

**| Editor's Note |**

## **Gender and Digital Media**

Feminism has become a popular concept since the 2010s with the emergence of various digital media platforms and the development of technology. These changes are seen as being led by the so-called “digital native generation.” One of the characteristics of this generation is the simultaneity in their use of media. They neither use only one media platform at a time nor use them sequentially. They use various media platforms simultaneously while maintaining multiple identities based on those media platforms. Moreover, they actively use such platforms when participating in social movements.

The expectations from Internet technology stem from the fact that women’s voices are seldom heard in spaces within the existing media industry. Online spaces provide women with more opportunities to speak up and enable them to accumulate experiences and record collective testimonies. Thus, the changes in feminism produced by such an active usage of digital technology are evident in cases where anonymous individuals gather in social spaces and organize protests attended by tens of thousands. A study suggests that as feminist activism in the digital era leads to behaviorism, it widens the audience through connectivity and builds new communities (Josiane, 2018). The term “fourth-wave feminism” has also become a familiar one. This celebrates the fact that different voices that may be in discord with one another in other ways can create a network of connectivity under the same banner of women’s liberation (Kim, 2019).

Compared to many years ago, feminism has certainly become a popular ideology in Korean society. The change was facilitated by the development of digital technology, which the feminist movement of the new generation actively utilizes. Therefore, it is important to examine what is happening on digital media platforms in terms of feminist knowledge building and solidarity, and how women’s experiences and voices are to be interpreted and connected. The discussion of gender and digital media can take many forms, such as the presence and significance of feminism in digital media, the research on events taking place through digital media and its significance, and the relationship between digital media and the changes occurring in women’s lives and realities.

In the midst of an ongoing discussion regarding what digital media technology will liberate, the issue continues to be that of reconstruction or re-enactment. Agustina Tyarakanita, Amanda Ummu Haniah, Joan Nofila Nurlinita, and Diah Kristina examine the problem of gender stereotypes on an Indonesian online language education platform. From the perspective of critical pedagogy, they discuss the sexist linguistic expressions and sentences found in its online educational materials and related discourses. According to their analysis, Indonesia's online English educational materials display limitations resulting from their continued use of traditional gender stereotypes, especially those relating to how women are not included in specialist jobs and the usage of gender-dependent reference terms, despite their gradual disappearance from the English-speaking world and the increasing movement toward gender-neutral terminology. Gender discrimination is mostly seen in nouns, pronouns, and female gender reference terms. This online English education platform is used throughout Indonesia, and because students encounter gender discrimination on the online platform, without the intervention of an instructor, the issue of gender discrimination on such platforms must be treated especially seriously.

Apart from the criticism that gender discrimination is being transferred from spaces of traditional education to digital media platforms, criticism about perpetuating existing inequities extends to Yeon Jeong Gu's analysis of the introduction of new technology and signs of change in humankind as a result of such technology. The discussions relating to artificial intelligence are usually led by male-centered imaginations. From a perspective that emphasizes such a fluid and plural body, imagining new bodies in a non-biological thought-based way makes women's identity indiscernible. The new digital identity, one that can handle a vast amount of information, assumes a body with a multi-level identity beyond which it would be liberated from a biological body to become a free being. Such an image of body-less information was represented by the movie *Lucy*, suggesting that a body is meaningless and worthless, and ethical considerations about how a woman's body is used as a sexual instrument also disappear. In other words, if humans become beings that engage in non-biological thinking, it only repeats the history of suppression, exploitation, and inequality of the anthropocentrism of the modern period. Between the dichotomy of body and mind, the dichotomy of the modern period that prioritizes mind is repeated in a dangerous form, and for such discussions among futurists the intervention of a feministic view that has defined itself based on mutual relationships with other beings is earnestly needed.

Following the discussion regarding the technological reconstruction of women, Ji-Yeong Yun examines the network of feminists that utilize technology. Yun's discussion on the feminist network enabled by a participatory platform centering around the #MeToo movement deals with the current state of the fourth wave of feminism in the Korean context. It views the feminists' online activism as an agents' network based on Latour's notion and analyzes the manner in which feminist citizenship is created. The feminist's online activism is an ontological turn as well as an axiological intervention, and it represents a political intervention. For example, the feminist online activism that targeted the sex extortion incident on the media platform Telegram and insisted upon resolution invents feminist citizenship through the movement that resists the power structure. The evolution and change in feminism through digital media is being made real by such new feminist agents connected by the network.

Jungyoon Chang did not deal with issues of digital media platforms but analyzed the different strategies of soft creator of male groups and strongly advocator of female groups to use methods that reproduce new gender images in contemporary Korean pop (K-pop) groups. Male and female groups have selected two kinds of gender image strategies within different positions as new Korean Wave strategies. Those of the female groups are particularly important as they serve as role models for female fans and voice opinions on the gender inequalities of society. While the idol industry is still displaying traditional gender problems, the changed image strategies of female groups hold great significance for fans.

These articles show how gender-related issues are arising in digital media environments and how old and new problems are to be handled. Among the topics discussed in this special issue are changes in gender roles and gender power relationships, changes in digital subjects, the evolution of feminism, and effects on feminist activism. Digital platforms are currently evolving and the interventions and actions of women exist within the continuous dynamics of this field. Continuous research is needed into issues of feminism and digital media in terms of how they affect female subjects and change areas of everyday life. Of course, digital media by itself will not bring about women's liberation. The motivation behind the younger adult population's awakening as feminists and the emergence of online movements such as the #MeToo movement are related to the long history of discrimination against women. The anger over the sexual objectification of women and sexism has brought about such a connection. Hence, the meticulous observation and discussion of the participants' actions and the mode of connect-

ing feminist identities presuppose the discussion of gender and digital media as much as the expectation of new technology. Above all, it is necessary to restart the existential questioning of “how feminism is possible in our generation, now, and here” (Cho, 2014).

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