

Exploring Derivatization in *Mrs Everything: A Novel* by Jennifer Weiner

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Abstract

The concept of Derivatization presented by Ann J. Cahill was applied to the novel *Mrs Everything: A Novel* (2019) by Jennifer Weiner for the purpose of exploring how women are derivatized by others and society at large. The textual analysis concluded that the characters of Jo, Kim and Bethie were derivatized by those close to them. Jo was made to feel like a misfit by her mother due to her unconventional sexual orientation. Kim and Jo were derivatized by their husbands to be stay-at-home moms, which curbed their aspirations and individuality, although both women successfully resisted the mistreatment. Bethie experienced a weight loss complex and was severely objectified by her college boyfriend to cater to his needs. This study suggests the spread of awareness to change societal norms to eradicate the actions that allow derivatization and objectification so that womanly subjectivity and aspirations are allowed equal freedom.

Keywords: derivatization, mistreatment, objectification, subjectivity, unconventional.

Introduction

Mrs Everything: A Novel (2019) by Jennifer Weiner is a novel that surveys the attitudes adopted by society to stereotype and oppress the women through the hideous acts of mom-shaming, fat-shaming, and objectification. It is set in the 1950s American town of Detroit and captures the lives of two sisters, Jo and Bethie, through the ages till the year 2022. Along

with their mother, Sarah, who leads a solitary, monotonous life after the death of her husband Ken Kaufman, the sisters boldly face the challenges of marriage, abortion, extramarital affairs, widowhood, distortion, and denial of sexual orientation, which threatens and twirls around traditional feminine ideals and institutions.

The novel is deconstructed under the concept of derivatization presented by Ann J. Cahill in *Overcoming Objectification: A Carnal Ethics* (2011) to find out how the characters are made devoid of their individuality and embodied as caricatures of deviant male conceptions of typical female stereotyping. This study dissects the elements of female discrimination through the scrutiny of highlighting certain problematic events throughout the narrative. The aim of this study is to investigate how the characters of Bethie, Jo and Kim are derivatized by other characters in this novel. This textual analysis is conducted to dissect the feminist ideals that materialize within the novel which is set against the backdrop of sexist discrimination.

Conceptual Framework

Ann J. Cahill provides the concept of Derivatization in her book, *Overcoming Objectification: A Carnal Ethics* (2011). Derivatization is presented as an alternative term for objectification to effectively signify the misrepresentations and treatment of women. Derivatization is defined as “portray, render, understand, or approach a being solely or primarily as the reflection, projection, or expression of another being’s identity, desires, fears, etc.” (Cahill 32). Women are often derivatized that is thought to be non-persons as their subjectivities or individual realities are underappreciated and uncredited. When such a derivatized woman claims her subjectivity or essence, she is often “disregarded, ignored, or undervalued” (Cahill 32). To project and force one’s ideas, expectations and wants upon another person while that person, usually a woman, transforms and morphs themselves to the

behaviour and effect of those ideas is in a sense derivatized. In this way, the women become caricatures that are devoid of subjectivity, complexity and dimension. Or simply put, “to derivatize is to reduce the subjectivity of one entity to that of another, such that every relevant characteristic of the former only exists because of a relevant characteristic of the latter” (Cahill 101).

The concept of derivatization as presented in Cahill’s book was reviewed by Brassfield in the article “Overcoming Objectification: A Carnal Ethics,” by Ann J. Cahill.” (2012). She concluded that it highlights the mistreatment of women in sex work, media, pornography and sexual violence while it is presented in a dense technical diction (Brassfield 217). The reviewer applied the text to the novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston and the short story *Pairpuppets* (1976) by Manuel Van Loggem to demonstrate the concept of derivatization (Brassfield 220). Moreover, Cahill had presented her views on how the concept of objectification lacked in better capturing the misrepresentation of women in general and how the notion of derivatization shapes and nets women’s treatment in regard to their bodies and appearances in terms of sex work and ethics (Bodies 00:56:30).

The process of derivatization occurs when one projects their wants on another individual and reduces the other person’s subjectivity to shreds. In contrast, the other person becomes derivatized at being subjected to constant covert or overt manipulation as the “body images are central to the functioning of the embodied subject as a unified entity, they themselves are constantly shifting, reacting to and absorbing changes in their environment” (Cahill 91). This analysis is conducted to find out how the characters are derivatized to highlight the sources and causes of feminine injustice and, at the same time, feminine resistance to the limiting societal boundaries.

Analysis and Discussion

Women are taught to be the mirror for others' wants and expectations. They have to behave and conduct themselves in the community to fit the shoes of derivatized projections of their parents, peers, acquaintances, and society in general. If a woman does not endorse the traditional feminine idealizations and flouts the set benchmarks of womanly behaviour, she becomes an outcast and a misfit. Similar is the case with Bethie and Jo's characterizations.

From a young age, Josette Kaufman was ridiculed and shunned by her mother for being a rebellious child. From the choice of wearing pants instead of traditional dresses to playing sports like basketball and volleyball, Jo admits that "I can't cook. I won't do my hair. I hate wearing dresses. I'd rather hit a ball or shoot a basket than prance around a stage and sing" (118). Furthermore, she did not curl her hair or do her eyebrows like the other girls to attain the standard of prettiness as: "She didn't have the words to say how she felt about pretty ... When she was dressed up, Jo just felt wrong, like it was hard to breathe, like her skin no longer fit, like she'd been forced into a costume or a disguise ... She didn't care about looking pretty, and she didn't like dresses" (9).

Since childhood, Jo was aware of her mother's scrutiny and disdain towards her as "Her mother, she knew, would never understand" (9) and consistently questioned, "What's the matter with you ... Why can't you be good for once?" (11) or "What is wrong with you" (117). Such statements had instilled in Jo insecurity and doubts about the ever-present difference in her makeup and identity. It suggested that Jo was always on the wrong end of goodness or correctness. Jo constantly thought about the wrongness of her every action that made her mother angry. These doubts and misgivings made her look down on herself and term herself to be unworthy as she thought that "Something was wrong with her. She was broken, she was twisted, she was unnatural like her mother had said. She would never be

fixed or made right” (119). These considerations are tinged with the concept of Jo allowing herself to be derivatized by the rigid views of her mother initially. Society’s conventions stipulating even the trivial aspects of actions, thoughts and freedom of girls were lost on Jo due to her naivety “Some rules she understood, but others were mysteries. “Do you have to sit like that?” Sarah would ask when Jo was sitting in a chair with her legs spread apart. “Why does it matter how I sit?” Jo would ask” (26).

Sarah’s derivatization and objection to Jo’s behaviour resulted in a mental wedge between the two as they both became distant from each other. She supposed Jo to be “unnatural” (119) due to her having a girlfriend and being in a relationship with a girl and not a boy, as society had decreed. Sarah was of the old world view and associated the women’s natural responsibilities, or aim in life should be finding a man to marry and settle down to raise children just as she had done in her life. Her expression of her eldest unruly daughter’s personhood and identity was that of “an exotic animal, some ungainly, awkward creature, an ostrich or a giraffe that had folded itself through the front door and sat down at the table, and Sarah was wondering what to feed it, or how to make it disappear” (122).

However, due to unconventional sexual orientation of Jo, she feared that “no man is going to want a wife who can’t even manage Jell-O” (118) or, in other words, manage a kitchen. Sarah projects her views of gender roles and fear of being left unmarried and alone unto Jo. Regardless, Jo ends up finding love and peace in the form of Shelley and does get married while having three daughters. Similar to the character of Jeanette from the novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruits* (1985) by Jeanette Winterson, whose mother refutes her due to her eccentric personality and homosexuality, Jo realizes her individualization and self-assertion while combating the coercive and repressive convictions of the society and restrictive culture.

Unlike Jo, Bethie rejoiced in being called pretty and beautiful. She carefully selected her wardrobe, styled her hair, and was conscious of other people's opinions about her. Even at the time of the death of her father, she was hesitant to inform her friends that her father had died in a bathroom as "Bethie cared about people's opinions in a way that Jo didn't" (56). This indicates the pressure of keeping with social appearances and societal opinions that makes one shallow and deeply insecure.

To mentally cope with Uncle Mel's sexual harassment, Bethie would emotionally overeat to suppress her emotions of anger and rage. During that particular summer, she had gained ten pounds with the addition of red pimples on her forehead and cheeks. This weight gain and acne sprout further intensified her sense of shame and feeling of being ugly and unworthy. She avoided her friends by deliberately making excuses not to visit them to hide her bulky figure. While all her friends enjoyed the luxury of tanning beside the public pools, Bethie was ashamed to even show some skin due to fear of fat-shaming as "she couldn't stand the thought of putting on her swimsuit, which no longer fit, and lying on a towel on the concrete around the pool, with so much of her body exposed" (73).

Sarah left a seven-day diet out of a womanly magazine daily "at Bethie's spot on the kitchen table" while she implied that "When you're short, with a small frame, every pound shows" (73). This criticism of Bethie's figure insinuated that she was short for her height while being fat and heavy in a disdainful way. A comment like this from her mother heightened Bethie's feelings of shame that arise through being overweight thus intensified her desire to lose weight. Society has set certain benchmarks that define what exactly beauty is. Having a slim and trim figure with flawless, smooth skin attributes to the abstract concept of beauty. While a sprinkle of acne or a plump figure coincides with the standard definition of beauty to be termed as ugly or not good-looking. Bethie's schoolmates criticized her by

declaring, “She used to be so cute!” (88). This way of derivatization not only hinders social prospects, such as if Bethie stayed at “her current size, she’d never have a shot at the lead” (88) role in her high school musical drama. This crafted perception also limits one’s self-esteem. It instigates the cultivation of insecurity as Bethie listened to such criticism with “her face burning with shame” (88) and instilling a deep fear of fat-shaming. Good physical appearances are considered the gateway to attaining society’s approval and nod as: “Women are objectified when their appearance is considered to be of utmost importance to their identity; when their appearance (particularly aspects of appearance that are especially socially loaded, such as weight) is constructed as open to public criticism and comment; indeed, whenever women’s bodily existence takes precedence over their subjectivity” (Cahill 7).

Bethie wanted to achieve the slim figure trend not only to get the leading role at a school’s play but also to feel herself appearing attractive and attention-worthy to boys at school as she reflects “with boys’ eyes skipping over her, like she was part of the furniture or, worse, a teacher. Beauty was power, and Bethie wanted her power back” (90). Losing weight is also attributed to the process of beautification and most often than not to appear desirable and beautiful according to the societal scales: “Beautification is often, and with good reason, associated with sexual objectification: not only does one beautify to become more like a sex object, but one must objectify one’s body – treat it as a malleable, transformable entity – in order to undertake beautifying projects” (Cahill 64).

In a dire attempt to shed weight, Bethie buys cans of the advertised diet drink named Metrecal and consumes it as a replacement for food and gets addicted to it regardless of its horrible taste. Other than the excessive energy dose and rapid weight loss, the side effects of such a diet made her “so dizzy that the room had wavered in front of her” (91), “ready to pass out” (90), experienced severe “hunger pains” (90) and “feeling airy, as if a balloon was

expanding inside of her” (92). Moreover, she fainted during the school play rehearsal and ended up in the school nurse’s office. Besides the strict diet and the regular regimen of exercise, Bethie’s sense of unwanted-ness and lack of consuming healthy and nutritious intake of food had developed the eating disorder of bulimia as after dinner she would under the guise of going for a walk, would “stick her fingers down her throat, and kick dirt over whatever she vomited up” (92). Bethie had lost eighteen pounds in a short span of weeks and this made her look “too thin” (97) and the risk of metaphorically “going to disappear” (100) due to being so slim.

All these painstaking efforts were outwardly taken to reduce weight, but Jo clearly understood the real motive behind Bethie’s obsession with weight loss and body image, which was a psychological reaction to resist against Uncle Mel’s previous sexual advances. Just as she had initially consumed generously and put on weight so that she could repel him with her outward obesity and ugliness. Bethie was now starving herself to regain the sense of identity and subjectivity that she had lost. Uncle Mel had projected his wants, sexual gratification and dominance on Bethie and derivatized her to make her a means to satisfy his deviant sexual urges and pride. In his arms, Bethie felt dirty, used and violated. Her self-esteem and self-worth pummeled to the ground and she derivatized herself to feeling like nothing except a means for making Melvin excited. She wanted to shed off the mental dirt, feeling of disgrace and excess weight that has curbed the growth of her personhood.

During her relationship with Devon Brady, Bethie had reverted to her old habit of extreme dieting and in a weight loss complex as she indulged in diet pills provided by Devon, among other assortments of drugs ranging from acid to weed. This is similar to the character of Elle, who took diet pills to appear slim due to being insecure about her heavy appearance and fat-shamed and mocked by her colleagues in the novel *The Sins* (2009) by Penny Jordan.

Both these characters endured the loss of appetite, and rapid weight loss and faced the threat of being physically underweight and malnourished as a consequence of the diet pills.

Although both felt a transient sense of confidence boost after being addicted to these drugs as Bethie relates: “Among his treasure trove, Dev had prescription-strength diet pills. Bethie would take a few whenever she felt her clothes getting tight, or when she spotted the hint of double chin in the mirror. The pills sent her flying” (178).

At college, Bethie lived with Devon at his place as his girlfriend in his garden apartment on Church Street. He gravely derivatized her as she acted both as his caretaker and housemaid. Not only did Bethie serve as someone available for sexual satisfaction, but she cleaned, cooked and packed for Devon like a maid or wife would do as “she would wash their clothes at the Laundromat, and ironed Devon’s shirts on the kitchen table” (176). In return, Devon dominated her, made her addicted to an endless supply of drugs and used her like a doll available at his every whim and command. Devon’s three older sisters were married and were stay-at-home moms. The married sisters lived in small starter houses in the suburbs similar to the Alhambra Street home of Bethie’s parents, Sarah and Ken Kaufman. Whenever Devon talked about his sisters being housewives and living a conventional lifestyle, his voice would be “rich with scorn” (171). This would indicate Devon’s brash attitude towards conformity and traditional choice of lifestyle as he projected himself to be a kind of rebel who lived outside the conventionalities of society without the etiquette of a proper job, menial work, or family life with babies as Devon prided himself by declaring “Not me” (172).

On the contrary, Devon’s actions contradicted his rebellious views as “he liked it when she (Bethie) looked like all the other girls in their crowd, and he liked having dinner on the table at seven o’clock” (176). Devon’s talk and behaviour juxtaposition suggested his

manipulation and derivatization of Bethie's identity and selfhood. She acted and dressed the way Devon preferred. She had even begun to learn how to cook food to match his flavour, including "how to make pasta the way he liked it" (176). The level of derivatization was highly ingrained in her as she began to associate herself that it was her duty to take care and perform chores for him. This is evident when Devon states that they should start packing for the trip to the folk festival and Bethie "understood that we meant her" (176) to pack Devon's stuff.

She began to represent the mundanity of all the other girls in their friend circle and this personality mutation chipped away at her quintessence and originality. Bethie had let herself be derivatized by her boyfriend in exchange of sexual gratification, and free supply of drugs. Moreover, she began conjuring thoughts of culling all her ambitions of achieving success to be objectified by Devon Brady as she pondered about "abandon(ing) her dreams of fame and fortune as long as she could be with him" (182). This stream of thinking hints at the depth of derivatization and manipulation Bethie endured so that her subjectivity and embodiment are condensed to make room for only Devon's aspirations and essentiality.

Bethie's identity was gradually diminished and undermined since she came to be identified through her association with Devon. From the onset of their relationship, Bethie was widely known as "Dev's girl" (175) although she attended her lectures regularly at the university, performed at the local theatre and had her name and accomplishments. Due to the acknowledgement that "Because Bethie was Dev's girl, she was treated with admiration and respect" (175). This implies that she was fraternized and befriended only as Devon Brady's girlfriend for which she was showered with courteousness among her circle of friends.

The essence of subjectivity and personality that formulates through one's birth name tarnishes and changes by signifying another name to that particular person. The person then

alters and modifies their temperaments and dispositions to suit that of the person who changed the name or the name assigned to them. Similarly, Bethie started morphing her personality into the taste and inclination of Devon. She started trading her clothes for the preferred clothes that Devon deemed acceptable. She had even changed her hairstyle as she grew her hair long and kept them “wavy and unstyled, the way Devon liked it” (176). This transformation in Bethie’s attire arose from Devon naming her “Alice” (170-182) after their first meeting. Therefore, Bethie had shed her old habits, wardrobe and name through the derivatization by Devon Brady.

She was derivatized to feel safe, secure and protected with him as she thought that “Devon kept her safe” (176), and this feeling of safety was cultivated in her through Devon by occasionally calling her “little” (170-173). This name-calling and tagging of the chosen partner as little or small is similar to Nora being repeatedly called a child or a pet by her husband in a subtle attempt to reduce her independence and personhood in *A Doll’s House* (1879) by Henrik Ibsen. Therefore, in a sense, she was unsafe and constantly required Devon’s presence to feel secure and this projection of Devon’s safety blanket cues at Bethie’s dependence and insecurity.

Later when Bethie got raped and informed Devon of her predicament, he gave her a cold shoulder and acted as if she repulsed him. The derivatization of Devon through his action of “looking at her like she was toilet paper stuck to the bottom of someone’s shoe” (209) was what made Bethie firmly attach the stigma of shame and spoilage to her being other than the crime of rape.

Due to Devon’s manipulation, Bethie started perceiving herself as doll-like as she “loved how he called her Alice and pulled her onto his lap, as if she were no bigger than a doll” (182). This stance of perceiving women’s utility as an object to control and project

one's expectations and wants corresponds to Matt's subjection and derivatization of his wife Kim, Jo's eldest daughter and Bethie's niece.

Kimberly Braverman was a lawyer who worked at the U. S. attorney's office and had met Matt Grissom at the University of Pennsylvania, whom she married at the age of twenty-five years. Both were successful lawyers who had two daughters together, Flora and Leonie. Unlike the direct dominating relationship between Devon and Bethie where Bethie understood her role clearly as the girlfriend, cook and cleaner, the relationship between Matt and Kim was engrossed with subtleness and shrewd manipulation and derivatization.

Right from the birth of their first daughter, Matt did not let Jo stay with them as extra help around, although Kim readily agreed initially to the aid that Jo could provide with her presence and experience but reluctantly declined after Matt's intervention. Kim had just given birth when Jo had offered to stay with them for a few days. Matt made his stance clear and objected to his wife's choice of help by tacitly manipulating and pressuring his wife through intimate physical touch as he stood behind Kim and gave her "shoulders a squeeze" and to stress his point of view, he gently tightened his grasp as "Matt's hands tighten on Kim's shoulders" (424). Outwardly this would have been just a husband who was clutching the shoulders of his wife, but to a critical eye, the covert contrivance would be plainly visible. Moreover, this tact of manipulation through physical touch is again noticeable when Kim suggests waiting for Lila to join them for the 2006 Thanksgiving dinner but eventually continued with the course as he had "came up behind her ... he put his hands on Kim's shoulders, his expression was almost smug" (431).

To care for their young daughters, Kim had resigned from her job and became a full-time stay-at-home mom. She had enjoyed working at the office and getting some relief from baby duty, albeit for a few hours. When she rejoined her job after her first maternity leave,

she exhaled that “I was so relieved to hand her off to someone else. I’m so happy to be back” (425). However, when Jo inquires regarding her going back to work after the end of her second maternity leave, Kim hesitates in informing she will be taking an open-ended sabbatical from her profession to stay at home to care for and be close to her daughters. This stresses the notion that women have their place at home caring for children and looking after the house, doing chores like cooking and cleaning is the main and only job for them.

On the other hand, men should be out working, and earning money is deep-rooted in society and advocated by Matt’s declaration that “let me be the breadwinner” (433) and the demand that “Matt had wanted her to stay home” (453). The compliance and submission of Kim, a well-educated and successful lawyer, to this traditional and prevalent concept clearly ink at the society’s construction of separate social roles for men and women that derivatize not only women but also suppress their identity, subjectivity and intellectual abilities as stated that “To be a woman is to be thing-like” (Cahill 5). The dilemma and derivatization of women are starkly noticeable from Lila’s observation that “Every single woman on this street went to an Ivy League school. Most of them have advanced degrees, and all of them stay home full-time with their kiddos. They drive around in Range Rovers and take the kids to Tot Shabbat” (435).

Similarly, Dave had worked unsuccessfully as the sole breadwinner while Jo, with an advanced English degree, was somewhat forced to stay at home and look after their children and perform house chores regardless of their dwindling financial situation. It does not matter whether the woman has attained a degree from a good college or prefers a career but the societal and spousal pressure, that of Matt and Dave in this novel, guilt trips her to be always present for her babies. If she decides to work, then she will be considered as “a terrible mother” (425).

The impression that a mother should be present at every step of the child and should be a homemaker and a not career woman is ingrained, and any deviation from this results in guilt and remorse formation as Kim, who later got divorced and went back to working had “struggled and stretched herself thin, the way all working mothers did. She felt guilty for enjoying her job, and she felt guilty when she missed some milestone” (453) in her children’s life like a parent-teacher conference. On the flip side, a father can be excused when he associates looking after children for a few hours with “babysitting” (429) like Dave did or like Matt, who “never seemed to torment himself when he was golfing the first time Flora rode her bike” (454) or the child performed any novel task. This attitude of men not being accused of parental responsibilities that women often face is that “Name me one man who ever gets asked if he misses his kids while he’s working...They don’t expect men to do everything. They don’t care if men have help, and they don’t ask men if they have regrets” (282-283).

Nevertheless, Kim regained her identity as an independent working individual and resisted the age-old treatment of women being held back from reaching their true potential. She had realized her passion for work as a public defender for young women and paid the price for passion in the form of a divorce with Matt after a few years as she stated: “I can’t be the kind of wife he wants ... He wanted to take care of me. And I feel awful, because that was what I wanted when we got married ... But I don’t want that anymore” (453). Women should not confine themselves to boundaries set by society but carve their niche and path. A woman has every right to be whomever she wants to be and should be told that “You’re allowed to want to use your education ... You’re allowed to want to be more than a mother” (453).

Although, this novel is a coming-of-age story where the main characters pass their youth and shrivel into old age while progressing and possessing inner strength and conviction, however, some concepts like marriage and sexuality remain outdated and inundated even beyond the decades. Jo, after being heartbroken by Shelley, marries Dave Braverman whom she first met on the day of Shelley's wedding. Parallel to the character of Matt, Dave was also the sole earner of his household and considered that "Woman's natural responsibilities" (108) was in homemaking and rearing children. However, the concept of women being passive recipients, material entities and disembodied is rejected and resisted by these women as they left behind toxic self-contained relationships to assume their autonomy.

Dave readily jumped from one idea and business to another and lacked the necessary analytical business skills to soar high financially as Bethie observed that "Once you got past his dark eyes and his glinting grin, once you'd heard all his big talk about his businesses and his plans, you saw that there was nothing there but hot air and hairspray ... Dave was mostly superficial glitter" (309). Other than a non-consistent attitude and idle bearings, "Dave had expensive taste" (363), which led Jo and him into considerable debt and later bankruptcy. To increase their financial status, Jo had started teaching as a substitute teacher and even had the business proposition of starting a fitness video service. She had researched this business venture capacity before pitching the idea to her husband, who immediately rebuffed it by declaring that it "Won't work" and reasoned that Jo was "not an aspirational figure" (374). The attitude Dave proffered that he was patient and benevolent in listening to the ramblings of a child who did not have any sense of the real world as "Dave waved his hand negligently, a king granting a favour to a peasant. "Sell 'em at bake sales, or to the ladies who come to your classes. Make yourself some pin money" (374). Although the fitness video business was booming at that time and was a "billion-dollar fitness-video market, which, by all accounts,

was large, lucrative, and still expanding” (373) but this straightforward negative response had made Jo feel like a fool and she “felt a rush of disappointment ... She was sorry” (374).

Contrary to Dave’s statements, immediately after divorcing Jo and marrying Nonie Scotto, he had plagiarized and copied Jo’s this particular idea and made Nonie the cover of the fitness video that sold successfully, earning him a substantial amount of money. All of this cumulates to the impression of reducing Jo’s brilliant ideas, intellect and identity to that of an underbred homemaker whose only job is to do the dishes and care for her children. This derivatized point of view is also visible from the time when Jo used to attend communal protest meetings during her college days where the women participants were tasked with menial copying work or making dinner while the male volunteers “discussed the putative consequences” (155) of protests, marches and other political actions.

However, if a woman like Jo decides to make something worthy of her abilities, she is downgraded, derivatized and made to feel negligent. Just as in Bethie’s relationship with Devon, Jo had conformed and reduced her individuality to match that of her significant other. Even if a woman steps out of the house, earns big or prefers to be child-free and refuses to be derivatized, then she will be termed as “un-feminine” and “unnatural” because “The world still expects women to want babies. And if you’re a successful businesswoman, they don’t want to think that you sacrificed the pitter-patter of little feet for money” (382). Further, such archaic notions are transmitted and taught through popular magazines to solidify these concepts in the general public for instance, Lynette reads out from a magazine that no woman can experience “... happiness in putting career ahead of her husband and family ... Once she has taken on woman’s natural responsibilities, whatever work she undertakes must be done in a way that deprives the family the least ... more women with young children fail at making happy homes while working full-time than succeed” (108).

Bethie, Kim and Jo had become a derivative of their partners' personalities and an extension of their partners' expectations and ambitions. This is corresponding to the character of Janie from the novel *Their Eyes were Watching God* (1937) by Zora Neale Hurston who had moulded her personality to the image and persona of her husband Mayor Joe Starks and admitted that "Mah own mind had tuh be squeezed and crowded out tuh make room for yours in me" (Hurston 102). Though hope is expressed through this novel that with the passage of time, women would be accepted as equals in society in terms of earning and homemaking and not derivatized based on their looks and appearances as the media coach Beverly Husner of Bethie expressed: "And someday, the world might change. Someday, they might ask Bill Gates why he's not at his kid's spelling bee instead of inventing computers, and they might let a successful female CEO off the hook for not having babies, or maybe even for not getting married at all. But we're not there yet. Not even close" (383).

Conclusion

The concept of derivatization by Ann J. Cahill was used to analyze *Mrs Everything: A Novel* by Jennifer Weiner. The textual analysis was conducted to find out how the characters of Jo, Bethie and Kim were derivatized. Sarah Kaufman projected her fears and anxieties at her daughter in an attempt to make Jo more feminine which resulted in Jo being mentally confused and insecure. However, Jo was able to disregard mother's attempts and left her husband to build a future that she had envisioned for herself. Devon Brady has objectified and reduced Bethie to be a doll-like figure who was present to cater to his needs. Bethie was deeply influenced by society's perceptions of how a perfect woman should be. In her weight loss obsession and drug addiction, Bethie tried to embody the standard of beauty. She tried to frame herself as the ideal woman who caters to the needs and wants of those around her while being devoid of personality and individuality. Jo and Kim were derivatized by their husbands

to be housewives and their only social roles were to care for their children, although both these women resisted the gender discrimination and were successful in achieving their aspirations. Both left their husbands to pursue their career goals while fulfilling their roles as mothers. The study suggests for societal perceptions to be changed over time to make space and acceptance of womanly aspirations, and to eliminate such actions and notions that perpetuate the objectification and derivatization of women.

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