ISSN: 1817-6798 (Print)
Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities
available online at: www.jtuh.org/

Awfa Hussein Al-Doory

Najm Abdulla Najm

* *Corresponding author: E-mail* :اميل الباحث

Keywords:
Ethical Vegetarianism,
Trauma,
objectification,
resistance,
Ecocriticism

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:
Received 1 Sept 2024
Received in revised form 25 Nov 2024
Accepted 2 Dec 2024
Final Proofreading 2 Mar 2025
Available online 3 Mar 2025
E-mail t-jtuh@tu.edu.iq

©THIS IS AN OPEN ACCESS ARTICLE UNDER THE CC BY LICENSE
http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

Ethical Vegetarianism and Vegan Poetics in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intertwining themes of ethical vegetarianism, trauma, and resistance against patriarchy, and explores the themes of ethical vegetarianism and vegan poetics in Han Kang's award-winning Korean novel, (The Vegetarian). The study will examine the novel's portrayal of the traumatized vegan identity, the cultural context of Korean food and traditions, and how the author's language evokes the protagonist's journey of self-discovery. This analysis deals with ecocriticism theory. The study aims to find the forms of vegan identity and to investigate women's resistance toward patriarchal domination. It also focuses on the precisely on the various underlying shades of trauma that a woman's body and mind undergo while trying to live up to the expectations of contemporary society.

DOI: http://doi.org/10.25130/jtuh.32.3.2.2025.21

Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities Journal of Tikrit University for Humanities Journal of Tikrit University

النباتية الأخلاقية والشعرية النباتية في رواية هان كانغ النباتية

اوفى حسين الدوري/ جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للعلوم الانسانية

نجم عبدالله نجم

الخلاصة:

تتعمق هذه الدراسة في الموضوعات المتشابكة للنباتية الأخلاقية والصدمات والمقاومة ضد النظام الأبوي، وتستكشف موضوعات النباتية الأخلاقية والشعرية النباتية في رواية هان كانغ الكورية الحائزة على جوائز، (النباتية). ستبحث الدراسة تصوير الرواية للهوية النباتية المصابة بالصدمة، والسياق الثقافي للطعام والتقاليد الكورية، وكيف تستحضر لغة المؤلف رحلة بطل الرواية لاكتشاف الذات. يتعامل هذا التحليل مع نظرية النقد البيئي. تهدف الدراسة إلى إيجاد أشكال الهوية النباتية والتحقيق في مقاومة المرأة للهيمنة الأبوية. كما أنه يركز على وجه التحديد على مختلف الظلال الكامنة وراء الصدمة التي يتعرض لها جسم

المرأة وعقلها أثناء محاولتها الارتقاء إلى مستوى توقعات المجتمع المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية : نباتي أخلاقي، صدمة،مقاومة، نقد بيئي.

Introduction

The goal of veganism as a lifestyle and social movement is to avoid items made from animals and to oppose any harsh or exploitative treatment of them. This chapter addresses veganism, the motivations for choosing to follow a vegan diet, and the traumatized vegan identity as it is re-represented in Han Kang's 2016 Korean novel The Vegetarian. The antisociality of ethical vegetarianism and the sensationalizing language that portrays a pattern of meat avoidance are both highlighted in Kang's book. In the context of animal research, sensationalizing speaks to the ethical treatment and sympathetic equal treatment of animals. Animal ethicists and theorists of animal studies have theorized that "empathy for animals was the foundation upon which to transform our interactions with animals and cultivate more caring and loving relationships with them." (Calarco, 2021)

As a Korean novel, *The Vegetarian* is distinct in representing "Han"[1], a Korean word refers to a form of grief, personal anguish, despair and repressiveness that wracks one's inside. (Chu, 2008) In her " Korean Han and the Postcolonial Afterlives of ‘‘The Beauty of Sorrow’’ (2017), Sandra Kim (2017) illustrates that Han is a

> Korean ethos and the quality of Korean sorrow as being different from anything Westerners have experienced or can understand…[it is] the pain that Koreans experience from their individual life circumstances…[on individual level] han as a kind of mental state of

[1] In this particular discourse, the origins of Korean han have been attributed to every experience of injustice that the country has experienced: Korea’s purported long history of foreign invasions; colonization; prolonged poverty and starvation under oppression; the tyranny of ruling classes, first in the feudal caste system as well as later, during the period of rapid industrialization; the abuses of power by one authoritarian military regime after another in the postwar period; oppressions of religious ideologies.

> giving up, resulting from an extensive experience of frustrating and tragic life events. (254-5)

Han is represented in Kang's novel through Yoeng-hye's post-traumatic conflict materialized in the form of carnophobia, a term indicating fear of meat. It is through this particular phobia that Han Kang articulates the issue of anti-speciesism and human\animal distinction. She wants to draw attention to the ways that certain groups of people are thought to be more like nonhumans than others. Daniel Y. Kim addresses the critical reception of The Vegetarian in his 2020 work "Translation and Ghosting of History: The Novels of Hang Kang" by saying, "The Vegetarian can so effortlessly… illustrates a potential downside of interpretive models of world literature that exclusively emphasize the creativity and dynamism shaping how novels are absorbed by readers in faraway nations." (p. 381)

One of South Korea's most promising modern authors is Han Kang. Her novella, The Vegetarian, earned her the coveted Man Booker Prize. "Winter Seoul" is one of the five poems she produced in her early career as a poet. The Black Deer (1998), Your Cold Hand (2002), Breath Fighting (2010), Greek Lessons (2011), Human Acts (2014), and The White Book (2016) are only a few of her well-known fictional works in addition to The Vegetarian. Since she has written and performed a number of songs, she is also a musician. (Ravikesh,2017).

Kang's language is often poetic and evocative, using rich imagery and metaphor to convey deep emotions and complex themes. She said "When I write fiction, I put a lot of emphasis on the senses. I want to convey vivid senses like hearing and touch, including visual images. I infuse these sensations into my sentences like an electric current" (The Booker Prizes Interview, 2023) To exemplify this, in *Human Act* Kang reflects on aspects of man's brutality by means of using certain words that echo cannibal spirit and dehumanization:

> Is it true that human beings are fundamentally cruel? Is the experience of cruelty the only thing we share as a species? Is the dignity that we cling to nothing but self-delusion, masking from ourselves the single truth: that each one of us is capable of being reduced to an insect, a ravening beast, a lump of meat? To be degraded, slaughtered - is this the essential of humankind, one which history has confirmed as inevitable?" (p. 107)

This quotation might support her arguments for switching to a vegetarian diet. As though she accentuates the way flesh highlights the cruelty and cannibalistic inclinations of man. The Animal Liberation Movement, which seeks to create a new social egalitarian model that strikes a balance between human and non-human cultures, meets Kang's idea. A peaceful cohabitation that prioritizes purifying man's conscience, rewriting life in accordance with sharing principles, honouring the needs of other lives, and reversing the blind force that consumes non-human societies would be the outcome of such equilibrium.

This tendency is emphasized by the title of the novel "The Vegetarian" as well as its cover which functions as an objective correlative to Yeong-hye's desire to connect with the natural world and her eventual wish to become plant-like:

> I was in a dream, and I was standing on my head…leaves were growing from my body, and roots were sprouting from my hands…so I dug down into the earth. On and on…I wanted flowers to bloom from my crotch, so I spread my legs; I spread them wide…" (Han Kang, 2017, p. 188)

The woman on the cover reflects the main character of the novel with her gradual return to nature, and the roots symbolize the formation of the character in the form of a plant.



Figure 1: The cover of Han's novel *The Vegetarian*

The novel was published as a three-section novella which later became three parts in one novel. These three parts sum up the conflict of speciesism vs. anti-speciesism. Kang uses a number of narrators to convey the tale of a vegan character whose viewpoint is kept secret. Despite being as silent as a forest, Yeong-hye has a lot to say. To tell the readers about Yeong Hye's life-changing experiences, the author selects her brother-in-law (an unidentified character), her sister In-Hye, and her husband, Mr. Cheong. During Yeong Hye's transition from the speciesist world to the one of peaceful coexistence, where she removes the layers of the cosmic hierarchy, all three characters are crucial. Her brother-in-law is able to connect her body to her newly formed ecological identity, but her husband sees her as a normal lady going insane.

The Poetics of Carnophobia

An extreme and enduring dread of eating meat is the hallmark of carnophobia, commonly referred to as meat phobia, an anxiety disease. Individuals with carnophobia feel extremely anxious around any food that comes from animals, particularly meat. Because it restricts their food choices and causes emotional distress, this illogical fear can seriously impair the quality of life for persons who experience it. (Robertson, 2003)

Sarah et al. (2015) stated that there are many causes of such phobia but the most common is environmental. In other words, the majority of people had unpleasant meat-related experiences in the past. Examples include a serious disease that develops right after eating meat, An unpleasant experience at a butcher shop or slaughterhouse, an incident involving the preparation of meat, negative response to advertisements or pictures of meat items. Some people develop carnophobia as a result of unpleasant opinions or experiences with meat held by family members or friends, rather than direct exposure to meat-related situations. Symptoms include feeling sick and disgusted by the smell of meat. When meat is prepared and served in public settings, some people may become ill. Such individuals require medical care.

Because carnophobia is based on an irrational fear that meat is in some way intrinsically bad or worthy of being feared, people who suffer from it are not automatically vegetarians. That being said, those who have carnophobia fear meat for illogical reasons rather than because they may actually develop heart conditions or other health risks from eating it.

The Vegetarian is a narrative of protagonist Yeong-hye Kim, a young married woman living her plain life in contemporary South Korea, whose traumatic incident that happened in her childhood drove her to withdraw from her social environment. It starts with a dream a traumatic childhood memory to be exact which is strongly related to the cruelty of her father murdering their family dog in an extremely inhuman way. Back then in her early years, the nine-year-old Yeong-hye was bitten by a dog, leading her father to chain it in his motorcycle to death. Ironically, they have a feast of the same dog later that evening. They adhere to the proverb that states that "you have to eat that same dog for a wound caused by a dog bite to heal" (p. 49), despite the fact that what they did seems callous and repulsive to some. Even though Yeong-hye remembered the dog's two sorrowful eyes staring into her eyes, she practically

ate the entire bowlful. She supposedly decides to drastically cut off meat, one of the key ingredients in Korean cuisine, because this trauma haunts her in her frequent dreams. Furthermore, the protagonist's vegetarianism has changed every aspect of her life, preventing her from interacting with her family, husband, and even society.

> Dreams of murder.
> "Murderer or murdered… hazy distinctions, boundaries wearing thin. Familiarity bleeds into strangeness, certainty becomes impossible. Only violence is vivid enough to stick. A sound, the elasticity of the instant when the metal struck the victim's head… the shadow that crumpled and fell gleams cold in the darkness." (Han Kang, 2017, p. 35)

Han illustrates how Yeong-hye's nightmarish dreams deeply influence her approach to life through her writing. A horrible collection of images of dark woods, a gloomy barn, a family picnic in the strangest way, especially a lump of meat, and a mess of blood blood in her mouth, hands, and clothes all trouble the ordinary life of Yeong-hye. Described as dull and ordinary, even her husband, Mr. Cheong, initially considers Yeong-hye an "unremarkable" woman (p. 11). However, things changed completely when the dreams appeared; so real and touchy as if it happened in the near past. Yeong-hye narrates one of the dreams as follows:

> "Dark woods. No people. The sharp-pointed leaves on the trees, my torn feet. This place, almost remembered, but I'm lost now. Frightened. Cold. Across the frozen ravine, a red barn-like building. Straw matting flapping limp across the door. Roll it up and I'm inside, it's inside. A long bamboo stick strung with great blood-red gashes of meat, blood still dripping down. Try to push past but the meat, there's no

end to the meat, and no exit. Blood in my mouth, blood-soaked clothes sucked onto my skin."(Han Kang, 2017, p. 14)

Cole and Morgan's (2011) study examines how veganism is presented in UK national newspapers, analyzing 397 articles from 2007 using a database search. Numerous articles depict veganism adversely, indicating a strong bias, according to their findings. It was usual for negative portrayals to make fun of veganism, characterize it as austere and unworkable, and paint vegans as being too sensitive or antagonistic. He also underlined how vegetarians are sensitive. The primary character's sensitivity regarding eating animal meat is a matter of concern.

There is a lot of symbolism and imagery in the dream above. Fear and a sensation of loneliness are evoked by the dark woods and the impression of being lost. The protagonist's torn feet allude to a physically and emotionally taxing trip. The blood-red flesh slits and the red barn-like structure stand for violence and the protagonist's intense dislike of meat, which may be seen as an expression of her carnophobia. She used literary language that was visceral, carceral, and deeply embodied to convey the psychological agony and disgust of facing meat from a vegan/carnophobic standpoint.

From another perspective, there is a term presented by Jay Carol "Absent referent" which is related to vegetarian ecofeminism. The concept refers to a process in which a subject is removed or obscured, disconnecting the meaning of an object from its original context, often to mask violence or exploitation.
The way that men position and view women as objects is known as objectification; in other words, the subject with the authority is a man. Young Hye's husband opens the first section of the novel by narrating his first impression of her, portraying her as an ordinary woman.

> The passive personality of this woman in whom I could detect neither freshness nor charm, or anything especially refined, suited me down to the ground. There was no need to affect intellectual leanings in order to win her over, or to worry that she might be comparing me to the preening men who pose in fashion catalogues (Han Kang, 2017, p. 3).

In the aforementioned quote, Young Hye's spouse is objectifying her. His attitude makes it clear that he rates the different kinds of women's bodies. As stated in the aforementioned remark, males determine the ideal standard or impression of women's attractiveness. Women's ideal facial features and body shapes are always compared to men's perceptions. That is to say, women are unable to define their own ideals of beauty. Young Hye rebels against the food system standards of Korea by choosing to be a vegetarian rather than consume animal meat.

Ara McDonald in his study entitled "An Empirical Look at Becoming Vegan" (2000) suggests that veganism can be seen as an innate orientation, In a similar vein, Yeong-hye's visions reveal a prior sensitivity to animal suffering and her intense concern for the natural environment. Yeong-hye's sensitivity is triggered by her post-traumatic dreams of animals being tortured, which makes her genuinely worried about the natural environment in which she lives. Eventually, it leads her to decide against eating meat. She gradually becomes more anti-species as a result of this, giving up eating eggs, drinking milk, and/or using any other animal products. In actuality, her commitment to vegetarianism affects both her and her spouse. With the radical change in the house's food system, Mr. Cheong is astonished as he cannot comprehend the sudden and strange behaviour of his wife. Firstly, Yeong-hye throws away all products of animal origin out of her refrigerator:

> “What the hell are you up to now?” I shouted.

> She kept on putting the parcels of meat into the rubbish bags, seemingly no more aware of my existence than she had been last night. Beef and pork, pieces of chicken, at least 200,000 won worth of saltwater eel.
>
> "Have you lost your mind? Why on earth are you throwing all this stuff out?"
>
> I hurriedly stumbled my way through the plastic bags and grabbed her wrist, trying to pry the bags from her grip. Stunned to find her fiercely tugging back against me, I almost faltered for a moment, but my outrage soon gave me the strength to overpower her. Massaging her reddened wrist, she spoke in the same ordinary, calm tone of voice she'd used before.
>
> "I had a dream."
>
> Those words again. Her expression as she looked at me was perfectly composed. Just then my mobile rang. (Han Kang, 2017, p. 13)

Yeong-hye is not limited to eliminating dietary animals or anything derived from animal sources. She even discards clothing made of leather from animals. The entire house shouldn't include any more animal-based products. The fact that she squandered her husband's money to purchase all of the culinary ingredients doesn't really bother her. Moreover, she even complains about the meat smell of her husband's body. To the extent, she stops making any sexual relationship with her husband.

Kim Chernin (2015) makes clearly "connects eating to the fight for identity" for women, and Brumberg describes "food refusal and appetite control as an indicator of mentalities in transit." In a society that does not provide acceptable and transformational female rites of passage, Chernin views eating

disorders as dysfunctional rites of passage for women. Young Hye becomes silent and seldom ever talks to her spouse once she makes the decision to become a vegetarian.

She becomes cold and intentionally ignores her husband's sexual desire. This is justified by Young-hye as follows:

> "… it's the smell".
>
> "The smell"?
>
> "The meat smell. Your body smells of meat".
>
> This was just too ridiculous for words.
>
> Didn't you see me just take a shower? So where's this smell coming from, huh"?
>
> "From the same place your sweat comes from," she answered, completely in earnest. (Han Kang, 2017, p. 16-17)

The fact that her husband just views Young Hye as his "maid" (p. 23) means that it does not have a significant effect on him. This demonstrates that women have a limited role in the home. Her husband's narration supports this, demonstrating that despite her wife's capacity for self-liberation, he still views her as merely an assistant in the home and benefits from her role.

Yeong is a reflection of Nora from Henrick Ibsen's play The Doll's House. Just as I was Daddy's doll-child at home, I have been your doll-wife, and the kids have been my dolls. Our marriage has been like that, Torvald. I found it enjoyable when you came to play with me, and they did the same when I went to play with them. Nora and Yeong are both representations of defiance against gender norms. The family makes every effort to make her eat, but they are never successful. The only person who initially supports Yeong by honoring her decision is her sister, but as she begins acting like a crazy person, Yeong views her sister as a burden. It is clear from the voices of the other characters in the novel how people evaluate those who don't fit the mould. "One is not born, but

rather becomes, a woman," according to Simone de Beauvoir in her book The Second Sex. Despite being labelled as the "other" in the book due to her decision, Yeong nevertheless defies expectations of what a woman in Korean culture should do. (Devi, 2023)

According to Gruen and Jones, Identity veganism and aspirational veganism are the two varieties of veganism. Identity veganism, the first phrase, refers to a way of life and ethical beliefs that influence one's identity. In this way, it is no longer just a diet; rather, it is a fully realized entity that is made public. Yeong-hye's choice to become a vegetarian can be interpreted as a search for a human identity that is pure; it is a cathartic reaction in that the act of killing the animal makes her feel sorry and afraid, which motivates her to rebel against the Korean food system as a whole and be herself, completely free of any cannibalistic tendencies. (Calarco, 2021)

The second type of veganism, which Gruen and Jones have named Aspirational Veganism acknowledges the underlying problems with animal abuse and encourages continued initiatives to reduce exploitation. It integrates concerns for people, animals, and the environment with more general social justice values, seeing veganism as an ongoing journey rather than a definitive destination. Yeong-hye's growing distaste for meat evolves into a deeper protest against the cruelty and violence she witnesses in the world. Her path shifts from pursuing personal purity to opposing the systemic violence that permeates society, including environmental degradation and human exploitation.

This may take one back to the traumatic scene that led to her carnophobia and antispecism:

> That evening there was a feast at our house. All the middle-aged men from the market alleyways came, everyone my father considered worth knowing. The saying goes that for a wound caused by a dog bite to heal you have to eat that same dog, and I

> did scoop up a mouthful for myself. No, in fact I ate an entire bowlful with rice. The smell of burnt flesh, which the perilla seeds couldn't wholly mask, pricked my nose. I remember the two eyes that had watched me, while the dog was made to run on, while he vomited blood mixed with froth, and how later they had seemed to appear, flickering, on the surface of the soup. But I don't care. I really didn't care. (Han Kang, 2017, p. 30)

"Food not only nourishes but also signifies," according to sociologist Claude Fischler. Furthermore, Terry Eagleton encapsulates the symbolic qualities of food quite effectively when he says, "If there is one certain thing about food, it is that it is never just food." Yeong-hye immerses the reader in a time of tradition, violence, and emotional detachment in this chapter with terrifying intimacy. A microcosm of social standards and power dynamics is established by the evening feast, which is a gathering of males the father considers important. Eating takes on a symbolic and unnerving significance, and it is more than just a meal. The distinctively ethnic way of life is symbolized by this Chinese dish. Chinese culture values close family and leisurely dining, which contrasts with mainstream American culture, where many people's meals consist primarily of microwaved dinners, quick food, and soggy sandwiches. (Xu, 2008)

Many South Koreans have come to assume that vegetarian eating is not a healthy diet because non-vegetarian diets are so ingrained in the country's culture. "Eating differently is considered a deviant behavior that disturbs group harmony," according to a study by Yoo and Yoon. "The major challenge that Korean vegetarians have to cope with is social pressures to conform to a conventional diet" (p, 130). As Yoo and Yoon note in their study, "the mere presence of a vegetarian appears to have an immediate impact on underlying principles at the Korean dinner table, which is closely associated with eating and sharing the same meals together," is another factor contributing to this

animosity toward vegetarians. (p, 131). Since South Korean society, which is a "collective society," allows less opportunity for individual independence due to societal pressure, all citizens are required to conform to social norms in Korean society (Yoo and Yoon). "Although Korean society may seem peaceful, orderly, and close-knit on the surface, the reality is that this social formation requires a tremendous amount of structural violence to maintain and enforce its cohesion," argues Dczook (2016). In an interview, Han Kang claims that her writing attempts to expose the violence that occurs in daily life and is accepted by society.

She says: “My preoccupation extends to the violence that prevails in daily life. Eating meat, cooking meat, all these daily activities embody violence that has been normalized”. In South Korea, it is very difficult to stick to vegetarianism. Han Kang says that her personal experience of being a vegetarian for some time in South Korea informs the novel. She remembers how people around her “made it a mission to feed her meat” (Krys, 2016).

. Yeong-hye describes the incident with a combination of emotional detachment and sensory detail. The adage "you have to eat that same dog for a wound caused by a dog bite to heal" introduces the logic of retribution, which holds that harm must be remedied by eating the cause of suffering. This expression, full with cultural connotations, serves as the rationale for a violent act and its subsequent consumption. A mouthful turns into a complete bowlful, demonstrating the narrator's overindulgence in what appears to be both acquiescence and silent submission to the situation's demands. Discomfort permeates the meal's visual depiction. A visceral disquiet is evoked by the "smell of burnt flesh" and the attempt by Perilla Seeds to cover it up, highlighting the attempt to hide the act's violence. Even much the narrator tries to ignore it, the vivid memory of the dog's anguish, its eyes, and its crimson vomit pierces through this curtain. Recurring eyes that are described as

"flickering, on the surface of the soup" turn the meal into a near-hallucinogenic encounter with remorse and the unavoidable echoes of violence.

Yeong-hye's choice to give up meat is also a criticism of South Korea's food culture, which necessitates the mass killing of animals. According to Kim (2019), "Eating meat is a measure used to judge the normal and the abnormal in Korean society, so Yeong-hye's refusal to eat it results in her being isolated from society." (page 4)
Every year, the nation's per capita meat consumption is alarmingly increasing. However, because the origins of their eating habits can be found in Korean mythology and history, people continue to follow them. Similar to women, animals in Korea are being mistreated in the guise of long-standing customs. Under such circumstances, Yeong-hye's choice spreads the We can think about the world instead of about it, according to the Deleuzian concept. Instead of attempting to define the world, our thoughts ought simply to follow it. Yeong-hye's metamorphosis creates a post-dualistic state in which she dissolves the distinctions between nature, animals, and other non-human beings. She seeks out the pure imminent notions that see her existence as a fluid phenomenon that continuously changes and develops rather than remaining fixed, rather than grounding her life in a transcendental principle. She becomes a Rhizomatic thousand plateaus in the Deleuzian language. (Chithra, 2020)

Adams (2018) insists in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* that “patriarchy is a system of sexual discrimination inherent in the relation between humankind and animal” (P, 20) and that “meat is a symbol of patriarchy”. As we can see in the above incident, Yeong-hye loses his standing as an independent human being and is brutally mistreated, reduced to the level of an animal. The oppression of women and animals coexists in the book, and women and animals are seen as identical. Examining vegetarianism and meat consumption from a feminist

standpoint, she also draws attention to "the relation between woman and animal" and specifically "the mutually overlapped oppression." According to this way of thinking, women are just lumps of flesh, and the phrase "meat" is used to describe how oppressed women are. As a result, both women's and animals' bodies are used for exploitation and consumption. In the same way that prostitution objectifies and commercializes a woman's body, eating meat objectifies and commercializes an animal's body.

Conclusion

In Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*, the intersections of veganism, patriarchy, trauma, and cultural norms are explored with a profound depth that challenges conventional societal narratives. By examining Yeong-hye's journey, the novel critiques the systemic objectification and commodification of both women and animals, revealing the shared vulnerabilities within patriarchal structures. Yeong-hye's refusal to consume meat becomes a radical act of resistance, highlighting the inherent violence in normalized practices and offering a poignant commentary on the fluidity of identity and the quest for autonomy. The novel's use of poetic language and evocative imagery underscores the protagonist's inner transformation, while also addressing broader ecological and ethical concerns. Ultimately, *The Vegetarian* invites readers to reconsider entrenched societal norms, urging a move towards empathy, equality, and coexistence within both human and non-human spheres.

References

Abbas, Syeda Sarah, Safila Naveed, Fatima Qamar, and Sehrish Kiran. (2015). "Carnophobia: A Consciousness for Meat." World Journal of Pharmaceutical and Medical Research, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 50-51.

Adams, Carol. (1990) *The sexual politics of meat* London: Continuum.

Calarco, Matthew R. (2020). *Animal studies: the key concepts*. Routledge.

Cole, Matthew, and Karen Morgan. (2011). "Vegaphobia: Derogatory discourses of veganism and the reproduction of speciesism in UK national newspapers 1." The British journal of sociology 62.1: 134-153.

Chu, Seo-Young. (2018). "Science fiction and postmemory han in contemporary Korean American literature." *Melus* 33.4: 97-121.

Devi, Atchaya, and Meera B. (2023) "Edible Resistance: A Feminine Rebellion Through Culinary Representation in The Vegetarian by Han Kang." The Dawn J Bruce journal, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 1570-1575.

Fulton, Bruce. (2007). "Korea's Literary Tradition." The Korea Society Educational Resources.

George, R., and V. Sunitha. (2020). "Exploring ecopsychological interconnections: A study of Han Kang's The Vegetarian." Journal of Critical Reviews 7.17: 1293-1296.

Kim, S. S. H. C. (2017). Korean" Han" and the Postcolonial Afterlives of" The Beauty of Sorrow". Korean Studies, 253-279.

Kim, Won-Chung. (2019). "Eating and Suffering in Han Kang's The Vegetarian." *CLCWeb:* Comparative Literature and Culture. Purdue University Press.

K, Anupama. Chithra, G, K. (2020). "Becoming Tree or Becoming a Body of Pure Intensity: An Indicative Reading of Han Kang's The Vegetarian." Journal of Critical Reviews, vol. 7, no. 5.

Lee, Peter H., ed. (2003). A history of Korean literature. Cambridge University Press.

Lee, Krys. "Violence and Being Human: A Conversation with Han Kang"." World Literature Today, 30 Apr. 2016, https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/2016/may/violence-conversation-han-kang-krys-lee.

McDonald, Barbara. (2000) "Once You Know Something, You Can't Not Know It" An Empirical Look at Becoming Vegan." Society & Animals: 1-23.

Ravikesh CKS, SLL&CS, JNU. From 'Being' to 'Becoming': A Critical Analysis of Han Kang's Novella "The Vegetarian". Journal of Emerging Technologies and Innovative Research *(JETIR)* www.jetir.org (2017*)*.

Robertson, J. G. (2003). *An excess of phobias and manias*. Senior Scribe Publications.

Savitri, Adelia. (2018). "Subjectivity of women's body as a resistance to the domination of patriarchy in novel Vegetarian by Han Kang." International Journal of English and Literature (IJEL).

Wright, Laura. (2015). *The vegan studies project: Food, animals, and gender in the age of terror*. University of Georgia Press.