

Gender, Power and Oppression in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian*

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The paper attempts to study the famous South Korean Nobel Laureate Han Kang's breakthrough text *The Vegetarian* in association with gender based oppression. The aim of the paper is to study how the female protagonist of the text, Yeong-Hye is oppressed throughout the novel after making the decision to become a vegan. Kang divides the book into three sections while each of the sections is told from diverse individual perspectives. Each of the section eventually reveals how Yeong-Hye has been ill-treated by her family members after becoming a vegan. An in-depth analysis of the characters along with Yeong-Hye, highlights the manner in which various forms of discrimination crowd the universal reality of the text and intersect one another thereby creating a cluster of connections which is apparent in Yeon-Hye's gradual mental breakdown. The incapacity of the people to accept her individual right as a human being to control and choose her food habit is unimaginable. The novel explores how a small decision of a woman on her food habit changes everyone's attitude around her. There are many instances in the novel that highlight the simulation of the protagonist Yeong-Hye as she goes through mental breakdown thereby showcasing the blur of a fixed notion of female identity. The aim of this paper is to foreground those instances by making analytical observation on the journey of the protagonist from a vegan to a performative female position in which she resists the norms and is oppressed till the very end of the novel.

Key words: Female Identity, Gender, Oppression, Ecology, Veganism, Gender based Violence