

Hedonism and the Disposition of Sensory Pleasure in The Vegetarian by Han Kang

B. Aishwarya¹, K. Shanti Chitra²,

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chennai. India. Email: saishu1616@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0005-2150-5627

Professor, Department of English, College of Science and Humanities, SRM Institute of Science and Technology, Kattankulathur, Chennai. India; shanthik@srmist.edu.in; ORCID: 0009-0008-4917-6564

Abstract:

The human mind is a remarkable entity, continuously generating, guiding, formulating, and preserving the vast spectrum of experiences in one's life. At the core of human behavior lies the pursuit of pleasure, a fundamental instinct that propels individuals to seek gratification regularly. The human psyche plays a pivotal role in shaping habitual actions. Han Kang's The Vegetarian delves into the realms of psychology, offering insights into concepts such as hedonism, inferiority complexes, and sensual preferences. This study aims to assimilate these notions to scrutinize the character of Mr. Cheong and unravel the significance of meat consumption in his life, as well as the repercussions of involuntary sexual encounters between spouses. The paper embarks on a comprehensive exploration of Mr. Cheong's psyche, intricately weaving together various facets of sensory hedonism. It delves into the audacious quest for pleasure through the human senses.

Keywords: *Inferiority Complex, Hedonism, Pleasure, Meat, Sensual Preferences.*

The Korean society places great importance on the consumption of meat, considering it an intrinsic aspect of human existence, as it aligns with their belief in the omnivorous nature of humans and the indispensable role of meat in their diet. The ingestion of meat is considered obligatory for individuals, and any attempt to limit the nutritional benefits it offers is deemed unacceptable within their cultural norms. This perspective is deeply rooted in Korean culinary tradition, as it is characterized by the notion that the delectable taste and satiety derived from consuming meat are essential components of human pleasure-seeking behavior. Koreans value the pursuit of sensory gratification, recognizing that personal priorities in this regard can vary significantly based on individual needs. This research endeavors to investigate the pivotal role played by sensory perceptions and the resultant sensual inclinations in the life of Mr. Cheong. The sensory faculties encompassing vision, audition, gustation, tactile sensations, and olfaction are interconnected with the pursuit of sensory pleasure and serve to delineate an individual's emotional state. The intricate nature of human psychology, especially in the context of interpersonal relationships, sometimes fails to adequately emphasize the significance of companionship. The institution of matrimony is one such aspect of life that reinforces mutual understanding, respect, moral righteousness, friendship, romantic intimacy, and sexual satisfaction. Nevertheless, misunderstandings may arise due to a lack of comprehension of each other's sensory preferences among couples.

In Korean culture, married women often conform to the conventional role of working wives who are responsible for the well-being of their husbands and other family members, ensuring that they are provided with satisfying and delightful meals. In the contemporary world, numerous organizations and assemblies actively advocate for women's empowerment and education. An unspoken societal norm persists, irrespective of whether a woman pursues a career or opts for homemaking; she is entrusted with the responsibility of guaranteeing that every family member is served food that not only nourishes them but also elevates their mood through its palatability. Food, by virtue of its taste, wields the power to influence the emotional state of the consumer. "Hwabyeong," as Explored in Korean Literature: A Comparative Examination of "The Vegetarian" by Han Kang and "Kim Jiyeong, Born 1982" by Cho Nam-Joo. The concept of "Hwabyeong" is a notable topic in Korean cultural studies, and this paper delves into its portrayal in two prominent literary works: "The Vegetarian" authored by Han Kang and "Kim Jiyeong, Born 1982" penned by Cho Nam-Joo, as discussed by Diana Budeanu. This analysis primarily focuses on the theme of suppressed emotions and provides a comparative study of mental health issues

stemming from repressed anger and depression, which are key elements in the portrayal of “Hwabyeong.” In the context of Korean culture, “Hwabyeong” is a significant medical term that serves to identify individuals experiencing both physical and emotional distress. It is a condition often associated with the enduring suppression of emotions, particularly anger and depression, which can lead to a range of mental and physical health issues. The present study examines how these literary works, “The Vegetarian” and “Kim Jiyeong, Born 1982,” offer poignant insights into the manifestation and consequences of “Hwabyeong” through their portrayal of characters grappling with emotional repression, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of this cultural syndrome.

“The World Literature and Women’s Voice in Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* (2007) by Indiwara Pandu Widyaningrum” presents the lives of women struggling with racial discrimination in the white-skinned society and symbolizes food such as meat consumption and vegetarianism to express the voice of the female protagonists. This work analyses the depiction of women, and sociocultural connection and concludes the significance of women’s voice in world literature. This study conducts a comprehensive analysis of how women are depicted in these novels and underscores the intricate sociocultural connections that surface within their stories. By exploring the narratives of these two books, the article seeks to elucidate the broader significance of women’s voices in the realm of world literature. It emphasizes the pivotal role of these voices in addressing and challenging complex issues such as racial discrimination and societal norms.

“An Ecofeminist Reading of Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* by Shilpa Bright” expresses the dominance of masculinity against women and nature and it reflects their resistance. The paper investigates the way in which man colonizes nature as well as women. This interpretation sheds light on the prevailing hegemony of masculinity, which exerts control over both women and the natural world, while also highlighting the resultant acts of resistance by these marginalized groups. The research paper undertakes a thorough examination of the manner in which human society, represented by men, exercises dominance over both the environment and women. It delves into the ways in which this dominion manifests as a form of colonization over nature, and by extension, over women. The paper discerns the interconnectedness of these phenomena, revealing the underlying power dynamics and the challenges faced by women and the natural world in their struggle against such oppression.

“A Deleuzian Reading of “Becoming-plant” in Han Kang’s Writing: “*The Fruit of My Woman*” and “*The Vegetarian* by Mijeong Kim” The title is based on the concept of ‘becoming’ the female leads cravings to discover their true self and escape from reality. This academic study, titled as such, draws upon the Deleuzian philosophical framework to analyze the thematic concept of ‘becoming’ as it unfolds within the narratives of the female protagonists in Han Kang’s literary works, specifically “*The Fruit of My Woman*” and “*The Vegetarian*.” The title encapsulates the essence of the inquiry, which revolves around the protagonists’ desire to undergo a transformation that allows them to connect with their genuine selves and disengage from the confines of reality. The analysis in this research paper applies the Deleuzian perspective to delve into the process of ‘becoming-plant,’ which represents the characters’ yearning for personal metamorphosis and the shedding of societal constraints. This examination explores how these female leads navigate their journeys of self-discovery and liberation in the context of their respective stories, as they grapple with the complexities of their identities and their yearning to break free from the limitations imposed by the world around them.

“Journal of Critical Reviews Exploring Ecopsychological Interconnections: A Study of Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* by Raimy George and Sunitha Venugopal” addresses the connection between nature and the psyche of Yeong-hye. It explores dreams as an element that become very crucial in interpreting the ecopsychology of the mind and actions of the protagonist. This investigation delves into the significance of dreams as a pivotal element that plays a crucial role in interpreting the ecopsychology underlying the thoughts and behaviors of the protagonist. This research uniquely explores the ecopsychological dimension of the narrative, revealing how nature and the protagonist’s mental state are intricately linked. The analysis highlights the role of dreams in providing a window into the ecopsychological aspects of Yeong-hye’s mind and actions, shedding light on the intricate relationship between her inner world and the natural environment. “Starvation and Consumption: Vegetarianism and Gender Violence in Diana Evans’s *26a* and Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian* by Rosa Moreno”. It is a comparative study based on the

changes in food practices are interpreted from various perspectives such as food studies, ecocriticism and food studies against abuse, patriarchal relationship and interconnection between nature. This academic study, authored by Rosa Moreno, offers a comparative analysis of two literary works, Diana Evans's "26a" and Han Kang's "The Vegetarian," with a particular focus on the transformative shifts in dietary practices. The research incorporates a multifaceted approach, drawing from fields like food studies, ecocriticism, and studies related to food's intersection with issues of abuse, patriarchal relationships, and the interconnectedness of nature. Moreno's work explores the theme of "Starvation and Consumption" in the context of vegetarianism and its complex relationship with gender-based violence. The analysis scrutinizes how dietary choices symbolize and affect broader aspects of these texts, from ecological concerns to gender dynamics, abuse, and the connection between human beings and the natural world. The study offers a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted perspectives that emerge when considering the transformation of food practices and its implications within the context of these literary works. "Enforced Conviviality and the Violence of Care in Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* by Seul Lee". The research paper highlights the feminist philosophy of care and shows the modes of violence that are embedded in terms of care. In this academic study, Seul Lee delves into the concept of enforced conviviality and the intricate dynamics of care as portrayed in Han Kang's novel, 'The Vegetarian.' The research paper primarily accentuates the tenets of feminist philosophy concerning the act of caregiving and illuminates the often concealed manifestations of violence that are inherently intertwined with this caring process. Lee's work scrutinizes the notion of mandatory social interaction, illustrating how it operates within the narrative and how it reflects broader themes of care and gender relations. The paper uncovers the multifaceted layers of violence that are interwoven within the fabric of care, shedding light on the subtler forms of aggression and dominance that can exist within ostensibly compassionate acts. This analysis presents a profound exploration of the complexities surrounding care and the potential for underlying violence, enhancing our understanding of these themes within the context of Han Kang's literary work. Within the previously referenced studies, each researcher places a significant emphasis on the feminist and ecological dimensions of the subject matter. This current research endeavor seeks to offer a fresh perspective on Hedonism and its resultant ramifications. In the works mentioned earlier, scholars have predominantly concentrated on the feminist and ecological elements of their research. The present study aims to provide a novel interpretation of Hedonism and the outcomes it engenders.

Han Kang is one of the most prominent contemporary women writers. She belongs to South Korea. She has won the Man Booker International Prize for *The Vegetarian*. This novel has three chapters: The Vegetarian, Mongolian Mark and Flaming Trees. Kang's literary oeuvre is remarkable for its profound ability to establish connections with readers and exert a profound influence on their emotional well-being. At the core of her work lies the concept of Hedonism, a philosophical idea that centers on the relentless pursuit of pleasure. In this context, pleasure encompasses the human longing for a state of ultimate happiness or ecstatic fulfillment. Kang's exploration of this theme contributes to the depth and resonance of her literary narratives, resonating with readers on both intellectual and emotional levels. Her writings are incredible as they connect to the readers and influence their emotional state. The idea incorporated in this work is Hedonism, which focuses on the pursuit of pleasure. Pleasure is a desire that aims for the state of ultimate happiness or ecstasy "pleasure is a kind of sensation, feeling, or quality of experience." (Haybron 62) the experience aims to have its ultimate choice of satisfaction with the help of sensory organs reaching its utmost state of happiness. the fundamental nature of pleasure as an intrinsic aspect of human existence. It means that pleasure is a subjective, sensory, or emotional response that people experience in response to various stimuli or situations. Pleasure often begins as a sensory perception. It can be derived from the five traditional senses - sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell. For example, the taste of a delicious meal, the feel of a warm embrace, or the sight of a beautiful sunset can evoke feelings of pleasure. Pleasure contributes to the overall quality of one's experiences. When individuals find an activity or situation pleasurable, it enhances their overall perception of that experience. It can transform an ordinary moment into an extraordinary one. Pleasure can vary greatly from person to person and from one situation to another. What brings pleasure to one individual may not have the same effect on another. Understanding the diverse sources and dimensions of pleasure is a critical aspect of psychology, philosophy, and human well-being, as it plays a substantial role in shaping human behavior, motivation,

and overall life satisfaction. Pleasure is not limited to physical sensations; it also encompasses emotional responses. Joy, happiness, contentment, and satisfaction are all emotional states associated with pleasure. People can feel pleasure in response to positive events, achievements, or interactions.

"Happiness and blessedness are not brought about by a great amount of money, a pile of possessions, offices, or power, but by freedom from pain, gentleness of sensations, and a disposition of the soul that arises by marking the boundaries of nature" (Arenson 145) the nature of the state of the person determines the condition of their mood. "...happiness consists in a person's emotional state: insofar as one's emotional state is basically positive... positive emotional conditions as a predominance of joyfulness, high-spiritedness, peace of mind, etc." (Haybron 66), the emotional state of people determines their condition and that condition influences their environment. Hedonism is "the doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life." (Mandeville 11), hedonists believe that wishes and bliss are the chief purposes of life. "Voltaire believed in the seeking of personal pleasure, including bodily pleasure, with an ethics rooted in maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain." (Boone) He viewed seeking personal pleasure as an immensely essential fragment leading to a hedonistic life. The higher the pleasure the lesser the pain. The central motto of hedonists is to feel good and positive and fulfill their desire, they choose inclination over reality.

Korea excites the contemporary generation with its culture, fashion and food. The cultural aspect of Korea confirms that meat consumption existed in earlier times and one must not be selfish when it comes to food. "When you see a fat cow, dog, pig, or chicken, do not immediately speak of slaughtering, cooking and eating it. It is ungracious to serve the guest only vegetables while the host eats meat." (Pettid 158) It is a basic rule that they serve their guests a delightful feast of meat. Koreans are both meat and vegetable consumers. Korean cuisine is optional. Kimchi and a variety of other meals are well-known outside of Korean foods that may appear unusual to non-Koreans. Visitors to Korea frequently approach the country's delicacies with trepidation. "Korean cuisine often features meat or fish side-dishes and a soup or stew." (Pettid 31). The culture of Korea has a momentous significance when it comes to feasting meals, their meat intake is habitual. "Stews and soups also would have been served as a complement to the main meal of rice and side-dishes." (Pettid 31) Food is essential for survival but prioritizing taste buds and giving prominence to pleasure leads to tumult.

The novel commences with Yeong-hye recounting her hallucinations encompassing visuals of slaughtering animals, the same premonitions captivated her to dispose of meat away to pursue her nutritious routine. Yeong hye's strange conduct, such as her unwillingness to put on a bra in a usual routine or enthusiastically converse at a business dinner thrown by his company. an act that violates Korean traditional norms for women and leads him to look weak. He becomes exasperated and abhorrence his wife, resulting in sexual assault. As a vegetarian Yeong hye's weight reduction prompts him to inform her parents and her sister of her new lifestyle, creating considerable anxiety in her parents and leading to a commotion. Her mother plans to make a huge supper of Yeong hye's favorite meat-filled dishes at the subsequent family dinner. In conclusion, Yeong hye's father is characterized as a tough gentleman with a short rage, who tries to impose her with pork, and slaps her when she refuses. Yeong-hye threatens her family members with a knife before slicing her own wrists and being brought to the hospital. The modification in an individual's life can generate problematic circumstances and leads to a psychological breakdown. The purpose is to highlight the character of Cheong by examining how his sensual pleasure seeks satisfaction when his wife Yeong hye is psychologically unwell and struggles with constant nightmares. Hedonism is the concept used to analyze Mr. Cheong's psyche and sensual pleasure. The intention is to explore the pleasure acquired through meat eating and the pleasure obtained through lovemaking or sex. "Psychological hedonism, in philosophical psychology, the view that all human action is ultimately motivated by desires for pleasure and the avoidance of pain." ("Psychological Hedonism." Encyclopedia Britannica). Mr. Cheong describes Yeong hye as totally uninteresting in any sense. Whilst the description may appear negative, this feature keeps him happy in his personal life, as he wishes to live an inconspicuous existence.

Every society has its own social construction, when it comes to the society of Korea each and every individual without any regard for gender, men and women give equal importance to appearance. Being a citizen of South Korea, Mr. Cheong had a paunch that started to appear in his mid-twenties and his

physique was not up to the mark. His skinny legs and forearms never took a transformation despite his best efforts. He constantly felt inferior and insecure about his appearance. "Inferiority complex is defined as lack of self-worth. It is a feeling that gives you uncertainty and doubts over your capacity to do something. It is a disorder that makes you afraid to be humiliated manifested by withdrawing oneself or being aggressive." (Johnson) When it comes to male genital size, it could create a tremendous complex of inferiority to self, destroying their minimal self-esteem and leading to aggression and hatred towards oneself. They naturally tend to develop an illness of self-doubt. They never get satisfied with anything even after giving away their fullest effort. "...the inferiority complex I used to have about the size of my penis..." (Han 3) he has bossed around among the people who were younger than him rather than competing with the fellows of his age. Everything of his choice was constantly limited. He never tried to cure his inferiority complex rather he started to settle with things that accepted him without making an effort. "Ultimately, I settled for a job where I would be provided with a decent salary..., at a company whose small size meant they would value my unremarkable skills." (Han 4) here the longingness for appreciation can be identified. Hedonism is inflicted in every possible way to feel happy, to be valued and recognized. Psychological pleasure-seeking is stimulated as the segment of abasement kicks inside him. "You worry too much. You doubt your own abilities to complete a task. You become afraid that negative things will happen if you compete." (Johnson) these thoughts are found in his attitude and sensual preferences show up in his attitude. This behavior makes him get married to Yeong-hye though he mentions that he was never attracted to her. "To be frank, the first time I met her I wasn't even attracted to her." (Han 3) the strand of hedonism is spotting through the means of seeing. Not being attracted to her but still wanting to marry her shows the way his unstable. How wounded he is by all his past experiences. "You become restless and hopeless. When you let excessive anxiety overwhelms you, you are in danger of depression and it would be dangerous to your mental health." (Johnson) at this stage people commence to treat their emotional wounds through the means of any addiction example: Alcohol, drugs and etc. This is where sensual hedonism occurs. He set out his dark side and the connection of food hedonism pops into the frame. There was no reason for him to get attracted to her but their first meet was at a restaurant, unconsciously he was habituated to taste buds and had an emotional connection towards meat eating "Emotional eating can be defined as eating in response to emotional cues or eating to make yourself feel better or change your mood, as opposed to eating in response to being physically hungry." (Carolyn Coker Ross. *The Food Addiction Recovery Workbook : How to Manage Cravings* 10) and being originated from Korea it is in their hereditary, to consume all varieties of animals and it is considered that people belonging to the grandiose family are more likely to intake meat in their meal. People of higher standards and social positions are more likely to consume meat "This meat is the food of superior persons." (Katarzyna Joanna Cwierka 105). When a person is unattracted to someone, there is nothing interesting in that relationship and the passion is considered to be missing in them "However, if there wasn't any special attraction, nor did any particular drawbacks present themselves, and therefore there was no reason for the two of us not to get married." (Han 3) this proclamation about their relationship clearly states he is a person who needs a wife to take care of him. when it comes to his wife, she never bothered or triggered his insecurity "You only see their flaws and weaknesses. You do not even feel good about yourself and you want others to feel like you do. You look for loopholes in their works so you can convince yourself that they are weaker than you." (Johnson). He himself mentions that "She was a woman of few words. It was rare for her to demand anything from me, and however late I was in getting home she never took it upon herself to kick up a fuss." (Han 4) He clearly needs someone to satisfy his needs without questioning his behavior. He leads a simple and peaceful life because his wife was a woman with a passive personality. She never demanded or argued with him. They had a straightforward and uncomplicated relationship. She was one of those rare wives who tries to keep their man at ease. Selflessness plays a major role in a successful relationship. He never knew much about her condition, until he was able to figure out the abnormality in her attitude, one night he spotted her standing in front of the refrigerator and she was completely unconscious it was the starting point of an obstreperous relationship, "Around her, the kitchen floor was covered with plastic bags and airtight containers, scattered all over so that there was nowhere I could put my feet without trembling on them." (Han 9) as he never demanded anything from her and she has always been nourishing and caring in terms of cooking

and all household works. She was unequivocally unconscious and she was wrapping up every meat product into a trash bag, he freaked out in the text saying, 'What the hell are you up to now?' (Han 10). When there is a sudden shift in the psychological and emotional state of the life partner, there are a lot of misperceptions among them. It leads to pandemonium in the harmony of personal space. An abrupt change in Yeong hye's physical and emotional stability has created a commotion in their relationship. The drastic transformation from a lover of meat consumption to a vegetarian affected Mr. Cheong psychosomatically as he is used to eating meat. The constant trepidation about the nightmare "...understand that virtue is coincident with pleasure, just as eating, drinking, and having sex are simultaneous causes of their respective pleasures." (Arenson 155) whenever a person is addicted to food, it always gives them the pleasure of pursuing happiness as food can never hurt or harm another person's feelings. "Have you lost your mind? Why on earth are you throwing all this stuff out?" (Han 10). In this case, Yeong-hye undergoes a drastic psychological bizarre and as Mr. Cheong is completely dependent on his wife for the past five years was unable to accept her decision of becoming a vegetarian and becomes distressed by her sudden shift and struggles to cope with her. "In the five years we'd been married this was the first time I'd had to go to work without her handling me my things and seeing me off." (Han 11) every relationship has its own skirmish and misconceptions. Ensuring sympathy, empathy, compassion and appreciation is an essential factor in a nuptial relationship. Initially, he mentions that he was never attracted to her in any specific way. Later, he utters that "...she had never been a picky eater, and I'd always been impressed by her way with food." (Han 14) this clearly states that any relationship must have a basic instinct to get attracted from the beginning senses has been the key of attraction. He was not impressed by her appearance but he was impressed by the way she flips rib meat in the sizzling pan and her fragrant (sense of smell) caramelized deep-fried belly pork. Cheong's hedonistic longing through sensual pleasure is revealed. There wasn't any kind of focus towards Yeong hye or her new found vegetarianism. If he was really concerned, he would have taken her to hospital when she explained about that nightmare she was struggling from. He was least bothered and he started paying attention only when his pleasure elements were cut off. Relationships are never single-handed. They require commitment from both the person and if a person is being ambivalent in a relationship, it is really frantic for the other person. They are in a relationship without commitment. It never serves right when things happen this way. "Surrender also means letting go of ambivalence. Ambivalence means one foot in and one foot out of the relationship, whereas commitment is both feet in all the time." (Hendrix). Further, it was distressing to him because she was not being sexually active and has been deliberately avoiding sex. Happiness, being the motto of his hedonistic attitude now his pleasure of touch has been taken away which makes him think about the past and gets him agitated. "...she now seemed to be actively avoiding sex. In the past, she'd generally been willing to comply with my physical demands, and there'd even been the occasional time when she'd been the one to make the first move." (Han 16) as he clearly states about the time when she was the one to lead explains about the psychological changes that are happening within her and again it is a sign that she is not emotionally normal and she also has been avoiding sleep which again makes it obvious that she is been traumatized and needs immediate care and attention but his major focus was pursuit of pleasure. "Experiential avoidance is the phenomenon that occurs when a person is unwilling to remain in contact with particular private experiences (e.g., bodily sensations, emotions, thoughts, memories, behavioral predispositions)" (Follette 14). A nuptial relationship is an assurance that ensures the well-being of each other. The vows that a person articulates aren't just an expression. It is a commitment that a person undertakes for the rest of his/her survival. When there is a commitment, there must be an understanding of their partner's every reaction. Mr. Cheong emits that "This strange situation had nothing to do with me" (Han 19) which clearly shows how irresponsible he is in their relationship. "An exit is acting out your feelings rather than expressing them in words in a way that is respectful to your partner and helps you connect. Any behavior or activity that allows you to reduce or avoid involvement in your relationship is an exit." (Hendrix) it is obviously a red flag being in a critical situation and not belonging to that moment and being disconnected from his wife will traumatize her and make her feel lonely. He explained her condition to mother and to commence with it is being portrayed as if he was much concerned about her situation and he cared for her. But the actual fact is that he was suffering because she asked him to not have meat at home. He informs to mother-in-law that her

condition is becoming worse and she doesn't cook me any meat. In call Cheong states that, 'Oh, I've told her, all right, but she still goes ahead and defies me. And what's more, she's even imposed this ridiculous diet on me- I can't remember the last time I tasted meat in this house.' (Han 27) The hedonistic pleasure in him is induced and it stimulates him to pursue it without any delay. His violent self stimulates him and he utters, "My mother-in-law was lost for words and used her speechlessness as an opportunity to turn the screw a little tighter. 'She's become very weak. I'm not sure exactly how serious it is...'" (Han 27) that quest for happiness and satisfaction infuses his mind with desirable traits without caring about others feelings. Hedonism focuses ultimately on morality and ethics. They never try to express anything in terms of social construct. The chase for pleasure makes him an unethical person. Secret admiration of his sister-in-law commenting over her appearance and hearing her voice gives him arousal "Her voice as it sounded over the phone, always somehow more distinct than in person, never failed to send me into a state of sexual arousal." (Han 27), Hedonism of hearing is focused here, the sensual pleasure is gained by him just by listening to her sound through mobile. Whenever it comes to a person with inferiority complex, they suffer throughout their adulthood due to their inadequacy and when the time comes, they try to get hold of everything in every possible way. He lost himself in search of pleasure. He became a sadist. His relationship with his wife had always been a little on and off. But that never justifies his act of being sadistic in a relationship. If his wife is having a serious issue in their intercourse due to his smell. Again, there comes an aspect of hedonism of sense. She says that he smells like meat and disagrees to have sex with him. He suffering throughout his childhood with inferiority now becomes violent towards her. "Pinning down her struggling arms and tugging off her trousers, I became unexpectedly aroused... I would manage to insert myself successfully" (Han 30) and in that process he says that he was unexpectedly stimulated and tried to make love without consent. "Sadism is an active reversal of masochism; it designates a state of fusion of sexuality with violence against others in order to exercise power over them." (Sehgal 120) the feeling of exposing power while having sex makes him feel aroused. Being aroused and forcefully inserting oneself is actually psychopathic behavior and indulging in the act never made him regret rather he was making it habitual. "Addictions tend to elicit frustration and despair, affairs tend to elicit anger and depression, and mental illness tends to elicit sadness and empathy." (Hendrix) certainly being consumed by sadistic intercourse can become addictive and can make the concerned person pathetic. But it always influences the person to go ahead and try it more often. "After the first time, it was easier for me to do it again, but each time, I would be seized by strange, ominous premonitions." (Han 31) It expresses his regret after intercourse but never felt guilty during sex because his priority was pleasure and happiness and the only connection he had with her was for the pursuit of pleasure. "I thought to myself: I do not know that woman. And it was true. It was not a lie." (Han 52) as he mentions in the end of the vegetarian chapter, honestly, he never knew anything about her. It is true that he does not know her and he addresses her as a stranger. Under no circumstance, he tried to understand her or help her out when she was struggling emotionally in that shift from an adequate meat eater to a vegetarian. He by no means was ready to treat her psychologically and when he realized to take proper care on her condition it was too late. "An exit is a form of "acting out" unspoken, painful feelings by finding satisfaction outside the relationship..." (Hendrix). He always ensured on his hedonistic sensual happiness, if there wasn't a condition of her not cooking non-vegetarian in that home. Cheong would never have known anything about her health and not that he was bothered. Pleasure is the essence of life. Every human need pleasure because it stimulates the nervous system and helps to understand the difference between reality and fantasy. Pleasure is not enforced only through ecstasy; it can be experienced in reality with the support of sensory organs. Senses are the quintessence of survival. The five rudimentary senses are seeing, smelling, touching, hearing and tasting. The fundamental need for human survival is food, clothing and shelter. The initial focus is on food and the prevalence of food can be caught everywhere. Food is one of the most significant elements involving most sensory organs. Once people receive the food they see it, then they tend to feel the aroma, further, they are likely to touch it with their hands. Being addicted to food is different from eating habits. Considering the culture and background of Korean society, meat consumption is common and essential. Food obsession could be called Food dependence or food addiction because it approaches the usage of food, and aggregate the actual concerns associated with food and its eating habits. Proliferate eating can beget physical change in shape and leads to obesity. It paves

the way to shame and reduces self-confidence. The distress of mind with a preoccupation with food can take over your life and creates distance between partners. Food addiction apprehends self and the person is so hung up with food that it interferes with their work, and the body image issues associated with food dependence can keep them from their responsibility and can cause variation in their routine. “Any addiction— to food...common characteristics in that it is chronic, with numerous relapses. It involves compulsion to seek and “use” a behavior or a substance, and loss of control over how much and when you use or obsess about using.” (Carolyn Coker Ross. *The Food Addiction Recovery Workbook : How to Manage Cravings* 2). Food is essential for survival, and it becomes an obsession when it is prioritized. This obsession leads to addiction and this food addiction determines a person’s behavior. People with food dependence can have an emotional bond, a person starts eating food according to their mood. When a person is sad or depressed, they tend to eat chocolates; when they are happy or angry, they eat spicy food. “Emotional eating can be defined as eating in response to emotional cues or eating to make yourself feel better or change your mood, as opposed to eating in response to being physically hungry.” (Carolyn Coker Ross. *The Food Addiction Recovery Workbook : How to Manage Cravings* 10).

In *The Vegetarian*, Commencing the plot of Mr. Cheong and Yeong-hye’s relationship in terms of hedonism. Elements related to sensual preferences are spotted throughout. Their initial meet-up occurs at a restaurant, ‘Food is memories, smells, comfort, safety, cultural heritage, recipes, traditions.’ (Gray, Louise. *The Ethical Carnivore*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016.) from the ancient period, every emotion is expressed through the means of food. A husband-and-wife relationship is always about understanding and communicating everything. It requires a lot of effort in various aspects such as acceptance, adjustment, concern and space for any successful marriage life. Being hedonistic in a relationship can create a hassle for one another since hedonists’ ultimate aim is the pursuit of pleasure at any cost. Sacrifice along with consideration boosts couples to lead a peaceful life. Mr. Cheong is entirely dependent on her for his daily needs. If he was able to adapt and accompany his wife at her worse, his relationship wouldn’t have been byzantine. He should have taken care of things in the initial stage, his inferiority complex paved the way to becoming a hedonist and his hedonism led to ignorance, lack of space and sadistic selfishness happens to be another reason for his troublesome life.

Works Cited

1. “Psychological Hedonism.” Encyclopedia Britannica,
2. [www.britannica.com/topic/psychological-](http://www.britannica.com/topic/psychological-hedonism)
3. [hedonism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/psychological-hedonism). (n.d.).
4. Arenson, Kelly. *Health and Hedonism in Plato and Epicurus*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019.
5. n.d.
6. Boone,
7. Brian. *Ethics 101 : From Altruism and Utilitarianism to Bioethics and Political Ethics*, an
8. *Exploration of the Concepts of Right and Wrong*. Adams Media, 2017. (n.d.).
9. Carolyn Coker Ross. *The Food Addiction Recovery Workbook : How to Manage Cravings*,
10. *Reduce Stress, and Stop Hating Your Body*. New Harbinger Publications, 2017. n.d.
11. Follette, Victoria M., et al. *Mindfulness and Acceptance : Expanding the Cognitive-*
12. *Behavioral*
13. *Tradition*. Guilford Press, 2011. n.d.
14. Gray, Louise. *The Ethical Carnivore*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016. n.d.
15. Han, Kang, and Deborah Smith. *The Vegetarian : A Novel*. Granta, 2018. n.d.
16. Haybron, Daniel M. *The Pursuit of Unhappiness*. OUP Oxford, 2008. (n.d.).
17. Hendrix, Harville, and Helen LaKelly Hunt. *Doing Imago Relationship Therapy in the Space-*
18. *Between:*
19. *A Clinician’s Guide*. W. W. Norton & Company, 2021. n.d.
20. Johnson, Pam. *The Inferiority Complex Cure*. 2017. n.d.
21. Katarzyna Joanna Cwiertka, and Boudewijn Walraven. *Asian Food : The Global and the*
22. *Local*.
23. Routledge, 2015. n.d.
24. Mandeville, Amy, and Rachael Osborne. *Sex, Love and Hedonism*. 2001. (n.d.).
25. Pettid, Michael J. *Korean Cuisine : An Illustrated History*. Reaktion Books, 2008. (n.d.).
26. Sehgal, Amita. *Sadism*. Routledge, 2018. n.d.