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Research Article

An Eco-Linguistic Study of Kang's *The Vegetarian*Nusrat Sultana¹, Zareena Qasim²¹ Department of English, University of Education Lahore Multan Campus, Pakistan.² Department of English, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

This research aims to explore the relationship of human language with nature. Mainly, the present research strives to inquire the natural world language used in 'The Vegetarian', by Han Kang, a psycho-social novel about a female protagonist and her life situations. The corpus tool AntConc has been used to find the metaphors with the help of keywords in context. It is found out that women and natural resources like trees are harnessed by men for their benefits. Women are more in control of men who do not allow women to enjoy fresh air, rain, sunlight and fragrance. The trees are freer as compared to women. The protagonist's desire to become a tree is a try to feel naturally normal that is better than to be a woman. The males are found to follow their natural instincts and controlling the same in women. But the novel concludes that nature and women are tired of misuse, and it may be destructive for the survival of the universe if positive changes will not be initiated.

Keywords: Eco-Linguistics, Ecofeminism, Nature, Freedom, Life, Male, Female, Tree, Soul, Soil.

INTRODUCTION

This research paper endeavors to inquire the ecolinguistics and ecofeminist features of an enigmatic postmodern novel "*The Vegetarian*" by Han Kang. This novel is insightful because the author has raised the issues of South Korean family setup and cultural values which seem to marginalize the natural systems, needs of women and children. The reference of a "*Mongolian mark*" adds more exotic value of the novel and an androgynous type of female protagonist who undergoes the transformation from stage one of childhood to the second stage of married life and then to the third stage of natural self-freedom and rebellion against the unnatural life. The female protagonist Yeong-hye breaks all traditions without even bothering about it. Her childhood resilience proves to be permanent and is exalted till the end of the novel.

Her resistance towards her father's restrictions makes her perfect material world painter of the postmodern world who soon realizes the so-called materialistic space created by men for women in the world for the benefits of men. Though she continues to play that role of a patriarchally, mechanically and unnaturally controlled daughter, wife till five years without having a child on her husband's demand to save budget to construct home and to avoid expenses. But soon real nature overcomes her past socialized affectation in the second part, and she refuses all those worldly expectations from her which make her more human machine rather than simply a human being. The author has some motives of writing down the novel which best be explored from ecolinguistic and ecofeminist perspectives. The most of human issues in the world are created by created unnatural restrictions and common sense naturalization which life particularly of females.



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STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

We are living in a commercialized world. With the passage of time, we all are looking to financial benefits. On the other hand, our relationships with nature and with human beings as our kith and kin are getting deteriorated. It is high time to ponder over the matter that if we did not pay attention to natural life existence and naturalness of human existence, we would destroy our family set-ups. Moreover, mistreatment of the weaker sex will result in a serious revolt. So, we need to see through the analysis of language step by step to find out the serious problems that women are facing. I will help find remedies to make family life normal and natural. Otherwise, our women and children will also stop flourishing as nature has been responding negatively in the presence of artificial lifestyle. We have to love nature and relations.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What kind of language Han Kang has used to depict the females' problems in her novel *The Vegetarian*?
2. Does language exhibit the duality of our society in relation to women and men?
3. Does language suggest ways to naturalize human life?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ecolinguistics offers a broader research area within academic disciplines that include nature, language, ecosystems, human, animals and earth. Halliday (2001) defines ecolinguistics in his work *What on Earth is a discipline?* It offers a definition: "A field of study is defined according to its content: what it is that is under investigation". Ecolinguistics serves as a sub-discipline, as a discipline, as a trans-discipline, as an inter-discipline, as a meta-discipline, or even as a multi-discipline. Döring and Zunino (2014) state that some language researchers take ecolinguistics as a sub-discipline within mainstream linguistics that investigate language in the social and ecological contexts of an environment. Likewise, ecolinguistics can be seen as a field of language study or a natural situation discipline. Fill (2001: 51) & LeVasseur (2015), ecolinguistics is the study of universal features of language relevant to the ecological issues. Fill (2001) maintains that ecolinguistics is multidisciplinary in the sense that the notion of ecology has been transferred to linguistics.

Bang and Trampe (2014) further elaborate Fill's (2001) three ecological concepts in ecolinguistics: biological, trans-disciplinary, and prescriptive. By trans-disciplinary, accordingly, it is meant by the notion that a linguistic and trans-disciplinary approach that generates empirical hypotheses which describe and explain the manifestation and organization of linguistic processes in organism-environment relations. (Bang and Trampe 2014: 89)

More recently, ecolinguistics has been defined as a special field of research by Finke (2018) who seeks a more fortified and a more rigorous focus that he calls *ecolinguistics proper* in the age of super alteration. Li et al (2020) is of the view that other ecolinguists consider ecolinguistics as a multi-angular subject for an interactional field of inquiry where the natural sciences and humanities interconnect. A few ecolinguists and particularly Stibbe (2021a) consider ecolinguistics a special meta-discipline within the framework of an ecological discourse analysis, which juxtaposes the indispensable query of what role ecolinguistics can play in contributing to a wider environment and social grounds. There is a far-flung agreement on the disciplinary side that ecolinguistics has connected two separate disciplines of ecology and linguistics (Alexander and Stibbe 2014; Zhou 2017). However, Steffensen (2018) apprehends the lack of appropriate frameworks that could help study language and ecology. This is a crucial issue that needs to be addressed (P: 393).

ECO-FEMINISM

The term was coined by the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974). Eco-feminism demands for social change combining ecological values with feminist theory. Ecofeminist theory asserts a feminist perspective of Green politics that calls for a democratic, collaborative society in which there is no one dominant group. The ecological feminism recognizes the oppression of women and the social control of natural aspects in patriarchal society is reciprocally reinforced. Ecofeminist analysis explores the connections between women and nature in relation to culture, economic system, religion, politics, literature and iconography, and addresses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women. These parallels are not limited to seeing women and nature as property, seeing men as the curators of culture and women as the conservator of nature, and how men dominate women and humans dominate nature. Eco-feminism emphasizes that both women and nature must be respected.

ECO-FEMINISM AND NATURE OF MEN AND WOMEN

There are two sets of belief regarding eco-feminism. On one hand eco-feminists argue that human beings are only one constituent of a much larger community; a community that includes all life and living systems. While other eco-feminists believe that women are biologically closer to Nature as compared to men, many others argue that women may be closer to Nature due to their similar experiences of subjugation and control, and the mutual reduction of women and Nature within patriarchal society. On the third place there are some ecofeminist scholars who endorse that the concept of women's intimacy to Nature as compared to men is basically a flawed idea, because all concepts about gender and Nature are social constructions. While it may be precious to look at how women and men have been associated with Nature, questioning whether one sex or gender is closer to Nature reinforces the dualistic assumptions in our society. Because again the burden is found to be more on women than on men. From this point of view all sins, evils, and desires are more attached to women than men. From past literary references of *The Return of The Native* by Thomas Hardy the character of Eustacia Vye was exhibited to be "nocturnal beauty" Hamlet's Mother Gertrude to be "a pernicious woman" and in *King Lear*, Gonerill and Regan were entitled as "Pelican daughters". The naming of women and men is inspired by nature and forests but these titles degenerate women's actual selves in society by showing them evil and closer to natural evil. The marginalization is evident in the gendered language used to describe nature, such as naming earth as mother or mother as Nature", and simultaneously, using carnal language to describe women in disparaging terms.

ECO-FEMINISM AND ECONOMY

Ecofeminist theory asserts that market economy reflects only paternal and patriarchal values. This thought implies that the personal effects of capitalism have not benefited women and has led to a noxious split between nature and culture. Alternatively, ecofeminist and activist Vandana Shiva (1988) wrote that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily fundamental interaction and that has been underrated. According to Shiva, women produce riches with the help of her nature, and ultimately have specialized in atomistical and ecological knowledge of natural processes. She points out that the reductionist thinking about women has reduced the benefits to economy, because it fails to perceive the interconnection of nature, women's lives, work and knowledge with wealth. Shiva blames this failure on the Western patriarchal perceptions of development and progress. According to Shiva, our unnatural social thinking does not accept women, their knowledge and nature from economic point of view. Similarly, Australian ecofeminist Ariel Salleh (2023) in an interview deepens this materialist ecofeminist approach in dialogue with green politics, ecosocialism, genetic engineering and climate policy. Different sub-disciplines have also been under research orientation for the analysis of postmodern literature. These ecological fields have been found relevant to the present research attempt and mentioned below in detail. For example, Charlotte Perkins Gilman (2018) represents the objectification of women and animals in our day to day economy. This is because of women's labour; men are able to produce more wealth than they could. This is why women are a strong economic factor in us in society. Similarly, horses are economically productive for men. So, the labor of horses and women enables men to collect more wealth than they otherwise could. Women and animals remain dependent on men even after hard labour. (2018:10) This dimension of ecofeminism may also be referred to as "social feminism", "socialist ecofeminism", or "Marxist ecofeminism". According to Carolyn Merchant (2005) "Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even controls women reproductive organs. Ecofeminism in this sense seeks to eliminate social hierarchies which favor the production of commodities by men taking over biological and social reproduction by women. Women provide economic power to men by serving them in the domestic sphere. On the other hand, horses also bring economic wealth to men by serving them in the public sphere. In this way, Gilman (2018) demonstrates that in a male-centred society, both women and nature have close positions as they exist as objects. In this way, the male-dominance oppresses non-male beings and minorities and treats them as objects. For this reason, women's issues, exploitation of animals and other disparities like ageism, classism etc. become interrelated as they represent the same kind of oppression done by the male-hegemony. Similarly, Garrard (2007) notes that dominance comes to the fore in terms of the discriminations against class, species, race and gender. Consequently, ecofeminism handles the issues of nature's exploitation, female's subordination, and issues of class, race, gender and age matters.

VEGETARIAN ECO-FEMINISM

The application of ecofeminism to animal rights has established vegetarian ecofeminism, which asserts an end to all forms of oppression and ecofeminism. Many ecofeminists believe that meat-eating is a form of patriarchal domination. During a 1995 interview with *On the Issues*, Carol J. Adams stated very serious concerns about manhood that it is created in our culture in part by having approach to meat-eating and controlling others' bodies i.e., of women and animals. According to Adams, "We cannot work for justice and challenge the oppression of nature without understanding that the most frequent way we interact with nature is by eating animals". Vegetarian ecofeminism combines sympathy with the analysis of culture and politics to refine a system of ethics and action.

LANGUAGE AND OTHERNESS

Fill, A & Miihlhausler, P. (2001 : 259) contend that language is indeed a cultural production invented by humans in the interest of the dominant male class. As such, our language maintains and perpetuates dominant social structures and therefore, reinforces the interconnected and mutually reinforcing oppression of women and Nature. Therefore, it is imperative that the language of nature and society to be critically analyzed.

Many environmentalists note that our language is symbolic of the predominant anthropocentric world view in Western society - a basically human centered view which sees animals, plants and earthy systems as objects for human use. This anthropocentrism is illustrated through the use of terms such as 'timber' instead of trees, and phrases such as 'harvesting of natural resources' and 'wildlife management' to describe and justify the victimization of Nature and natural methods by humans.

Furthermore, ecolinguistics and ecofeminism explores the role of language that determines the differences between males and females. This division need to be studied through language. Likewise, Dorothy Smith cited in Berman, T. (2006) argues that men have been principally accountable for creating and disseminating cultural images which has resulted in effectively separating women from men and universalizing male point of view. Women have been placed at a disadvantage as language users and as equal members of society because male language falsifies women's experience and perceptions. Simultaneously, Plumwood (1993) states that there exists dualism in the formation of domination and subordination that is constructed on the basis of opposition and exclusiveness. Plumwood (1993) notes that these abstract dualisms associated women with Nature, men with culture, and masculinity and femininity have been constructed as oppositional forces rather than as two strong pillars of the natural systems. This cultural polarization devalues one side of dualism and distorts both of them. Catherine Roach (1991) notes that when women are seen closer to nature they are inevitably seen as less human as compared to men . A through these categorizations that the concept of the '*other*' is created. Ecofeminist Plant (1989) notes that 'the other, or the women as object are supposed to benefit men. Simultaneously, women and Nature become objects for male's use. A mother's identity is constructed through the role of caregiver, a wife takes on her husband's name and prostitutes become sex-objects. Similarly, in the natural world, animals are taken as meat, the experimental objects or prisoners, plants, trees and minerals become symbolic of dollars.

Sandilands (1991) and Merchant (1983) note that although women have historically been associated with Nature, the nature of this association has differed considerably and at times been a source of empowerment. Both of them believe that the different associations between men and women, rational and intuitive modes of thought, mind and body, nature and culture are readily apparent in our language, socio-political and economic systems. In presence of such detrimental ideas, it is not possible to achieve a moralist society and a more harmonious relationship with the non-human world. Collard, Andree (1988) notes another aspect of language that projects the cultural values upon the external world that determines the actual performance in life. By name earth as mother, we associate it with motherhood motherhood and devalue mothers, their work and their private sphere in patriarchal society. The same way Dorothy Dinnerstein (1976) highlights that women have been perceived as a natural resource, as an asset to be closely-held and harnessed, harvested and mined. It is done without having a feeling for her being equal partner and there is no responsibility for for her conservation and improvement. Lakoff and Johnson (1987) raises the question that whether we can coin andocentric terms or language to talk social and cultural concepts to avoid discrimination through anthropocentric language.

Metaphors

In the whole world a control on women dressing and questioning her dresses makes her sexually oriented. This kind of discussion mostly leads to mistreatment of women and particularly to rape. Andree Collard (1988) notes that even for the production of desire for rape nature and women are held responsible. Women being associated to intrinsic nature are supposed to be 'overmature' and as a result need to be harvested.

The use of the rape metaphor assumes that naturally woman might willingly cooperate with men. Through this metaphor, the domination of women and nature by men is reinforced and legitimized. The word 'rape' is used as an experience of women and that is an acceptable metaphor diminishing its brutality. Dale Spender notes that the word 'rape' does not reflect a woman's experience it only incorporates women's silence and reflects a male understanding of it and 'naming' of this very act (Spender 1981). She notes that there is an absence of force in the name 'rape' which does not reveal it as a vicious sexual act. This is why it can be used to discuss without a sense of disgust for it. The use of the metaphor reinforces the lawfulness of the term and of the act, therefore perpetuating acceptance of 'resourdsmo' - the view that both Nature and women can be managed for man's use.

Diamond and Orenstein (1990) cite Grace Paley who endorses that the men of science believed many hundred years that naming is an act of owning, owning leads to using, and that using naturally moves to using up'. By naming other beings, objects and actions, male culture closed or barred other ways of knowing through the creation of categories or boundaries. And Dale Spender (1981) endorses that those who hold the power to name the world are in a position to influence reality.

METHODOLOGY

This section puts forward the planning about how research will be carried out in this very research study. The method, theoretical framework and assisting tool in data collection and analysis have been described. The eco-linguistic and specifically eco-feminist theoretical framework will work as the best suitable way to analyse the novel "The Vegetarian" by Han Kang, qualitatively. To verify and triangulate qualitative analysis, quantitative data will be used collected through Corpus based tool Antconc version 4.1.4 to highlight the distinguished keywords in context relevant to the theoretical framework. The countable significant metaphors will help see qualitatively the significance of the frequent or infrequent use of specific words by the author. In all the previous researches and books on eco-linguistic and ecofeminism there is emphasis on the analysis of language and metaphors for deeper understanding. So, I will focus on the different metaphors that are really important from the perspective of the story and meaning making systems. The concept of metaphors has been derived from the framework given by Fill, A and Miihlhausler, P (2006) in their book *Language, Ecology and Environment*. These metaphors show that how language with different titles makes meaning from a particular perspective of the society.

Table 1. The Metaphors in the novel

Body	101
Father	45
Flower	43
Mother	41
Life	40
Need	31
Dream	28
Rain	26
Water	23
Sunlight	18
Green	14
Air	12
Die	12 / 7
Tree	10
Nature	10
Soil	2

All these important metaphors have been chosen with the help of corpus tool Antconc. The keywords in context are given below about all these metaphors. All these metaphors focus on the life of protagonist who craves to become a

part of nature and natural process that our modern society has denied to human beings particularly nature, women and children.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

In this section, all metaphors and personifications from human and natural spheres have been extracted from the novel "The Vegetarian" to deconstruct the language from ecolinguistics and ecofeminist perspectives. These metaphors have been chosen according to the proposed theoretical framework that has been utilized in many other former researches relevant to ecolinguistics and ecofeminism.

Vegetarian.txt	and yet it was a	body	from which all desire had been eliminated.
Vegetarian.txt	leaves are growing out of my	body,	roots are sprouting out of my hands.
Vegetarian.txt	Her	body	was sufficiently animated, flushed with desire, to make up
Vegetarian.txt	through Yeong- hye's	body,	had the water that was saturating the soil been
Vegetarian.txt	This was the	body	of a beautiful young woman, conventionally an object of desire
Vegetarian.txt	Would they seem like one	body,	a hybrid of plant, animal and human?

Figure 1. Body.

Only 5 expressions have been chosen to show how the word 'body' has been incorporated in the text to show how we have been exploiting nature. Human, animal and plant bodies are not taken as living creatures. These are just exploited for the social and carnal desires. Yeong Hye's emaciated body tries to find its natural self and place in Seoul, South Korea. She transforms herself into a tree by metamorphosing herself to resist her physical torture and her use as a sexual object devoid of love and care. She denied her mechanical use as money saver, cleaner, cook. The frequent use of body infers that human body needs to fulfill natural desires more than to follow the artificial social restrictions. The body of humans, animals and plants has been shown as a significant aspect of natural life.

Vegetarian.txt	"What?" my wife's	father	and brother, who were both similarly hot tempered, yelled
Vegetarian.txt	But that her	father,	the Vietnam War hero, had actually struck his rebellious
Vegetarian.txt	my	father-	in-law raging impotently,
Vegetarian.txt	my	father-	in-law shouted at Yeong-hye.
Vegetarian.txt	Your	father	went too far, you know. How can he hit
Vegetarian.txt	front of Father?" "What kind of talk is that?" my	father-	in-law yelled. "Grab her arms, quickly. You too,
Vegetarian.txt	phone rang and my wife picked up. "Yeong-hye," my	father-	in-law bellowed, "are you still not eating meat?"
Vegetarian.txt	did. Yeong-hye had been the only victim of their	father'	s beatings. Such violence wouldn't have bothered their
Vegetarian.txt	young cheeks were frequently left throbbing by their heavy-handed	father,	and Yeong-hye had provoked in In-hye a
Vegetarian.txt	wife showed up that evening, with In-hye. Apparently my	father-	in-law still hadn't calmed down. Their mother

Figure 2. Father.

The second most important and recurrent metaphor of the story is father and indicates the patriarchal control on wife and daughters. Yeong Hye's father has been associated with bad temper, violent, furious and yelling at his kids and particularly Yeong Hye who resists him. The nature of women and girls is supposed to be close to nature, but it is surprising that their resistance is not accepted as a natural phenomenon when they are attractive, they are thought to be mature but when they are naturally resisted, fathers, brothers and husbands do not accept them. The difference between two sisters proves this thing. In-hye, her older sister obeys her father's orders while Yeong hye goes against unnatural and unacceptable orders and she is beaten badly for her resistance. Women's natural self is acceptable in terms of following men for love and sexuality but as soon as they naturally stand for their ego, rights and self-place, it is never reciprocated.

Vegetarian.txt	of the master tape with a black pen: "Mongolian Mark 1—	Flowers	of Night and Flowers of Day." As soon as
Vegetarian.txt	with the camcorder, making sure to capture the dark purple	flowers	scattered over her back, the Mongolian mark rippling in
Vegetarian.txt	had been the last time, but the golden cluster of	flowers	that he'd painted right in the center of
Vegetarian.txt	fancy that kid?" "It wasn't him; it was the	flowers..."	The flowers?" Her face instantly blanched, as if in
Vegetarian.txt	Endlessly, endlessly...yes, I spread my legs because I wanted	flowers	to bloom from my crotch; I spread them wide...
Vegetarian.txt	her sliding her naked body, still covered with the brilliant	flowers,	between the mattress and the quilt. That body which
Vegetarian.txt	his footsteps, like in that Hayao Miyazaki film? No, not	flowers,	butterflies would be better. Ah, in that case we
Vegetarian.txt	napes of their necks right down to their bottoms with	flowers,	coiling stems and thickly overlapping petals, painted on in
Vegetarian.txt	a man and woman, their bodies made brilliant with painted	flowers,	having sex against a background of unutterable silence. Their

Figure 3. Flowers.

The literature about this topic, ecolinguistics and ecofeminist theory are proved with the different examples of relationship between nature and human beings. The women are specially attached to nature to exploit them as we exploit flowers, insects and animals for our benefit. The flowers beauty has been resembled with the beauty of women body particularly and generally with men. The main purpose of flowers is to amuse human beings. And similarity between females and flowers exposes that they are there to be ravaged. Furthermore, women expected to keep silent about their treatment as flowers do. Actually, women want to bloom like flowers and want to flourish with their kids but the materialistic modern world after two world wars has alarmingly changed itself. There is no control on sexuality but there is a control on having children. This antagonist view destroys natural peace of mind of women. If men cannot nurture family, then why they marry women. Women love to have children but in Yeong Hye's case she controls her desire to keep within family budget. Flowers keep blooming and growing more and more by pollination process. While women are controlled, and this is why they are led astray as it happens with Yeong Hye in flower painting scene in section two.

Vegetarian.txt	the last time I tasted meat in this house.” My	mother-	in-law was lost for words,
Vegetarian.txt	. My	mother-	in-law was all smiles, exclaiming, “More, drink more!”
Vegetarian.txt	in turn my father-in-law’s swarthy cheeks; my	mother-	in-law’s face, so full of wrinkles I
Vegetarian.txt	twisted away violently. “Eat it quickly! My arm hurts...” My	mother-	in-law’s arm was actually trembling.
Vegetarian.txt	I’m not drinking it.” “Drink it. This is your	mother’	s wish. Even the dead get their wishes obeyed,

Figure 4. Mother.

The 4th recurrent metaphor mother has been placing second to father. The word *father* appears more times as compared to *mother* to justify the power of the patriarch. “*Mother in law lost for words*”, “*all smiles*”, “*mother in law’s face, so full of wrinkles*”, *mother in law’s arm was actually trembling* are textual examples that she is treated by her kids the same way as her husband treats her. She cooks, cleans and obeys everyone and after a long sacrifice she expects to be obeyed by her kids. Mothers’ softness and demanding nothing is also assumed natural. Because nature does not speak and demand. But her words spoken to Yeong-Hye “*This is your mother’s wish even the dead get their wishes obeyed*” show that it is natural for women to speak and say their desires. It is not natural to keep silent. Nature exposes and speaks itself loudly.

Vegetarian.txt	mean. The moment she’d tried to take her own	life	had been a turning point. Now there was nothing
Vegetarian.txt	house. They did not belong to her. Just like her	life	had never belonged to her. Her life was no
Vegetarian.txt	other way. Our first duty as doctors is to preserve	life...	and we simply can’t be sure of keeping
Vegetarian.txt	Just like her life had never belonged to her. Her	life	was no more than a ghostly pageant of exhausted
Vegetarian.txt	stage of weariness and boredom that can otherwise turn married	life	into a trial. hear the reassuring sound of a

Figure 5. Life.

The life as a metaphor is exposed like a ghost that is not in control of anyone. The human life is more uncontrollable for women more than men. Life had never belonged to her shows that how Yeong Hye felt to be in the control of patriarchy that even her own life was felt suffocated by her like an animal. Her father controls a dog by chaining it by a tree, similarly she feels chained to an unwanted life of her own as a female. Married life had also been exposed as a trial. All this not because women do not behave naturally, it is because society tries to control their natural self and frees men to behave and decide whatever way they feel comfortable. Women support them to behave that unnatural way with women. Women are taught to believe this and when some women resist the language and culture associated with women, they are considered to be the traitors. Same way Yeong Hye suffers because of desiring for her natural freedom.

Vegetarian.txt	he looked across at Yeong-Hye's feverish eyes. "I	need	to water my body.
Vegetarian.txt	eat, not now. I can live without it. All I	need	is sunlight." "What are you talking about? Do you
Vegetarian.txt	if about to disclose a momentous secret. "I don't	need	to eat, not now. I can live without it.
Vegetarian.txt	I guess there are just parts of myself that I	need	to, to awaken, but...I need some time first,
Vegetarian.txt	from the pit of my stomach. Shuddering awake, my hands,	need	to see my hands. Breathe. My fingernails still soft,
Vegetarian.txt	appease. "When did I kick you? Now hang on, I	need	you all to talk to me one a

Figure 6. Need.

The human beings and their self-actualization depend on their fulfillment of needs. Human needs have been elaborated as have been suggested by Abraham Maslow in his theory of Need. Yeong hye clearly states what she needs. *Water, sunlight, breathe time to contemplate, sharing and talking* are the needs of a women as nature predicts by its exposure in different life examples. All these desires are supposed to ridiculous when women have no freedom to contemplate, talk and share there is kept a control on their literary qualities and thinking capabilities. These desires are supposed quite normal and natural for men but unnatural for women. This duality of patriarchy snatches life from women.

Vegetarian.txt	kimchi. "What the hell? So, all because of some ridiculous	dream,	you've gone and chucked out all the meat?
Vegetarian.txt	had been more than enough. All because of this agonizing	dream,	from which I was shut out, had no way
Vegetarian.txt	all this, hey? Are you saying it was a sad	dream?"	Still lying down, Ji-woo had rubbed at his
Vegetarian.txt	as though she'd just woken up from a happy	dream. "	When did you get here?" The nurse, who'd

Figure 7. Dream.

From ecolinguistic perspective animal eating is the beginning of men's control of women. This image of meat eating has been inserted and questioned in the novel to resist men's control on animals and women. The horrific dream of animal eating by Yeong hye is a metaphor for her own control of body by social constructions. She finds her married life a ridiculous, agonizing and bad dream. When she gets divorce and goes to hospital, she says she had just woken up from a happy dream shows her liberty. The fixation of duties on women in a mechanical way in our Asian social set ups makes married life a bad dream actually. Marriage has been associated with bad dream because anything disturbing becomes a nightmare as it happens with most of women. Naturally, it is important to liberate people in relationships to bloom like flowers otherwise, they would soon perish earlier than their time like it happens with flowers if mistreated die soon.

The metaphor of rain is symbolic of life and death at the same time. It cleans the past or it rejuvenates the past sometimes. "Rain like the spirit of a dead person" shows that it replaces the past with something new. Rain is the strong metaphor that has been personified as a living thing from natural world. In case of the protagonist, Yeong hye, the rain is getting heavy like her inward soul that is ready to change herself completely to strip off her past memories. "Rain is still pouring down", "the rain swelling the black clouds" shows how Yeong hye is desirous of peeling off the past control on her body and soul. The "black clouds" expose that she wants her old role to die and wishes to be reproduced with a new attire of life as it happens in nature to all things.

Vegetarian.txt	more like fainting, and saw a tree flickering in the	rain	like the spirit of some dead person. Black rain,
Vegetarian.txt	during the night. She stands and looks out at the	rain-	swept road. She is at the bus stop across
Vegetarian.txt	something to her. Today, a day sodden and stupefied with	rain,	it is reticent, and keeps its thoughts unspoken. The
Vegetarian.txt	they had in fact gone deeper into the mountains. The	rain	had gradually grown heavier as the afternoon wore on.
Vegetarian.txt	peering outside. They're probably feeling a bit claustrophobic, the	rain	having kept them cooped up inside for the past
Vegetarian.txt	hospital is visible, flanked by mountains on all sides. The	rain	is still pouring down, its measured cacophony slightly less
Vegetarian.txt	days, only for non-serious patients, and only when the	rain	swelling the black clouds overhead seemed likely to stay
Vegetarian.txt	is something batted down about the woods in this torrential	rain,	like a huge animal suppressing a roar. As it

Figure 8. Rain.

Vegetarian.txt	across at Yeong-hye's feverish eyes. "I need to	water	my body. I don't need this kind of
Vegetarian.txt	else for it but to hang up, she spoke. "The	water'	s boiling." Her voice had no weight to it,
Vegetarian.txt	rays soaked down through Yeong-hye's body, had the	water	that was saturating the soil been drawn up through
Vegetarian.txt	don't need this kind of food, sister. I need	water." — "	Thank you so much for all your trouble," In-
Vegetarian.txt	almost imperceptibly. "I'm thirsty," she whispered. "Give me some	water."	In-hye went and fetched some from the lobby.

Figure 9. Water.

The metaphor of water is as significant as is the metaphor of rain. It shows how inside of Yeong hye, there is a desire to live not to die. At superficial level, we feel Yeong hye to wish to die and perish herself to avoid her mistreatment. But the metaphor of rain and water prove that they are not only destructive; they are also preserver of life and nature. Both these natural elements give way to life to grow. The demand for water by Yeong hye more often shows her desire to live and grow. She wants to flourish naturally like everything in nature grows freely, not to be restricted to grow like human keep a check on humans' growth.

Vegetarian.txt	her way toward the lobby. All of a sudden the	sunlight	is pouring through the window, brightening the gloomy space.
Vegetarian.txt	now. I can live without it. All I need is	sunlight." "	What are you talking about? Do you really think
Vegetarian.txt	now." — When he woke up, she was still sleeping. The	sunlight	coming into the room was bright. Her disheveled hair
Vegetarian.txt	wide as though she wanted to make love to the	sunlight,	to the wind. He heard the sounds of the

Figure 10. Sunlight.

In natural processes, after water the sunlight are required to grow. Sunlight is a kind of powerful protection that nature provides without harm. Similar protection Yeong hye's character demand from the people around to protect the rights of the animals, women and children to flourish. The roles of men as father, brother and husband in postcolonial literature have been supposed to be associated with things that come from sky like rain, water, sun and sunlight. These are providers and protectors of the things that grow on the earth. Similarly, Han Kang has also been demanding the same natural protection and naturally assigned roles to men through her character Yeong hye. Yeong hye's expression "*she wanted to make love to sunlight*" expresses that life depends on sunlight to grow otherwise, life may perish and disappear without it.

Vegetarian.txt	Her skin was a pale	green.	
Vegetarian.txt	light, the rain on the leaf's glitters intensely, kindling a	green	fire.
Vegetarian.txt	the end of the narrow mountain path, clustered together like	green	flames in the early-morning half-light,
Vegetarian.txt	broad daylight flicker in front of her eyes like huge	green	fireworks.
Vegetarian.txt	The trees by the side of the road are blazing,	green	fire undulating like the rippling flanks of a massive
Vegetarian.txt	the woods open out. Trees thick with leaves, springtime's	green	light.

Figure 11. Green.

The metaphor of green leads to the completion of growth process step by step as we got through the metaphorical analysis. The green symbolizes that after all needs are completely provided then comes the stage of greenery and happiness in life of human beings especially in life of women. The greenery for farmers is material success and same way the growth of women is also the material and social success of men which is quite ignored. From "*pale green*", Yeong hye moves to "*green light*", "*green fire*" and "*green fireworks*" that illuminate her body, life and compassionate feelings to become natural. She succeeds in bringing out her natural inner-self to front and grows like a tree and flowers.

Figure 12. Air

Vegetarian.txt	A sweet fragrance spreads through the humid	air	of the ward.
Vegetarian.txt	The chill	air	rushed into the apartment when she opened the sliding
Vegetarian.txt	though someone had just slid out from under it. The	air	felt stale, and he was on the point of
Vegetarian.txt	instead of zipping them up, she just giggled into the	air. "	Why are you laughing?" "Because I'm all wet..."

The air that forms in the blooming season refers to spring season. After blooming everything, nature transforms and replenishes every sector of life with fragrance. First, the air spreads in the ward where Yeong hye tries to become a tree. The air is personified as the words justify "the air felt stale" means that the pungent smell of the past closed air inside human systems is taken away by fresh fragrant air. Then the sentence she just giggled into the air shows the natural feelings of yeong hye. She feels like a fresh flower as a human being shedding everything of the past patriarchal restrictions and taking her new natural free self. The text step by step describes the condition of natural change of a human being.

Vegetarian.txt	like this because I'm afraid you're going to	die!"	Yeong-hye turned her head and stared blankly at
Vegetarian.txt	doing? Are you listening to me? Do you want to	die?	Do you really want to die? Dazed, she examines
Vegetarian.txt	and dinner, so...it's not as if you'll	die	if you go without meat just for one meal."
Vegetarian.txt	eyes filling with tears. "They're saying Yeong-hye	die." "	How has she been?" "Just now she vomited some
Vegetarian.txt	s lips. There is no response. "Are you trying to	die?"	she asks. "You're not, are you? If all
Vegetarian.txt	question came. "Why, is it such a bad thing to	die?" —	Why, is it such a bad thing to die?
Vegetarian.txt	wish I were dead. I wish I were dead. So	die.	Unable to understand why the tears were streaming down

Figure 13. Die/ Death.

The ecofeminist paradigm sometimes mixes itself with existentialist philosophy where women are exposed asking for the reason of their being in the world where they have no worth or equality to men. The concept of death and dying reminds of Hamlet's question of to be or not to be here. Yeong hye's bad medical condition does not infer her death. In fact, it refers to her transfer from life of human serfdom to natural life of decomposed body that is about to become a tree without human emotions because tree enjoys soil, water, rain, sunlight and fragrance of fresh air. Similarly, Han Kang presents her imagination that a woman can stay happy and alive if she is treated as a tree because as human, she is not that much loved and cared. A woman is also materialistically used in our society like tree for men's benefits but is not rewarded emotionally, physically and spiritually. She has very low status to tree as compared.

Vegetarian.txt	eyes for a long time before opening them again. The	tree	fills her field of vision, still silent, keeping its
Vegetarian.txt	asleep that was more like fainting, and saw a	tree	flickering in the rain like the spirit of some
Vegetarian.txt	his wife, but to him she radiated energy, like a	tree	that grows in the wilderness, denuded and solitary. All
Vegetarian.txt	you? If all you want to do is become a	tree,	you still have to eat. You have to live."
Vegetarian.txt	about? Do you really think you've turned into a	tree?	How could a plant talk? How can you think

Figure 14. Tree.

The nature and life of a tree has been represented in an idealized way by Han Kang through her protagonist's attachment to a tree. Yeong Hye is fascinated by the "*denuded and solitary tree*" that grows freely. Yeong Hye's desire to become a tree and behaving like a tree is incomprehensible for her sister and her comrades in the hospital. Nature does not stop anyone to grow but in society nature is a plaything ironically enough in the hands of the powerful, the men, fathers, brothers and husbands. This why her tree like behaviour is questioned "*how can a plant talk?*". this example shows that trees are freer than human beings. Though they are also sometime taken for granted but it is more involving question that human beings talk and ask for their rights are left unattended and punished for speaking for their right. A free woman is an exceptional case in our world. The reference of tree attached to yeong hye and her desire to be a tree shows that both are used for men's benefit and women are also no exceptions even though they are living being.

Vegetarian.txt	a surreal and spellbinding quality, especially in its passage on	nature	and the physical landscape, so beautiful and so magnificently
Vegetarian.txt	night wrestling with, struggling to face up to the true	nature	of the emotions they provoked in him, had now
Vegetarian.txt	a fundamental human instinct, which means vegetarianism goes against human	nature,	right? It just isn't natural." avoiding, but everywhere

Figure 15. Nature.

The metaphor of nature shows that emotions are natural and cannot be ignored. And controlling desires is unnatural. The men and women both have strong beautiful emotions, and these are natural, but these emotions are kept more under control in case of women than men. The words "struggling to face up to the true nature of the emotions they provoked in him" exhibit that men's emotions are taken more natural while women are just supposed to be physically closed to nature. This is a kind of marginalization of women. Nature in actual life is more attached to men's desires and in case of women who are claimed to be more closed to nature are not allowed to behave naturally in terms of any kind of freedom of growing, desiring, relaxing and free thinking. Collard and Contrucci (1988) also point out the same ironical situation where women are supposed to be closed to nature and alluring men towards them and men are supposed to be far away from nature but actually, they do more what their nature leads them to act. What is natural and what is unnatural is decided by men. Women have to follow what is natural to men for them. The author in the novel "the Vegetarian" has left many questions to ponder over and to find answer. Main question is relevant to meat eating or not eating. She makes us laugh that it is unnatural not to eat meat, but women's mistreatment and girls' molestation is quite normal and natural.

Vegetarian.txt	the rain on the leaf's glitters intensely, kindling a green	fire.	In-hye brushes Yeong-hye's hair, still slightly
Vegetarian.txt	trees by the side of the road are blazing, green	fire	undulating like the rippling flanks of a massive animal,

Figure 16. Fire.

The "green fire" stands as metaphor for accepting and illuminating innovative and forward-looking ideas through the protagonist's words of her observation of natural world. The green fire means to go to change in the society. Her words suggest that life in a civilized society is unbearable for human beings then how can men change and protect forests and animals. First, we have to save the weaker sex to become like a tree devoid of emotions then we have to claim to protect forests and animals. Human being is being transformed to be like trees and animals and satirically, animals and trees are being claimed to be adored and protected. All seems to be ridiculous.

Vegetarian.txt	in her body, had these things been awakened in her	soul? "	But seriously," In-hye said out loud. "What the
Vegetarian.txt	the bag closed. What another dimension might Yeong-hye's	soul	have passed into, having shrugged off flesh like a

Figure 17 . Soul.

The transformation of a human being to a tree is like separating body from soul. It is described as a painful process by which Yeong Hye goes through to separate herself from her real life. The words like "having shrugged off flesh" for Yeong Hye show that she avoids food, meat and sustains on water and sunlight to protest for her rights as human being. All metaphors are move toward the goal of the novel to awaken humanity.

Vegetarian.txt	white roots sprouting from her hands and clutching the black	soil? Had her legs stretched high up into the air
Vegetarian.txt	hye's body, had the water that was saturating the soil	been drawn up through her cells, eventually to bloom

Figure 18. Soil.

The last significant natural metaphor is “soil” that is in actual the first and basic metaphor. But it has been discussed in the last to show the decay and decomposition of the humanity and so-called social unnatural reality. The soil represents that all human, animals and forests are born from soil and perish in soil, but human have artificially chosen such systems that promote the powerful and harness the labour of the physically weak and vulnerable for the benefit of the powerful i.e., men mostly.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the novel through prominent natural metaphors and personifications has given an insightful understanding of the text. The ecolinguistic and ecofeminist theoretical framework disclosed the resemblance of human life with nature. The mistreatment of trees, animals and human beings had been quite normal since our history that was defined by men as Spender (1981) stated that men had created language from their own perspective. Similarly, Glotfelty (1996) endorses that eco-criticism exposes the link between nature and culture, propagated through language and literature. But the postmodern novels and literature open up and disclose the politics of language that makes women the vulnerable in the ecosystem of our real and natural world, unnaturally. The women are not treated even like trees that enjoy free air and sunlight. The nature had been shut down for women as daughters and as wives. Women's liberty will change society, its economy and relationships. Same as the forests that flourish being supported by nature if not intruded by men. We can conclude that if men' treatment towards females becomes natural. Undoubtedly, life will become cool and green and fully nurtured everywhere.

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