

Chapter 1

Han Kang and The Vegetarian

Context and Issues

Dreams have massive impact on human psyche leading the dreamers to act following the dreams. *The Vegetarian*, a novel written by South Korean writer Han Kang and translated by Deborah Smith presents an example of how humans fall prey to their dreams and go against the traditional norms of the society. This research explores the various characters' dreams and their mental and physical condition throughout their journey of life as reflected in the novel. They can hardly escape it, they cannot because of their experience which forces them to act following their dream. Because of dreams, the characters of the novel see their life turning upside down and they find themselves in such a situation where their family life and social life have ruined. The major character of the novel takes dream as much as reality and she tries to live in dream. In other words, she does not want to come back to reality from dream which makes her life and the lives of her family members so hard. The main argument of the thesis is that dreams influence human behavior of waking mind affecting not only personal life but also social interaction.

The major character Yeong-hye and her sister In-hye are two sisters. In this novel, Yeong-hye takes dream so seriously that she turns herself into vegan and slowly stops eating any kind of food which leads to her downfall. Her sister In-hye tries to console her mentally and cures her but everything done by In-hye goes into vain.

The primary objective of the research is how a life and surrounding can ruin an individual's psychological obsession over something. To support primary objective, these secondary objectives lead study to the conclusion:

- a. To explain what were the consequences of Yeong-hye's nightmare.
- b. To point out the over obsession of dream which leads towards the downfall of family sentiment of characters in novel.

Han Kang is modern day celebrated author of South Korea. In this novel, she presents a family heading towards downfall in terms of relationship and other emotional boundaries after one of major characters, Yeong-hye, switched herself into pure vegan. What happens when a character turns into vegetarian in an omnivores Korean family where their cuisine is not full without meat product is the basic story of novel. But still there is the reason behind main character; Yeong-hye's switching into vegan. The bad nightmare and the repeated disturbing dream is the main cause behind her decision to turn into vegan. But the consequences behind the dream are the main issue in this research.

In this three-part drama novella; Yeong-hye, the major character's life after turning into vegetarian, has been described from the point of view of her husband, Mr. Cheong, brother-in-law and her sister In-hye. After encountering with same type of bloody, nightmarish dream about human cruelty Yeong-hye one day decides to throw out all meat in her house and turn into full vegan. Her husband; Mr. Cheong becomes surprised at first but he thinks that she will quit being vegan one day so he does not talk or discuss about that matter. But with the passing of days and months, Yeong-hye's nightmare continues and so does her vegan life along with other personal and familial life. The disaster in her family life gets worse when her husband tells all other family members about her vegan life, which leads her father to make an attempt to eat meat and hit her brutally.

After that, she tries to commit a suicide which leads her to become more obsessive towards her dream. After her trying to commit suicide, her devastated

husband Mr. Cheong does not see any hope in their marital life and files for divorce and they split. After her attempt of a suicide and her failure in her marital life, Yeong-hye comes under the care of her sister In-hye, who runs her own business of cosmetics shop and lives with her artist husband and son Ji-woo. Even after that Yeong-hye's nightmare does not go away neither she succeeds to ward off by applying various methods like: living naked in apartment, trying to conserve sun rays through her bare chest and eating as little as amount of food.

Later on, Yeong-hye's obsession with dream increases more which leads her to make a physical relation with her brother-in-law. This invites more trouble into her personal life and familial life, and her sister's marital life also turns into a divorce. Still, her bloody, nightmarish dream does not stop. In this period, we can see other characters of the novel also do have their own dreams bounded by their emotions and experience.

The novel brings forth the common analytical approach to the tragic life of the characters of the novel. It explains what happens with life when we possess so much about dream rather than concerning in reality.

The novel features the old sad memory of an individual that leads to psychological trauma and makes him/her live in dream rather than accepting the real world. A dominating hot tempered father, a husband who is not involved emotionally in relation, a brother-in-law who always seeks chance to get sleep with her, a mother who never protected her from father's violent behavior are the environment to create Yeong-hye's life miserable. Moreover, it is also a sibling story between Yeong-hye and In-hye, Yeong-hye's elder sister, who remains and supports her till the last when all of other family members lost hope and cut any kind of relation with mentally disturbed Yeong-hye.

The novel deals with Yeong-hye's vegetarian life. It tells the story about characteristics of major characters in various parts of novel. Moreover, in three parts of novel three different characters describes their relation to major character Yeong-hye and their jobs and daily lifestyle. In terms of psychological and emotional relation of three characters with major character Yeong-hye, Porochista Khakpour writes:

Han's novella-in-three-parts zigzags between domestic thriller, transformation parable and arborphiliac meditation, told from the points of view of her lousy husband, who works at an office (Part I); her obsessive brother-in-law, who is an artist (Part II); and her overburdened older sister, who manages a cosmetics store (Part III).

These three characters are largely defined by what they do for a living, whereas Yeong-hye stops doing much of anything altogether. (Para.3)

The quoted text clearly presents the structural aspect of the novel. Further, Khakpour also points out the correspondence of the structure with these characteristics of personal three major characters. This three part drama novel opens up with the narration of Mr. Cheong, husband of major character Yeong-hye, describing how his wife turned into vegan and changing her lifestyle drastically in first part 'the vegetarian'. In Korean society where almost each and every person is omnivorous except those who are sacred Buddhist and quitting meat for a cause or animal rights, Yeong-hye's switching into vegan just because of her dream is not something common for her husband. He never tries to know about her nightmarish dream that turned her away from meat but he tries to force her to eat meat along with Yeon-hye's other family members. This action of Yeong-hye's family member does not help her nightmare to vanish but it takes to another level of devastating trauma. She tries to kill herself rather than eating meat. This leads to her mental and physical downfall

rapidly.

The second part of the novel 'Mongolian Mark' is narrated by Yeong-hye's brother-in-law. In this part, he describes how possessive he is to see the Mongolian mark of Yeong-hye and to make a physical relation with her. This leads him to fantasize about Yeong-hye and keep physical and emotional distance with his wife In-hye. After few attempts, he succeeds to make physical relation with Yeong-hye but consequences after that creates more devastating situation for Yeong-hye's mental condition and her sister In-hye's familial condition.

In the third part of the novel 'Flaming Trees', narrated by Yeong-hye's only caretaker from her family and sister In-hye narrates the possible causes behind Yeong-hye's mental disturbance. And she recollects the options that she could have done in past which might be fruitful to recover Yeong-hye's mental condition but it was already too late cause Yeong-hye was in the stage from where she could not return. She was much obsessed by dreams that she finds reality as nightmare rather dreams.

The novel represents Yeong-hye's subconscious psyche. Her dream is her experience of life. Moreover, the dreams of other characters such as Mr. Cheong, In-hye, Ji-woo and Yeong-hye are also the result of their subconscious psyche. Among all the characters, Yeong-hye gets stuck into dream which leads her life into trouble. Her brother-in-law also fantasizes about her and dreams about her which leads him to the failure of his married life and attempts to commit a suicide. After his divorce with In-hye, he leaves all his regular activities and regular artist life but at least we can assume that he is alive and healthy because he comes back from his dream and obsession. But Yeong-hye's obsession of dream continues and she never comes back to reality.

Review of Literature

After the publication of the novel, different critics have analyzed it from their own perspective drawing upon multiple interpretations. It has elicited a lot of critical attention and massive arguments from a large number of critics and scholars. Critics deal with the issues like slavery, sensibilities, female desire, gender, class, marriage, motherhood, legacy of feminine self, subordination, and so on. Some critics have paid attention to the thematic analysis of the novel whereas others have gone through the experimental aspects of the novel.

A marriage is successful when two individuals involve in relation with great affection, love, caring and enthusiasm. But this was not the case with Yeong-hye and her husband. Critic Daniel Hahn writes about Yeong-hye and her husband Mr. Cheong's cold relation and their not so working marital life:

Yeong-hye is, in her husband's opening words, "completely unremarkable in every way". She is a reasonably diligent homemaker, a reasonably attentive spouse, not deeply unhappy and driven by no great passions. Her husband, Mr Cheong, is a mediocre employee, not greatly ambitious, mildly unenthused by his life but not dramatically so. Time ticks by, and the two of them get on with living their ordinary lives; but their ordinariness, it turns out, is more fragile than they realise. (para.1)

Yeong-hye's marital relation with her husband was not going smoothly in first place. At first, their relation was somehow working in Mr. Cheong, Yeong-hye's husband's word but later it turns out to be fragile. Their relation was not that strong from the start it seemed ordinary but their ordinariness was more dangerous or disturbing than they realized. This factor shows that Yeong-hye and her husband were living together

physically but mentally and psychologically their marital condition is way opposite.

Porochista Khakpour describes the experience of novel readers and the fate of characters as full of trauma. At first, we might just realize the fact of Yeong-hye turning into vegetarian slowly but later on we get to know the reason behind her converting herself into vegan. In this process, Yeon-hye's converting herself into vegan is the biggest risk for Mr. Cheong, Yeong-hye's husband. Explaining the unpredictable nature of novel Khakpour writes about the traumatic experience and psychology of character in novel:

All the trigger warnings on earth cannot prepare a reader for the traumas of this Korean author's translated debut in the Anglophone world. At first, you might eye the title and scan the first innocuous sentence — “Before my wife turned vegetarian, I thought of her as completely unremarkable in every way” — and think that the biggest risk here might be converting to vegetarianism. (I myself converted, again; we'll see if it lasts.) But there is no end to the horrors that rattle in and out of this ferocious, magnificently death-affirming novel. (para.2)

Simply turning into vegetarian because of a dream of Yeong-hye becomes biggest risk for her husband at first. But with the days and months passing there is no end to the horrors that brought in by that dream in their life. This eventually turns into their marriage failure and puts Yeong-hye's life into almost death bed.

The obsession of Yeong-hye and other characters over dream continues. This leads to unwanted and surprising violence in novel. The psychologies of characters are so limited that they can go any further to fulfill their wish. Yeong-hye can do anything to stop herself from eating meat whereas her father can do anything to make Yeong-hye eat meat. In this process, a straight minded father uses violence against his

daughter. Julia Pascal writes about sudden violence that leads to Yeong-hye's life towards downfall:

Violence erupts without warning. It is described almost casually. J tries to jump out of the window when discovered betraying his wife with her sister. At the family meal, Yeong-hye's father beats his daughter and, in front of everyone, brutally tries to force pork into her closed mouth. Yeong-hye slashes her own wrists at the dinner table. She is sent to a psychiatric hospital where medics brutalise her in an agonising description of tubes down noses, blood and vomit. (para.4)

To respond her father's violence and deny eating meat, Yeong-hye slits her wrist and attempts suicide. This makes her life more horrible and she is sent to a psychiatric hospital. Her obsession over dream does not end there too.

Yeong-hye's other family members forcing Yeong-hye to make her eat meat is not something surprising or uncommon. In South Korean culture meat is very much the staple of every meal. Mr. Cheong's disappointment of his wife's converting into vegetarianism is common instead of Yeong-hye's switching into vegan because of cultural artifact. Eileen Batters by writes about South Korean cuisine culture and Yeong-hye's decision:

Yeong-hye is reasonable, however. Although she will no longer prepare meat dishes for him, she does point out that he usually dines out anyway.

Han skill fully builds the story. Becoming a vegetarian is a personal decision. Not all of us make public statements about it. The young woman in this novel is not making a protest. But in South Korea, where meat is very much the staple of every meal, vegetarianism

amounts to rejecting one's culture. (para.4)

In South Korean food culture, meat is almost a regular item. Age old tradition of eating meat as food is culture. Yeong-hye is rejecting same age old tradition by quitting meat. In this case, Yeong-hye's family members are psychologically guided by same age old tradition that's why they are forcing her to eat meat. Whereas Yeong-hye is the one who is rejecting the culture. Her family members are not in the condition of accepting rebellious action of Yeong-hye against their culture.

Yeong-hye's sister, In-hye, remains only guardian from her family after Yeong-hye's mental breakdown. In-hye recollects how she was the one who took care of family from her young age and Yeong-hye was always victimized by her father. Battersby further writes about sisterly love between Yeong-hye and In-hye and the possible cause of Yeong-hye's downfall:

As she watches her sister dwindle, withdrawing into a strange inner world, she recalls how, as "the eldest daughter, In-hye had been the one who took over from their exhausted mother and made a broth for her father to wash the liquor down . . . Only Yeong-hye . . . became difficult to read . . . So difficult that there were times when she seemed like a total stranger."

Han's deliberate prose channels into the heart of the helplessness of trying to help when the afflicted has no interest in being helped. Kindly

In-hye is a heartbreaking study of the helpless career. (para.14)

When In-hye deliberately tries to help her sister but Yeong-hye does not show any interest of being helped. In other words, In-hye is trying to bring her sister back into normality but Yeong-hye has not even single intention of leaving her dream world and turning herself into a tree. In this process, In-hye is a heartbroken and helpless

character of the novel, who is always there to support her sister.

Yeong-hye later does not remain as a woman who is pursuing a vegetarian lifestyle. She thinks as she is going to grow like a tree. Her obsession with dream becomes so strong that she even quit eating other vegetarian foods and even drinking water. Rather, she starts walking naked in sun rays to pursue sun rays and photosynthesis because she believes that she is turning into a tree. Nicky Kim argues about her madness, “No longer is she a woman pursuing a vegetarian lifestyle. She becomes anti-social, suicidal and develops anorexia. Although it is unclear if she is seeking death, the reader can guess that living is no longer a priority” (para.15). Yeong-hye becomes more anti-social, suicidal and develops anorexia. She quits eating and drinking. Is she seeking death? This question remains unsolved till last. One can say that for Yeong-hye living is no longer in priority.

Divided into three parts and narrated by three different characters, at first glance the novel looks like the story of a woman and her entering into the world of vegetarianism because of her nightmarish dream. But its range extends further into the lives of her narrating family members, offering musings on their own personal crisis and conflict after her converting into vegan. Ella Holden discusses about the effect on Yeong-hye’s family members after she chooses a vegetarian life:

The sections, entitled *The Vegetarian*, *Mongolian Mark*, and *Flaming Trees*, are narrated by the protagonist’s husband, her brother-in-law, and her sister respectively, and each offers a unique dialogue pertaining to Yeong-hye’s actions. Indeed, while this is a novel ostensibly about the vegetarianism of the protagonist, its range extends far further into the lives of her narrating family members, offering musings on their own personal crises and conflicts. What Kang has

produced here is a novel that envisions familial conflict within the broader question of human identity, questioning the proximity of mankind to our environment, and the significance of the human body as an object of art. (para.1)

Lost in dream, Yeong-hye brings so many difficulties to family and to herself. The conflict between culture and personal experience brings doom in the lives of family members. The novel offers the familial conflict within the broader question of human identity, questioning the proximity of mankind to our environment and the significance of the human body as an object of art.

Although many critics have observed and interpreted the text from different critical perspectives, this thesis centers on to figure out the obsession and psychological aspects of characters because of their dreams. So the objective raised by this research is distantly new and fresh which is left untouched. The novel successfully presents over obsession in something is harmful. The author attempts to reassert her purpose by the devastating representation of Yeong-hye and her brother-in-law with the creative, self-expressive imagination too.

Organization of the Study

The major objective of this study is to seek through the window of psychoanalytical prospective as characters suffer in the face of the adverse situations in their life because of their dream. The critical review of this very newly published novel is very rare except for a few articles in noted magazines and newspapers. However, the study will organize the chapters on the basis of textual analysis and a survey of the available critical analyses and reviews.

The first chapter of this study introduces the main argument of the thesis. It focuses on the dream, obsession of characters with brief literature review and the

outlines of the entire thesis. The theoretical concept of the psychoanalysis is overviewed in the second chapter. The dream consequences, cause of dream, trauma that cause dream and obsession over dream of the major characters in the novel are analyzed in the third chapter as textual analysis. Finally, the fourth or the last chapter sums up the main points of this thesis.

This research aims to show the declining condition of the major character, and her obsession over dream is the main cause of her downfall. Both primary and secondary resources are used during this study. Library, internet and constructive ideas of teachers and professors are highly materialized during writing this research.

Chapter 2

Psychoanalysis and Its Practice in Literature

Theoretical Stance

Psychoanalysis first came as a clinical method for treating psychopathology. First used and defined by Sigmund Freud in late 19th century, starting with his publication of *The Interpretation of Dreams* in 1899. Psychoanalytic theory came to full prominence in the last third of the twentieth century as part of the flow of critical discourse regarding psychological treatments after the 1960s, long after Freud's death in 1939, and its validity is now widely disputed or rejected. This theory began to gain prominence in literature and psychoanalytic theory has undergone many refinements since his work.

At first, psychoanalysis was used as therapeutic technique that analyzed mental-health disorder caused by unconscious mind. Psychoanalysis was later developed in different directions, mostly by Freud's students such as Josef Breuer, Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung, and by neo-Freudians such as Erich Fromm, Karen Horney and Harry Stack Sullivan. Freud retained the term *psychoanalysis* for his own school of thought.

With the hectic daily life an individual gets so many problems in life. Some of those problems become psychological distress. Psychoanalysis provides the way of thinking about the human mind and psychological distress. Liz Bondi argues about the psychoanalysis theory's popularity history and its practice:

It offers a distinctive way of thinking about the human mind and of responding to psychological distress. Psychoanalysis has travelled widely from its central European origins, and has evolved into a complex, multi-faceted and internally fractured body of knowledge

situated at the interface between the human and natural sciences, and between clinical practice and academic theory. (3)

Psychoanalysis developed as clinical practice to console the patient of mental health later it gained wide popularity in the field of literary too. It traveled widely from the center of Europe to all over the world and evolved into complex, a multi-faceted phenomenon which has been able to analyze the human behavior, culture and memory of individual.

Sigmund Freud had ceased his analysis of the brain and his physiological studies and shifted his focus to the study of the mind and the related psychological attributes making up the mind, and on treatment using free association and the phenomena of transference. His study emphasized the recognition of childhood events that could influence the mental functioning of adults. Freud argues:

In the foregoing exposition we have now learnt something of the dream work; we must regard it as a quite special psychical process, which, so far as we are aware, resembles nothing else. To the dream work has been transferred that bewilderment which its product, the dream, has aroused in us. In truth, the dream work is only the first recognition of a group of psychical processes to which must be referred the origin of hysterical symptoms, the ideas of morbid dread, obsession, and illusion. (35)

The dream is one of the main components to describe human mind in terms of psychoanalysis along with slips of tongue and unintentional acts. Dream is not the part of any coincidence but it is our thought and our ideas of morbid dread, obsession and illusion. We dream about those things only which we are obsessed of in our unconscious mind.

When Freud launched his theory of psychoanalysis, Freud focused on the repressed desire of sex. He described dream as the result of repressed desire of sex. But later on, his student Carl Gustav Jung described psychoanalysis with other cultural factors, forgotten memory of an individual along with repressed desires. M.-L. von Franz, Joseph L. Henderson, Jolande Jacobi and Aniela Jaffe' discuss about the theory presented by Carl Gustav Jung:

The converse of this is that the communications of the unconscious are of the highest importance to the dreamer—naturally so, since the unconscious is at least half of his total being—and frequently offer him advice or guidance that could be obtained from no other source. Thus, when I described Jung's dream about addressing the multitude, I was not describing a piece of magic or suggesting that Jung dabbled in fortune telling. I was recounting in the simple terms of daily experience how Jung was "advised" by his own unconscious to reconsider an inadequate judgment he had made with the conscious part of his mind. (13)

The dreams we see are the result of simple daily experience. The individuals with their different cultural, biographical and ethnographic background do see different types of dreams. The unconscious of an individual is determined by his/her surrounding so does the dream. This concept lets the critical readers to use psychoanalysis theory in broad term.

The daily activity we do, daily thoughts we think about, daily lifestyle we live, the things we see in our life determine our unconscious psyche. The unconscious psyche that we develop in our life is the reason behind our dream. The obsession and repression are also the causes of dream.

The unconscious psyche of an individual develops from the childhood. The language itself is the factor of an unconscious psyche. From the very first word coming out from the mouth a child starts to live in that particular culture and that becomes his unconscious psyche. Dr. Khursheed Ahmad Qazi argues about the unconscious psyche developed by Jacques Lacan:

Lacan broadened undoubtedly the scope of Unconscious saying that the unconscious is always at work and the being of everything. The distinctive feature of Lacanian theory, however, is its emphasis on language and his contention that the Unconscious is structured like a Language, an assertion that needs to be viewed in the broader perspective according to which the unconscious comes into existence only with the individual's access to or entry into language. In other words, a child learns its mother tongue. (2)

Unconscious is structured like language. Unconscious exists right after the individual's access to or entry into language. Child's learning mother tongue is the first step of developing unconscious.

Psychoanalysis acknowledges the forgotten or unobserved mental contents. It concerns itself with an unconsciousness of another kind that is covered with conscious self. This study also acknowledges the inborn impulses, instincts and psychological dispositions. O. Pfister and Frederick M. Smith argue about the area of psychoanalysis:

Psychoanalysis, as well as traditional psychology, acknowledges inborn impulses, instincts, psychological dispositions. It commits to others the task of determining the origin of these psychological realities. It acknowledges also the forgotten or unobserved mental contents which

compose the potential inventory of memory of the components of perception. In all events which are germane to it. It concerns itself with an unconsciousness of another kind, with highly worthy ideas and endeavors that in part were conscious but through opposing ideas and endeavors are suppressed from the conscious as painful, and in part through the same antagonistic powers are repressed and prevented from becoming conscious. (134)

The psychoanalysis reads the unconscious thoughts which are suppressed from the conscious human self. The conscious does not want to show the pain, sorrow and other emotional instincts due to the fear of society. These repressed and suppressed feelings come out through writings, dreams, slips of tongue and unintentional acts.

Dream is the true language of unconscious. Through dream one can fulfill his repressed or suppressed desire. But dream is not only language of expression. A dream is always the fulfillment of a wish, although that wish may not be clear in the dream as remember to, argues Henry McDonald Spencer:

The dream, itself, is the true language of the unconscious, and is its means of expression, although not its only means of expression. A dream is always the fulfillment of a wish, although that wish may not be clear in the dream as remembered...Although a dream may be thrown into activity by apparently insignificant thoughts or incidents during the day (dream instigators). The latent content of the dream, which contains the dream wish, may become so distorted and symbolised, that its real origin may be unrecognised in the manifest content. Occurrences during the day or things read, do not cause the dream; they merely throw the latent or unconscious thoughts into

activity. (310)

Dream may be the cause of apparently insignificant thoughts of incidents during the day or the content of dream may be inspired and affected by our day to day lifestyle. The forgotten memory or our unconscious psyche is the root of dream or sometimes the origin may be unrecognized in the content.

The ethical and cultural side of psychoanalysis is given more interest by content reader or normal people. However, the unconscious gets its gratification through a symbolic outlet, either in the form of dreams or of neurotic symptoms. Spencer further argues about the thoughts that provoke dream:

The normal man and woman, however, is probably more interested in the ethical and cultural side of psychoanalysis than in its purely remedial phase. Psychoanalysis teaches that the unconscious gets its gratification through a symbolic outlet, either in the form of dreams or of neurotic symptoms. Repression is the most important factor in our civilised life. It keeps individuals from doing harm even if they however are not lost; there is no waste –of have evil thoughts. The repressed feelings energy, since these feelings are sublimated or utilized for a higher and more useful purpose. (313)

However, repressed thoughts are the most important factors in our civilized life. These types of thoughts should not be harmful. But, we should not be obsessed with our repressive or suppressive thoughts. If we develop obsession over these kinds of thoughts then it may cause the trouble into our life and mental health too. The repressed feelings should be used for the higher and more useful purpose.

Behind every thought there are always hidden coherent but unconscious thoughts. There is hidden a latent dream-material behind the conscious dream-content,

which, on its part, was aroused by coherent logical dream thoughts. The images and experiences, of which the dream consists, are for the most part only disguises, symbolic allusions to suppressed trains of thought. S. Ferenczi talks about the dream thoughts:

Behind each imperative thought, no matter how illogical it may appear, are hidden coherent but unconscious thoughts, and to make these evident is the problem of psychoanalysis... Behind the conscious dream-content is hidden a latent dream-material, which, on its part, was aroused by coherent, logical dream-thoughts. The interpretation of the dream is nothing else than the translation of the dream from its hieroglyphic-symbolic speech into conceptual speech; the leading back of the obvious dream-content through the clues of association given by the hidden dream-material, to the logical dream-thoughts. (311)

The interpretation of dream is the translation of those illogical thoughts we see in dream-content through the clues of association given by the hidden material to the logical dream thoughts.

We have the dream related to us, divide the given material into several parts or sections require the dreamer to tell all that occurs to him when he directs his attention, not to the whole of the dream, but to the definite part of it, to a particular event or word-image occurring in it. Ferenczi further argues:

The subject of the analysis, who at first reproduces his apparently senseless ideas with scornful scepticism, soon discovers, to his own surprise, that the train of associations, uninfluenced by conscious aids, leads to the awakening of thoughts and memories which were long since forgotten, or repressed on account of the pain they caused... Once

these are recognized, not only the single fragment, but also the dream as a whole seems coherent and intelligible. If, finally, we compare the point of departure of the dream, the dream thoughts, with the content of the naively related dream, we see that the dream is nothing else than the concealed fulfillment of a repressed wish. (312)

When an individual runs or escapes from a feeling because of social taboo that feeling remains in individual's unconscious psyche. The person only pretends to hide his true feeling rather it remains as forgotten memory or repressed desire. When we recognize the causes of our dream and compare the point of departure of the dream, the dream thoughts, we see that the dream is nothing else than the fulfillment of a repressed wish.

Psychoanalysis is the liberation from the effects of the unconscious which is achieved by bringing this material into the conscious mind through therapeutic intervention. Psychoanalytic concepts are also widely used outside the therapeutic arena, in areas such as psychoanalytic literary criticism, as well as in the analysis and deconstruction of film, fairy tales and other cultural phenomena. Ian Parker discusses about the therapeutic method of psychoanalysis:

...clinic is 'real' is to extract it not only from taken-for-granted reality, reality that is suffused with fantasy, the place we retreat to in order to dream with our eyes open when we have encountered some traumatic point in our more obviously surreal dreams functioning as the guardians of sleep Freud (1900/1999; Lacan1964/1973)...Lacanian psychoanalysis is also opens again a space for desire and then a questioning of that desire itself, for which 'drive' might be the name (Zizek2006:63), but only if that drive is conceptualized as on the

border of the physical and the psychical, as movement itself, that which propels us and which we try to make sense of after the event.

(197)

The drive force of dream is border of the physical and psychical. The desire is which we try to make sense of after the event. The dream is the image, identification and unconscious fantasy. A person's development is determined by often forgotten events in early childhood, rather than by inherited traits alone.

Heredity and home-environment also variable to affect the psychology of an individual Lucile Dooley argues:

Heredity and home-environment both predisposed our philosopher to an unusual line of development, to nervous instability. Father and grandfather were extremely active and capable men but high tempered, harsh, and overbearing. The father is supposed to have committed suicide. The mother married for advantage, after an unfortunate love affair, and seems to have been unemotional, cold, and selfish. Both parents were inclined to nomadism. The boy's relations with neither parent were happy. He and his mother could not live together. She cared more for the society of her friends than for her son, was disgusted with his morose ways and unwilling to yield to his wishes.

(407)

The relation with family members, society and behavior of family members are also important factors to make an individual emotional. Those forgotten emotion remains in unconscious and those things come out as dream, unintentional activity and slip of tongue.

The Freudian psychoanalysis mostly deals with the repressed sexual desire.

Sometimes Freudian psycho analysis has taken as the most erotic theory in academic and literary fields. However, at first Freud had developed this theory with the purpose of helping and curing mental patient. Post-Freudian theorist believes that the unconscious of an individual is not the only reason of suppressed sexual desire but it is also determined by the cultural background of individual.

To read psychoanalysis of an individual dream, slip of tongue, arts and unintentional acts are the main medium. Research tries to find out the psychological condition of characters like, Yeong-hye, In-hye, In-hye's husband, Ji-woo and Mr. Cheong through their dreams. Yeong-hye, the main character of the novel has the bloody nightmarish dream which leads towards her downfall. Her acts and obsession over dream leads almost all of her family members towards tragedy. In-hye tries to bring her back into conscious or senses but she does not want to believe or understand what personal surrounding says her.

Moreover, this ongoing research tries to find the repression and obsession of unconscious and hidden memories and their effects that of obsession. The next chapter focuses on the psychoanalytical interpretation of dreams and the effect of dreams in characters' life. Finding the roots of dreams is also the quest of research.

Chapter 3

The Dream Obsession of Major Characters

Yeong-hye, Her Dream Obsession and Downfall

In The *MEANING OF THE DREAM IN PSYCHOANALYSIS* Rachel B. Blass discusses the dream and its interpretation quoting Sigmund Freud, “There is nothing to be sought there, the dream has no meaning.” Freud (1856–1939), more than any other modern day investigator, would not heed such warnings” (1). The dream has no meaning on its own. If we investigate meaning of dream then it would be nothing more than foolishness. The dream does not carry any meaning or upcoming prediction about future. Dream is a person’s mind. Blass further argues:

It is a recurring event that started at a certain point in time and exerts various influences on the patient’s behavior and thoughts. Although contents of psychic states need not be real, the psychic states themselves are real; they are in a person’s mind, and as such there is a fact of the matter regarding them. (21)

The dream is recurring event that was happen in certain point of time or we have fantasizes about that at some point. It does not tell us what to do in future or we cannot do anything to escape about our dream. If we try hard to escape from dream or exaggerate the dream it will start to affect our health and our life.

At very first part of the novel Mr. Cheong narrates Yeong-hye, the major character of the novel, is obsessed with her bloody nightmarish dream. Her dream has started to affect her life. Mr. Cheong narrates one incident after his wife Yeong-hye turned vegetarian:

‘Have you lost your mind? Why on earth are throwing all this stuff our?’

I hurriedly stumbled my way through the plastic bags and grabbed her wrists, trying to prize 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.' (10)

After Yeong-hye turning into vegetarian, she starts to throw the entire meat item, eggs even milk. This makes her meat lover husband Mr. Cheong so much depressed and surprised.

Yeong-hye's dream's first victim is Mr. Cheong besides Yeong-hye herself. Yeong-hye becomes so much obsessed with her dream that she starts to live an uncommon lifestyle. Mr. Cheong further narrates:

She grew thinner by the day, so much that her cheek-bones had really become indecently prominent. Without make-up, her complexion resembled that of a hospital patient. If it had all been just another instance of a woman giving up meat in order to lose weight then there would have been no need to worry, but I was convinced that there was more going on here than a simple case of vegetarianism. No, it had to be that dream she'd mentioned; that was bound to be at the bottom of it all. Although, as matter of fact, she'd practically stopped sleeping. (15-16)

Yeong-hye's lifestyle is affecting her health. Still, she does not care about it. She has stopped eating any kind of meat items and dairy items too. For her husband, quitting meat for weight loss is something common but eating as little as possible like Yeong-

hye is something serious. Furthermore, Yeong-hye has practically stopped sleeping because of her nightmare.

Yeong-hye's switching to vegetarianism does not cause much effect at first. But her strict vegan life starts to affect people surrounding her as she hates to share the table with those who eat meat. Porochista Khakpour discusses the negative spaces created in family after Yeong-hye's turning into vegetarian:

At first she is met with casual disdain by family and friends; a dinner acquaintance passive-aggressively declares, "I'd hate to share a meal with someone who considers eating meat repulsive, just because that's how they themselves personally feel, don't you agree?" But soon her physical form creates the very negative space those close to her fear: weight loss, insomnia, diminished libido and the eventual abandonment of everyday "civilized" life. (para.3)

Her abandonment of everyday life creates so many problems in her marital life.

Moreover, she physically becomes so weak and mentally so unstable. Quitting food, meat, sleeping and other common lifestyle become her only priority. This behavior of Yeong-hye makes her family members leave more worried.

The bloody and nightmarish dream Yeong-hye dreamt made her vegan and to choose an uncommon lifestyle. It is so hard to escape from that horrible dream.

Yeong-hye's new lifestyle is nothing but her attempt to escape from her dream. She used to be a meat lover and live a common lifestyle but after that bloody recurring dream she chooses to live an uncommon life. Yeong-hye discusses about her nightmarish dream in her narrative shown in *Italic letters* in novel:

...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.

Somehow a way out. Running, running through the valley, then suddenly the woods open out...Families picnicking, little children running about, and that smell, that delicious smell. Almost painfully vivid. The babbling stream, people spreading out rush mats to sit on, snacking on kimbap. (12)

Her nightmare is nothing but all about blood, meat, violence and horrific situation. The frozen and dark woods without people, blood all over the place and all over her body. Yeong-hye's escaping from that situation and again ended up in a picnicking place where all the people are preparing different items of meat. This bloody nightmarish dream makes her to decide to convert herself into vegetarian. Her nightmare does not end there, she further narrates about her dream:

But the fear. My clothes still wet with blood. Hide, hide behind the trees. Crouch down, don't let anybody see. My bloody hands. My bloody mouth. In that barn, what had I done? Pushed that red raw mass into my mouth, felt it squish against my gums, the roof of my mouth, slick with crimson blood.

Chewing on something that felt so real, but couldn't have been, it couldn't. My face, the look in my eyes...my face, undoubtedly but never seen before. Or no, not mine but so familiar...nothing makes sense. Familiar yet not... that vivid, strange, horribly uncanny feeling.

(12)

The dream chases her every night in sleep and the memories of the dream chase her in broad daylight. The horribly uncanny feeling and sickness of dream made her into a woman with obsession. That obsession started to affect her personal and familial life. She even cuts her wrist to protest to not to eat meat.

Yeong-hye's strong decision of turning into vegetarian after her recurring nightmares becomes her tragedy. Nicky Kim argues about her decision of turning into vegetarianism, "The protagonist first becomes a vegetarian because she has recurring nightmares. They are bloody, violent and she appears to be racked with guilt, so she vows never to hurt any other living thing again" (para.15). Her bloody, violent nightmare makes her to vow and never to hurt any other living thing again. But that becomes obsession later.

Yeong-hye starts to disbelieve all the animal and human being surrounding her. She starts to think everyone around her are trying to hurt her. She believes that every animal eye have presence of blood. Yeong-hye in her monologue says:

Sleeping in five-minute snatches. Slipping out of fuzzy consciousness, it's back- the dream... Animal eyes gleaming wild, presence of blood, unearthed skull, again those eyes... My fingernails still soft, my teeth still gentle.

Can only trust my breasts now. I like my breasts, nothing can be killed by them. Hand, foot, tongue, gaze all weapons from which nothing is safe. But not my breasts. With my round breasts, I'm okay. Still okay.

So why do they keep on shrinking? Not even round any more. Why?

Why am I changing like this? Why are my edges all sharpening- what I am going to gouge? (33)

Her obsession increases day by day. She even starts to think that her own body parts

are in danger from each other. She only believes in her breasts. She thinks her breasts are only body parts which cannot be killed or damaged. That's why she starts to show her breasts in public places.

In novel, Yeong-hye has shown her body or stripped her clothes in many places. Mr. Cheong, Yeong-hye's husband narrates about the first incident of Yeong-hye's appearing naked in public place:

My wife was sitting on a bench by the fountain. She had removed her hospital gown and placed it on her knees, leaving her gaunt collarbones, emaciated breasts and brown nipples completely exposed. The bandage had been unwound from her left wrist, and the blood that was leaking out seemed to be slowly licking at the sutured area.

Sunbeams bathed her face and naked body.

'Darling, what are you doing?' I murmured in a low voice, picking up the hospital gown and using it to cover bare chest.

'It's hot, so... ' She smiled faintly... 'It's hot, so I just undressed.' (51-52)

Yeong-hye becomes more and more obsessive with dream and does more and more asocial things. She does not care about her wounded body and does not try to stop her bleeding. Rather she becomes naked in public place just because she feels hot.

Yeong-hye does not stop by turning into strict vegetarian life to escape from horrible dream. She starts to behave differently. Nicky Kim further elaborates Yeong-hye's surprising behavior:

This innocent reason for vegetarianism spirals out of control when other people in her life force her to stop. She slowly stops eating food all together and slits her wrists when she is forced to eat meat. Then

she develops a habit of taking her clothes off in public places and displays peculiar behaviour, such as not speaking and standing on her head. It is revealed in the end that these were attempts to become a tree. (para.15)

Not only meat, Yeong-hye slowly stops eating food and drinking water too. She tries to kill herself when her father forces to feed her meat. She develops a habit of taking her clothes off in public places and displays peculiar behavior, such as not speaking and standing on her head. These all unusual behaviors of her were the attempts to become a tree. In this way, she becomes more and more obsessive over her dream and she does anything it takes to run away from horrible dream.

The recurring dream of violent always haunted Yeong-hye. Yeong-hye always tries to escape from her unwanted dream of violence, murder and blood. The more she wants to escape from dream the more that dream repeats. Yeong-hye in her monologue says:

They come to me now more times than I can count. Dreams overlaid with dreams, a palimpsest of horror. Violent acts perpetrated by night. A hazy feeling I can't pin down...but remembered as blood-chillingly definite.

...Everything starts to feel unfamiliar. Like I've come up to the back of something. Shut up behind a door without a handle. Perhaps I'm only now coming face-to-face with the thing that has always been here. It's dark. Everything is being snuffed out in the pitch-black darkness. (28)

The unfamiliar faces, same type of bloody nightmare and a kind of fear, these are Yeong-hye's main enemies from which she wants to get rid of. In the process of getting rid of dream, Yeong-hye becomes more and more obsessed towards her

dream.

The dream is the reflection of what an individual experiences in real life. It is the hidden memories or the interest of an individual that shape the dream. Sigmund Freud talks about dream and its relation with waking life:

When considering the relation of dreams to waking life, and the provenance of the material of dreams, we learned that the earliest as well as the most recent investigators are agreed that men dream of what they do during the day, and of the things that interest them in the waking state. This interest, continued from waking life into sleep, is not only a psychic bond, joining the dream to life, but it is also a source of dreams whose importance must not be underestimated, and which, taken together with those stimuli which become active and of interest during sleep, suffices to explain the origin of all dream-images.

(15)

The interest and the incident, an individual experiences in day time is all what he/she sees in dream. Those interests or incidents become our dream images. Yeong-hye's dream is also guided by her bitter experience of her past.

Moreover, her violent father, woods and other factors she had experienced in her childhood become her dream in present time. Yeong-hye narrates about an incident of her father's killing a dog that bites her:

Blood drips from its throat, which is being choked with the rope... At six laps, the dog vomits blackish-red blood, trickling from its mouth and open throat. As blood and froth mix together, I stand stiffly upright and stare at those two glittering eyes. Seven laps, and while waiting for the dog to come into view, Father looks behind and sees that it is in

fact dangling limply from the motorcycle.

That evening there was a feast at our house...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. (42)

The process of killing dog and its pain remains deeply inside Yeong-hye's memory. The dog's blackish-red vomit, its eyes and choking sound of dog were never gone from her memory. Moreover, the feast of dog's meat and the first bite of dog's meat that Yeong-hye chews just because of small superstition remains as a scar in her heart.

Besides this violent memory of her father killing a dog, Yeong-hye's father was dominating and violent towards her too. She never loved to be around her father. She used to love woods than home. In Yeong-hye's sister In-hye's narration *Flaming Trees* we come to know about the violence of their father over Yeong-hye in their childhood and Yeong-hye's fear:

A long time ago, she and Yeong-hye had got lost on a mountain.

Yeong-hye, who had been nine at the time, said, 'Let's just not go back.'

At the time, In-hye had not understood what she meant. 'What are you talking about? It'll get dark any minute now. We have to hurry up and find the path.'

Only after all this time was she able to understand why Yeong-hye had said what she did. Yeong-hye had been the only victim of their father's beatings. Such violence wouldn't have bothered their brother Yeong-ho so much, a boy who went around doling out his own rough justice to the village children. (157)

Yeong-hye was always been the violent victim of her father. Her father used to beat

her brutally. She even used to love jungle and mountain more than home. The violent father's beatings make her living in fear always. Those vivid memories of violent and fear and blood are the sources of Yeong-hye's memory.

The dream influenced by her sad and violent memory disturbs Yeong-hye a lot. She tries to run away from it but becomes more obsessive over it. She quits eating meat, food and drinking with time. In-hye narrates an incident about Yeong-hye's claiming of turning herself into a tree slowly:

Yeong-hye moved her emaciated face closer to her sister. 'I'm not an animal anymore, sister', she said,.. 'I don't need to eat, not now. I can live without it. All I need is sunlight.'

'What are you talking about? Do you really think you've turned into a tree? How could a plant talk? How can you think these things?'

Yeong-hye's eyes shone. A mysterious smile played on her face.

'You're right. Soon now, words and thoughts will all disappear. Soon.'

Yeong-hye burst into laughter, then sighed. 'Very soon. Just a bit longer to wait, sister.' (153-54)

Yeong-hye tries to become a tree. All her activities were just an attempt to become a tree. Her dream and obsession of dream leads her to go and think beyond the reality.

Ilana Masad discusses about the Yeong-hye's idea of going to turn into a tree,

'Humanity is harmful, rageful, murderous, violent, grasping, jealous, greedy – all things she doesn't want to be. And so she defies us humans not only by becoming vegetarian, but by trying to become vegetation itself. She doesn't want to stop living. She wants to stop living like us' (5). Yeong-hye's trying to live as a tree is nothing else but her fear against humankind.

Moreover, Yeong-hye does not even want to live. For her life does not have

any meaning. Yeong-hye believes dying is nothing to fear about. Death is not that for her. In psychiatric ward where Yeong-hye was kept, In-hye, out of love towards her younger sister and fear of losing her asks to not to die and situation goes like:

In-hye couldn't hold herself back any longer. 'You!' she yelled. 'I'm acting like this because I'm afraid you're going to die!'

Yeong-hye turned her head and stared blankly at In-hye, as though the latter were not her sister but a complete stranger. After a while, the question came.

'Why, is it such a bad thing to die?' (157)

In-hye is worried about her sister, Yeong-hye's degrading health but Yeong-hye does not care at all. In-hye told her to eat food otherwise she will die but Yeong-hye replies with a question whether dying is a bad thing.

Yeong-hye's leaving all the human values and needs for escaping from nightmare is the worst downfall of her life. Lori Feathers discusses about Yeong-hye's decision of leaving every materialistic value:

"Existence precedes essence" is a central tenet of Jean-Paul Sartre's philosophy-first a human exists and then she creates her essence, the values and meanings that define her as human. The Vegetarian's heroine, Yeong-hye, gradually sheds her essence, emotionally isolating herself. She devolves into something that exists without meaning, like a plant or animal, and in doing so she ignores the societal norms that require a suppression of the primal. (para.2)

Yeong-hye's life after being vegetarian becomes more isolated. She becomes more alienated. Her ignoring the social norms and values make her family members suffer. She leaves behind the philosophy that defines one as sane human being in society.

At first, Yeong-hye quits eating meat just to avoid a bad dream. In this process, she becomes so obsessed over her dream that she leaves each and every norm and value of society. Along with turning vegetarian, at first, slowly Yeong-hye quits to eat food and drink water and get rid of clothes too. Her quitting any kind of food makes her so much weaker and it affects her health badly. Furthermore, she loses her societal status, familial love, gets divorced and almost dies. Everything she does at first just to avoid a bad dream and this leads her to an ultimate downfall with mental illness, physical helplessness, familial tragedy and marital failure.

Yeong-hye's Brother-in-law's Obsession over Mongolian Mark and His Downfall

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law is on another character who meets downfall because of his obsession over his lust towards Yeong-hye. He was not much attracted towards his sister-in-law at first but from the moment his wife, In-hye tells him that Yeong-hye has Mongolian mark at her buttock he wants to see that Mongolian mark and have sexual relation with Yeong-hye. He narrates about his attraction towards Yeong-hye:

‘Well...I can't remember exactly when mine went. And Yeong-hye still had hers when she was twenty.’ If she hadn't then followed up his astonished ‘Twenty?’ with ‘Mmmm...just a thumb-sized thing, blue. And if she had it that long, who knows, maybe she's still got it now. In precisely that moment he was struck by the image of a blue flower on a woman's buttocks, its petal opening outwards. In his mind, the fact that his sister-in-law still had a Mongolian mark on her buttocks became inexplicably bound up with the image of men and women having sex, their naked bodies completely covered with painted flowers. (59)

The moment he heard Yeong-hye has blue Mongolian mark in her buttocks from his

wife he starts to fantasize about her. Flower painting all over the body of both male and female and their involvement in sexual activities is all he fantasizes about.

Watching Yeong-hye's naked body especially her buttocks is his only dream.

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law's obsession to watch Yeong-hye's Mongolian mark and having sexual relation with her makes her to dream about having sexual relation with her. He never had that kind of thought before hearing about Mongolian mark.

The narration goes on:

It was clearly only after hearing about her Mongolian mark from his wife that he'd started to see his sister-in-law in a new light. Before that, he'd never had any kind of ulterior motive when it came to his dealings with her. When he recalled how she'd looked and acted during the time she'd spent living with them, the sexual desire that flooded through him was a product of his mental re-enactment of these past experiences, not something he'd actually felt at the time. (71)

The way Yeong-hye acted and looked during the time her living with sister and him never matter before. Moreover, she never attracted him. All the sexual desire that flooded through him was a product of his mental re-enactment.

Besides latest discovery of Mongolian mark, his not so satisfied marriage life also one of the cause of his attraction towards Yeong-hye. His attraction and obsession goes hand to hand for his misfortune Charles R. Larson argues:

He's observed Yeong-hye's recent transformation, including her divorce from her husband and her stay in a psychiatric hospital for several months. Yet, because of his own failed marriage (to Yeong-hye's sister), he has discovered that he is attracted to her and talks her into modeling for him. He convinces her to remove her clothes and

then he paints flowers over her entire body. Oddly, she so enjoys the paintings that when she returns to her own flat, she does not wash the paint off, convinced that her flowery body is now more closely connected to the vegetable world. (para.4)

The attraction towards Yeong-hye, her brother-in-law convinces her to modeling for nude painting. Moreover, his painting over Yeong-hye's body is just an excuse. Seeing her naked and having sexual relation with Yeong-he is his main motive.

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law's sexual attraction toward her increases day by day. Moreover, he become so obsessed with her that he starts to dream about her too. In his dream he sees himself Yeong-hye having sex ejaculate together. About his dream with Yeong-hye he narrates:

A dazzling light came from her naked body, making him squint, and he couldn't see the area above her breasts-as though the source of the light was somewhere around her face. He spread her legs; her thighs parted with an ease that could only mean she was awake. A green sap, like that which oozes from bruised leaves, began to flow out from her vagina when he entered her. The acrid sweetness of the grass was so pungent he found it difficult to breathe, when he pulled out, on the point of climax, he saw that the whole of his penis was stained green. A blackish paste was smeared over his skin from his lower stomach to his thighs, a fresh sap which could have come from either her or him.

(96)

His obsession with his sister-in-law is the material for his dream. It was not only nude body painting for him it was always more than that. His strong lust towards Yeong-hye is only cause of his downfall. Mongolian mark on Yeong-hye's buttocks is only

the cause that makes him obsessed and attracted towards Yeong-hye.

With all his effort and different attempts, he gets to sleep with Yeong-hye but he was caught by his wife In-hye. After getting caught by his wife, he tries to kill himself. But somehow a paramedic caught him before getting killed. The situation of his suicidal attempt is narrated in third part of the novel *Flaming Trees*:

While all this was going on, her husband had tried to get round the other paramedic, who was standing by the front door, but the man easily caught hold of him. Using all his strength to tear himself free, he whipped round and, without a moment's pause, ran out onto the veranda. He tried to throw himself over the railing. The quick-footed paramedic got hold of him around the waist just in time, and after that he didn't struggle any more. (138)

He gets succeeded in his obsession and fantasy but he loses his family. After getting caught by his wife he realizes about his mistakes. He realizes about the social norms, values and taboos. But it was already too late. This makes him to think only option he gets is committing suicide. But his attempt of throwing himself from third floor of building was disturbed by paramedic team.

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law met his destruction by his own actions. Thrity Umrigar claims, "And yet, the novel makes clear that the women are not the only victims... In-hye's artistic husband, who remains unnamed in the novel, develops an obsession with his sister-in-law and is destroyed by his passion" (par.9). His passion and obsession are his causes of downfall.

Moreover, because of his obsession he lost his family. He gets divorced with his wife, In-hye. In-hye never lets him see his son Ji-woo. His professional life as artist and reputation also goes in vain. Furthermore, after getting divorced with In-

hye, nobody knows about his whereabouts. He used to be an artist who always works just for reputation and good name but after the incident with Yeong-hye and getting divorced, he is not even place to use his name openly, this is his major downfall and tragedy.

Psychoanalytical Study of Other Characters' Activities and Dream

The dream and its impact continue with other characters too. The characters experience, fantasy and wish are their source of dream. Yeong-hye is the victim of dream because of her obsession over it. Other characters Mr. Cheong, In-hye's husband, Ji-woo and In-hye also do dream. The dream does not leave big impact upon other characters because they become able to return to reality as soon as possible.

After Yeong-hye's attempt of killing herself by cutting wrist, she was admitted to hospital. There, Mr. Cheong dreams about his killing someone so violently. About his violent dream Mr. Cheong narrates:

When I eventually succeeded in falling asleep, I had a dream. In the dream, I was killing someone. I thrust a knife into their stomach with all my strength, then reached into the wound and wrenched out the long, coiled-up intestines. Like eating fish, I peeled off all the squishy flesh and muscle and left only the bones. But in the very instant I woke up, I ceased to remember who it was that I had killed. (50)

Mr. Cheong, in his dream tries to kill someone. He thrusts knife into that person's stomach with all his strength. He does not satisfy only by killing him. He peeled that person's flesh and muscle and left only the bones. Mr. Cheong sees this dream in hospital while waiting for his wife who just tries to commit suicide.

After Yeong-hye's converting herself into vegetarian, Mr. Cheong has not been able to eat meat in house. Yeong-hye threw all the meat including dairy item and

goes strict vegan and does not cook meat even for her husband, Mr. Cheong. The meat lover Mr. Cheong was so upset by his wife's latest behavior. Charles R. Larson discusses about Yeong-hye's behavior after converting herself into vegan and Mr. Cheong's reaction on that:

...when she tells him that she has thrown out most of what is in the refrigerator—even the milk and the eggs—and that she will no longer eat meat, he regards her act as “self-centered.” He's aghast that she has done something for herself: “The very idea that there should be this other side to her, one where she selfishly did as she pleased, was astonishing.”...After some months of eating only vegetables, Yeong-hye becomes emaciated. She tells her husband that his body “smells of meat.”...He's coped by eating his meals during the day at work. Finally, he's so upset by her “vegetarianism,” that he takes her to see her family. At the table, she tells her father, “I don't eat meat,” provoking her father into striking her. (para.2)

Mr. Cheong thinks his wife has become so selfish that she only prepares food that she wants to eat. Moreover, she throws all the meat in kitchen and she does not let her husband come close because she thinks her husband smells like meat. This latest behavior of Yeong-hye made Mr. Cheong upset. Finally, he's so upset by her vegetarianism, that he takes her to see her family members. In that family gathering Yeong-hye's father beats her and tries to feed her meat forcefully. This leads to Yeong-hye's suicidal attempt.

Mr. Cheong's dream is all about his hunger for meat and in that processes his wife's misfortune. He wanted to eat meat for months but his wife was not ready to cook meat item in home. He was so obsessed with meat that he arranges the family

gathering to force to feed meat to his wife. But in that process his Vietnam vet father-in-law becomes so violent that he beats Yeong-hye without even thinking for a second. His lust for meat and his wife's attempt of suicide in the process of his feeding her meat are his source of dream.

One character who supports and stands with Yeong-hye till last is her own sister In-hye. Her husband's relation with Yeong-hye destroyed her marital life. She got divorced. In-hye is a character of responsibility. In her younger age too she works hard for her family. She runs her own business. Eileen Batters by talks about the characteristics and role about In-hye, 'Yeong-hye's older sister, In-hye – a good wife, a good mother and a good sister – to provide the only support left for Yeong-hye. It is she alone who visits the increasingly catatonic woman in a psychiatric facility and attempts to make sense of the horror. (para.15)' Her husband being not so supportive to family she is the one who look after family for each and every problem. Running business, looking after mentally challenged sister and doing household activities perfectly are her routine.

However, after finding her husband with her own sister who is recently came out from psychiatric hospital, her marital life collapsed. Still she never runs from her sister Yeong-hye. However, after doing and living her busy schedule at cold and dark midnight when she becomes free and tries to sleep dreams about her sister. In-hye narrates about her dream:

But lying next to the small, tanned body of her son, after sleep draws itself down over his guiltless young face, the night begins again for her...If she curls up in the empty bathtub and closes her eyes, the dark woods close in around her. The dark lines of rain drill into Yeong-hye's body like spears, her skinny bare feet are covered in mud. When

In-hye shakes her head to dispel the image, summer trees in broad daylight flicker in front of her eyes like huge green fireworks. Is this because of the hallucination Yeong-hye told her about? The innumerable trees she's seen over the course of all her life, the undulating forests which blanket the continents like a heartless sea, envelop her exhausted body and lift her up. (169)

In her dream, In-hye dreams about her sister and dark woods around her. The dream continuous with Yeong-hye's body drilled by dark lines of rain like spears, her skinny bare feet are covered in mud. In-hye's worrying and cares for her little sister Yeong-hye is the factors to her dream.

In-hye's love, affection and responsibility towards her sister Yeong-hye remains till last. All other family members ignore her but this sister stands with her.

Eileen Battersby elaborates In-hye's character:

As she watches her sister dwindle, withdrawing into a strange inner world, she recalls how, as "the eldest daughter, In-hye had been the one who took over from their exhausted mother and made a broth for her father to wash the liquor down . . . Only Yeong-hye . . . became difficult to read . . . So difficult that there were times when she seemed like a total stranger." Han's deliberate prose channels into the heart of the helplessness of trying to help when the afflicted has no interest in being helped. Kindly In-hye is a heartbreaking study of the helpless carer. (16)

The sincere sisterly love is shown in the novel. In-hye tries to help Yeong-hye, in any situation but in the other hand Yeong-hye has no interest in being helped. In-hye could have left Yeong-hye like all other family members but she does anything

possible to keep Yeong-hye alive. This sisterly love showered by In-hye does not carry positive impact to her sister. On the contrary, Yeong-hye finds it as if she is being tortured.

In all this, there is a little child who is much more affected than others. Yeong-hye meets her downfall because of her obsession over dream, her brother-in-law meets downfall because of his obsession over Mongolian mark of Yeong-hye, In-hye's tragedy belongs to her ego and Mr. Cheong's tragedy is because of his irresponsible nature. But this little boy Ji-woo lost his father and fatherly love. He sometimes asks about his father but In-hye would answer as there is no father in this family. Ji-woo ask his mother In-hye about his father:

After her husband left them, Ji-woo would often ask her, 'Is there a dad in our family?' It was the question he'd asked her every morning even when her husband was still around so infrequently did the boy actually see him.

'No,' she would answer shortly. And then, soundlessly: 'No one at all. There's only you and me. That will have to enough, now.'(134)

After parents got divorced a child searches for his father and mother cannot reply with the truth. The innocent child does not know what happened between his father and mother. His mother would say there was never a father rather than his father and mother got divorced and father will never come to see him again.

The novel presents about the obsession, dream, ego and other human behaviors. Obsession and failure of the character are shown in the novel with Yeong-hye and her brother-in-law. On the other hand, we can observe sense of responsibility through character of In-hye. Mr. Cheong is the character who escapes from responsibility. At some point every major character experience dream or visions in

which they see their own reflections. Lori Feathers talks about the characters and their dream experience:

Yeong-hye, her sister, and her brother-in-law all experience dreams or visions in which they see their own reflections distorted, their faces altered or obscure. This recognizable but distorted self is the primal self, and while only Yeong-hye surrenders herself completely to it, both In-hye and her husband give in only temporarily to its seductions. In-hye envies her sister's total surrender: (5)

Yeong-hye surrenders herself into dream so much that she could not come back in reality and meets her downfall. Yeong-hye's brother-in-law becomes so obsessed with his fantasy of having sex with Yeong-hye. He got the chance to sleep with Yeong-hye but his marital life meets total destruction. In-hye is only such character who does not let her obsession win her. She returns to reality before situation got worse.

Yeong-hye turned strict vegan into the society where meat is almost regular for every kind of cuisine. Her decision has nothing to do with animal rights or losing weight. She left meat just because of a dream which is senseless for almost all of her family members. Moreover, she left all other foods and even quits drinking water to become a tree. Her obsession leads her to tragic downfall of mental illness, physical weakness. Yeong-hye's brother-in-law's sexual obsession over Yeong-hye becomes the cause of his marital failure and professional destruction. Characters, Yeong-hye and her brother-in-law meet downfall due to their obsession.

Chapter 5

The Dream, Obsession and Downfall

Every society is governed by a particular socio-cultural system which has a direct impact upon the lives of the people. Han Kang writes about the woman who tries to convert herself into vegan in a South Korean family where meat is almost regular for every dishes. The novel depicts a woman's strong commitment of quitting eating meat just to escape from nightmare. It also shows the violence, sex, art and other premises of life. The struggle of the major character and her psychological downfall after her obsession over dream is shown beautifully in the novel.

It shows how dangerous it is to be obsessed with something. The novel symbolically represents the South Korean history of revolution. The novel shows one small violence and ignorance towards children can be most dangerous for him/her in future. The South Korean culture of nurturing children in rural area is also shown in the novel. The novel presents how a small incident can become the worst memory for a child and an obsession over something can be harmful for life.

The violent nature of Yeong-hye's father kills a dog mercilessly while she was a child. This incident remains in her memory so deeply that in her dream too she always sees the blood, flesh, violent and murder. To escape from the dream she stops sleeping, eating meat, and eats foods as little as possible. On the other hand her loveless marital life also ends because of her obsession over dream. Her obsession over her dream does not end just by quitting meat or eating less; She starts to undress herself in public places. Her health becomes so critical that doctors and caretakers of mental hospital say she has no hope for life. Yeong-hye meets only downfall with her obsession. This thesis is especially focused on the psychological impact of dream upon dreamer. It is Yeong-hye who becomes the victim of her recurring dream of a

violence and it has detrimental impact upon her . She gives up eating meat. People around her suggest not to go against the cultural tradition but she finds it an unnecessary pressure and she loses her control over her psche and starts to display unbecoming behaviour like undressing herself in the public.

The main problem that arouse in the process if writing his thesis was why that particular character became obsessed due to that dream. In connection to this problem, the hypothesis formulated was that dreams had strong psychological impact upon the dreamers leading than if unusual thinking and strange behaviour. The study has also shown the same result. Yeong-hye's strange behaviour and her way of thinking have been the result of her dream.

The study has adopted Freudian psychoanalysis of dream interpretation, focusing on the impact of dreams in waking mind. The thesis has come to the conclusion that the dream effect upon Yeong-hye is so powerful that it has become the cause of her collapse.

Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, a videographic artist has his own obsession. In-hye casually mentions about a Mongolian mark on her sister Yeong-hye's buttocks. After hearing about Mongolian mark from his wife Yeong-hye's brother-in-law develops craze to see that Mongolian mark at any cost and to have sex with her. He somehow gets chance to having sex with Yeong-hye but his wife In-hye finds out about his relation with Yeong-hye. After finding out the relation between her sister and husband, In-hye divorced her husband and does not allow him to meet with his son Ji-woo. Moreover, he lives completely stranger's life after divorce, losing his all reputation as an artist.

The psychological trauma and effect of over obsession is shown beautifully in novel. Han Kang's characters are so much unstable in terms of emotion. Because of

their instability they develop the obsession over dream and other activities of skepticism. Rather than realizing the difference between dream and reality and stopping themselves from obsession, they go deeply into their fantasies, which becomes their only reason of failure and downfall.

To sum up the novel successfully presents that a life and surrounding can ruin an individual's psychological obsession over something. It suggests that control over obsession is a need before it gets too late to handle. And it also suggests that one should not act violently in front of children. The innocent mind and memory of children can get negatively affected by the violent behavior of parents.

Lastly, it is the work of art that depicts Han Kang's belief in the peace loving society where everyone can live happily. Violence against children causes mental disorder to them. Thus the novel is a lesson towards those parents who are parenting their children with violence and to those people who are so obsessive over fantasy and dream and can do anything to fulfill their fantasy.

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