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The World Literature and Women's Voice in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2007)

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Abstract

This study seeks to investigate the women's voice in the world literature depicted by ethnic female authors from African-American and Korean descent. Gaining international recognition in the world literature, Toni Morrison's The Bluest Eyes (1970) and Han Kang's The Vegetarian (2007) reveal different social-cultural conditions about how women are presented in their respective nation. Morrison presents the life of colored women struggling with racial discrimination in the predominant white society. Meanwhile, Kang employs the symbolic food of meat and vegetarianism to reveal the women's voice against social conformity. Applying écriture feminine or women's writing in the analysis, both Toni Morrison and Han Kang scrutinize the stereotypical representation of women as passive, obedient, and lacking. In examining the two works, some steps were done: 1) having close reading towards the text to analyze the representation of women; 2) doing the socio-cultural analysis in connection to the women's voice; 3) drawing the conclusion about the significance of world literature to the women's voice. This study finds that the world literature has its significant contribution as the windows for global readers to understand women's issues portrayed in two different nations. Not only to present women's voice, ethnic female authors such as Toni Morrison and Han Kang indeed share the local culture through their novels. With this condition, the world literature enables to break the barriers of male Western authors as the center by offering room for female writers from non-Western countries.

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Introduction

The development of world literature has given richer colors to the variety of regions and cultural nations circulated in a global scope. Taking account of the word 'world' literature, it refers to a geographical term that includes the entire globe without taking aside a

particular region. It covers all areas not only in Europe or America but also non-Western countries from Asia and Africa (Longxi, 2013). With the concept of openness, the world literature functions as the multiple windows which allow readers to experience various literatures from any region (Damrosch, 2003). Providing more access to the foreign readers, people from all over the world could finally learn about national culture, history and value represented in the literature.

Before the emergence of world literature, traditionally the Western has become the center of literature and civilization. It begins from the antiquity era when famous Western authors and philosophers mostly come from Greek and Roman. Along with the establishment of Western imperialism, many of the canonical literary works were originated from the Western countries. Centralized in Western countries, the canonical literature was majorly written by male authors (Lombardi, 2019) such as William Shakespeare, Charles Dickens and Geoffrey Chaucer. Under this circumstance, the binarism emerges, strengthening the position on Western and making non-Western as the periphery. However, the barrier is not only limited between Western and non-Western but it also includes male and female writing.

The traditional belief says only men should write, but in world literature nowadays, it turns out to be a more flexible platform for women to express their idea. In literary history, the male Western point of view reflects the representation for all kinds of human beings including non-Western people and women. Hence, there had been discrimination in a way white men's lenses were used to define marginalized groups. At this point, the shift of landscape in the world literature gives room for authors from non-European countries and female writers to show up in the global market.

When it comes to writing, the patriarchal society expected women's narratives to be feminine and less vulgar in expressing their thought (Saito, 2010). However, the idea of *écriture feminine* or the feminine writing by Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray in the 1970's affords females to express their own passion originally from the women's mind (Moi, 2008). As the women write, *écriture feminine* encourages women to represent the repressed and misrepresented femininity done by the Western culture (Vachhani, 2019). Highlighting the necessity for women to write themselves and create their own history (Stroud, 2016), the women's writing resists the conservative norm which suppresses the women's voice.

In order to investigate the women's writing in world literature, this study applies two selected works from female authors which are Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2007) translated by Deborah Smith in 2015. The representative female authors speak up the local experience from African-American and Korean point of view related to the issue happening in their society. Throughout the discussion, the focus of the analysis is centered on feminine writings from two selected novels depicting both the representation of women and the local issue about women in their respective country. In relation to world literature, it suggests a framework centering on 'world literary space'. In which, it negotiates between historical, political economic context and the aesthetic autonomy of the text (Casanova, 2014). By reading the female writings from different nations, it will be easier for the readers to capture the representation of women ranging from various countries.

Two selected works by female authors from African-American and Korean descent are chosen as the object of the study for some reasons. In the scope of world literature, these two names are widely recognized for the foreign readers. Unlike Morrison who writes her debut novel in English language, Han Kang originally writes her book in her national language, Korean. Due to its success, the novel is translated so that more people outside the nation have access to read the books. Regarded as female non-European authors, Toni Morrison and Hang Kang against the patriarchal structure by putting the women's voice in their narrative. Moreover, their emergence in the world literature raises the non-European rights to be able to write and present their identity.

Winning a Nobel and Pulitzer Prize American novelist, Toni Morrison writes a tale of African-American young girl named Pecola who has a desire to be white by having the beautiful bluest eye (Bracken, 2020). Through her novel, Morrison uplifts the experience of how it is to be African woman living in a predominant White society where being colored has been connotated to be less and ugly. Instead of being judged by deed and intention, black women are treated differently because of their skin color (Eddine, 2018). As a woman of color, Morrison brings up the African-American's female voice about the double marginalization of colored women to live in a White patriarchal society.

Similar to Morrison, Han Kang also writes about the life of Korean women under the male's subjugation. Having a brutal dream about bloody animal, Yeong-Hye as the main character decides to be a vegetarian. By becoming a vegetarian, a married woman Yeong Hye, rebels against the strict Korean social mores (Krys, 2016). Han Kang symbolizes meat and vegetarianism to portray women's voices in a patriarchal society. Living in a country where meat is consumed by a large of people, the figure of a vegetarian woman contradicts what is called normal in society. The opposite of normal representation of woman indeed makes this novel as a counter to social conformity. Han Kang depicts the bizarre representation of a woman in *The Vegetarian* whose novel has won the Man Booker International Prize in 2016. This somehow leads her to open a new door for Korean literature to be mainly known (Licher, 2016).

Estanto (2020) in his writing offers the advancement of woman portrayal, position and chance as portrayed in Asian literature. The study discovers that women are considered as subsidiary compared to men (2020). Similar to Estanto, the current study also employs women's perspective to see how female writers in each nation vocalize the representation of women. Unlike Estanto who puts his scope on Asian literature, the current study intends to have two different female authors who are part of African-American, and Korean nation. The variety of nations in this study seeks the contribution of female authors in giving a depiction about women from a particular country as well as enabling the readers to understand both social and political conditions in each nation.

The previous research about feminism by Rahimnouri and Ghandehariun (2020) investigates feminist stylistic in Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* (1988). The authors combine the analysis from both linguistic and literary perspective. On the basis of the stylistic analysis, the authors find out that Harriet as the female character is described as traditional, old-fashioned, powerless, and subordinated. Although both the current research and the previous research by Rahimnouri and Ghandehariun (2020) apply the woman perspective in the analysis, there is a gap in a way the current research focuses on not only women but also national culture in the context of world literature.

Along with the discussion, the study aims to analyze two main points about: 1) the constructed images of women in the society reflected in two selected novels; 2) the ethnic female writers and socio-cultural issue in world literature. Using the perspective of female writing in the context of world literature, this study observes how female writing describes the position of women in global literature and how national identity about social and cultural condition has been portrayed in the narrative.

Methodology

In order to complete the analysis about women representation in the two selected novels, this study applies a descriptive qualitative method. The data are taken from Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* (1970) and Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2007) as the primary texts and some journal articles as the secondary data.

As the representative of Africa-American and Korean literature, both Toni Morrison and Hang Kang express the women's voice against normative construction made by the male Western society. In addition, the two novels by non-European female authors add more nuances for the non-Western to introduce their identity and portray the social, cultural, and political condition in their respective

origin. Focusing on the presence of two ethnic female authors, the analysis connects the world literature and marginalized female non-European authors. As a matter of fact, the shift from European centric to a more globalized country in world literature has enabled the peripheral group to rise and define themselves.

This research posits the mode of women's writing by ethnic female authors as the core of the analysis. To support the discussion about the women's voice, *écriture feminine* or the women's writing is applied as the theoretical framework in the analysis. Thus, it aims to scrutinize how women were presented and shaped by the dominant class. The perspective from the women's writing finally can empower the women to create new world literature where women could write in a more liberating way (Stroud, 2016).

There are three main steps done in this study. First, close reading towards the primary texts is needed to find how Morrison and Kang portray the representation of women. Second, the researcher analyzes the way women's representation is connected to the socio-political condition in African-American and Korean descent. Lastly, the study examines the significance of world literature to ethnic female writings of vocalizing female point of view.

Results and Discussion

The Constructed Images of Woman in the Society

Highlighting the idea of female liberation, *écriture feminine* refers to the writing by women, although it is not limited that men can write it too. What has been problematized by the feminists is about gender and sexuality that is constructed in the society (Moi, 2008). Naturally, the feminine characteristics are related to caretaking and domestic roles. Meanwhile, the masculinity is associated with roles that require physical activities (Murnen & Don, 2012). The gender roles division between male and female make a clear portrait about inequalities among them. In the two selected novels, both authors display the stereotype about a good wife for a man.

> *They never seem to have boyfriends, but they always marry. Certain men watch them, without seeming to, and know that if such a girl is in his house,— They know their work clothes will be mended, washed, and ironed on Monday,—Her hips assure them that she will bear children easily and painlessly. And they are right.* (Morrison, 2004, p. 78).

Taking account of the word 'wife', Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* captures that most men prefer the brown girls from the northern part to be their wife. The bourgeois black women educate themselves to be good wife which means she dedicates herself to take good care of her husband, family, and household. It seems to be a natural and fixed condition that activities related to the household are associated with the idea of femininity.

The concept of patriarchal society believes that men are born to dominate and women to be subordinate (Sultana, 2012). Under this condition, the society is constructed by the patriarchal structure which gives less access for women to decision making, legal rights, and women's mobility. Depicted by Morrison, she subtly evaluates the femininity measured by the nature of a woman to give birth. In society, the figure of women is thus generalized to bear children because that is what women do. Women are expected to marry a guy and be a mother. Therefore, the women who choose to be unmarried and childless remain undervalued.

In the scope of medical care, black women have to deal with stark and persistent disparities (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014). In the medical community, the stereotypical perceptions of black women lead to biased treatment in medical care since "black women are more likely to engage in risky health behaviors such as promiscuous sexual behavior" (Abdou & Fingerhut, 2014, p.318).

> *When he got to me he said now these here women you don't have any trouble with. They deliver right away and with no pain.*

> *Just like horses. —when them pains got harder, I was glad. Glad to have something else to think about—I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement. I hurt just like them white women.* (Morrison, 2004, p. 112).

Not only vocalizing the women's voice, but Morrison also positions herself as the black woman. Through her writing, she resists the negative stereotype of black women. With their hips, black women will have less pain than white women. Seen as the horse, Morrison deconstructs the stereotype towards the black women. As a part of the Black community, Morrison attempts to redefine the identity of colored women asserting that black women are also human beings who are equal to white women.

The social demand of femininity is also depicted in Kang's *The Vegetarian*. Women are supposed to be good with their hands for cooking, ironing and tidying the house because that makes them a good wife. In the society, women have to deal with demands of femininity. This expectation of the society towards women somehow produces the internalized belief about gender roles and constructed identity (Marso via Hall, 2010).

> *In keeping with my expectations, she made for a completely ordinary wife who went about things without any distasteful frivolousness. Every morning she got up at six a.m. to prepare rice and soup, and usually a bit of fish.* (Kang, 2015, p.10-11).

This situation, as portrayed by the authors, raises a question whether or not women have a choice to do what they actually want outside the manifested gender roles in the society. The limitation for women to freely decide their own choice somehow reveals the lack of respecting women's freedom (2010). In consequence, the voice of women under patriarchal domination tends to be submerged by the common expectation in the society.

Not only about gender roles, Toni Morrison and Hang Kang implicitly assert the representation of women as passive in a male-dominated society. A constructed representation of female is legitimately to be a fundamental entity. Woman is defined to be inferior and subordinate (Madsen, 2000). In Morrison's writing, there are differences between Pecola and Sammy in a way they express disappointment from the upsetting family.

> *There was a difference in the reaction of the children to these battles Sammy cursed for a while, or left the house, or threw himself into the fray.— Pecola, on the other hand, restricted by youth and sex, experimented with methods of endurance. Though the methods varied, the pain was as consistent as it was deep.* (Morrison, 2004, p. 42).

Being a girl, Pecola cannot express what she feels. She tends to bury her voice when she is upset. The cultural image of girls in the society demands her to stay at home, even if she wants to run away. Feeling overwhelmed, women are supposed to keep quiet and hold her emotion inside. Meanwhile, the masculinity casts men to be freer in expressing their anger, not to hold back what is in the mind.

Under the male domination, Kang portrays that woman is not allowed neither to speak up her own voice nor to rebel. The demand of femininity in the society requires women to be obedient and reserved.

> *She was a woman of few words. It was rare for her to demand anything of me, and however late I was in getting home she never took it upon herself to kick up a fuss— Even when our days off happened to coincide, it wouldn't occur to her to suggest we go out somewhere together.* (Kang, 2015, p.11).

From Mr. Cheong's point of view, he likes Yeong-Hye to be his wife because she is an obedient and quiet woman. It is a privilege for Mr. Cheong that he would be at ease to control his wife. The society intentionally shapes women to be passive through the collective culture cultivated in women's representation. The figure of a good wife is also embedded in Yeong-Hye's sister, In Hye, *He studied his wife, a picture of responsible compassion as she carefully approached their son with the medicine. She's a good woman, he thought. The kind of woman whose goodness is oppressive.*

(Kang, 2015). From the male perspective, having a good wife is similar to having someone who can be controlled. The masculinity in the figure of male molds the ideal character for a man as strong and determined. In order to make himself to be superior, man needs someone less inferior to become a devoted wife.

In a patriarchal society, women are required to follow some rules for presenting themselves as the kind-hearted and angelic figure. From the novel by Kang, the author inserts a contestation that females should be obedient.

> *He didn't know if her desperate efforts to be understanding and considerate were a good or a bad thing. Perhaps it was all down to him being self-centered and irresponsible. But right now he found his wife's patience and desire to do the right thing stifling, which made him still more inclined to see it as a flaw in her character.* (Kang, 2015, p.79).

Hye's husband feels there is something missing in his wife. Doing the right thing and following the expectation in the society reveal that a woman does not really express the real self of her. The portrayals of obedient women like In Hye and Yeong Hye are trapped to fulfill the communal expectation. In the concept of feminine writing or *écriture feminine,* women must write, and they must not think of themselves as a woman, simply just be themselves (Moi, 2008). Therefore, there is a connection between a representation of a good wife in Kang's *The Vegetarian* and normative culture cultivated in the society. When a woman is trying to fit and fulfill other's expectations, it actually leads them away from being the way they are.

The image of lacking in woman's figure is also depicted in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye.* Women are not only presented as inferior and secondary to man. Ironically, in patriarchal society, women are perceived as 'things' instead of human beings.

> *"He touched me— Here and here." She pointed to the tiny breasts— "Miss Dunion came in after everybody was quiet, and Mama and Daddy was fussing about who let Mr. Henry in anyway, and she said that Mama should take me to the doctor, because I might be ruined, and Mama started screaming all over again.* (Morrison, 2004, pp. 89-91).

Frieda a ten-year-old girl becomes the victim of sexual harassment by Mr. Henry. From this case, Frieda has become the object to release Mr. Henry's sexual desire. Moreover, the constructed society believes that virginity has become the main determination of women's worth and value. Harassed by the older man, the society doubts if Frieda has been 'ruined'. The way the author uses the word 'ruined' indicates implied meaning to show women as an object. When the girl loses her virginity, people will assume that she is broken and losing her worth.

Another part of the novel captures underaged woman, Pecola, as the main character who is sexually abused by her own father, Cholly. *Removing himself from her was so painful to him he cut it short and snatched his genitals out of the dry harbor of her vagina. She appeared to have fainted*. (Morrison, 2004, p. 145). In her writing, Morrison presents a complex family relationship mirroring a traumatic experience in the childhood. Described as an alcoholic father, Cholly rapes Pecola for the sake of satisfying his sexual desire. Women are reduced as the material object for man (Tyson, 2006). At this point, Pecola is no longer seen as Cholly's daughter, instead she turns to be the appropriation of male's property.

The Ethnic Female Writers and Socio-Cultural Issue in World Literature

The literature that has been circulated in a wider scope does not only function as a piece of writing. From the social and cultural depiction in the literary work, the literary work can be the instrument for the author to reflect the local society and its circumstances. What seems to be local is now brought for the foreign readers through the window of world literature.

As an African-American author, Toni Morrison writes down the life of African woman who migrates and then resides in the

United States. Through her writing, she presents the racial discrimination faced by the colored people and criticizes the Western thinking about ideal beauty centering on the figure of White. Morrison goes beyond the binarism of the black male literary tradition which is generally divided into black/white, good/evil, self/other. Highlighting the voice of black women, Morrison explores the plights of women in a patriarchal society which are often ignored by the majority of African-American authors (Taha & Ibrahim, 2020).

The criticism towards the White predominant society in the novel reveals the position of African women. Having dark-skinned-color and being a woman, women of colored indeed suffer from double oppression in the society. With the collective cultural image imposed by racism, black women are regarded as undervalued and it prevents them from achieving full selfhood in life (Madsen, 2000). In Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye,* Pecola as the main character desires to have blue eyes to make herself beautiful just like the white women.

> *—if those eyes of hers were different, that is to say, beautiful, she herself would be different. Her teeth were good, and at least her nose was not big and flat like some of those who were thought so cute. If she looked different, beautiful, maybe Cholly would be different, and Mrs. Breedlove too. —Each night, without fail, she prayed for blue eyes*. (Morrison, 2004, p. 45).

The Bluest Eyes tells a remarkable story illustrating a poignant tale about the inferiority complex embedded in the figure of colored people. Feeling less to be black, Pecola wonders if only she is white the society will accept and love her. It has been manifested in the society that standard beauty refers to Eurocentric features such as a small nose, thin lips, straight hair, and fair skin (Walker, 2014). Thus, black women are considered as the opposite of physical attractiveness.

Set in Toni Morrison's hometown in Lorain, Ohio, the collective value of standard beauty is everything that resembles to white people. The cultural product of standard beauty is invested through the advertisement and other mass media. With the common Western idea of the ideal beauty, there is a normative construction shaped in the society by putting the European side as the center.

> *A picture of little Mary Jane, for whom the candy is named. Smiling white face. Blond hair in gentle disarray, blue eyes looking at her out of a world of clean comfort. –To eat the candy is somehow to eat the eyes, eat Mary Jane. Love Mary Jane. Be Mary Jane.* (Morrison, 2004, p. 48).

The depiction of beauty in mass media clearly shows white women as the typical desirable woman. Unconsciously, people assume the physical appearance outside white-standard-beauty is naturally ugly. The contrast body image in black reveals the oppressing mind to make dark-skinned-color people feel ugly compared to white. For this reason, it is easier for white people to subjugate colored people because they are intentionally made to feel less and lacking.

The normative construction about standard beauty based on Eurocentrism raises critics from ethnic writers such as Toni Morrison. Through her writing she argues her opposition towards white domination. The character of Claudia mainly narrates the whole story in the novel. In addition, Claudia's presence depicts a young colored woman standing for herself and her people. *I hated Shirley. Younger than both Frieda and Pecola, I had not yet arrived at the turning point in the development of my psyche which would allow me to love her* (Shirley). (Morrison, 2004, p. 21). Opposing to Pecola and Frieda who admire Shirley Temple, Claudia could not relate why people are fond of the white girl.

The representation of Claudia implies a rejection towards collective culture embedded in the society, that only White resembling beauty. Although she is only nine years old, Claudia has her own opinion about preferable body image in the society. She rejects the standard beauty from Western thinking, and she is aware that the inferiority complex has been purposely embedded in colored people.

Unlike Toni Morrison who speaks about gender oppression combined with racial issues, Kang narrates women's rights enfolded

in the theme of nature. Han Kang criticizes the society's demand towards women to fulfill gender roles and to position themselves lower than men. Coming from South Korea where meat has been the regular dish, the author reversely pictures the meat as something that turns Yeong-Hye to be a vegetarian. For Korean, meat has been placed in the hearts of Korean people for its nutrients and the richness of local food made from meat.

> *Her fragrant, caramelized deep-fried belly pork was achieved by marinating the meat in minced ginger and glutinous starch syrup. Her signature dish had been wafer-thin slices of beef seasoned with black pepper and sesame oil, —She'd made bibimbap with bean sprouts, minced beef, and pre-soaked rice stir-fried in sesame oil*. (Kang, 2015, p.18).

Mr. Cheong adores Yeong-Hye's ability when it comes to cooking. From the quotation it shows meat is used in many local Korean foods such as *bibimbap.* When Yeong-Hye suddenly decides to be a vegetarian after her nightmares, it actually reveals the author's intention to break conventional norms in the society. *"You're claiming that you're not going to eat meat at all from now on?" She nodded. "Oh, really? Until when?" "I suppose…forever."* (Kang, 2015, p. 17).

In Korea, there are some interpersonal problems faced by vegetarians. For Korean society, meat has generally held a dominant position in mealtime (Yoon, 2015). In the cultural context, sharing or ordering similar meals together can strengthen the emotional bonds and intimate relationships among the people (2015). Hence, vegetarians can be seen as disturbing the harmony in the community for their principle of avoiding meat.

> *"Father, I don't eat meat." In an instant, his flat palm cleaved the empty space. My wife cupped her cheek in her hand. —He'd hit her so hard that the blood showed through the skin of her cheek. Her breathing was ragged, and it seemed that her composure had finally been shattered*. (Kang, 2015, p.36).

Yeong-Hye's decision to stop eating meat frustrates her family. Being a vegetarian has caused Yeong-Hye to be deviant and it results in discordance in the family. The situation gets worse when Yeong-Hye's dad physically abuses his daughter to eat meat. However, the decision of Yeong Hye to be a vegetarian does not merely mean the changing of conventional consumption. In fact, it also marks the transformation of redefining her identity as a free woman.

The reverse image from a meat lover to be a vegetarian subtly portrays the realization of Yeong-Hye upon her autonomy as a woman. Being a vegetarian, she can finally connect herself to nature that gives her more lively emotion. Eating meat represents the idea of greediness of human beings to violently kill the animals. *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* (Kang, 2015, p.16).

The image of being a vegetarian suggests the author's intention to say that women have the right to choose how they want to live their life. The story emphasizes that women have autonomous right towards their body. The criticism towards women's bodies is revealed when Yeong-Hye chooses not to wear bra unlike other women, *The only respect in which my wife was at all unusual was that she didn't like wearing a bra* (Kang, 2015, p. 11). The representation of Yeong-Hye against the common image of women is defined to be unusual. Women seem to be constrained to express what they want including the restriction to the way normal women should dress.

Han Kang, resembling a woman with nature, conveys the passivity embedded in the two figures. Both nature and women are often objectified by the man's greediness to fulfill physical need from nature and sexual desire from woman. At this point, what Yeong-Hye does in the novel is to break the conventional norm by relating herself to nature.

> *Look, sister, I'm doing a handstand; leaves are growing out of my body, roots are sprouting out of my hands…they delve down*

> *into the earth. Endlessly, endlessly…yes, I spread my legs because I wanted flowers to bloom from my crotch; I spread them wide…* (Kang, 2015, p. 99).

Having finally connected to nature, Han Kang portrays the women's freedom in the figure of Yeong-Hye. The people think Yeong-Hye is losing her mind as she lives in the psychiatric hospital. By this condition, Han Kang shows that breaking the legitimate value in the society will give the cost for women regarded as weird, unusual and outcast. However, the image of woman who can finally choose what she wants radiates Yeong-Hye's power to become limitless amid the stereotypical belief about femininity.

Conclusion

In the context of world literature, literary work functions as the window to understand more about national identity from the various countries. Foreign readers can now enjoy the local flavor that has been circulated widely across the globe. The more spaces for non-Western authors shows the dissolvement of barriers between Western and non-Western. Starting from the 1970's, women are encouraged to write to express their mind as a woman without a limitation about masculinity and femininity. Many female authors emerge, and it remarks the improvement of female writing. The post-structuralist women aim to promote the idea of gender equality between man and woman.

The ethnic female writers like Toni Morrison as African American author and Han Kang from South Korean present the images of women in patriarchal society. Both Morrison and Kang criticize the representation of women as passive, reserved, and obedient in order to be classified as good women as well as good wives. However, their writing emphasizes the close depiction to what reality expects women to be. In addition, the écriture feminine identified in the two novels highlights the importance of women's right for having the same opportunity as men to freely choose what they desire.

As a woman of color, Morrison depicts the racial discrimination and gender oppression imposed on the black woman. The society shapes a constructed reality assuming that being beautiful means to be white. Therefore, the black women are intentionally made to be inferior and lacking. Depicting the experience of African living in America, *The Bluest Eye* by Morrison portrays local struggle from colored people struggling with the racial prejudice in predominant White society.

Meanwhile, *The Vegetarian* by Han Kang portrays the counter to conventional society through the images of vegetarian woman. She depicts the local culture of Korean people where meat can be easily found in Korean meals. Presenting a vegetarian woman, Kang highlights that woman is close to the nature in terms of its passivity and inferiority. Nevertheless, she delivers her criticism that women have the same right to choose what they want to be over their body and mind.

Through the female writing circulated across the globe in world literature, readers can have clear depiction about literary works written by female authors from certain regions such as the United States and Korea. The work by female authors does not only embrace women's empowerment, besides it also reflects the local culture in their respective country. At this point, the circulation of ethnic female authors benefits the global readers to understand more about women's experience and the local tradition in one specific nation.

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