

Han Kang: Fiction As Trace of Real

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Each time I work on a novel, I endure the questions, I live inside them. When I reach the end of these questions — which is not the same as when I find answers to them — is when I reach the end of the writing process. By then, I am no longer as I was when I began, and from that changed state, I start again. The next questions follow, like links in a chain, or like dominoes, overlapping and joining and continuing, and I am moved to write something new.¹

Han Kang gained international recognition for her literary *oeuvre* in 2024, receiving the Nobel Prize. For approximately thirty years, she has offered us novels of unsurpassable value—masterpieces that inscribe the human psyche with exceptional depth.

Her language is sharp and, at the same time, profound; almost poetically dense, it not only moves but also shocks through its boldness, its deep insight, and its necessary sensitivity. Each novel, through fiction, engages with existential and fundamental questions: violence, existence, love, and historical trauma—many of which also bear an autobiographical dimension.

Each work constitutes an attempt to answer a question, or, more radically still, to articulate a question through the creation of fiction that reflects the absence of the sexual relation.

Han Kang is an artist whose writing does not merely function as a means of suturing the hole in the symbolic, nor is it exhausted in an endless symbolic representation. Her genius lies in the charismatic way she employs language—words themselves—in order to render the impossible. Brutality, the inhuman, encounters sensitivity in a creator without equal.

In her case, fiction is not simply another narrative, but a *lituraterre*, which brings writing to the fore not as a symbolic function, but as a trace of the Real. It is a solitary process that constitutes a defence against the death drive.

In summary, fiction, as *lituraterre*, resonates with a mode of jouissance that humanises her in the face of the horror of the hole in the symbolic, of the Other as radical Alterity. This *savoir* of opaque jouissance would be the locus of her being, and fiction, her partner-symptom.

When I write, I use my body. I use all the sensory details of seeing, of listening, of smelling, of tasting, of experiencing tenderness and warmth and cold and pain, of

¹ Kang, H, 2024, Nobel Prize Lecture. Available at:
<https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/2024/han/lecture/>

noticing my heart racing and my body needing food and water, of walking and running, of feeling the wind and rain and snow on my skin, of holding hands. I try to infuse those vivid sensations that I feel as a mortal being with blood coursing through her body into my sentences. As if I am sending out an electric current. And when I sense this current being transmitted to the reader, I am astonished and moved.²

² Kang, H, 2024, *op.cit.*