

IJELLH

International Journal of English Language,
Literature in Humanities

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed) Journal

ISSN-2321-7065



Volume V, Issue III March 2017



[About Us](#) | [Editorial Board](#) | [Submission Guidelines](#) | [Call for Paper](#) | [Paper](#)
[Submission](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Terms & Condition](#) | [More.....](#)

THE PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN PAULA HAWKINS' *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN*

**M.MUTHUSELVAM
RESEARCH SCHOLAR
THE AMERICAN COLLEGE
MADURAI
INDIA**

Abstract:

Paula Hawkins is a British author, best known for her thriller novel *The Girl on the Train*. It is a complex thriller with the themes of subjugation, domestic violence, and alcohol and drug abuse. Paula is in a difficult situation to publish her novel and it becomes a popular one unexpectedly. Her other novels are *The Money Goddess*, *Confessions of a Reluctant Recessionista* and *Into the Water*. The researcher wants to analyze the psyche of the protagonist Rachel and her downheartedness in the male dominated society.

Discussion

The plot revolves around the main characters Rachel, Anna, Megan and Tom. Women achieve a noteworthy part in the novel which provokes the researcher to approach the novel in the feminist point of view. Rachael is a 32-year-old alcoholic reeling from the dissolution of her marriage to Tom who leaves her for another woman, Anna. The male dominant Tom leaves her and it affects her psyche to the core. She loses her wealth and supremacy because of him. Tom throws her like a waste paper from his life. For his own sake, he remarries and he doesn't care for first wife Rachel.

Tom lives with Anna and his daughter, Evie. Whenever Rachel gulps liquor, she expresses her annoyance to Tom even he is miles apart. Tom was the only reason behind shattering her peaceful life and he drives her to the edge to accept the mental and physical illness. Her habit of liquor consummating pushes out from her job. Because of drinking, she loses her job. She doesn't want to share her position of unemployment from her flatmate and so Rachel still continues her old routine of taking the train to London every day. Returning from her way back, she crosses her old house which was now owned by Tom, Anna and Evie.

Rachel watches an attractive couple, Megan and Scott, living near Tom's house and fantasises about their perfect life together. Megan undergoes severe insomnia. The therapist, Dr Kamal instructs her to get the problem. Rachel wants the couple to be happy always. Her

mental illness forces her to think the relationship between Dr. Kamal and Megan in a different way. She grumbles Scott about Dr. Scott, who in fact doesn't have any relationship with Megan.

Segregating herself from the society, Rachel feels problematic to survive in the society; that is completely male-centered. The divorce made her unsociable. Megan was in close relationship with Tom and she couldn't accept the fact that Tom does hate her. The seclusion of Rachel and Megan substantiate that the female characters in the novel were suppressed.

The novel clearly depicts that women were used only for the male thirst. The central character and the antagonist of the novel, Tom cheats the three female characters Rachel, Megan and Anna. Tom rejects Rachel after she loses her virginity. The novel is several prospects substantiate Tom as a male dominant. He was cunning and tricky in all his acts which make the women fall for him.

Like the famous saying, "Every action has an equal and opposite reaction", Rachel prepares herself to pay back when she finds that Megan was missing. Tom does want Megan to abort her own child, but when she refuses he kills her. Rachel quests for Megan but fails in her attempt. Rachel later learns from Tom that he was the cause of her death. Anna is frightened about her daughter's life and her security. Rachel stabs Tom with a corkscrew. Anna helps Rachel to be sure that he dies from the wound.

Self-defense is a need for the womanhood in the modern scenario. Though Rachel senses nostalgic about her preceding life, she overcomes the troubles being a single woman in the male-dominated society. She tries to cope up with the society without disturbing her ex-husband. Even though she feels lonely, she doesn't want to interfere with Tom's family because she was aware of the family bonding.

Trains are powerful symbols for motion. Ever since the Industrial Revolution, trains have been moving people and cargo across the world. In contrast, the novel, *The Girl on the Train*, Rachel tries to change her life in a diverse track in all her problematic conditions. She turns into a murderer only because of Tom, his cruel behaviour and male dominant nature. A solitary woman wins in the society.

Works Cited:

Hawkins, Paula. *The Girl on the Train*, Haryana: Random house, 2015. Print

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paula_Hawkins_\(author\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paula_Hawkins_(author)) (retrieved on Mar 10, 2017)

<http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/22557272-the-girl-on-the-train> (retrieved on Mar 10, 2017)

<http://www.shmoop.com/the-girl-on-the-train/themes.html> (retrieved on Mar 10, 2017)