

Disorder and Mental Sufferings in Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train*

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Abstract- This study investigates the trauma suffered by Megan, one of Paula Hawkins's most significant characters in the book *The Girl on the Train*. The discussion is divided into four parts: the awful events that happened to Megan, her trauma, her coping techniques, and how her trauma has affected her marriage. When analysing the problems raised in the thesis, a number of psychological theories on trauma are used. The reader is led by these theories as the author recounts the horrific events covered in the text. This study uses a psychological method since it addresses a psychological problem trauma that one of the major characters had to cope with. The analysis's findings indicate that Megan's horrific experiences (PTSD) cause her to develop the condition. A few PTSD symptoms include Megan's emotional outbursts, panic attacks, sleeplessness, and avoidance. Megan works as a nanny and walks beside major roads with traffic to manage her PTSD. She also tries to get aid from a professional. The issues Megan's PTSD is causing in her marriage. Scott fights with his wife a lot because he wants kids from her. Due to this and her condition, Megan betrays her husband by engaging in an illicit romance. Her affair ultimately results in her death.

Indexed Terms- Avoidance, Emotional outbursts, Extramarital affair, Insomnia, Panic attacks, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

I. INTRODUCTION

Paula Hawkins hails from the United Kingdom. After growing up in Zimbabwe, where her father worked as a journalist and professor of economics, she relocated to London when she was seventeen. At the University of Oxford, she majored in economics, philosophy,

and politics. *The Girl on the Train*, a psychological suspense novel that has achieved commercial success and addresses marital violence, alcoholism, and drug misuse, is her most well-known work. The novel was turned into a movie. Hawkins primarily writes thrillers and mysteries. She frequently uses powerful imagery and figurative language to describe the overwhelming strength of negative emotions. She uses psychological elements in her writing, as well as story twists to create suspense and change readers' perceptions of her characters.

Life is governed by a variety of symptoms that shape people's lives in a variety of ways. Every person is capable of sustaining their own life. Contrary to popular belief, maintaining an unconventional lifestyle is quite simple. However, such a person must be aware of the challenges they face in life. As a result, when they socialise, they will be better prepared to deal with these psychological issues. Life is inextricably linked to one's internal state, which is directly influenced by one's surroundings. It's reasonable to believe that psychology and mortality are inextricably linked. Psychology, according to Freud (1939), is the study of the human mind's activities, particularly the factors that affect behaviour in a similar context. The mind controls a person's behaviour and how they react to the world around them. Acting or responding causes assumptions and impressions of others, which are subsequently utilised to classify any ailments they might have. Trauma is defined as an extraordinary event that causes wounds and pain sensations; nevertheless, it is usually used to refer to a wound or a severe pain sensation caused by an extraordinary incident that either directly or indirectly affects a person. The weight that each person gives an experience determines how much it affects their actions. Rape and sexual harassment victims may

endure stress as a result of their trauma. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) may develop in sexual assault and harassment victims. One distressing or traumatic event from the past can lead to PTSD. The majority of the time, PTSD symptoms appear hours or days after a traumatic event; however they can linger for weeks, months, or even years. One piece of literature that addresses trauma is Paula Hawkins's novel *The Girl on the Train*. The work includes talks about Megan's trauma following the tragic deaths of her brother and her infant. As a result, she frequently has emotional instability, insomnia, and extreme or hyper vigilance. She regrets the discord in her marriage since she didn't grant her husband's wish for a child. Since trauma affects many people and can be harmful whether it is endured for a short period of time or a long period of time, the author picked three to evaluate trauma.

Trauma is one of the most agonising psychological traumas that anyone, particularly adolescents, may experience. A person's behavioural, emotional, and cognitive abilities may be impacted by trauma. When someone is often exposed to stressful events like violent crimes, rape, threats, armed conflict, earthquakes, or tsunamis, trauma frequently develops. According to Bryant and Ehlers (2003: 45), a stressful incident might cause a psychological condition called brain trauma. Many individuals are aware of the various shapes and sizes that trauma can take. One benefit of generalising about trauma is that, regardless of the event or victims, it constantly results in the same kind of equation and reaction.

Battles, bombings, or oppressive circumstances like the Holocaust can all cause traumatic occurrences like PTSD. The Holocaust, rape, earthquakes, floods, man-made disasters like plane crashes, and many other forms of calamities are examples of natural catastrophes. PTSD is a serious mental and physical disorder that can be brought on by traumatic events or situations where one's life is in danger.

“I miss him every day. More than anyone, I think. He is the big hole in my life, in the middle of my soul. Or maybe he was just the beginning of it. I don't know. I don't even know whether all this is really about Ben, or whether it's about everything that happened after that,

and everything that's happened since (Hawkins 41).

The sentences that come before them depict Megan's emotions upon the death of her sibling. She feels as though she has lost her soul since Ben's death. Ben is fiercely protective of Megan and would do anything to keep her safe because she is his only sibling and he is her only sibling. Megan is surprised and unhappy since she never imagined her brother would permanently cut off contact with her. She will always remember her discussions with Ben.

...I close my eyes, and it doesn't take me long to get back there, back to the bathroom. It's weird, because I've spent so long trying not to think about it, about those days, those nights, but now I can close my eyes and it's almost instant, like falling asleep, right into the middle of a dream. (Hawkins 274)

She was traumatised when her child died as a result of Megan's carelessness. She felt guilty that her carelessness had resulted in the tragic loss of her kid. She felt bad that she couldn't give the youngster the care he needed. Mac deserts Megan after the infant passes away. After the baby's funeral ended, he left, leaving Megan at home by herself. She thought her beloved would always protect her, which prompts Megan to become afraid and begin sobbing.

I can't sleep in this heat. Invisible bugs crawling on my skin, there is a rash on my chest, I can't feel comfortable. And Scott seemed to radiate warmth; lying beside him is like lying beside a fire. I can't get away enough from him and find myself pressed against the edge of the bed. (Hawkins 216)

The last line perfectly expresses Megan's sentiments about her inability to sleep. Megan is still of the opinion that Scott's bothersome breathing next to her is the cause of her inability to fall asleep. Scott, Megan's husband, saw that his wife was restless since it was clear that she was having trouble drifting off to sleep. Megan has problems sleeping because of her agony at Mac's rejection and the loss of her unborn child as a result of her brother's betrayal

It is not really about her child at all, despite the fact that the child never stops whining makes it hard to love. Everything was much more complicated, but of course I can't explain it to her. However, that's one of the reasons I've been shutting myself away. (Hawkins 46)

She was traumatised when her child died as a result of Megan's carelessness. She felt guilty that her carelessness had resulted in the tragic loss of her kid. She felt bad that she couldn't give the youngster the care he needed. Mac deserts Megan after the infant passes away. After the baby's funeral ended, he left, leaving Megan at home by herself. She thought her beloved would always protect her, which prompts Megan to become afraid and begin sobbing. After carefully analysing the events in Hawkins's "The Girl on the Train," the author concludes that Megan has PTSD as a result of her traumatic encounters. She experienced post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a result of Megan's unexpected death, the dissolution of her marriage to the child's father, and the tragic death of Megan's brother in a vehicle accident. Unmistakably, Megan is displaying symptoms of PTSD. One of the signs Megan exhibits is insomnia. Megan struggles to get to sleep because of the awful event that keeps playing in her thoughts. Additionally, she experiences hallucinations in which she hears Mac's footsteps and sees her child's skin. The next symptom listed by Megan is her panic attacks. Megan has trouble falling asleep since she is constantly reminded of the awful event when she closes her eyes. She also experiences hallucinations in which she hears Mac's footsteps and smells her baby's skin. The warning symptoms of Megan's anxiety attacks are listed below. She gets the shivers and tenses up when something brings up painful memories for her. She can walk along some of them, despite the fact that her trauma has not completely healed, and she has conquered her fear of traffic and streets. The same is true for Megan, who seeks to find professional advice. Those are discussed in her therapy sessions with the physician as well. Due of her PTSD, Megan finds it difficult to maintain a happy marriage. She constantly argued with her husband about the child Scott wanted from her. Megan betrays her husband as a result of her illness. She tries to speak with the therapy psychologist, but he declines. Anna then had a relationship while

working as Tom's wife's nanny. The connection that resulted in her getting pregnant was not Tom's fault. Megan expresses her fury, threatening to notify Tom's wife about the circumstance. Tom is overtaken with emotion and shoots her in the head.

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