

Response to Post -traumatic Stress Disorder in Paula Hawkin's *The Girl on the Train*

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By

Rupa Bhandari

Roll No. 05 'C'

T.U. Redg. No. 6-2-0605-0397-2011

Central Department of English

Kirtipur, Kathmandu

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Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation.

Mrs. Rupa Bhandari has completed her thesis entitled “Response to Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Paula Hawkin’s *The Girl on the Train*” under my supervision. She carried out her research work from April 2019 to December 2019. I hereby recommended this thesis be submitted for viva voce.

Hem Lal Pandey

Supervisor

Central Department of English

Date:

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science
Central Department of English

This thesis entitled “Response to Post- traumatic Stress Disorder in Paula Hawkin’s *The Girl on the Train*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Rupa Bhandari has been approved by undersigned members of Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

Internal Examiner

External Examiner

Head

Central Department of English

Date:.....

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Abstract

The research project aims to illustrate the response to post-traumatic stress disorder in Paula Hawkins's The Girl on the Train. This project explores how Megan and Rachel's memory of past experiences haunt them in their daily life and show how it makes their life terrible and complicated to survive. It further explores how they deal with trauma to heal themselves. They suffer from different symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as: intrusive imagery, avoiding stimuli and increased arousal. While doing it, the researcher has incorporated the theoretical insights of trauma, particularly from the book Counseling for Post Traumatic Disorder by Michael J. Scott and Stephen G. Strading. And, this paper also frames out the notion of 'working through' by Dominick LaCapra from his book; Writing History, Writing Trauma. The research concludes with the findings that the people have some past memories which are unforgettable, that directly or indirectly affect present life. Instead of lamenting on past memory people should take those traumatic experiences as a platform to refresh themselves. Thus in the text, Rachel and Megan take different strategies to cope with trauma to live with happy and healthy life; Megan became nanny, walk on street, visit therapist where Rachel helps in the process of investigation of Megan's disappearance and goes through fantasy to forget her past memories.

Keywords: Post traumatic stress disorder, past memory, working through, articulation

Introduction

This project entitled “Response to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder in *The Girl on the Train*” by Paula Hawkins’ examines the traumatic psychology of the major female characters, their responses towards the distressing situation and their attempt to overcome of the traumatized and problematized world healing their wounds and normalizing the prevailing situation. *The Girl on the Train* centers on the course of actions which thrusts two protagonists of the novel- Rachel and Megan. Those female characters’ life foregrounds the obstacles and complications because of the frustrated and thwarted past experience that adverse effect to cause psychological trauma. Those past experiences haunt them in their daily life and it makes their life terrible to survive. They are suffering from many symptoms which make them mentally as well as physically and socially weak. They take different strategy to cope with those past traumatic moment and heal their trauma to live with happy and healthy life.

The Girl on the Train presents the issue of psychological instability and crisis in identity of female because of those past memories. Those past memories that they witnessed in their life, which completely transforms their life. Therefore, they face too many complications in their day to day life. Protagonist Rachel including other character Megan come to London in search of their better life and prosperity. However, they become like a pendulum in the city. They run here and there without any purpose, because they are not mentally stable. Far from bringing any betterment to their life, in modern city, their past experience about life has brought anxiety, fear and paranoia in their life. Thus, this research paper deals with the broader area of trauma. Within the broader field of trauma, it pays particular attention to an issue related to post traumatic stress disorder. The propose of this study will be to explore how the women goes through traumatic experience in *The Girl on the Train* by Paula

Hawkins. There are two main female characters in the text; both characters are affected by their past experience which haunts them in the present life. Therefore, they are unable to survive their life happily. The issue about trauma can also appear in literary works. Therefore, this study is going to analyze a literary work with psychological approach.

The story is about two women who have their own stories which can be considered as traumatic. Their own story can be separated from one another. Rachel has spent the last few years stumbling through life in a booze filled depression ever since her husband left her for another woman, humiliated and insulted in public places and cannot bear child. Therefore, those unforgettable incidents led her to mental illness. Megan is the woman whom Tom had an affair with, when he was married to Anna. Megan did not tell her husband Scott, about her ex relation and also established extra marital affair. She has past experience about her brother's death and baby's death and also her husband forces her to bear child which affects her mentally. Female characters in the novel are surrounded by different kinds of barrels and obstacles in their life. They do hard labor to come out from the web of complication but they fail to come out from it. So, both women in the novel had gone through some terrible incidents which make their life terrible to survive.

The novel describes the female characters that have several dreams regarding education, development and their expansion in the future life with happy family and has strong gut to fulfill these dreams even adopting new cultural behaviors, costumes and rules of the urban city. The research has explored how the condition of middle class women who are used as a tool of amusement of the high class males of the modern society. Those abuse, fear, anxiety and struggle hunt them every day and every time. They are bounded by different obstacles and complications in their life.

However, it is a tragedy that their dreams and their struggle to fulfill them do not bring any positive outcomes in the life of the poor female's life. That event which happened in past could not let them to do something freely in their present life. They fear to do new things in their life to survive but they cannot do. Therefore, they become unable to keep their day to day life peaceful and happy.

As a matter of fact, it should be distinguished that Megan's trauma is different from Rachel's. Megan finds it difficult to submit themselves to the "good" mother stereotype, as the image of 'mother' does not match their realities, though they very much yearn to fulfill this image. Megan says: "I lay there and I thought of what teacher said, and of all the things I'd been: child, rebellious teenager, runaway, whore, lover, bad mother, and bad wife. I'm not sure if I can remake myself as a good wife, but a good mother- that I have to try" (Hawkins 365). Here, in this line Megan is blaming herself as a bad mother and wife. Because she could not be able to keep happy her family. She cannot bear a child for her husband because she has a reflection of her dead child in her mind. Whenever she thinks about pregnancy she remembers her fault which let her child to death. She thinks herself as careless mother who cannot give proper care to her child, so she is not perfect image of good mother. Therefore, she is unable to be pregnant in her later life. She is the figure of failure woman who is unable to keep her family happy.

The death of Megan's brother causes her trauma. Megan loses her parents in her early age except Ben, there is nobody remains alive in her family. Only Ben and Megan are alive in their family, so Ben is only one guardian, who gives love like a brother, father and mother too. So, Ben gives more attention and protection to Megan from all the complication and fear. When she loses Ben in an accident she hurt deeply, she has not anyone to help and support her in life. Unfortunately, when Ben

died in an accident Megan has mental illness because she never expected that incidents will happen in her life. Furthermore, she witnesses that tragic accident which happened with her caring brother. Ben's death affects the life of his sister Megan. She is alone after passing Ben in accident. Losing her brother Ben is the thing that creates many troubles in her day to day personal life. After the death of Ben, she feels lonely and goes through depression. She cannot forget that accident which took her brother away from her. She gets the trauma and stress disorder from that accident and creates many mental as well as physical problems.

The characters like Rachel and Megan go through the psychological trauma. That psychological condition is created by their past experiences. The main effect of the women's traumatic experience is Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. The psychological and neurological disorder of the characters as represented in their behaviors is examined there by focusing on the multiple origins of trauma including intrusive imagery, avoiding stimuli increased arousal and so on. They cannot forget their past which haunts them every day. They attempt to normalize their traumatized and problematized life through acting out and working through. Megan went to therapist to relief herself from trauma whereas Rachel goes through fantasy to forget her own damaged past life and help police to investigate the murder of Megan and success to find out the murderer.

Paula Hawkins is profound English novelist and short story writer. She was born on 26 August 1972 in Salisbury, Rhodesia Zimbabwe, British author, best known for her best selling psychological thriller novel *The Girl on the Train*, which deals with themes of domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse. The novel was adapted into a film starring Emily Blunt in 2016. In her early writing career, Hawkins found herself enticed into writing sensationalist fiction, fascinated with themes that

explored taboos and evil. She worked as a journalist for *The Times*, reporting on business. She then worked for a number of publications on a freelance basis, and wrote a financial advice book for women, *The Money Goddess*. Around 2009, Hawkins began to write romantic comedy fiction under the name Amy Silver writing four novels including, *Confessions of a Reluctant Recessionista* is her noticeable text where ostensibly ordinary experiences become perverted and dark in a world pervaded by dysfunctional families, loneliness and a vacuous existence culminating in violence and obsessive sexuality. She did not achieve any commercial breakthrough until she challenged herself to write a darker, more serious story. Her later fiction like *The Girl on the Train* explores psychological insight into the characters' mind and actions, tracing the manner in which extreme situations impact on ordinary existence. It was written in 2015 and has been published in over forty languages and has been a No. 1 bestseller around the world. The story unfolds in multi narrative way to give different story with unreliable narrator. The protagonist in the novel evolves with an awareness of the fragility of happiness and a greater acknowledgement of moral as well as humanistic responsibility. Protagonist in the text tries to cope with trauma and violence to relief herself.

Hawkins is the prominent author of the contemporary England. Hawkins is largely considered as the novelist with vigorous longing for politico-cultural realism. She has criticized several social and ideological bigotries. She always stands for the progressive transformation of society. Various critics have portrayed their view on this novel by raising different issues from multiple perspectives. Angela Carter makes the following remarks about novel, it presents historical reality and representation of Modern England and realistic situation of the females of nineteenth century:

The Girl on the Train personalizes the political and social changes in her country over the past few decades in this novel unlike most historical narratives from England, which are pegged to political events? *The Girl on the Train* is a representative of people's history, a bottom up rather than top down view of a country in flux. By moving back and forth in time and focusing on small events and everyday people. Hawkins creates life in to history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen. (12)

Thematically, Carter opines about the political and social issues that are merged and modified in the text. In a sense, Hawkins tends to reflect upon the history of modern England. Modern England has come a long way since that last few decades. Yet it still has to face countless number of challenges and troubles. Hawkins is recognized as one of the best authors who can contemplate upon history that gives profound insight to those who want to alter the course of history of modern England and the condition of the modern females. England highlights the different way to commodity in the sense of social, cultural as well as personal physical benefits but the women of the middle class are still victimized in their house, working place also in public area by their counterparts. They are not able to take a long breathe of happiness with peacefully.

Females of England categorically look for “the sovereignty and the unique supremacy of western ideals like universal human rights and democracy, modern secularism, political liberalism, gender equality and individual freedom” (Carter 87). This novel is written in the contemporary political scenario of England. The setting of the novel is in English society of twentieth century when native Rachel is lost in emptiness and hollow of those events which happened in her by gone day which affect her present life. She is deviated and hung between several problems. *The Girl*

on the Train reflects the political, cultural, conventional and social unrest in England. This text is the reflection of people's history, a bottom up rather than top down view of a country in flux. Hawkins' work moves back and forth in time and focusing on small events and local citizens, she creates life into history by describing effects of large- than- life events on the normal people.

This text illustrates the notion of women and motherhood. Although there are many discourses regarding motherhood which contest "the mother in her socially constructed, institutional role" (Kaplan 6), in the eyes of feminist scholars, the dominant motherhood ideology is still very much a patriarchal construct: "Culture tells us what it means to be a mother, what behavior and attitude are appropriate for mothers, and how motherhood should shape relationships and self identity" (Johnston and Swanson 21). These often contradicting motherhood discourses have created a form of female trauma, which is definitely evident in the novel. Women in this text behave like typical traumatized individuals, their symptoms being memory loss, depression, hysteria, repeating the traumatizing moment in their heads, having flashbacks, telling lies to the people around them. The protagonist in the novel, Rachel keep lies about her job to her friend Cathy. Every morning she travels on the train to show others that she is doing job. Actually, she had lost her job. She is in depression because she is divorced by her husband and no child and job. She has flashbacks about her husband's abuse and humiliated behavior in public places. She feels herself empty and tired of life due to her husband's domination; she is isolated and separated in her life. Similarly, another female character Megan has repeating traumatic moment in her present life. She had lost her own child as well as her only one brother Ben. She is suffering with domestic violence that her husband wants child and he forces her to it. But she is not able to give a child because she has not

completely forgotten her dead child. The notion about womanhood and motherhood becomes a main obstacle in female's life in the modern society. Female could not do anything without any complication or hard work to success in their life. They always look through the eye of conventional thought.

Another critic comments on the topic of *Critique of Cosmopolitan Modernity in Hawkins' The Girl on the Train*. He analyzes the novel based on the modernity. He has critically analyzes the book by using the concept of modernity from modern theorist Janet Wolff, Griselda Pollock and Bonnie Kim Scott to prove his hypothesis about the topic of his research work. Adhikari argues:

The Girl on the Train is an epitome to reflect the modern England. The female were made invisible used only for the male gaze as commodity value. It shows the exact life of the ambitious female who was attracted to the modernity, wanted to develop them, wanted to get education but they were used as the tool for the males and for the economical enhancement of the society only.

The thesis clarifies that a girl being middle class girl from village cannot fulfill their dream in the modern city. (Adhikari 30-31)

He had concluded his thesis by saying that middle class female in the modern England who migrated from countryside to England in the hope of education, development, bright future life. However, all of their dream could not come true in their life rather they have tolerated too many troubles and complication in the city to survive. They become the tool of entertainment and amusement of high class male in England. They did not get any kinds of benefits rather surrounded by barrels and obstacles. The ultimate life of those females in modern society was not valuable, was not given value and not regarded positively. Therefore, the female in city migrated from countryside could not sustain them in the rich city, had to return to the village cutting off the all-

temporary rations in the city, and lived an isolated and separated life. In this way another researcher Yamuna Kumari Rawal did her thesis on the topic of Female Bonding in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* argues that:

A thorough analysis of *The Girl on the Train* offers the finding that modern women of the middle class are pressurized to develop gender bounding to resist the pressures and constraints imposed by patriarchy. Any girl endowed with the rebellious conscience must have the rash audacity to tolerate alienation and estrangement. Those women who defy and challenge the establishment tradition and norms must face the suffering, agony and anguish.

(Rawal 35-36)

Those women from middle class background have making cooperation with other female in the society. They give support to one another whenever they need. One woman understands another woman's suffering, agony as well as anguish. Those woman who question on the conventional tradition and culture, they becomes the victim of the domination of patriarchy. It depicts how the women form coalitions based on their inability to meet patriarchal expectations of women. Female are not only bound by their shared love of married life and motherhood. Rather, their bond is the result of their suffering. The fact that none of them can become the kind of woman patriarchal society expects them to be. Directly and indirectly they seem as forming bound and raise voice against the domestic violence.

Suneel Mehmi is another critic of Hawkins who analyzes Hawkins' novel based on the fantasy. She argues that:

Through its exploration of Rachel's life, novel considers how loss of family life causes suffering and disconnection with the world. Rachel is characterized so fully that we are able to appreciate all the nuances of her hurt caused by the

fantasy of the perfect family. The novel suggests that beyond the cultural ideal, the realities of the family are entirely different. By taking us into the lives of the damaged, the novel also provides insight into the people's terrible actions: for instance, Rachel becomes a stalker. The novel also delves beyond surface appearances into the intimate lives and histories of strangers, and thus questions the extent to which others are merely products of our imagination, an extension of our own minds. (Mehmi 114)

To survive easily in their life, people go through imagination. Imaginations lead towards relaxation. They went far from the reality or human world and enter into the world of illusion which never happened in their life. By doing this, they tried to forget their present horrible and terrified life. He enumerates how the female in the modern city hide their sorrow and show up joyful moments. Nowadays, people prefer to live alone but it is difficult to survive without family life. In single life they cannot handle their life happily, loss of family life considered as the disconnecting with the world around.

Joanne Arnett is a celebrated critic and author who looks at Paula Hawkins' literary representation from a Western perspective. She criticizes the dystopian effect of the book in reference to another English novelist Anthony Burgess:

The Girl on the Train is hardly a work of fiction. This is essentially a dystopian text. It seems like a novel but is a complete story. In contrast to Anthony Burgess's often-expensive novel it describes events spanning four decades from 1969 to 2009. While amounting to a memoir, Burgess is selective in what he presents. However Hawkins presents the bafflement of female characters in a scientifically advanced society. (37)

By writing this novel in the form of dystopia, Hawkins tries to attack the transitional politics of England. The constantly shifting scenario of England has affected the common pattern of the English. The modernization of England is both subversive and uplifting as well. Both the rosy and seamy side of modernizing England is brought to the focal point. Primarily, Hawkins' fiction is most often set in urban area to advanced London city to England. Her story explores human complexities in modern society. This novel represents the story about the middle class women of modern society, their positive vision regarding the capitalist modern society and their struggles for getting a successful life. Unfortunately the result comes negative to them. Rachel dooms to sacrifice the real taste of life owing to her subordinate condition. She is helpless, alienated and suffered by the blow of western culture.

All these reviewers have explored that Paula Hawkins *The Girl on the Train* is a book of history, blackouts, female bounding, domestic violence and critic of cosmopolitan etc. Different scholar has been criticized from different perspectives some have analyzed on the basis of its theme and its depiction of the realistic cultural scenario of the contemporary society, and some have analyzed its technical and metaphorical part. Although all these critics have raised different issues in this novel, the critique of trauma; specifically post traumatic stress disorder is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries. This research paper tries to show how the past memory affects the present life through post traumatic stress disorder and how they express their trauma in order to relief themselves. This research paper is based on primary and secondary resources as well as material available in the library, Journals and internet websites. This paper has taken theoretical insights from various theorists like Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*, Michael J. Scott and Stephen G.

Strading's *Counseling for Post Traumatic Disorder*, Dominik LaCapra's *Writing History, Writing Trauma*.

Megan and Rachel, in this text are suffering from the symptoms of post traumatic disorder. Those memory about past haunt them every day, which make their life terrible. They have difficult to sleep, raise temper, excessive anxiety etc. Trauma refers to an event, series of events or context that is emotionally overwhelming. The individual feels helpless or powerless to control the event or situation. Trauma is used mostly in medicine and psychology. But, there is a current effort to borrow the concept of trauma from medicine and psychiatry and to introduce it into sociological theory. The word trauma comes from Latin, meaning "wound". In this case trauma refers to psychological rather than a physical wound. It overwhelms an individual's ability to use normal coping mechanisms to adapt to a situation. It disrupts an individual's frame of reference; beliefs about themselves and the world. Trauma is one that we use as an individual experience, with our experience being that perpetrators, victims, or spectators, with all of us deeply affected by the experience as representing some form of violent interruption to our lives. It can be defined further in the words of Cathy Caruth as:

Trauma describes an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often delayed, and uncontrolled receptive occurrence of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena. The experience of the soldier faced with sudden and massive death around him, for example, who suffers this sight in a numbed state, only to relive it later on in repeated nightmares, is central and requiring image of trauma in our century. (181)

So, this definition clearly shows that trauma is described as the response to an unexpected violent that are not fully grasped as they occur, but return later in repeated flashback, nightmares and other repetitive phenomena. For the development of the trauma theory the credit goes to Sigmund Freud who initially took the job of meaning and flourishing the trauma theory in course of his treatment of the people who were being mentally and physically wounded, disturbed and disordered in the World War I. In this regard, Post traumatic stress disorder is described as great emotional upheaval and the feeling that the soul is shattered. Rachel and Megan in the text are going through the traumatic experience in their life. That is why the researcher has picked up the issue of the post traumatic stress disorder.

Rachel as a main protagonist in the text is the most traumatized one. She remembers those past days when she was victimized and insulted by her husband. Narrator articulates the behavior of Rachel's husband in the party in front of many couples. She remembers that:

I try not to think of the worst days, but the memories crowd into my head at times like this. Another fight, towards the end: waking, post-party, post-blackout, Tom telling me how I'd been the night before, embarrassing him again, insulting the wife of a colleague of his, shouting at her for flirting with my husband. I don't want to go anywhere with you anymore; he told me, 'You ask me why I never invite friends around, why I don't like going to the pub with you anymore. You honestly want to know why? It's because of you. Because I'm ashamed of you'. (142)

Furthermore, during the party with many people, when Tom treats Rachel in a barbaric way, Rachel cannot resist this because she is trapped by her husband. Narrator describes: "Jocelyn and Clifford had pitched out of the way for the party.

She went out of the back door and stood burning and shivering in the cool wet night. She was humiliated, she was ashamed of Tom” (111). Indeed, Rachel states the cause for her alcoholism and subsequent psychological derailment in her inability to become a mother. Thus, Rachel not only suffers from her trauma, she also suffers from having an identity denied to her, an identity she obsessively wants to call her own. Her degraded condition is described as: “Women are still only valued for two things- their looks and their role as mothers. I’m not beautiful, and I can’t have kids, so what does that make me? Worthless” (112). These lines describe that the main character Rachel lives a terrible life because of her some past unforgettable events. Rachel has difficulty to spend her day. She is traumatized because she thinks that people like or value those women who are attractive and have motherhood. Both of them characters are not in Rachel. She cannot give birth to a baby, she does everything whatever she knew to bear a child but all of them went vain. So she thinks that she has to spend a single life. Her dream of a happy family limits her imagination.

Rachel remembers her life incidents when she gets divorced by her husband Tom. She is totally isolated and separated. During that day, she feels herself empty and tired of life due to her husband’s domination inside and outside of the house. The narrator narrates this painful condition representing the condition of all the middle class female in the countryside and describes “She knew that how she had seen him, she knew it, because it happened again. She was in her village, in the middle of the night. This was about nine years after she and Tom had divorced. She was alone”(99). She becomes deserted and alone in the city. She cannot forget those bad days of her life. Those incidents always haunt her and become a burden of her life.

The critique of post-traumatic stress disorder argues that our life does not prepare us for trauma. Millions of people develop post-traumatic stress disorder with

symptoms such as nightmares, headaches, flashbacks, withdrawing from people, profound sadness, anxiety, anger, guilt, fatigue, pessimism, sexual problems, and emotional numbing. The character named Megan, primarily affiliates with the trauma. She thinks that she is the main killer of her child. Because of her carelessness behavior leads to death of her child in her past days. Now she blames herself as a murderer of her child and she is circled by guilt for her deeds. The researcher aims to prove mental condition of female in the modern time.

Critics comment upon the post traumatic stress disorder, it conceptualizes upon unusual disorder in that unlike others such as depression and panic disorder it is not defined simply in terms its symptoms. It is experience of serious threat to life. It could be serious threat or actual harm to one's children, partner or another close relative or friend. It could be the sudden destruction of one's home or community, or seeing another person who has been seriously injured or killed as the result of either an accident or physical violence. In reality, the incident might not pose a serious threat to life, but, if the incident is genuinely considered to be life-threatening, then the victim has experienced an event outside the range of their normal experience.

David Kinchin asserts in his book *A Guide To Psychological Debriefing: Managing Emotional Decompression and Post –Traumatic Stress Disorder:*

Traumatic events strike unexpectedly and turn everyday experiences upside down. They frequently destroy the belief that 'it could never happen to me'. In aftermath of a disaster or event, people may believe that they were in the wrong place at the wrong time. It is not only survivors of disasters who suffer trauma. Relatives, witnesses and emergency workers are also exposed. Once a person has experienced trauma, it may be extremely difficult for them to

believe that their life can ever be the same again. Survival is not just to do with living- it mostly to do with the quality of that living. (Kinchin 12)

Similarly, another critic Glenn R. Schiraldi in his book *The Post Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook* defines the term about post traumatic stress disorder as he narrates:

Post traumatic stress disorder results from exposure to an overwhelmingly stressful event or series of events, such as war, rape, or abuse. It is a normal response by normal people to an abnormal situation. The traumatic events that lead to PTSD are typically so extraordinary or serve that they would distress almost everyone. These events are usually sudden. They are perceived as dangerous to self and others, and they overwhelm our ability to respond adequately. We say that PTSD is a normal response to an abnormal event because the condition is completely understandable and predictable. The symptoms make perfect sense because what happened has overwhelmed normal coping responses. (Schiraldi 20)

The text is depiction about the psychological condition of female in the urban city. It projects the concept of psychological trauma. In order to get a deeper understanding in analyzing the effects of the traumatic event, the researcher uses Post Traumatic Stress Disorder which is known as PTSD. This research paper particularly frames out the notion of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from the book *Counseling for Post Traumatic Disorder* by Michael J. Scott and Stephen G. Strading. And this paper also frames out the notion of Dominik LaCapra from his book; *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. They argue:

The client must have witnessed or experienced a serious threat or their life or physical well being. Second, the client must have experienced the event in

some way. And, the client must persistently avoid stimuli associated with the trauma or experience a numbing of general responsiveness. Then, the client must have experienced persistent symptoms of increased arousal. In this study, this criterion consists of three indicators. The patient of PTSD feels difficulty to sleep. The second is irritability or outburst of anger. It is an inability to control the emotion so it has become unbalanced. The person will easily get angry toward another person. At last the symptom of PTSD is` hyper vigilance. This causes the unusual increase of the person's alertness. (Scott & Stradling 8)

From this quote, it argues that, the person experienced, witnessed or was confronted with an event or events that involved actual or threatened death or serious injuries, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or other. The person's response involved intense fear, helplessness or horror. The traumatic event is consistently re-experienced recurrent and intrusive distressing recollection of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions. Avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness, symptoms of increased arousal, duration of disturbance and the disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas. For instance:

Ben never got as far as Paris, he never even made it as far as Cambridge. He died on the A10, his skull crushed beneath the wheels of an articulated lorry. I miss him every day. More than anyone, I think. He's 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. (41)

These lines explain that Megan has experienced and witnessed her brother death in front of her eyes. She cannot believe in her eyes whether she seeing is happening in front of her or it was just a bad dream. She cannot control herself after seeing her brother's accident in front of her. Then, she cannot forget those past experiences of her life which overwhelms her in present. In the text, Megan witnessed her brother's death in an accident. Therefore, she has fear to cross the road and cannot walk on the street alone. She has a kinds of threats on her mind that if she walk on street she will also killed by vehicles running on the road. Similarly, she is not able to stay in her own home because she remembers those incidents and get frightened. For instance:

I was so frightened- too frightened to go to sleep. I'd just walk around those dark rooms and I'd hear her crying, I'd smell her skin. I saw things. I'd waken in the night and be sure that there was someone else- something else- in the house with me. I thought I was going mad. I thought ii was going to die. I thought that maybe I would just stay there, and that one day someone would find me. At least that way I wouldn't have left her. (276)

Because of the reflection of past memory, Megan feels fear to stay at home. She cannot forget her death child as long as she always feel her death child at home. Therefore, she is mentally disturbed by the death of her brother and child. Even she thinks that she will be mad and may be die. She cannot tolerate all this things within her mind. This illness makes her mentally as well as physically weak. Additionally, she cannot prepared herself to being mother second time. She cannot throw out the memories about her first child from her mind. Whenever she thinks about pregnancy she remembers her fault which let her child to death. She thinks herself as careless mother who cannot give proper care to her child, so she is not perfect image of good

mother. Therefore, she is unable to being pregnant in her later life. She thinks herself as the figure of failure woman who is unable to keep her family happy.

The cause of PTSD is the stressor, which in this case is the traumatic event, and it can happen in several ways. The first is an event posing a serious threat to one's life or physical integrity. Megan who has witnessed her child's death by drawn is unable to give birth to another child for her husband. Because she thinks that if she bears a child again she cannot nurture him because she thinks that her habit of carelessness and relaxation leads her child to death. So, it is impossible her to care child. The Second, an event which presents the possibility of a serious threat to one's loved ones. Moreover, in the book *Counseling for Post Traumatic Disorder*; Scoot and Stradling interpret more about the elements of PTSD. It has symptoms which make relation to one another, the patient who have traumatic experiences and witness that the stressor will lead to an interfering imagery or feeling of re-experiencing the trauma. This situation leads the PTSD patient to give a reaction towards this uncomfortable feeling. The avoidance of situation may become the result of this condition which also may serve again as the trigger for the intrusive imagery to those PTSD patients. The connection between intrusive imagery and avoidance behavior can lead to disordered arousal to the person. Scoot & Stradling stated that "different people react to objectively similar situation differently" (8). This situation helps to build the symptoms of PTSD. It depends on the effectiveness of the individual's coping response. If the patients show negative coping responses it may affects them, while positive coping responses may break the cycle and enable an exist of PTSD symptoms. In this sense, at the first part of the novel, Megan avoids walking on the street and did not want to have a child. But later section of the text, she wants to heal her trauma by doing those activities which trigger her to remember past experience.

She challenges to them and indeed served to reduce the intrusive imagery of the accident by dare to walk alone in the road, get pregnant by Tom, Rachel's ex. husband and wants to birth the child. She dares to speak truth that she was pregnant by tom and now she wants to give birth this child. She wants to face all of the obstacles and complication to raise her child:

I will love this child and raise her knowing that I did the right thing from the start. All right, perhaps not from the very start, but from the moment when I knew she was coming. I owe it to this baby, and I owe it to be Libby. I owe it to her to do everything differently this time.I'd been: child, rebellious teenager, run away, whore, lover, bad wife, and bad mother. I'm not sure if I can remake myself as a good wife, but a mother –that I have to try. (365)

In this text, the writer ascertains that someone's present life is affected by their some past traumatic experiences. This book has clearly shown the different effects on female characters life because of those traumatic incidents which happened in their life. The main effect is Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) which has such types of symptoms intrusive imagery, avoiding stimuli, and increased arousal. This criterion consists of some indicators: The first one is difficult to sleep. The second one is irritability or outburst of anger. It is inability to control the emotion so it becomes unbalanced. The person will easily get anger towards another person. The third is hyper vigilance and bad relationship. This causes the unusual increasing of the person's alertness" (Scott and Strading 2). The main symptoms of PTSD is experience an unwilling returning of traumatic events in the form of dream or shadows, which enters into consciousness suddenly flashback. This is often triggered by things that remind the sufferer of a traumatic event that has ever been experienced. Different

signs of increased arousal come in the form of anxiety, irritability, insomnia, and poor concentration.

In this novel, Megan and Rachel experience symptoms of PTSD one of them is having difficulty to sleep knowing as insomnia, “I’ve been up for hours, I can’t sleep. I haven’t slept in days. I hate this, hate insomnia more than anything, just lying there, brain going round, tick, tick, tick, tick. I itch all over. I want to shave my head” (40). Megan is suffering from difficulty in sleeping. Similarly, she even feels like there are invisible bugs disturbing her sleep. She thinks that her head becomes too heavy that is why she wants to cut her hair to get relief from insomnia. Similarly, another female character Rachel also goes through the problem of sleeping. She cannot sleep well in the night. For instance:

I can’t remember what I was watching, but at some point I must have felt lonely, or happy, or something, because I wanted to talk to someone. The need for contact must have been over-whelming and there was no one I could call except for Tom. There’s no one I want to talk to except for Tom. The call log on my phone says I rang four times at 11.02, 11.12, 11.54, 12.09. (29)

This quote describes that Rachel could not sleep well. She had dreamed about perfect family life. But in reality, she is alone. Nobody is there with her to help and support. Therefore, she is in depression and cannot control her feeling. She wants to talk with someone to share her joy and sorrow. Thus, she called Tom to talk at mid night. But whenever she called him instead of listening her, Tom always scolds her for disturbing him. She is alone; even she has not a home to take rest and friend to share her suffering.

Whereas, Megan and Rachel are facing some mental sickness and trying to deals with the trauma, but it is still hard to live normal life with their family. Day to

day Megan's mental illness is increasing instead of recovering. Because Megan and Scott having conflict about a child. Her husband wants to a child but she is unable to do so. Therefore, she felt the uneasiness of pushing her husband for neglecting about the child. But, inside she felt guilt for always making her husband feel unhappy. The symptom of PTSD really makes the patient life terrible. They cannot survive easily, all the time they are suffering from some symptoms. Those incidents which occurred in their past time haunt them a lot. Even they cannot able to do something for themselves; they have threat upon their own life. They become only the man of blood and flesh, their mind could not work properly because their mind is disturbs.

The other symptoms of PTSD are experiencing of significant emotional, the frequency of emotional changes rapidly, easy to be offended and easy to calm down. Sometimes patients also experiences severe anxiety that they could not control themselves. PTSD's symptoms that affect Megan's emotional state arise due to her excessive anxiety. She could not control herself when she had a fight with her husband. Then, she feels lonely and used to cry alone. The patients who have experienced traumatic event, their body response are not only natural but also psychological. When Megan met the family of the baby that she cares, the meeting arises her anxiety and makes her confused of what she should do when she meet them. It shows the psychological body's responses towards facing some incidents which arouse her trauma. At first, she chooses to become a nanny to make herself calm and feel better. But, later that job increased her trauma level and she suffers more than before. She always feels upset and worried whenever she is asked to care for the baby. Then, she has decided to retire from her profession as a nanny for Watson's family, as long as she wants to try to stop her trauma. It is very difficult to her to face the things which arouse her trauma but at the same time she wants to get relief from trauma. In

addition, Rachel is also suffering from excessive anxiety. For instance: “I picked up her and took her outside, as quickly as I could. I remember running with her towards the fence, the baby starting to wake and to grizzle a little. I don’t know what I thought I was doing” (143). She cannot control herself while she sees that the baby is crying. Then, she picks up the baby from cot and run away. She didn’t know why she was stealing the baby. She did that because she did not have her own child, whenever she saw a child then she stole her. It shows that Rachel is suffering from symptoms of PTSD as excessive anxiety.

Feelings of loneliness bring Megan and Rachel the uncomfortable feeling that eventually could make them to undergo repeated trauma. As Scott and Strading explain about the factor of PTSD symptom “the traumatic experience which is the stressor will lead to an intrusive imagery or feeling of re-experiencing the trauma. This situation causes the person to give reaction toward this uncomfortable feeling” (5). Megan goes to psychiatrist to recover her illness but there she goes through another problem. She makes affair with psychiatrist because she feels calm with him. This attraction makes both of them emotional and they broke the relation between doctor and patient. There is no sense of shyness and hesitation, no longer concerned with the status that should be a patient and a psychiatrist. Similarly, Rachel keep sexual relationship with Scott (Megan’s husband) when she is in processing of investigation of Megan’s disappearance. Rachel goes Megan’s house to know about the hidden reality to Megan’s disappearance. Rachel lie to Scott that she and Megan are friends but they are not. In this way, she became very close to Scott when his wife is contactless to him. His loneliness makes both of them emotionally as well as physically attracted to each other. Rachel was divorced by her husband because of her heavy habit of drinks. Then she makes negative relation with her friend Scott

instead of helping him she pushed him into another problem. For the point: “I roll over. Scott is sitting up now. He swings his legs over the side of the bed, his back to me” (281). This line illustrates that Rachel wants to keep physical relation with Scott (Megan’s husband). In the process of solving the problem about Megan’s disappearance, Rachel has keep relation with Scott.

In addition, Megan and Rachel both of them are suffering from another symptom which is bad relationship. Trauma experienced by Megan and Rachel does not affect only them, but also affect the people closest to them and the surrounding social environment. Rachel creates bad relationship with her husband and her friend Scott. Similarly, Megan has also bad relationship with her husband and psychiatrist. In addition, Megan has extra marital affair with Rachel’s ex husband as well as with her psychiatrist. As long as Megan’s psychiatrist does not accept the relation with her whereas, she has not good relation towards her husband. At the time, this condition makes her very depressed. On hand her husband is demanding to have child, on the other hand she is not capable to do that. Therefore, she needs a lot of attention from other or her psychiatrist to relief from this depression and wants to build close relation with him. “I moved closer to him, put my hands on his hips and turned him around. He took hold of my arms again, his long fingers locked around my wrists. ‘I could lose my job,’ he said, and then I really lost my temper” (181). These line describes that Megan want to keep relation with psychiatrist but psychiatrist is afraid because he has threat that he can lose his job. He thinks that because they are breaking the ethics of doctor and patient. But Megan is forcing to psychiatrist to keep on relation.

Hyper vigilance is a symptom of PTSD where patient experienced indirectly or can be through the psyche, and experiences conflict in his/her mind and have a re-experienced trauma. Therefore, patient wants alienate themselves against those things

which concerned them trauma. Hyper vigilance will occur while patient go through questions, stories, and photographs, videos as well as real events. Likewise, the sufferer gets conflict in their mind. Therefore inviting the patient to discuss what they experienced trauma can cause a sense of trauma. It indirectly makes the patient experience discomfort to them, and get re-experience trauma. Affective experienced Megan is worried about the presumption that she does not yet she did. “I’m scared, ‘I tell him. ‘What if I can do it all wrong again? What if there’s something wrong with me? What if things go wrong with Scott? What if I end up on my own again? I don’t know if I can do, I’m so afraid of being on my own again- I mean, on my own with a child.....”(181). These lines are showing Megan’s feelings. She feels anxious, fearful, unsure and not confident in what she will do. Her fear made her feel an over vigilance because she worried she will make another mistake in her new life and disappointed her husband.

Moreover, the female character Megan and Rachel faces different traumatic experience. To release themselves from those experiences they go through different process. LaCapra writes in his book; *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. Working through’ is taken to be post traumatic response of painful experiences of the past in which victim tries to detach themselves from the extremely overwhelming past experience. Victim goes through the process of articulation and expression of their past experiences in different ways and forms. One of the forms is the literature. Public can articulate the bitter personal experiences and the expression in the form of literature can work an act of public commemoration in the larger cultural context. LaCapra argues:

Working through is an articulation practice; to the extent one works trauma (as well as transferential relations in general) one is distinguishes between past

and present and recall in memory that something happened to one (or one people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with openings to the future, This does not imply wither that there is a pure opposition between past and present. (21-22)

LaCapra writes working through is a process of articulation that enables the victim to distinguish between past and present by making them realized present realities then it opens the future door to live a very healthy and happy life. It means to say that by expressing the painful and bitter experience of the past one can differentiate the past pain and present realities then the victim can persuade themselves from the past. By persuading themselves, he/she can cope with the situation and search for better situation.

As LaCapra argues, articulation of painful experience of the past reliefs the victim and can cope with the painful past in present and future living in his book *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, characters do the same in the text. They articulates all their painful traumatic past experience related to sexual violence, domestic violence, sexual abuse, drug abuse, torture and tries to heal the situation. Megan reveals her all private experience of her life to therapist in hospital and tries to heal herself to be a happy and healthy life.

LaCapra explains working through as the reengagement of life. It means, life has been destroyed by traumatic experience but it can be recovered by articulating traumatic past in the public forum. He further writes ‘working through’ revive the pain and suffering as he writes “in working through the past in a manner that enables survival or a reengagement in life, one is betraying the those who were overwhelmed and consumed by that traumatic past”(22). It means to say that something that sharing your personal pain and sufferings to the audience give relief. One can go with the

deep sufferings which overwhelmed the traumatic past but with the articulation in different forms give the power to survive. He/she stands able to distinguish between past, present and future and gets optimistic to shape future by fighting back to that traumatic event.

Here in the text, Rachel and Megan mourn to cope with their traumatic past experience of their life. They are not lamenting by remembering rather they are taking it as a platform for the refreshment by purifying their trauma. Rachel as a victim of her own past traumatic experience tried to find out the reality of disappearance of Megan Hipwell and helps investigation team and she makes presumption that: “1. She has run off with her boyfriend, who from here on in I will refer to as B. 2. B has harmed her. 3. Scott has harmed her. 4. She has simply left her husband and gone to live elsewhere. 5. Someone other than B or Scott has harmed her” (93). These lines are speaking about Rachel’s positively and creatively with her traumatic experiences. She is helping others to get justice. She is going through with ‘working through’ of her past experience and taking it as the lesson for her life. She is not treating her past experience as an unforgettable event rather she takes that as her lesson for future which is the feature of ‘working through’ process of healing trauma by LaCapra.

Megan wants to heal her trauma by became a babysitter or childcare for Tom Watson’s daughter Eive Watson. Even though she knows that if she became a nanny she will suffer more than she suffered. But she did not care about it and decide to become a babysitter. While she does the job of nanny, it considered that she faces her traumatic experience directly. It helps her to control her emotion about child as well as her trauma. Already, she is suffering from symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder, whereas to deal with her traumatic experience she chooses that thing which triggers her to trauma. She thinks that if she wants to get relief from those past

memories, she has to motivate herself to face those past incidents again now in her present life. Megan indirectly shows her positive strategy with her profession as a nanny. Megan shows her effort by accepting the suggestion from her husband Scott. However, she needs support from her husband because she knew that her activity will make her uncomfortable. Megan is fighting her fear of passing the streets and driving vehicles. Although she knows that the streets and vehicles are the one that cause her trauma arise, and that will be dangerous for her to walk alone on the street without a person accompanying her. She keeps going to any place that she ever visited with her brother or just passing the street. Doing that thing would remind her of the accident she and her brother experienced. The emergence of trauma did not make her feel re-experienced directly but through her mind. She describes that:

I want to shave my head, I want to run. I want to take a road trip, in a convertible, with the top down. I want to drive to the coast – any coast. I want to walk on a beach. Me and my big brother were going to be road trippers. We had such plans, Ben and I. Well, they were Ben’s plans mostly- he was such a dreamer. We were going to ride motorbikes from Paris to the Cote d’ Azur, or all the way down the Pacific coast of the USA. (40-41)

From this quote, Megan's statement is much reversed with the trauma which she got. She is not feeling any kinds of worries while travel latter in her life rather she feels comfort to travel. She is doing this to break the obstacles and complication from her life to survive normal life. To deal with her traumatic experience, another effort that Megan tries to walk on the streets. It shows that, she is doing those activities which are the trigger of her trauma. She did those activities to relief herself. In addition, Rachel wants a perfect and happy life but she lost all them from her life. Therefore, to survive her life she imagine the life of perfect family and enjoyed most in imagined

life while traveling in the train. She admires Megan and Scott's life as a perfect life in the world and remembers her past life with Tom and hope to being: "They're match, to be, they're Tom and me, five years ago. They're what I lost, they're everything I want to be" (26).

Positive dealing with trauma, experienced by Rachel and Megan makes them taking best decision for healing their trauma. Megan's another labor to heal trauma is to make the decision to visit the therapist. She took the counseling class which was given by her psychiatrist Kamal Abdic. She thinks to do those things to reduce her symptoms of PTSD and go ahead in her life. Hence, Megan's decision to go to the psychiatrist is one of the best solutions to decrease her trauma. She explains that:

All I know is one minute I'm tickling along fine and life is sweet and I want for nothing, and the next, I can't wait to get away, I'm all over the place, slipping and sliding again. So, I'm going to see a therapist! Which could be weird, but it could be a laugh, too. I've always thought that it might be fun to be Catholic, to be able to go to the confessional and unburden yourself and have someone tell you that they forgive you, to take all the sin away, wipe the slate clean. (41)

She makes the decision to visit the psychiatrist to solve her mental problem. She wants to get rid from all the troubles from her life and live happy life. Megan is suffering and her mind is not stable, in this condition she has those kinds of self power which lead herself to good way. Megan keeps on her decision without feeling any kinds of fear whenever she re-experience trauma. She encourages herself to fight with those negative feelings and strength herself. Similarly, Megan wants to give birth a child from Tom. She wants to give proper attention, love and care to her child. But it is not easy to her to do this because she was not pregnant by her husband rather she

was pregnant by another man. Her extra marital affair has give result as her pregnancy. Therefore, she wants to reveal the truth about her child's father and gave birth to child. But it is not easy to her Tom ignored her feeling and betrayal her. In this sense, Megan wants to reveal truth and take a risk to birth her child. This shows that Megan wants to convey the positive and progressive lessons among the readers to set a new perspectives and thoughts about the motherhood and womanhood. Nothing is greater than the love of mother in the world.

Working through by LaCapra focuses on critical thought of the traumatic events where the victims analyze their past painful events by using critical point of view. On the basis of this theoretical insight, Rachel's act of helping investigation team to find out the disappearance of Megan Hipwell is a process of 'working through' where she is involving herself in another's case to make herself busy. The trauma theorist LaCapra argues:

The process of working through including mourning and modes of critical thought and practice involve the possibility of making distinctions or developing articulation that are recognized as problematic but still function as limits and as possibly desirable resistances to decidability, particularly when the latter is tantamount to confusion and the obliteration or blurring of all distinctions. (22)

Rachel, main protagonist in the text try to heals her traumatic life through working through process. She helps to police to find out the reality of Megan's disappearance and also help to investigation of Megan's case. She fights for justice to Megan and success in her investigation. At last, she finds that her ex-husband is the murder of Megan Hipwell then, in self defense Rachel kills her ex-husband Tom in his own house. Where, Anna (Tom's second wife) also helps to Rachel. "I realized she wasn't

trying to stop the bleeding. She was making sure. Twisting the corkscrew in further and further, ripping into his throat, and all the time she was talking to him softly, softly. I couldn't hear what she was saying" (408-409). It explains that both women Rachel and Anna help to give justice for Megan, they killed Tom the murderer of Megan. It shows that they did not keep themselves silent rather they dare to give punishment to a killer even they could not care what the relation with him. They fight for justice for another woman who is suffered by the male counterparts in her life.

In short, Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* draws the picture of entire dark realities of post-traumatic stress disorder of the characters. She as a female writer wrote the past experience of female which haunts them in the present time. Female character in the text has witnessed and experienced different traumatic events in their life, those past memories haunts them in present time. So, they are suffered from different symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder such as intrusive imagery, avoiding stimuli, and increased arousal. Therefore they are unable to survive their life peacefully and happily. Whenever they want to do something new in their daily life those past experiences trigger them to denied doing. Because their mind is not stable, they are always haunted by those past traumatic experiences. To get relief from traumatic experiences they take different strategies; Rachel goes through fantasy to forget those past experiences. She enjoys in the world of illusion where she imagined a well made happy and perfect family life. She always imagine about a loving and caring husband and also a cute child with while she travels or takes the same commuter train every morning and night from Ashbury to London. As well as in reality, she becomes obsessed with the case of Megan's disappearance. She helps police to investigate the murder of Megan Hipwell and she becomes success in her ambition that she finds out killer and gives punishment. In this way, she establish her own identity without others

help and support. Her husband left her because of her drunken habit and not having a child. But now she becomes a successful investigator and makes her own identity. Now she has not depends on others, she become able to survive her own life by herself. She does not live with passive and pessimistic life rather she survives for others. Similarly, Megan adapts different strategies to heal herself from traumatic experience. She does not avoid the things that remind her about her trauma. Instead, she wants to do the activity that can prevent her trauma. The first is becoming a nanny and the second is by fighting her fear of passing the streets. The third is going to therapist to share her trauma and relief herself. Her proposes to doing that is to break her symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder and try to adaption with her reality. Therefore, both of them wanted to cope with the suffering to make their future better. Rachel and Megan want to live a peaceful and healthy life by using their traumatic past as a greatest knowledge for their present life. Both want to relief themselves from the traumatic moment by working through or mourning process. In this process, victim struggles to overcome the past traumatic shock rather than faithful to trauma like that of melancholia. There is an articulation of traumatic emotions and feelings out of mind and heart and the victim feels relief. Draining out all the suppressed traumatic shocks out of mind eventually gives a way to restore the peace, tranquility and stability in life. This is how a victim works through trauma. So, if a victim chooses melancholia or mourning is her/his choice depending on what message they want to convey. But it is only mourning process that conveys the positive and progressive lessons among the reader to set a new perspectives, thoughts and draw society towards the path of peace and harmony through reconciliation. They take those past experiences as their lesion for future life and copes them with positively.

They do those things which trigger to re-experience those past moment and walk ahead to heal their trauma.

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