

Tribhuvan University

Exploring the Subaltern in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*

A Thesis submitted to the Department of English, Saraswati Multiple Campus,
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Declaration

I hereby declare that the research paper entitled, Exploring the Subaltern in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* is my own original work carried out as a Master's student at the Department of English at Saraswati Multiple Campus except to the extent that assistance from other in the thesis paper's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expression are duly acknowledged. All sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree at Tribhuvan University or any other education institution, except where due acknowledgement is made in the thesis.

Saru Tamang

May, 2025

Letter of Recommendation

This thesis entitled Exploring the Subaltern in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* was written by Saru Tamang under my guidance. I recommend this thesis for final examinations by the Research Committee of Saraswati Multiple Campus, Thamel, Kathmandu, in fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's Degree in English.

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This thesis entitled Exploring the Subaltern in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* submitted to the Department of English, Saraswati Multiple Campus, by Saru Tamang has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee:

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Abstract

The research analyses the novel *The Girl on the Train* (2015) by Paula Hawkins using subaltern concepts, highlighting the degradation of women in the text. The study aims to explore how the women have been rendered voiceless and dominated by patriarchal concepts. The study attempts to identify these gaps and present the females as subalterns using subaltern theories of Antonio Gramsci, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, patriarchal concepts by Rita Felski and other concepts. The three first-person narrators of the novel- Rachel, Megan and Anna have been portrayed as negative and dominated by male ideologies. Rachel despite being the protagonist, has been attributed to many negative characteristics. On the other hand, the antagonist male, who manipulates all these women, commits fraud and murder has been shown as a positive character.

Keywords: Episteme, feminism, gendered subalternism, marginalization, voicing

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I. Unjust View of Women in Hawkin's Writing

The novel *The Girl on the Train* (2015) is a murder mystery comprising of thrilling and suspenseful series of events with three different female first-person narrators. The opening of the novel starts with one of the central female characters, Rachel. Rachel is recently divorced and commutes to and from work regularly through London and her suburb of Ashbury. Her recent separation has led her to get addicted to alcohol, while she still suffers from separation anxiety. During her train rides, she observes her surroundings and all the minute details, from train tracks to clothes around them to people outside. Meanwhile, she lives with Cathy, her friend from university, for the time being. Rachel gets attached to a couple outside the train windows at 15 Blenheim Road, Whitney, and reminisces about her past days with her ex-husband. This observation grows into an obsession as she looks forward to watching them every day.

Meanwhile, she loses her job but still rides the train just to observe them and her old house. The couple living there are originally named Megan and Scott Hipwell; Rachel calls them Jess and Jason. During one of her observations, she sees Megan with another guy, leaving her restless. Rachel is an alcoholic, and when drunk she is unable to recall the incidents of those periods; she makes drunk calls to Tom's house during midnights every time she drinks. Meanwhile, one day Rachel sees a news article revealing Megan was missing. Feeling the affair might be connected to her death, Rachel pretends to be Megan's friend and approaches Scott. As Rachel gets involved in Scott's life, her curiosity grows, and she begins investigating to find the murderer of Megan Hipwell. Tom, the antagonist, and Rachel's ex-husband live near the Hipwells with his new wife Anna and their newborn. Rachel's visiting the nearby area makes them wary, as one day Rachel barges into their house and takes their child in drunk state. Rachel attempts to unravel the mystery behind Megan going missing and during her investigation she finds out that Megan used to work for Tom and Rachel as their

babysitter. Trying to piece the incidents together, she goes for consultation with Dr. Abdic, Megan's therapist and lover. Among the nights Rachel is unable to recall, she feels that she might have met Tom and Megan one particular night, but Tom refuses giving her information about it which leads Rachel into visiting the venue of the incident. Meanwhile, Anna while going through Tom's things, finds a burner phone which belonged to Megan. Anna then knows about Tom and Megan's affair. With frequent attempts to recollect her memories by visiting the underpass, Rachel remembers how Tom attacked her that night while he was with Megan. Hurriedly, Rachel goes to Anna's house to ask Anna to take Evie and flee, as Tom is both a cheater and murderer of Megan. During this conversation, Tom arrives and intervenes with the two women. He knocks Rachel unconscious and takes Evie as hostage. After gaining consciousness, Rachel sneaks into the kitchen with a corkscrew and runs outside with Tom chasing her. During this chase, in an attempt to defend herself, Rachel ends up driving the corkscrew through Tom's neck and Anna shoves it further, ensuring his death. Then after, Rachel heads to Scotland, and the story ends.

Upon studying the prior analysis of the primary text *The Girl on the Train*, the struggle, the worthless attempts of the females-the voicelessness of the females, the treatment of the female characters as inferior subalterns haven't been justly presented. Aisananda Millenia Ferarre's analyses the text in his thesis from feminist and patriarchal views which can be observed through the following lines, "Tom Watson tends to abuse the power he has and use it to deceive the female characters around him. He also manages to do manipulative behavior to mask his lies and flaws. Surprisingly, even though Tom lies to them and hurts them, all of the female characters still love and trust him." These lines show patriarchal mindset in the novel as the male character is portrayed as superior, while females are victims of his manipulation.

An article by V. Kaviyadevi and P. Amuthapriya analyses the struggles of women. The mention of the terminology plight of women sheds light into the hardships the women. The need of understanding of this struggle has been underscored by the writers.

The existing ideas were assertively exploring some dissimilar features which makes a problem of women. *The Girl on the Train* (2015) was written by Paula Hawkins, which observes around Domestic Violence, Plight of Women, Betrayal and Drug Abuse which derives women suppression. The purpose in the Plight of Women is to indicate the woman struggles by the men controlling in the society. (86)

The above article attempts to portray the unjust happenings causing turmoil for women but do not point out the discrimination from all angles. Many other critiques have majorly written regarding the psychoanalytical aspect, showing criticism or weakness of females. Maysaa H. Jaber's article analyses links between the alcohol addiction of Rachel and views on this addiction. The writer in this article commends Hawkins' writing style but doesn't truly address the sufferings of the women. She writes:

The Girl on the Train can be thought of as having feminist undertones as it is concerned with stories of troubled broken women who are judged and dismissed by people and society at large. Using unreliable female narrators, the book goes into the depth of the vulnerability and suffering of women. It shows the effects of trauma on women and their entrapment in the cycle of alcohol and shame. While Hawkins exposes the serotypes of women and the (mis)conceptions around them, her book is not a feminist book per se. Hawkins presents marginalized women with motherhood at the heart of this feminist critique. (69)

Jaber advocates how Hawkins' book disregards the traditional features of feministic viewpoints and instead presents the women in dire situations. The women suffer from torture from their male partners, they are also presented as the center of all problems as they are

unruly and uncivilized. An article by Riska Rahayu Roisiah, Pramudana Ihsan and Wijayadi has presented critical views on the female characters. This article focuses on one of the central characters Megan, highlighting her negative traits by showing that she suffered from personality disorder. The article states:

The character perfectly shows the social behavior disorder of narcissism. Matters on personality disorders have become more widespread, people are becoming more and more anxious about these mental problems. People begin to randomly guess and diagnose who has this disease or what disease they might have. Narcissism is a psychological disorder. (171)

This article presents Megan as a character who suffered from psychological disorder, she suffers from episodes of trauma, which leads to her actions as a consequence but the article shows otherwise. Megan has been portrayed as a villainous character with an evil mindset which is unjust. Meanwhile, Bimal Kishore Shrivastwa, provides an unbiased view in his article, he has focused on the psychological analysis of Tom, trying to reason his behaviors.

The research not only corresponds to the hidden incidents that Tom emerges on but also other factors supporting to the use of defense mechanism. It digs out the reasons Tom blames or neglects others and lives in the illusionary world of 'being clean' that justifies the flaws in his behavior. The finding is that the central character, Tom is suffering from ego split and he is trying to get out from tensions and anxiety. It is expected that this paper stands as a reference to the scholars intending to research Hawkins further. (15)

The writer attempts to reason the actions of Tom. Tom is a character linked to all the characters, he is the center of all actions. Tom's selfishness and disregard of the females have

led to traumatic experience and building of criminal mindset in all the central female characters.

Another psychoanalytic analysis can be found in an article by Fetri Reni, Imelda Syam where they attempt to view the text using Freudian concept of Id, Ego and Superego. This research analyzes about the main characters: Rachel, Anna, Megan, and Tom. The theory used is psychology theory by Sigmund Freud which explains that the life of the human soul has three levels of consciousness namely; id, ego and superego. The method used in this research is a descriptive qualitative method in which this research does not require statistical data to obtain reality or phenomena that occur in the community.

In the beginning the story, Rachel is not like the protagonist in general, at the beginning of the character's story Rachel is an alcoholic, has severe depression because she has problems with her fertility so she cannot have children, unemployment, often lost consciousness (black out). But at the end of the story, Rachel's character changes where Rachel is involved in a murder case, when she realizes, she relentlessly tries to uncover the truth of Megan's murderous night, turning her into an unusual detective hunting for clues in her blurred memories. (39)

Through an example of Rachel, the writer points out how internalized values and ethos that is followed unconsciously cannot be altered. A perfect interpretation using Freudian notion has been provided. Meanwhile, a thesis by Fitria Febriani presents the traumatic experiences of Megan Hipwell, analyzing the text in relation to Megan, exploring her traumatic experiences and reasonings.

Megan is described to have experienced trauma due to an accident that killed her brother. The grief of losing him is intensified by the death of her baby because of her carelessness. Megan's trauma is analyzed based on the symptoms of Post Traumatic

Stress Disorder (PTSD). The results show that Megan experiences PTSD symptoms such as insomnia, unbalanced emotion, and hypervigilance. (Abstract)

Another psychoanalytical point of view has been presented to give reasons to the actions of the characters. Many researchers have portrayed their point of view in terms of psychoanalysis and feminism but they have missed out pointing out the epistemic violence faced by the subaltern women.

This research attempts to address the epistemic violence upon women in the text as a result of patriarchal beliefs, biasness. The women have been treated as subalterns, this lowly presentation of women, their voicelessness and struggles are highlighted in this writing by presenting the female characters in the book examining various gendered and subaltern concepts with the novel *The Girl on the Train*.

II. The Female Characters of *The Girl on the Train* as Subalterns

The postcolonial term *subaltern* was first used by Italian marxist “Antonio Gramsci” to identify the cultural hegemony that excludes and displaces specific people and social groups from the socio-economic institutions of society, in order to deny their agency and voices in colonial politics. This term denoted the oppressed classes in postcolonial theories:

The theory of the subaltern is a popular theory in postcolonial literature that stresses how colonial power and imperialism employed ruthless measures to marginalize and silence native peoples. The subaltern theory has proved to be the best mode of expression for victims of discrimination of all sorts. (523)

In the text, *The Girl on the Train*, the female characters have been rendered voiceless and undergo suppression as they are unable to voice themselves. The male characters are involved in murder, extramarital affairs, and other unfilial activities. Meanwhile, women, who are the true victims, suffering from trauma induced by the actions of the males, have been instead viewed negatively as per the view of the dominant characters. The opinions, voices, and actions of women are considered insignificant; a woman named Megan is brutally murdered, but the blame has been shifted to her for instigating the events leading to her unfaithful demise. Patriarchal mindset can be found in the book, where the women have been forced to accept the dominant mindset as the males enforce their ideologies. The women are the subalterns, as the central character Rachel, other females, Anna, Megan, and other women suffer from hegemony. We can also find internalization of patriarchy in the text as the women are seen imposing patriarchal beliefs on other women, the women who themselves were victims of patriarchy now have endorsed the beliefs unconsciously. This has turned them into soldiers of patriarchy, upholding phallogocentric beliefs and suppressing other women. These are the traits of the subaltern who cannot voice themselves and internalize the ideologies of the suppressors.

The dominant male characters have defined the characteristics of the females and the suppressed group are not allowed to voice their own identity. The antagonist Tom is the murderer of Megan and engages in relationships with three different women, despite this, he is portrayed as an ideal character, he is a loving and caring husband, a good friend and a neurosurgeon by occupation. Contrary to him, the victimized women are attributed negative characteristics. Rachel, despite being the hero of the story as she solves the mystery and even saves Anna and Tom's future victims from him has been shown as negative. She is also unable to present her own idea.

When we analyse the women in the book, Rachel, the central character, is described as an individual with no sense of responsibility, engulfed by alcoholism, and hung up on her ex-husband. She is shown as socially unacceptable and is disrespected by everyone, including her close friend, Cathy. She also has problems remembering her memories after drinking. Meanwhile, Megan, another central character, is shown as unfaithful and as the murderer of her own child, she engages in extramarital affairs with multiple males. Megan too suffers from the childhood trauma of losing her brother, Ben and death of her child Libby. She visits a therapist to deal with these issues and ends up engaging in an unfilial relationship with him; meanwhile, while working as a babysitter for Anna and Tom, she has a love affair with Tom too, out of which she even gets pregnant. Anna, on the other hand, is Tom's ex-secretary who seduces her married boss and is presented as a homewrecker. These women are the victims of Tom's manipulation and gaslighting.

Tom was the person who got involved in an extramarital affair with his secretary Anna; he left Rachel for another woman. Despite this, Rachel's trauma coping mechanisms have been heightened. She was emotionally unstable and took alcohol as her method of freeing herself from this misery. Meanwhile, although Tom had already found another woman (Anna), he wasn't satisfied and engaged in another affair with Megan. Tom got both

Anna and Megan pregnant, and later Tom silenced her forever. Ruining the lives of the two women was not enough; he even murdered a woman he once loved. Here, females are not treated as humans; they haven't been given the right to express themselves, the right to live and love away from fear. The male character who only cares for himself disregards these female characters, manipulates them into believing they themselves are minimal and insignificant, and merely considers them tools of self-pleasure. Meanwhile, other male characters, no matter how short-lived their roles are, have been glorified in the text. Rachel fancies Scott while observing him from the trains; he is described as husband material. Another character, Kamal Abdic, Megan's therapist, is commended for his handsomeness.

According to theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), The term subaltern refers to populations that are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structure of a society (271–313). Gayatri Spivak studies the intersection of marginalization based on class and gender. The term subaltern and is frequently linked to postcolonial studies, where she examines how dominant discourses frequently repress minority voices. She examines the marginalized women of lower societies, examining their voicelessness. The same concepts can be found in the above description as the male characters who are the dominant have been centralized, all the ideas and actions are their formations. While the subaltern female characters are voiceless. Spivak in her essay also describes the concept of epistemic violence which shows the displacement of the marginalized group.

The clearest available example of such epistemic violence is the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity. (77)

In Hawkin's text too, epistemic violence and rendering of voice of the subaltern "shes" can be encountered. The central characters Rachel, Megan and Anna's voice and beliefs has been considered insignificant. Spivak presents case studies of various incidents including the death of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri to show the misconceptions and struggles of subaltern women.

A young woman of sixteen or seventeen, Bhuvanewari Bhaduri, hanged herself in her father's modest apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhuvanewari was menstruating at the time, it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly a decade later, it was discovered that she was a member of one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had finally been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself. Bhuvanewari had known that her death would be diagnosed as the outcome illegitimate passion. She had therefore waited for the onset of menstruation. (103-104)

The struggle of the subalterns to voice themselves can be observed both in Rachel and Bhuvanewari Bhaduri. Rachel is the Bhuvanewari Bhaduri in *The Girl on the Train*; just as after her death, Bhaduri was later observed as illicit despite her attempts, the mindset and thinking of the others displaced the character of Bhuvanewari. Similarly, her failure to conduct her mission is a sign of failure of the marginalized to go against the authoritarians. In the same way, Rachel attempts to give justice to Megan by investigating the murderer of Megan Hipwell but her claims, her voice has been undermined just as Bhaduri's. Rachel's character has been determined by the society, some consider her to be mentally unstable, some regard her as improper and an alcoholic while some fear her. The identity of Rachel is in crisis. Rachel struggles to give justice to Megan, despite being in unstable condition herself- dealing with separation and traumas, with strong determination Rachel takes it into her hands to find the murderer, leading to her investigations. We can witness the struggles of

the marginalized to get justice, the males; police officer Gaskill, Megan's husband Scott do not take it into their hands to unravel the mystery. Rachel is brave to have figured out the murder mystery and even attempts to save Anna from the murderer. Rachel here can be taken as a leader and revolutionist from the subaltern woman group as she fights against the males.

Before the narration begins, the preface of the book gives hints of a woman, dead and buried in an unknown location. The woman's identity hasn't been disclosed here, but from the series of events in the book, Megan is the character who is killed, so it is likely referring to her. Megan is buried beneath a silver birch tree, this isn't a burial ground, there is no proper tombstone or flowers in her grave. Her death as no recognition, she doesn't have mourners surrounding the grave or any ceremony. She hasn't been shown any sign of respect, the insignificance of the marginalized has been highlighted as even after death, when everyone deserves respect, this grave is lacking. Meanwhile, only the narrator who is a woman has decided to honor Megan's deathbed, she considers her death to be good, as she is safe now, she will no longer be violated, she will not have to hide her feelings or suffer from trauma. Females are shown disrespected to the extent that they are not even buried properly; only the oppressed can feel the struggles of those groups and attempt for justice. The violence, the segregation the females have to face in the society is worse than death, the society doesn't allow them to be comfortable, this comfort can only be met in the deathbed.

A woman beneath the ground can also be taken as a symbol of low status, the helplessness of subaltern-women, the ability to voice themselves is absent under the soil. The men, the oppressors, step on top of this soil, showing their dominance. Another part of the preface shows the death scene of Megan, the same lines can also be found in the text. "One for sorrow, two for joy, three for a girl... Three for a girl. I'm stuck on three, I just can't get any further. My head is thick with sounds, my mouth thick with blood. Three for a girl. I can hear the magpies-they're laughing, mocking me, a raucous cackling." (Preface)

This is an English nursery rhyme about magpies. There is a superstition regarding this rhyme that connects predictions to the number of magpies you see. In the book, the same rhyme is uttered by Megan before she dies; she gets stuck in three, which signifies the birth of a girl. Megan was pregnant when Tom left her to die; her getting stuck in the number three can be interpreted as the baby in her womb being a girl and her inability to give life to the fetus. Her last memory is of magpies laughing at her, signifying the death of her baby; the number of magpies one sees determine the gender of one's fetus, but in case of Megan although she sees the magpies, she feels as if they are mocking her. They mock her death, they mock on the fact that she cannot bring the child into the world. At the end, Tom, the man Megan was having an affair with and the possible father of the baby in her womb who was her murderer, tells Megan how she was the one who made him cause the death. After killing Megan, Tom says "look what you made me do" (304), this shows how he blames her for threatening him, which compelled him to kill her. Tom doesn't feel guilty of Megan's death and instead acts like she was supposed to be punished for her misdeed. He places himself at a superior position, deciding the punishment for Megan by silences her. Again, even before starting the book another scene of a women being trampled has been presented. These lines which come before the start of the writing themselves hint the pathetic condition of the subaltern women in the text.

The opening of the book from Rachel's narration shows how her imaginativeness had always been put into question. While riding the train and observing the surroundings, Rachel suddenly remembers the comments given to her regarding her imagination. Here we can witness the role of male dominance and how Tom's thought revalidated and convinced Rachel that she in fact had an overly active imagination. Rachel's mother has internalized patriarchy, she, herself being a victim of patriarchy, now has been turned into a puppet functioning under patriarchal values. The validity she got from Tom was hammered into her, showing that this was a negative trait that she had to control. The fact that Tom made her

question the righteousness of her ability to imagine shows the intricacy of their bond and how submissive she was supposed to act. Are women not subject to their own individualism? Can they not determine the way they think? The hegemony imposing on women and their inability to fight against the suppression can be clearly noted. Spivak's concept of epistemic violence also aligns with the scenario as Rachel's ideas have been forced to change.

Patriarchal beliefs create a barrier, limiting females from expressing themselves and rendering them voiceless. An article by Francis Etsè Awitor states that "gender-based violence stems from a patriarchal system that is based on male supremacy. Women, considered "subaltern(s)," are oppressed and assigned a secondary role in society." (44) The subaltern women are excluded from her rights directly and indirectly as a result of male-dominated society.

The great debates about the changing American character, or about economic and political liberty, usually centered on the male half of the population. Theorists and critics sometimes incorporated women into male categories, and sometimes vaguely thought of them as representing a more communal perspective or as standing for traditional values in a rapidly industrializing country. Mostly, though, women were invisible. (39)

Women have been rendered voiceless from the past and they are constantly in identity crisis. The females end up internalizing the male mindset and identity and take it as their own identity. Although, Rachel was constantly questioned and considered insignificant, she was deeply attached to Tom. The patriarchal belief of need of male validity can be encountered in Rachel's actions as she needs Tom's presence for her happiness.

It's going to be a lovely weekend; that's why they're telling us. Beautiful sunshine, cloudless skies. In the old days we might have driven to Corly Wood with a picnic

and the papers, spent all afternoon lying on a blanket in dappled sunlight, drinking wine. We might have barbecued out back with friends, or gone to the Rose and sat in the beer garden, faces flushing with sun and alcohol as the afternoon went on, weaving home, arm in arm, falling asleep on the sofa.” (3)

Rachel centers her happiness around Tom; she singles out her reason for being unhappy as the absence of Tom. Rachel was unable to bear children, due to which Tom abandoned her. Rachel has been only seen as a tool of childbearing; her emotions have been undermined. Despite being mistreated by Tom, Rachel is still deeply attached to him; this is a sign of manipulation by Tom. The way the influence of nature and scenic beauty cannot lighten her mood as she finds happiness and solace only through Tom shows the control and need of Tom in her life. When placing Tom as an authoritative figure and Rachel as a subaltern woman, we can align the concept of subaltern by Gayatri Spivak in her essay, *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Rachel here is in total control and grasp of Tom, a patriarchal, authoritative figure; the happiness of Rachel is dependent upon Tom; this is the mindset of the subalterns who are deprived of the right to express their emotions and have fallen completely on the hands of the dominant.

The gaslighting and control over the female characters can be clearly witnessed throughout the text. The central character's attachment to alcohol has been highlighted in each of the narrations. Rachel is suffering from anxiety, she initially suffered from trauma after her father's death and later as she was unable to bear a child, and her husband Tom cheated on her with Anna Boyd. Upon facing such situations, it is likely for her to have a hard time; she is the victim of the central male character, Tom. Tom was unable to fulfill his full responsibility towards her and gave her more scars instead. At such a critical time when Rachel was blaming herself for not being able to bear a child, instead of helping Rachel cope with the situation he abandoned her. Despite this, Rachel has not been portrayed as a victim

in the text; rather, her habit of sipping on alcohol during train rides and her improper behavior when drunk have been focused on and highly criticized. Rachel has been deprived of justice and shown as the perpetrator instead. Every time she drinks, she gathers the courage to face Tom and fight for her rights; this can be taken as an attempt to voice herself, which has been ignored and silenced. The subaltern Rachel's voice and attempts are in vain. Rachel has been presented as unpleasant through various male characters. One male she sees in the train too gives off this opinion or makes her feel the way. She describes:

I look at the man in the seat opposite to mine. He is about my age, early to mid-thirties, with dark hair, graying at the temples. Sallow skin. He's wearing a suit, but he's taken the jacket off and slung it on the seat next to him. He has a MacBook, paper-thin, open in front of him. He's a slow typist. He's wearing a silver watch with a large face on his right wrist—it looks expensive, a Breitling maybe. He's chewing the inside of his cheek. (11)

The image of the man has been described intricately, hinting he is wealthy and powerful; the powerful man shows distaste or is uninterested in Rachel. Also, in Rachel's assumption, she thinks he might be writing a breakup note to his girlfriend. The fate of the relationship is too assumed to be upon the powerful male. The male is shown as respectful and smart in appearance; he wears a high-end watch and uses a MacBook, which shows his wealth; the fact that he wears a suit presents his high stature. The suit also represents a cultured man and someone who is self-sufficient. Rachel observing his minute details shows her interest in him, while the man, when he takes a look at Rachel, evades her eyes and shifts his look to the wine bottle on the table. This gives a hint of the man's attitude towards Rachel; he doesn't give her a friendly smile, which is customary; instead, he immediately shifts his focus elsewhere to let the staring Rachel know he is uninterested and, moreover, doesn't consider her worthy. Similar need of validation can be found in the following dialogue by Rachel.

I am not the girl I used to be. I am no longer desirable; I'm off putting in some way.

It's not just that I've put on weight or that my face is puffy from the drinking and the lack of sleep; it's as if people can see the damage written all over me, can see it in my face, the way I hold myself, the way I move. (11)

Rachel used to feel beautiful when she was with her husband, Tom. Her self-esteem and her feeling about herself are dependent on a male character, Tom. Now, the separation with Tom has left her feeling undesirable. Rachel didn't want the separation, but despite her struggles and attempts to get back with him, his decision has been shown as absolute, showing him as the dominant character. The voice of the female, the subaltern, has been unheard despite the struggles.

Rachel yearns to get back with Tom and reminisces about memories shared with him: "They're what I used to be; they're Tom and me five years ago. They're what I lost; they're everything I want to be." (10) These lines show how desperately she wants to get back to Tom but cannot, as he denies her. Her life is dictated by Tom; her emotions are valueless and in vain. In one of their conversations, her desperation and Tom's restraint can be seen, Rachel despite being divorced and separated from Tom, doesn't change her surname back, she is still addressed as Watson, this shows the impact of the oppressors on the people.

Listen, you have to stop this, OK?" I don't say anything. The train is slowing, and we are almost opposite the house, my old house. I want to say to him, Come outside, go and stand on the lawn. Let me see you. "Please, Rachel, you can't call me like this all the time. You've got to sort yourself out." (15)

Tom's attitude towards Rachel is clear in the above lines; Tom has presented himself as the victim of Rachel's constant phone calls. He speaks as if Rachel is the offender, while his cheating on her is the result of Rachel's miserable condition. The marginalized female

doesn't have a voice; despite being the victim, the male character manipulates her, not allowing her to act on her free will. All the actions of the female are questioned and considered negative. Rachel calling Tom and trying to approach him is portrayed as negative, framing the victim as the victimizer. Despite engaging in unfilial relationship and breaking Rachel emotionally, Tom has not been shown attributed to negative characters.

I read through his messages: there were dozens, hidden in a folder entitled "Admin". I discovered that her name was Anna Boyd, and that my husband was in love with her. He told her so, often. He told her that he'd never felt like this before, that he couldn't wait to be with her, that it wouldn't be long until they could be together. I don't have words to describe what I felt that day, but now, sitting on the train, I am furious, nails digging into my palms, tears stinging my eyes. (30)

Upon the discovery of Tom's affair, Rachel is dumbfounded. She feels a lot of anger and hatred, even at the present when she thinks about it, she is unable to control her emotions, despite this, her pent-up anger and emotions were forced to be kept hidden. Her voice was suppressed, she couldn't express her emotions freely, instead she submitted to the incident as her inability led to the incident. The mentality of the victims due to impact of hegemony has led her to believing whatever the males tell females. Rachel's inability to give birth was what she considered as the major turning point of their marriage. She couldn't fulfill the want of the male, which led her to believing she was the sole cause for the turn of events. Rachel also emphasizes on the fact that he texted her frequently, showing how much, he loves Anna, the word love has been focalized as Rachel now doesn't consider herself to be worthy of being loved by Tom. Her self-loathing, loss of self-confidence is all due to the inequality between the two sexes.

In many of Rachel's thoughts and sayings, the desire and want for Tom have been expressed: Please, Tom, please, I need to talk to you. I miss you. No no no no no no no. (13) Rachel, despite being cheated on and hurt by her husband, her obsession for him has grown even more. The male character has been shown as desirable despite the negative traits: Rachel, Anna Boyd, and Megan Hipwell—all three women are attracted to him (Tom). Tom has been presented as the center, the dominant authoritarian figure who has authority over the minds and emotions of all three females. The will and want of Tom has dictated the series of events in the text, from switching lover to lover, to the murder of Megan. The driving force is male while the women are puppets moving to his accord.

When being questioned by detective Gaskill regarding the unfaithful night of Megan's demise too Rachel's answers have been doubted and questioned by the officers: So the baby's screaming and her mother's right there, and she doesn't wake? Riley asks me. Yes. Her elbows are on the table, her hands in front of her mouth so I can't read her expression fully, but I know she thinks I'm lying. (81) The police personnel, despite being a woman herself, doesn't believe in her, Rachel went out of her free will to give information she thought could be helpful to find the murderer of Megan. Her good deeds are not credited as she is instead questioned regarding her visit to Anna and Tom's house. She is treated like a criminal, and her sittings of the day of Megan's death were questioned too. The reputation of Rachel is of a drunk and mentally unstable female, her thoughts, her views and descriptions have been viewed critically by other characters.

Meanwhile, Rachel was drunk and was around Blenheim Road on the day Megan went missing, she too was injured on that unfaithful day and believes she saw something near the underpass that could be connected to Megan but cannot recollect her memories. As she starts to recall the events in the underpass, she feels that she met Tom in that spot so she seeks Tom's help to remember the night, Tom ignores her and blames Scott for the mishap.

I need to talk to you, I say, about Saturday night. That Saturday night.

What are you talking about? I need to talk to you about Monday, Rachel. What the hell were you doing at Scott Hipwell's house?

That's not important, Tom-

Yes it bloody is. What were you doing there? You do realize, don't you, that he could be...I mean, we don't know, do we? He could have done something to her. Couldn't he? To his wife. (149)

When Rachel doesn't budge from her question, Tom tries to shift the blame on Rachel too, he asks if she had to do anything with it as Rachel was present in the nearby area in drunk state. He puts forward the idea of Megan being similar to Anna appearance-wise and hints that Rachel could've attacked Megan assuming she was Anna. Rachel's helplessness has been seen as her questioning has been deflected by Tom. Through her own efforts Rachel manages to recall the incidents of the night, she goes to the underpass again and again, meets Megan's close ones for clues. Rachel's struggles are to give justice to Megan by punishing her killer. The turmoil of the marginalized to get justice, fighting against male characters can be witnessed here. After the recollection of her memories, Rachel finally remembers seeing Tom and Megan together, Tom had given a good blow on Rachel's head and went away in his car with Megan. Upon remembering the unfaithful incident, Rachel rushes to Anna to disclose the information and to protect her from such an evil man. That is when she is confronted by Tom. When Rachel confronts Tom, he directly criticizes her, exposing his true nature.

You're like one of those dogs, the unwanted ones that have been mistreated all their lives. You can kick them and kick them, but they'll still come back at you, cringing and wagging their tails. Begging. Hoping that this time they'll do something right and you'll love them. You're just like that, aren't you, Rach? You're a dog. (316)

Along with indirect criticisms and control on Rachel, direct degrading of Rachel's character and status by Tom shows how Tom considers Rachel as a lowly creature. He doesn't even allow her the status of a human but degrades her a dog, which can only obey. After this dialogue, Rachel has been forcefully touched and kissed by Tom, she cannot deny or fight against him. The cruelty and brute of the male character upon the helpless female can be clearly observed.

Tom is an expert in lying and manipulating people, after behaving bizarrely with Rachel, he attempts to implant the belief into Rachel that she was the one who caused this. If her actions were not against Tom, if she had obeyed him, Megan would've been still alive and Rachel wouldn't have had to suffer in this manner.

It was your fault. The whole thing was actually your fault, Rachel. Anna didn't end up having dinner with her friends-she was back here after five minutes, upset and angry because you were out there, pissed as usual, stumbling around with some bloke outside station. She was worried that you were going to head over here. She was worried about Evie. So instead of sorting things out with Megan, I had to go out and deal with you. His lip curls. (307)

After Rachel kills Tom, she constantly suffers from trauma and nightmares. She managed to save herself, Anna and countless other possible victims of Tom, now still she herself is suffering from trauma. Although women manage to break themselves from patriarchal barriers, this incident can be interpreted as threat, females even after fighting and disassociating from people with patriarchal mindset, their ghosts or their beliefs wouldn't be erased immediately.

Back in my room I sit on my bed, sitting on my hands until they stop shaking. I open the minibar and take out the bottled water and the macadamia nuts. I leave the wine

and the little bottles of gin, even though they would help me sleep, even though they would let me slide, warm and loose, into oblivion. Even though they would let me forget, for a while, the look on his face when I turned back to watch him die. (322)

Anna Boyd on the other hand, is the home wrecker, engaged in relationship with Tom. Now Anna and Tom are living together with their new-born, she is constantly disturbed by Rachel, despite her attempts and warnings to Rachel directly and indirectly, her request is considered insignificant.

It's bad enough that you wake us when you call, but you wake Evie, too, and that's just not acceptable. We're struggling to get her to sleep through at the moment. We're struggling to get her to sleep through. We. Us. Our little family. With our problems and our routines. (33)

The text shows conversation between Anna and Rachel from Rachel's point of view. Anna is usually ignored by Rachel, after Anna and Tom get together, Rachel constantly calls them at nights, this is disliked by Anna, but despite her attempt to get her to stop, Rachel doesn't take Anna seriously. Anna is busy as she needs to tend to the house and the baby, Anna shoulders such responsibilities of the traditional female. Anna Boyd is a character to be pitied upon, she has lots of responsibilities to follow, the ex-wife of her husband constantly reaches out to them, disturbs them, while her husband cheats on her with other women. She too represents marginalized woman whose voices are unheard.

I watched Tom getting ready for work this morning, putting on his shirt and tie. He seemed a little distracted, probably running through his schedule for the day-meetings, appointments, who, what, where. I felt jealous. For the first time ever, I actually envied him the luxury of getting dressed up and leaving the house and rushing around all day, with purpose, all in the service of a pay cheque. (232)

Anna here displays a sign of dismay and disagreement with the role of traditional female, she envies her husband as she had to resign unwillingly, her wants and desires has been overseen, she has been compelled to act according to the need and want of her husband. The powerless female character here can be seen in Anna who has been forced to act upon the dominant male's decisions.

Anna is bewitched by Tom and despite being aware about Tom and Megan's affair she chooses to stay with him. This is the mindset of the oppressed; erasure of decision making and following the oppressors blindly. I'm not leaving him Rachel. He had an affair, he...It's not the first time, is it? I start to laugh and Evie laughs, too. (282) Anna has internalized patriarchy as she supports Tom in his misdeeds, when Rachel confronts Tom, Anna doesn't attempt to help her. Although she knows that Tom could possibly kill Rachel, she too wants Rachel's death, the mindset of Tom has influenced her deeply.

I was upstairs, putting Evie down, and I was thinking that this is what I wanted, isn't it? Rachel will be gone at last, once and for all, never to return. This is what I dreamed about happening. Well, not exactly this, obviously. But I did want her gone. I dreamed of a life without Rachel, and now I could have one. It would be just the three of us, me and Tom and Evie, like it should be. (312)

We can first hand witness the manipulation of Tom in certain parts of the book, Tom manipulates Anna too, making her feel as though his actions are to bring peace to their family. He makes promises to Anna, trying to gaslight her into believing Tom has only done all the misdeeds to protect their family. His sweettalk convinces Anna into forgiving him for cheating and murder too, the dominancy of the male voice and dormancy of the female's is clear.

We'll move away from here, just like you've always wanted. We'll go anywhere you want. Anywhere. He asked me if I could forgive him, and I said that I could, given time, and he believed me. (313)

Although, Anna's mindset has been shaped by Tom, her true self, the frustrated woman who longs to go back to work, who doesn't want to bear the responsibilities of parenthood alone, who wants to speak up and fight against Tom, punishing him for his lies and cheatings can be seen at the end moment. The confrontation between Rachel and Tom goes violent, they engage in a chase during which Rachel ends up driving a corkscrew through Tom's neck and Anna pushes it further inside.

The train had passed. I heard a noise behind me and saw Anna coming out of the house. She walked quickly towards us and, reaching his side, she fell to her knees and put her hands to his throat. He had this look on his face of shock, of hurt. I wanted to say to her, It's no good, you won't be able to help him now, but then I realized she wasn't trying to stop the bleeding. She was making sure. Twisting the corkscrew in, farther and farther, ripping into his throat, and all the time she was talking to him softly, softly. I couldn't hear what she was saying. (322)

Rachel now chooses water over alcohol, the once carefree Rachel who didn't care about the criticisms of society or closed ones and acted on her freewill has now changed, she is attempting to follow the society, trying to be socially accepted by leaving alcohol. Despite the death of Tom, unconscious presence of patriarchal mindset is still set inside Rachel. She can never truly overcome patriarchy. After Tom's death, Anna comes out of the house, this can be taken as a sign of her breaking through the patriarchal mindset and manipulation instilled by Tom. Her inner woman arises as she drives the screwdriver further into Tom's head which elucidates her pent of frustrations.

Rita Felski attempts to minimize biasness by examining how women have been trampled upon in various areas in the modern era too, despite the change in women's roles and images, they are constantly under undermined. Her book, *The Gender of Modernity*, analyses various texts and literary works, showing males as the gender of the modern times with oppression of women found in writings of the modern period. The prostitute, the actress, the mechanical woman- it is such female figures that crystalize the ambivalent responses to capitalism and technology which permeated nineteenth-century culture. The list can easily be extended. (20)

Felski presents woman as prostitutes, actress, mechanical woman pointing out the commodification and sexualization of woman in the 19th century, meanwhile the actress and mechanical woman also represent the rise of capitalist-working class women in the then society. Despite the awakening of the females, the traditional roles also prevailed.

Similar tendency can be spotted in the text as Megan, Anna and Rachel are given the role of prostitute, as they seduce men and engage with multiple males. Meanwhile, they are victims of the male but at the same time are preparators themselves with internalization of patriarchy. Their mindset has been affected by the dominant mindset.

Megan another central character suffers from childhood trauma after her brother, Ben passed away and later suffers another trauma due to the death of her child as a result of the previous trauma. She has been compelled to live out of her free will and feels suffocated with her lifestyle. Megan has an absence of a trustworthy figure in her life whom she can confide in.

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. (21)

The losing of Megan's true self can be seen in the above lines. Megan is supposedly not following her dreams, the lack of freedom of woman, the forceful settling down of women; getting married and fulfilling the role of a typical housewife can be seen. Women's dreams, the dreams of the marginalized are crushed and they remain unfulfilled. Megan wanted to be a traveler, but her dream was left unfulfilled. The dreams of the women, the lower class are considered insignificant, they are considered to have to follow the male counterparts. Now, Megan's bottled-up emotions are beginning to overflow, she tries to express herself, she tries to live her old dreams, she wants to be free and follow her heart. She wants to act to her accord; this is a sign of revoking the patriarchal beliefs and an attempt to voice the voiceless subaltern group. But her voice is unheard, no matter how loud her voice is, she is caught up in a bubble where her voice despite escaping her lips, cannot make it outside the bubble, it is unheard by others and does not turn into action. Such is the plight of the women, unheard and forced to kill one's dreams.

We can see retaliation from Megan as she states, "I can't do this, I can't just be a wife." (23) She wants to free herself from the societal norms and fulfill the role of a homemaker, a wife has been clearly disagreed upon by Megan. Megan is a modern-day woman with the ambition to have her own art gallery, but her voice has been trampled. She states, "I longed for my days at the gallery, prettied up, hair done, talking to adults about art or films or nothing at all." (19) Megan wants to break free from the chains of the society, her dreams and longings are for her to open a gallery of her own, she represents the rebellion of the women to express themselves, despite her longing and want, her voice has been left unheard.

Meanwhile, Megan engages in relationship with various males; Scott (husband), Mac (ex-husband), Kamal Abdic (Megan's therapist), Tom (Rachel's ex-husband). Megan, as an individual suffering from Trauma, decides to go for therapy to Dr. Kamal Abdic. He lay on bed, watching me as I got dressed. He said, "This can't happen again, Megan. You know it

can't. We can't keep doing this." (47) Megan has been shown as the seducer here, although both of them carry the same amount of responsibility by getting involved sexually. The male character has been attempted to be shown as positive as he states that their affair must be stopped, he is shown as righteous, while the female again carries the blame or burden. In an act where both the characters carry the same amount of responsibility, the she is blamed, the voiceless is considered as wrong-doers. Megan doesn't get a say in what is to happen.

Tom who is a womanizer cheating on his spouse again and again gets involved with Megan too. For a male, involving with many partners is seen as something normal, they are not degraded for the action, contrary to a woman. Tom and Megan conceived a child together, when she shares her pregnancy with Tom, her reacts violently, resulting to her demise.

Meanwhile, Mac is Megan's ex-husband, whom she was married to before Scott, their child Libby had drowned as a result of her negligence. She was suffering from PTSD and a victim of depression, on top of that being a first-time mother took emotional toll over her. On the day Libby died, Megan was supposed to be looking after her, the patient suffering from such conditions was given such a critical duty when she must've been taken care of. The woman's burden, the responsibility of the child was pushed onto her although she was already ill mentally. Her current husband Scott physically abused Megan. This shows the pathetic situation of the females, the events brought more wounds onto her, questioning her mental health even more. Except for the central characters, other women with short roles have also been shown as barbaric and uncultured. Megan narrates,

I was working downstairs in the kitchen when I heard a woman screaming, making horrible noise, I thought someone was being murdered. I ran outside into the garden, but I couldn't see anything. I could still hear her, though, it was nasty, it went right through me, her voice really shrill and desperate. What are you doing? What are you

doing with her? Give her to me, give her to me. It seemed to go on and on, though it probably lasted a few seconds. I ran upstairs and climbed out onto the terrace and I could see through the trees, two women down by the fence a few gardens over. One of them was crying-maybe they both were-and there was a child bawling its head off, too. (17-18)

Females here are attributed to violent nature, engaging in fights and causing commotions, opposing their natural role of mothers. They have been looked down upon as uncivilized and ungraceful. The attempt of Megan to witness this noise, taking interest in it also shows her to be delighted by violence. The natural spirit of kindness and gracefulness of women have been questioned.

Another short-lived character, Cathy who proves to be helpful to Rachel, opening her doors to Rachel after her divorce has too been shunned. Rachel herself says, “ It’s not awful. Cathy’s a nice person, in a forceful sort of way. She makes you notice her niceness.”(8) The kind gesture of Cathy too has been overshadowed by her greed for recognition of her deeds. Cathy has always been kind and tolerant, Cathy is the only person who lets Rachel stay with her despite her drunk ventures, she even checks on Rachel time and again and seems genuinely concerned about her. Even Rachel’s own mother didn’t take the time to help Rachel, despite possessing such positive traits, Cathy has been criticized as arrogant and forceful. The positive characterizations of the females have been questioned and criticized in some way.

When we see the central male characters; Tom, Kamal Abdic, Scott, they have all been described as attractive and given positive images. Rachel describes Tom as his savior as he saved her from grief after the death of her father.

Where did I take the wrong turn? Not when I met Tom, who saved me from grief after Dad died. Not when we married, carefree, drenched in bliss, on an oddly wintry May Day seven years ago. I was happy, solvent, successful. Not when we moved into number twenty-three, a roomier, lovelier house than I'd imagined I'd live in at the tender age of twenty-six. (51)

Tom has been associated with all the happy memories by Rachel, she feels as if the flaw is in herself. Meanwhile, Tom was Megan's lover, she considered Tom to be the only one who understood her, Anna on the other hand refuses to leave Tom despite knowing he cheated on her. All the women perceive Tom as the change maker and center of their lives.

Scott is considered as an ideal husband material by Rachel, while observing Scott from the train Rachel finds him physically attractive and envies his relationship with Megan. "Of course she misses him, just as I do. He is kind and strong, everything a husband should be. And they are a partnership. I can see it, I know how they are. His strength, the protectiveness he radiates, it doesn't mean she's weak." (14) Scott was an abuser with anger issues, the text doesn't describe this nature of Scott directly, instead the soft and caring side of Scott has been highlighted. Him caring about Megan, bring her coffee, sending her to therapy, and other romantics have been described again and again. The image of Scott has been portrayed as of an ideal husband which makes the readers feel as Megan's cheating was unfair and Scott was victimized. In reality, the already traumatized Megan was pushed to her limits by Scott's abuse, Scott's pretentious caring made her feel like Scott only loved her and Megan despite being abused didn't think of herself as a victim of abuse, she was traumatized by Scott.

During Kamal Abdic's therapy sessions, he identifies Scott's activities as abuse to which Megan denies. I laughed then, because it sounded so melodramatic. It isn't abuse, I

told him. Not if you don't mind. And I don't. I don't mind. (60) The negative tendencies of Scott have been denied by the victim herself. Another central male character Kamal Abdic too has been described as handsome and soft spoken.

I think it's the voice. Soft and slow. Slightly accented, which I was expecting, because his name is Kamal Abdic. I guess he must be midthirties, although he looks very young with his incredible dark honey skin. He has hands I could imagine on me, long and delicate fingers, i can almost feel them on my skin. (23)

Kamal Abdic was involved with Megan, in the act of getting physically involved, both the characters had equal responsibility, but Kamal hasn't been slandered anywhere unlike Megan. Kamal's description has only been given as handsome. In Megan's description, Kamal is shown as polite and kind while the lust of Megan can be seen in the above lines. The description of Kamal by Megan hints her interest which leads up into thinking she was the one to instigate relationship between the two of them.

Other minor male characters, the man Rachel sees in the train, Gaskill the police officer, the doctor who treats Rachel after she is bumped by a taxi, the red-haired man who helps Rachel, all have been shown in positive light. All these men have been shown as kind, handsome and helpful.

Rachel feels Gaskill is cooperative and kind, she enjoys his company too. She even ends up going to the police station repetitively with the excuse of Megan's case. Gaskill is very patient and trusts all the information Rachel gives, at least that is how she feels. Riley, the female police officer has been shown distrusting and questioning Rachel.

Gaskill handed me a Kleeneex.

You can leave any time you like Ms. Watson. You came here to talk to us. He smiles at me then, an apologetic sort of smile. I liked him in the moment, I wanted to take his hand and squeeze it, but I didn't, because that would have been weird. (76)

These men are the dominant figures in the text, the manipulation and lies of Tom lead to all the events of the book. Tom treats the female characters as inferior-not valuing their emotions and their voices. Scott too physically abuses his wife Megan and even shows violent tendencies towards Rachel, this shows his dominance on them, the two women are answerless against his brute. Kamal Abdic, therapist of Megan and Rachel influences the women and makes them act according to his will through therapeutic approaches.

Ranajit Guha, a key subaltern theorist who comments on history through subaltern lens, he challenges elitist narratives and voices the role of subalterns in shaping the events. From the religious text of Bhagwat Geeta, Guha analyses the binaries in males and females regarding sexual wants and needs. The women have been under erasure in almost all contexts from the historical texts themselves which act as the foundation of our morals, ethics and conceptions. Guha also mentions how the concept of subaltern can be altered with space, time, and venue. He defines Subaltern Studies as “a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society, whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way” (35). Guha attempts to give justice to the oppressed by analysing Hindu spiritual and religious ancient writings critically and presenting marginalization in historical texts and myths.

The sexual instrumentality of women is then spiritualized by the *sringra* mode (also known as *madhura-bhava*) into an ideal of love that transcends all that is of the body and of the world. In this transcendental eroticism, says De, “the supersensuous *Madhura-bhava* of the Gopis is different from the sensuous *Kama* in the fact that the

significance of the former consists entirely in contributing to the pleasure of its divine object, while the latter, as a mundane feeling, aims primarily at one's own pleasure."

The only female among Krishna's companions to show any signs of such "mundane feeling", that is, Kubja, who wanted to relate to him as an active partner, is roundly denounced, "for her desire for sport was entirely for her own sensual pleasure, while that of the Gopis was exclusively intended for Krsna. (49)

Just as in Guha's analysis, sexualization of the female characters can be found in Hawkins' text. Guha writes how the sexual need of female is denounced in the Geeta whereas if they desire to fulfill the sexual need of a male then it is an act of good deed. The right to pleasure of the female has been chained to males. Tom engages in physical relation with all the central characters; Rachel, Megan and Anna. They are treated as tools to satisfy his desire for which he even tramples their trust and breaks their relationships. Meanwhile, Megan and Rachel have been sexually involved with Scott and have become a tool of pleasure for multiple males. The sexualization of all the central female characters show their submissive nature and prove them to be true subalterns.

Female characters in the book are jobless and are house makers only. We can align the concepts of Marxist feminism where the women are exploited or considered as lowly based on capitalist views. The men here are capitalists, they have a stable job and provide for their families while the women are homemakers, despite having to leave their works to ensure stability in their families, we can find their want to go back to their jobs and become independent. Rachel used to work in a PR firm, after the separation with Tom her mental state is dismantled and has become an alcoholic. She suffers from trauma of not being able to give birth and her husband cheating on her. Despite her circumstances, she wants to have a job, during interview with officer Gaskill, she states, "My flatmate doesn't know that I've

lost my job. So I go into London, as usual, and I go to libraries, to job hunt, to work on my CV.” (84)

Rachel is ashamed of the fact that she is jobless, this state shows lower status of these women in the society. Anna Boyd, too left her work after marriage and the same with Megan. Megan had a gallery and wanted to go back to that life, the jobless state of women is attributed to their dependency on males, presenting them as inferior. On the other hand, the male characters; Tom is a doctor, Kamal Abdic is a therapist. These are jobs requiring high level of intellect and considered superior in the society, additionally, Scott is the bread earner of the family. Other short-lived characters are also doctors or professional looking characters. The capitalist notion of biasness can be observed, the males are dominant as they are the earners of the families, while women despite wanting to get into the working class, are unable to do so.

III. Reassessing Subalternity and Patriarchal Power

The Girl on the Train, presents the female characters as subalterns who are voiceless and in identity flux. Through the application of subaltern theory—particularly the concepts of Antonio Gramsci and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak—this thesis has explored how Rachel, Megan, and Anna embody the condition of voicelessness and internalized subjugation. The characters suffer from epistemic violence; the females are the subalterns whose psyche has been overruled by the male's manipulating and gaslighting. The male characters on the other hand have been glorified by the narrator. The primary antagonist, Tom has killed Megan, cheated on both Rachel and Anna and continuously lied about his past. Despite committing ill-deeds, he has been described as a gentle, caring man and a perfect husband to Anna. Additionally, Tom has also been shown as a victim of Rachel's- drunk ventures. Another male character Scott, who abuses his wife has also been described in positive light. Megan discloses that she considers Scott's physical abuse as his way to show love, manipulation and internalization of the ideas of the oppressors can be found in the character of Megan. Her own true voice has been subjugated. Meanwhile, Rachel and Anna both have been cheated on by Tom, Rachel makes an attempt to voice her pain but Tom pays no attention, instead blames herself for her situation and acts as the victim. Unjust behavior towards Rachel can be seen clearly.

Another central character Anna too has been cheated on by her husband, she is also deprived of the right to choose her career and has been forced to become a housewife which she finds distasteful. The voice of the females has been overshadowed by the males, the beliefs, the opinions, the cries of these women have been left unheard. The characters struggle to represent their thoughts, their attempts are dismissed by the males, their ideas, their opinions are considered supreme. Internalization of such patriarchal mindset can be found in all the characters, from requiring male validity to consider themselves beautiful to

embodying the lies of the males and degrading themselves. The females' mindset has been tampered with, the cheating and lying Tom has led Rachel doubting herself. Meanwhile, Tom has embedded his patriarchal beliefs into Anna, she has internalized the patriarchal beliefs. At the end of the novel, as the events unfold, Rachel and Anna confront Tom, this is an effort of the subalterns to break through from the hegemony and epistemic violence. They attempt to break patriarchal system prevailing in the society.

On the other hand, the protagonist Rachel, struggles to unravel the death of Megan and give justice to her. Her heroic deeds have been undermined while the drunkenness and drunk ventures of Rachel are highlighted. Rachel herself is a victim of trauma and considers alcohol as her trauma coping mechanism. The trauma was instigated by Tom as he abandons her when he discovers she cannot bear a child. Another central female character Megan, a trauma victim is shamed for her illicit relationship with multiple males. She is killed by Tom in pregnant state and not even given a proper burial. Anna has internalized patriarchy and as a result of Tom's manipulation, forms patriarchal mindset. Towards the end, her pent of frustration is released as she breaks from Tom's hypnosis after his death. During the deciphering of the text, the attempts of the women to get equal respect and recognition can also be encountered. Rachel's struggles and success in successfully unravelling the mystery behind Megan's death also stands for the need of the marginalized to stand for themselves as the dominant authorities wouldn't step ahead for their welfare.

The death of Tom symbolizes the freedom of women, a sign of claiming their voices and freeing themselves from the barriers of the society. The pent-up frustration and the want of women to live freely has been clearly seen. Only after breaking the glasses of patriarchy, the negative traits of Tom have been flashed. His lies about his family, his career, love life everything is made clear in the news articles. This points out the need for the society to snap

out of patriarchal hegemony, only after we come out of the elitist mindset, we can clearly see the true form and nature of the society.

Subalterns' characters can be further found in other female characters of the book, Megan Hipwell who was murdered by Tom has not been given a proper burial which is a sign of utmost disrespect to any living being. During her dying hours she pities the child in her womb by singing an English nursery rhyme. Getting a proper burial is a right of every human being but Megan is deprived of this, her body is discovered after continuous rainfall after almost a month of her death. The disposal of body irrespective of her pregnant state shows the state of the women and the value they hold.

Ultimately, this thesis argues that *The Girl on the Train* is not merely a psychological thriller but a powerful reflection of gendered subalternity in a modern, domestic context. The novel exemplifies how patriarchal narratives dominate even the most personal spheres, reducing women to fractured identities and silenced witnesses in their own lives. The subaltern woman's voice may momentarily break through, but the struggle for sustained recognition and autonomy remains ongoing—both in fiction and reality. The text in this way shows the turmoil and biasness faced by the women in various levels' physical, social, mental and emotional, decreeing the females in Paula Hawkin's book *The Girl on the Train* as subalterns.

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