

Tribhuvan University

Critique of Cosmopolitan Modernity in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train*

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By

Rudra Bahadur Adhikari

Symbol No : 282058

T.U. Regd. No : 6-2-7-1482-2008

Central Department of English

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Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Rudra Bahadur Adhikari has completed his thesis entitled “Critique of Cosmopolitan Modernity in Hawkins’ *The Girl on the Train*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2073/11/15 B.S. to 2074/05/16 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Keshab Sigdel

Supervisor

Date: 2074/05/16

Tribhuvan University

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Central Department of English

Approval Letter

This thesis entitled “Critique of Cosmopolitan Modernity in Hawkins’ *The Girl on the Train*” submitted to the Central Department of English, by Rudra Bahadur Adhikari has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Internal Examiner

\_\_\_\_\_

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External Examiner

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\_\_\_\_\_

Head

\_\_\_\_\_

Central Department of English

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Critique of Cosmopolitan Modernity in Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train***

*Mobilizing the concept of modernity and gender, this research project concentrates upon the difficulties and crises upon female characters in Paula Hawkins' novel The Girl on the Train. Most of the female characters in The Girl on the Train are deviated from their cultural root and individual identity. They feel that the temptation to follow the westernized thought has distorted the taste and attitude of the young generation. The main character of this novel Rachel is a middleclass woman who comes to London in search of her dream. Rachel forgets her real name, cultural identity and her own background being lost in the midst of western technocratic world. She becomes puppet on the hands of different males in the city simply because she is a woman. Modernity promises education, development, and betterment of humanity. However, modernity deteriorates Rachel to the level of an object despite enlightening her. The research aims to prove loopholes of modernity project. This thesis uses concept of modernity and gender conceptualized by Janet Wolff, Griselda Pollock and Bonnie Kim Scott.*

Key Words:

Modernity, City, "flaneurs", "flaneuse", Enlightenment, Females, Exclusion

This thesis studies Paula Hawkins' novel *The Girl on the Train* which comments on the difficulties of the females after welcoming western concept of liberal thought and modernity, and how they are deviated with their cultural root and lose the sense of individual identity. They feel that the temptation to follow the westernized thought has distorted the taste and attitude. Protagonist Rachel including her friends Anna and Megan come to London in search of their better life and prosperity. Rachel looks for better education, prosperity, equality and democracy.

However she becomes like a pendulum in the city. She becomes a puppet in the hands of her husband. Life keeps on repeatedly testing Rachel and she manages to emerge a survivor by winning those challenges. But there is time in life when it gets too much for her to bear and she needs to take certain decisions which change her life forever. Rachel's life has been full of such decisions and once again she is standing at crossroads that demands her to take a life altering decision once more so that she had job as house maid. *The Girl on the Train* demonstrates how modernity and city affect the lives of females. The obsessive search for the western cultural model in England resulted in crisis, conflict, and perpetual unrest. Far from bringing any betterment to Rachel's life, modern scientific development has brought anxiety, fear and paranoia in her life. And the optimism of the redemptive power of science has resulted into invisibility of Rachel in *The Girl on the Train*.

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” (87). *The Girl on the Train* is written in the contemporary political scenario of England. The setting of the novel is in English society of twentieth century where native Rachel is lost in emptiness and hollow of modern scientific development. She is deviated and hung between several problems. *The Girl on the Train* reflects the political and social unrest in England. *The Girl on the Train* is 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 everyday people, She creates life into history by describing the effects of larger-than-life events on the average citizen.

The novel describes the female characters who have several dreams regarding education, development and their expansion in the future life and they have strong gut to fulfill these dreams even adapting the new cultural behaviors, costumes and rules of the urban city. 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 females in England. The research has explored how the condition of middle class women who are used only as a tool of amusement of the high-class males of the modern society. However, failing of separated life without any hope and expectation at the end of the life of the main character.

In *The Girl on the Train* western thoughts like democracy, enlightenment rationality, universal human rights, and gender equality are depicted as enfeebled and powerless to transform the society because of the patriarchy. Females do not have access on them. These factors are mere soap bubbles for female characters. These crucial components of cosmopolitan modernity have rather put the seed of socio-cultural troubles in society. People believe in the pragmatic and modernizing influence of western thought. However, they are compelled to face the harmful consequences. They are tired of social instability. If the utilization of western thoughts creates conflict, despair and disillusionment on the part of female characters, how can the nonwestern programs of transforming traditional society become successful.

*The Girl on the Train* is Hawkins' depiction about the modern scenario and the effects of urbanization, city, and development. It projects the concept of modernity and gender. When the society turned into modernization and industrialization, not only males, but also many women from different parts of the villages migrated to the urban city and started to struggle there to live a better life. In

this regard, the notion of "flaneur" was developed to represent especially the educated, higher class males from urban area and whose job is just to stroll in the city, streets and markets to gaze the middle class female who used to go to the market and public space for their job. Therefore, the streets, parks, cinema hall and other public spaces were considered to be the setting of those male "flaneur". But, the term "flaneuse" was coined by twentieth century feminist historicist Janet Wolff in her book, *The Invisible Flaneuse* (1985) where the book defines "flaneuses" as those middle class women came from different country sides and doing work for the societal development economically.

Though the middle class women contributed their time and energy to develop the city economically, they were forgotten to define and portray by the traditional writers and artists, Thus, Janet Wolff talks about those marginalized female in the modern society and she coined the term "flaneuse" and *female* "flaneurs" to justify their role in the modern society. She speaks from the perspective of "flaneuse" who were made "flaneuse" by the female "flaneurs" and "flaneurs" in the modern city. The main character Rachel in the book has been presented a typical modern "flaneuse" who has been used only as the commodity tool and defined as an unstable lower class, not developed and uncivilized female by the so - called higher class males of English society.

However, feminist historicists Janet Wolff, Anke Gleber and Bonnie Kim Scott revisited the notion of modernity. Feminist critics found that many traditional painters like Charles Baudelaire, artists and poets used to make the portrayal of an educated male walking in the streets aimlessly or just for staring the females and he was considered to be a "flaneur" in respective manner. Most importantly, Janet Wolff

reviewed the traditional notion to define the women and she drew up the conclusion that especially during the time of nineteenth century, According to Wolff, there were two types of women such as woman "flaneur" and "flaneuse". Rich, sophisticated females like poets, artist and female from bourgeois were also there and were strolling into the city during that time as the male "flaneurs" of the time did. Wolff defined that so-called higher class Female as female "flaneur".

Bonnie Kim Scott defines modernity as the “forgotten gender infected territory” (78). Gender, which is defined as a social construction rather than an essential biological trait, comes in many forms: in languages that assign genders to nouns and pronouns; in what sociologists describe as “sex roles,” which divide and limit what persons of one sex or the other can do in private and public spheres; in efforts to recuperate the culture or traditions of women, as neglected and marginal (87). “Masculine” and “feminine” are the classic designations within gender, different from the biological male and female, but generally paired, respectively, with them. Lesbian and gay male interpreters have analyzed the underlying binary of the gender pair, suggesting that it also privileges a heterosexual norm (98).

The middle class females who arrived in England migrating from village in search of many golden dreams and study were used as a commodity tool in restaurant, shopping centre, and parks. They were just for the male gaze, so Janet Wolff termed and defined them as "flaneuse". In the text, *The Girl on the Train* has presented the main character Rachel including other female characters, Megan and Anna as typical "flaneuse" in the modern capitalistic English society.

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. Angela Carter makes the following remarks about the novel, *The Girl on the Train* 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 into 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 novel. In a sense, *The Girl on the Train* Hawkins tends to reflect upon the history of modern England. Modern England has come a long way since the 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.

Howard Goldblatt is another critic of Hawkins who analyzes Hawkins' novel based on the sensual imageries for the depiction of modern society and its open expression. He is critically aware of Paula Hawkins' ability to have her own aura of writing novel and he criticizes about her limitations as a novelist. He enumerates how

Hawkins has injected her own anecdotal experience to portrayal of society. Goldblatt argues:

Hawkins, rather than exploring the darker undercurrents of society or the depths of the characters, she seems to make it her goal to stay on the surface. Much of the energy of the novel is spent on long and sensuous descriptions of the effect and impact of ultra modernity. There are too many episodes when the reader has to witness this or that character urinating, and to endure long descriptions of the urine. Whether Hawkins has been successful in portraying the characters in their organic form or not, it is not clear. (27)

Symbolically, Goldblatt appreciates Hawkins' selection of real character from the society and her vivid depiction to carry out the theme of the novel as a representation of the contemporary society of England.

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

*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, Burges is selective in what he presents. However Hawkins presents the bafflement of female characters in 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 of England. Her story explores human complexities in modern society. *The Girl on the Train* is representational story about the middle class women of modern society, their positive vision regarding the capitalistic 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. Another critic Murphy Georgeann makes criticism as:

*The Girl on the Train* begins and ends back in London following the progress of the protagonist Rachel, whose life parallels Hawkins' in many ways. Hawkins' plots since 1978 often set near her childhood home, regularly concern strategies of coping and acceptance: in her own words, "I write about where I am in Life." (7)

In this way, Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* has been criticized from different perspectives from different critics. 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 modernity project is totally absent in their reviews and consistent commentaries. Modernity is expected to enrich human comfort and minimize labor. Nevertheless, science has denuded the humanity of

human beings as it misused by totalitarian rulers. The issue of scientific optimism and Rachel's implicit view on the systematic denudation of manhood is increasingly new and untested issue. Rachel's denuded manhood is miserable and heart-rending. That is why the researcher has picked up the issue of the critique of modernity.

Rachel, is degenerated into neurotic and paranoid because of the worst condition of the society, totalitarian political system, and manipulation of science and technology. Her degraded condition in dystopian world is described as:

I do not have words to describe what I felt that day, but now, sitting on the train, I am furious, nails digging in to my palms, tears stinging my eyes. I feel a flash of intense anger. I feel as though something has been taken away from me. How could she? How could Jess do this? Look at the life how beautiful it is! I could never understood how people can blithely disregard the damage they do by following their hearts. (Hawkins 38)

Rachel is desperate to find the underlying cause of these questions. She bumps into a red haired man on the train who remembers how happy he is in contrary to females of the same society.

The critique of Enlightenment universals is central to the thinking of the philosophers of the post-modern period happen to scrutinize its main protagonist's miserable condition because of modernity. The conclusion she arrived at was that the scientific knowledge was actually marked by a contradiction because "scientific knowledge cannot know and make known that it is the true knowledge without resorting to the other, narrative kind of knowledge, which from its point of view is no knowledge at all. In short, there is a recurrence of the narrative in the scientific"

(Sarup 136-7). The scientific knowledge, so to say, only proves its superiority with the help of the narrative. In other words, “Lyotard showed that science was like all other human activity” (Drolet 25). The protagonist Rachel, primarily affiliates with the logo centric way of seeing the world. She thinks that modernity provides her solace, relief, and freedom. She comes to England for the quest of freedom and solace but, modernity hampers her negatively. The research aims to prove loopholes of modernity project. This thesis uses concept of modernity and gender conceptualized by Janet Wolff, Griselda Pollock and Bonnie Kim Scott to prove its hypothesis.

These critics comment upon the cosmopolitan modernity. Cosmopolitan modernity conceptualizes upon the ideology that all human beings belong to a single community, based on a shared morality. A person who adheres to the idea of cosmopolitanism in any of its forms is called a cosmopolitan or cosmopolite. A cosmopolitan community might be based on an inclusive morality, a shared economic relationship, or a political structure that encompasses different nations. In a cosmopolitan community individuals from different places, gender and race have the mutual respect and identity. However, modernity and gender comments cosmopolitanism modernity as gender infected territory dominated by males.

The issue of worry and disillusionment created on modern woman by modernity is extensively dealt with in this thesis. In the fictitious world of *The Girl on the Train*, author is raising the issues of disparity and discriminations over females in modern city. Dream for harmonious society, political liberalism, and economic status, democracy and human rights are dream for females. In the peculiar world of England, the western thoughts turn out to be the source of despair. Hence, woman is just a mean to satisfy the male.

For the first time "flaneur" was characterized by the French painter Baudelaire in his painting and arts to present the new dynamic complications of modern life.

Traditionally, the traits that mark the "flaneur" were wealth, education, and idleness. He strolls to pass the time that his wealth affords him, treating the people who pass and the objects he sees as texts for his own pleasure. So, the "flaneur" is supposed to be free to probe his surrounding for. Janet Wolff makes discussion about the version of "flaneur" and "flaneuse" as the words are originally coined from France and this was coined to represent the modern society which she defines as:

The "flaneur", the French term is always used, in English as well as in German is the person who strolls aimlessly in the modern city, observing people and events, perhaps if the "flaneur" happens also to be a writer or an artist with a view to recording these observations in word or image. Although this particular figure has a prehistory in eighteenth century thought, it is generally agreed that its prominence in the literature of modernity dates from Bauldaire's mid nineteenth-century essays on the modern life (19).

Primarily, the concept of "flaneur" was centered on males where females were not accorded and they were not identified. The "flaneur", however, is necessarily male. The privilege of passing unnoticed in the city, particularly in the period in which the "flaneur" flourished that is, the mid- nineteenth century to the early twentieth century - was not accorded to women, whose presence on the streets would certainly be noticed. Not only that as many historians of the period have pointed out, women in public, and particularly women wandering without aim, immediately attract the negative stamp of the 'non - respectable'(19).

Wolff coined the term "flaneuse" associating with city to define the women of nineteenth century and especially for white male's pleasure, which she defines as:

The variety of city was again coded as a site of white masculine pleasure and hence as a potential threat to bourgeois femininity even as live experience provided examples of a tremendous variety of spatial practices across different genders, classes, and ethnicities. Such contemporary dichotomies were immediate motivation for the examination of the historical condition of cultural invisibility that termed as the "flaneuse" (2).

Wolff questioned on early 20th century regarding already formed "flaneur" and says, "The female version of modernity's urban stroller, such a person due to certain ideologies such as private and public sphere, gender, female *flanerie* is impossible" (18). In early twentieth century, many feminists and artists like, Janet Wolff, Anke Gleber, Walter Benjamin and Griselda Pollock came with the idea of revision to define the undefined women of the nineteenth century.

Walter Benjamin extended the idea, "flaneur" came to rise primarily because of an architectural change in the city of Paris. This change was rooted in building capitalism involved the creation of the arcades, which were passageways through elegant shops and park" (37). Baudelaire's depiction of " flaneur" in the city that "Baudelaire would be torn rest of his life between the stances of "flaneur" and dandy, a disengaged and cynical voyeur on the one hand, and man of the people who enters into the life of his subjects with passion on the other". "Flaneur", as both lines of continuity and ruptures between nineteenth century and "flaneur" as its medium,

paradigms, while rethinking of questions of gender and representation in the space of the modernity. (11)

*The Girl on the Train* chronicles the life of a middle class woman in modern England society after migrating from the small countryside of England. The issue of cultural domination, patriarchy, objectification and the commodification of females are the major concern of this research. The life of main character Rachel and her positioning in the England society is highly discussed and dealt. The issues of modernity and female gender are discussed as Janet Wolff discussed them as they are the paradigms of the modernity.

In the text, the society represents the all modern city and modern society and the main character Rachel represents the all middle class female who are being "flaneuse", not well recognized and well settled female returning to their native land or village. The main character, Rachel, after growing up in the suburb, she left the village dreaming about many successes to rise from poor to rich and become a modern woman in the urban arena. The main protagonist in the story Rachel is a strong, independent and confident young lady. She knows what she wants from life and has the zeal to fight the world for it. However, life lands her in circumstances where she is let down by everyone around her. The trauma she had faced as a child comes back to haunt her again and again. And the memories of distant past simply refuses to leave her. She tries hard to gather all the scattered remains and attempts to quest new order in Modern London. She gets married with Tom. But she was just treated as uncivilized and dirty. Rachel turns drunkard being alienated in modern city. The narrator describes about the plight of the main character Rachel as:

Rachel eases us into her drinking problem early. Sure, it's a little odd that she's drinking on the train, but she makes it seem like other people do it. (If other people do it, it must be okay, right. Right?) We don't know yet that Friday means nothing to her. She is unemployed, so this excuse that it's Friday doesn't wash. She is lost within the maze. (17)

Janet Wolff makes description about the role of middle class female in the city as a tool for the economic enhancement of the consumer culture. She says, "New opportunities for women in public as the department store supplanted the arcade, the mobilized gaze entered the service of consumption, and space opened for a "flaneuse" whose gendered gaze became a key element of consumer address" (20). Likewise, the stereotypical representation of the working class female in the city was highly dealt by the males of the urban area, female were rather defined as bad, fallen, whore and ideologies of bad which Wolff describes as:

Here, women move center stage in the modern metropolis, whether as prostitute, housewife, mother, new women or androgyny of 1920s and early 1930s. Seen anew in the context of their actual lives, and in their representation in paintings by women artists, these figures offer a striking contrast to their more familiar prototypes in part of men and in the dominant ideologies of gender - ideologies of the 'good' and 'bad' woman, angel/whore, virgin/ fallen women (25).

Rachel after migrating into a capitalistic urban society, feels very strange with the cultural tradition that is different from the countryside. Narrator describes Rachel's unfamiliarity with city lights and inhuman behaviorism of people. She finds criminal

attitude on people and happens to see a boy child in the street lying due to lack of parents and food but people do not have any concern and sympathy for him who she feels very painful and describes the reality of the modern city and comments:

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. . . I have never understood how people can blithely disregard the damage they do by following their hearts. Who was it said that following your heart is a good thing? It is pure egotism, a selfishness to conquer all. (58)

Rachel lives with her university friend, Cathy, after she broke up with her husband and had nowhere to live. She has no job but hides it from Cathy. Every day, she takes the same morning and evening trains, observing the same suburban houses by the tracks. However, there is one house that she cannot wait to see each day. She names the people in it, Jess and Jason. She loves this house because it reminds her of her past, perfect life, before she and Tom divorced.

Narrator narrates the compulsion of Rachel to do job to enhance her education, as she is poor and cannot sustain her life in the expensive city. She respects even minor work and starts to work in London. Her mother has left a message asking her to lunch in London and telling her it's not a good time to live back at home since she has a new "friend" (172). There is also a missed call from another character Scott. She does not call him back but instead gets into the shower to prepare to meet her mother. At lunch, she does not completely tell her mother about her struggles, but her mother

does transfer her 300 pounds. Rachel remembers the days with Tom that how humiliated she was because of her class and her origin. She narrates:

Hollowness: that I understand. I'm starting to believe that there isn't anything you can do to fix it. That's what I've taken from the therapy sessions: the holes in your life are permanent. You have to grow around them, like tree roots around concrete; you mold yourself through the gaps. (94)

Tom, is a rich, educated, young man from England having urban experience and strolls around the city as "flaneurs" does. Rachel feels that he is by birth rich but very proud. There was something edgy, jumpy, and disconcerting about him. His voice would break under stress with her, it seemed he was always under stress - he knocked dishes and cups off tables, spilled drinks, and bowls peanuts, like a comedian. He was not comedian; nothing could be further from his intentions. He came from London. His family was rich. (69)

Bonnie Kim Scott in her book *Gender of Modernism* defines from the perspective of two spheres as Public sphere and Private sphere. During the early nineteenth century, Male was considered for going to public world but the female were kept under the male in private sphere. In this context Scott describes as:

Parks and theater halls as liminal spaces of modernity, urban sites caught between or outside the public and private spheres, where women could be seen without being categorized as fallen and sexualized, where they could inscribe alternate interpretations of femininity. I want to carry that argument further, charting the way parks allowed alternate views of femininity and modernity to be staged

in Paris . . . parks were indeed key segments of public space to which women laid equal claim as men; more specifically, parks staged family life sphere, counterbalancing the dominance of masculinity. (34)

Scott's question is about the liberation of female in the modern city. How the construction of shopping as particularly feminized. How feminized activity affected its ability to become an object of the Male's gaze (14). Further she comments and says, "many female strollers was involved in such activities during the time such as cinema going, shopping. The fact is that there was women's lack of access to the distortions of cultural theory and solidarity which foregrounds male activities and women invisible." (18)

Tom proposes Rachel for marriage. Rachel finds the idea is very 'furious'. Though she discards him, he follows her for his selfishness and for proving himself superior which narrator describes, "Tom was in love with Rachel. This has become a fixed, even furious idea with him. For her, a continual surprise. He wanted to marry her. He waited for her after classes, moved in and walked beside her what he thought of their conversation. Rachel was flattered and but nervous" (68).

Rachel faces discrimination between lower class and rich class people. She faces low self-esteem in the city. Therefore, firstly, when she rejects the proposal, narrator shares Tom reaction to Rachel is very furious. He treats Rachel as an object and he is going to buy and charges her with bad hearing words. The narrator describes the humiliated condition of Rachel in the following way:

Beautiful sunshine, cloudless skies, no one to play with, nothing to do.

Living like this, the way I'm living at the moment, is harder in the

summer when there is so much daylight, so little cover of darkness,  
when everyone is out and about, being flagrantly, aggressively happy.

It's exhausting, and it makes you feel bad if you're not joining in. (93)

Scott transposes the feminist critique of the literature of modernity and describes the past literatures by the traditional male authors and painters who described woman as inferior and treated as women undermining their contribution in the society. Male is a lived, occupiable position available or unavailable to urban subjects based on their gender, class, or sexuality. Particularly, Scott and Wolff are interested in investigation on the social construction about the "flaneur". Forms of transforming and say that, "flaneurs" advocating posters, sold goods, supermarkets, bookstores, window shopping, department store and cycling. Woolf further asserts:

It is essentially literatures about transformations in the public world and in its associated consciousness. Its author, sociologists, social commentators of one sort or another like their mainstream brethren consistently ignored the private real, the domestic arenas that were women's primary domains. Its protagonists, invoked to epitomize the experience of modern life were invariably male figures: the dandy, the stranger, the "flaneur". Within these academic essays, literary Rachel, and poetry Wolff contended, women were largely absent; confined to home, to invisible arena of the private. (4)

The "flaneur", however, is necessarily male. The privilege of passing unnoticed in the city, particularly in the period in which the "flaneur" flourished. That is the mid nineteenth century, was not accorded to women, whose presence on the streets would certainly be noticed. Not only that as many historians of the period have pointed out,

women in public, and particularly women, apparently wandering without aim, immediately attract the negative stamp of the non - respectable. It is not accident that prostitutes appear as the central female tropes in the discourse of modernity.

The narrator shares the memory of Rachel about another female character Megan in the city. Rachel and Megan they were treating as the "flaneuse" in the modern city. They never get respect by the other male and bourgeois female. Rachel remembers the incident of a girl, Megan who is sexually assaulted by Tom when he is drunk. Rachel remembers the incidents when she feels humiliated and faces bullying by the males in the city.

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. A tidings. Bad tidings. I can see them now, black against the sun. Not the birds, something else. Someone's coming. Someone is speaking to me. Now look. Now look what you made me do. (28)

Rachel in the retrospection section, remembers her past days when she was victimized by the male of modern city. She remembers that she was used for the amusement of the several males. Narrator articulates the animalistic behavior of Rachel's husband in the party in front of many couples. Tom kisses her in an insulting way hurting her which she remembers, "For crying out loud", said Tom heartily, and he did squeeze her and kiss her, with a loud smacking noise on the neck. He always smacked when he kissed. (112). Furthermore, during the party with many people, when Tom treats Rachel in a barbaric way, Rachel cannot resist this because she is

trapped by the modern cultural values. Narrators 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).

Another critic Anke Gleber makes an argument about the privilege that was only given to the male boycotting the presence of female. Women’s access to urban space in the early twentieth century introduces gender biased and alternatives posed by feminist historians for rethinking the public/ private divide. They describe a modernity in which women are no longer visible, although these are important matters to address.

Rachel when she visits the bar and restaurants invited by her friends of the particular city of England, she finds herself always humiliated and she herself being a fool by the members. When people are drunk in the party, Scott who is the husband of Megan efforts to keep sexual relationship with Rachel. However, at the end, Rachel finds that they are making fun of her. Rachel realizes that no one is serious with her and feels guilty. The narrator narrates the incidents of Rachel as:

Who's to say that once I run, I'll find that isn't enough? Who's to say I won't end up feeling exactly the way I do right now-not safe, but stifled? Maybe I'll want to run again, and again, and eventually I'll end up back on those old tracks, because there's nowhere left to go. Maybe. Maybe not. You have to take the risk, don't you . 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. ( 119)

Tom treats Rachel as his personal property to keep inside the house. He visits the bar, restaurants and pub but he does not want Rachel to come out. Even he comments upon the dresses of Rachel. Rachel feels Tom as her 'watchdog'. He does not want her wearing short skirts. There was beer to drink, and wine punch Jocelyn, who was a splendid cook, was stirring a pot of jambalaya. Rachel makes a trip to the bathroom to remove her from Tom, who seems to want to stick close to her. She thinks that he is being a watchdog; she forgets he may be shy. When she comes out, he moves on. She drinks three cups of punch in quick succession and is introduced to the woman who had written the play. Rachel is constantly humiliated by her husband.

Moreover, Rachel's life is described as mischief because the other two men after having sexual relationships with Rachel, they explain the relation as a mischief and mistake. She feels really tormented and used by the all males which narrator describes as:

She must be very secure in herself, I suppose, in them, for it not to bother her, to walk where another woman has walked before. She obviously doesn't think of me as a threat. I think about Ted Hughes, moving Assia Wevill into the home he'd shared with Plath, of her wearing Sylvia's clothes, brushing her hair with the same brush. I want to ring Anna up and remind her that Assia ended up with her head in the oven, just like Sylvia did. (149)

Rachel remembers her life incidents when she gets divorce by Tom. She is isolated and separated. During that day, she feels herself empty and tired of life due to the male's domination in the modern society. Narrators narrates this painful condition representing the condition of all the middle class female migrating from the

countryside's and describes " She knew that how she had seen him; she knows 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 modern city.

Females are not machine that can be programmed forever. They have emotions, desires and feelings and desires for freedom. If the State attempts to control the personal freedom of people forever it generates permanent conflict between individual and the State. The opening of the novel also casts light upon the conflict and ending also highlights upon the possible conflict. First and foremost, Rachel sacrifices her own life for the sake of her survival. She enters the London – the totalitarian patriarchal society. Despite all of the wrongs that Patriarchy does to her, she efforts to survive.

In a dystopian world, bodies are represented as powerless and feeble, being reduced to constant oppression and regulation from the state, which engages discipline to achieve its devious aim. As Mitchel Foucault in his text *Discipline and Punish* describes it, discipline is a tool that made "possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body" materialized in different ways (137). One of them focused on a scrupulously designed and organized everyday routine, which had to be followed by everyone in society. This coercion grants the ruling elite a perfect opportunity to force people into submissiveness, turn them into robots that are trained to do with preciseness exactly the same thing as everyone else does. Every day and every hour of people's lives is prescribed and directed by the government, prohibiting people any involuntary deviation from the rigid schedule. In fact, it is through the use of such a strict disciplinary system that social order can be established where people become

totally subservient and oblivious to the omnipotent power of the state. Foucault in his work elaborates on this idea and explains that “discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (138). In other words, once a human body becomes totally disciplined, two things happen.

On the one hand, the body increases its productive potential and can benefit the state economically, and, on the other hand, it becomes completely obedient, posing no difficulties for the state’s control. Thus, inadvertently, the citizens of most totalitarian regimes resemble prisoners because of the rigid discipline that the state requires of their bodies. Foucault discusses the implementation of discipline in penitentiary institutions in *Discipline and Punish* and quotes at length Léon Faucher, who drafted the rules for a Parisian prison:

The prisoners’ day will begin at six in the morning in winter and at five in summer. They will work for nine hours a day throughout the year. Two hours a day will be devoted to instruction . . . At the first drum-roll, the prisoners must rise and dress in silence, as the supervisor opens the cell doors. At the second drum-roll, they must be dressed and make their beds. At the third, they must line up and proceed to the chapel for morning prayer . . . Work and the day will end at nine o’clock in winter and at eight in summer. (Foucault 6)

Similarly, female characters of *The Girl on the Train* follow exactly the same routine. People, to be exact numbers, live day after day according to the Table of Hours—a detailed schedule of their lives organized and put together by the state. This table, proclaimed by the main protagonist as the “heart and pulse of One State,”

dictates how people should spend every minute of the day—everyone is doing precisely the same thing in unison, creating a giant organism that acts and moves alike—to shape one body, which can be easily regulated through discipline and order (Hawkins 12). Hawkins, depicting a typical day in the life, Rachel narrates:

But I know something happened on Saturday. I knew it when I looked into that dark tunnel under the railway line, my blood turning to ice water in my veins. Blackouts happen, and it isn't just a matter of being a bit hazy about getting home from the club or forgetting what it was that was so funny when you were chatting in the pub. It's different.

Total black; hours lost, never to be retrieved. (13)

Such eerie unanimity does not allow any foreign action that is somehow different from the rest, making it very simple for the government to exercise its control and at the same time use people's productivity for its advantage. This never-interrupted and never-ending routine sucks out any creativity or desire to learn from these people, turning them into one giant mass of pliable material, easily trained and molded. Foucault elaborates on this "time-table" method of discipline and asserts that, because it "establishes rhythm, imposes particular occupations, regulates the cycle of repetition," it allows the state to obtain the same blind compliance from its citizens as commanders get from their soldiers in the army (149). The rigid breakdown of time into hours, minutes, and seconds and disciplinary control of gestures and movements in the military eliminates any free movements and adjusts "the body into temporal imperatives," (151) which, if repeated continuously, stay in one's body forever. By the same token Rachel and other characters in *The Girl on the Train* "precisely established meals, obligatory walks" that smears any traces of individuality and

makes them robotic and identical, like “innumerable waves” in one big “mighty flood” (Hawkins 7).

Louis Althusser’s work “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses,” where he introduces the idea of ideological function, categorizes individuals into “subjects.” He states that a human being, who is subjected to ideology involuntarily, turns into a “subject,” as his outlook on the world will be shaped congruously with the state’s beliefs (157). However, he claims that “what is represented in ideology is therefore not the system of the real relations which govern the existence of individuals, but the imaginary relation of those individuals to the real relations in which they live” (155). Thus, this “imaginary relation” will dictate how individuals perceive themselves in the world and what social function they will occupy. A person’s ability to identify oneself is perceived through the lens of social practices that are imposed on people through ideology. Therefore, it is in the state’s best interest that people view themselves as “subjects” (not as individual identities); once they identify themselves as such, they act and think according to the ideology’s chief principles, and fail to break the circle—they cannot imagine themselves outside of the ideological framework.

*The Girl on the Train* also plays a central role as the main protagonist’s way of resistance to the totalitarian regime, where women are exclusively valued for their reproductive function and are mentally and physically abused by the patriarchal ruling class. While writing helps the main character to discover her individuality and reconnect with the past, in Hawkins’ world, Rachel, the main heroine, employs writing to reconstruct her body, which has been disciplined and exploited for the state’s benefit. As Foucault puts it, the discipline that the state employs to achieve its

supremacy has to dominate and control the body to achieve its total subjection: “the discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes these same forces (in political terms of obedience)” (138). Thus, she has to regain her body and reclaim her authority, recreate her identity and challenge the state’s ideals by narrating her story. Among the dystopian novels discussed in this chapter, Hawkins’ novel literally belongs to the tradition of *écriture féminine* and directly reflects the philosophies of the feminist writers on the role of women and their oppression in society. Since women in the totalitarian society are defined only through their social functions of procreation, are treated as “machines,” and have no power over the autonomy of their own bodies, the only way to survive and resist the repression is to attempt to regain their bodies (Moyalon 282). Writing, subsequently, becomes the avenue for the reconstruction and liberation of the woman’s body, which has been taken away from her, rendering her voiceless and powerless. As Cixous underlines in her essay “The Laugh of the Medusa,” writing enables woman to “return to the body which has been more than confiscated from her, which has been turned into the uncanny stranger on display” (395). Since the woman is reduced to being the servant of the militant male, his shadow, she has to rebel and let her body be heard through writing,—“an act which will not only ‘realize’ the decensored relation of woman to her sexuality, to her womanly being.” But also give her back her goods, her pleasures, her organs, her immense bodily territories which have been kept under seal.

Narrating her own story thus becomes essential for Rachel, because through writing she recreates her body, reconstructs her identity, and remains human. Rachel, the main protagonist in Hawkins, always refers to her body as something over which she does not have control anymore, something that is foreign or distant from her,

something that is needed by the governing elite and thus treated as their property. In the totalitarian society, where as a result of the military coup, religious fundamentalists obtain governmental power, women who can still reproduce become a “national resource,” as nuclear pollution has rendered most women infertile (Hawkins 85). Her role now is to give birth, and, if she is unable to accomplish it, she will be labeled an “un woman” until she dies. Tom indoctrinates Rachel to think as “seeds,” but Rachel refuses to be considered just a seed: she feels that as a human being she is entitled to have the ownership over her own body and herself (25). Thus, since she is denied the ownership of her body, she must reclaim it through her story and gets divorced with Tom. As Mautner Thomas assures, “Rachel “refigures” her lost body “through the text, as she imagines the narrative as a metaphorical body” (356). The dismembered body is vividly present in this novel and becomes the metaphor for Rachel’s lost body to the ruthless values, one she must reconstruct through her story. Images of and references to body parts can be detected throughout the whole novel (104). In this dystopia, females are only viewed as “two legged wombs” (176); the doctor who examines Rachel “deals with a torso only” (78); the image of hands reoccurs multiple times when Rachel thinks how “empty” they seem to her, as they “could be held, but not seen” (Hawkins 62). When Rachel has memories of her mother, she confesses that she feels like a “missing person” and expresses the incredible urge to hold a human body:

I don’t mind, because it reassures him that there’s nothing going on, that I’m not up to anything. And that’s good for me—it’s good for us—even if it isn’t true. And I can’t really be angry with him, because he has good reason to be suspicious. I’ve given him cause in the past

and probably will again. I am not a model wife. I can't be. No matter how much I love him, it won't be enough. (132)

When women all of a sudden become powerless over night as a result of Patriarchy that establishes the rule of the Male , Rachel recalls that she thought as if somebody had “cut off [her] feet” (Hawkins). *The Girl on the Train*, the state prescribes which social function each person will serve for the welfare of the country as a whole. Thus, individual feelings or ambitions are disregarded, as dystopias, according to Martin Kessler, “posit a perfectly malleable . . . human nature incapable of experiencing any emotion or exercising any judgment outside of the prevailing . . . frame of reference” (568). Consequently, in *The Girl on the Train*, when girls reach the age of sixteen they are prohibited from choosing their future occupations because they are not in control of how their bodies will be used. The state arbitrarily determines what “subjects” they will be turned into and how their bodies will be appropriated according to governmental needs. Rachel narrates about her miserable condition as:

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. I have to find a way of making myself happy, I have to stop looking for happiness elsewhere. (18)

In other words, individuals' opinions on how to utilize their own bodies are not taken into consideration, and what is more disturbing is that due to the ideological indoctrination, they do not even mind it; they are so used of being told what to do that they see nothing unusual about it.

Griselda Pollock criticizes upon the failure of Traditional notion of modernity created by the traditional writers and artists in their literature at by putting male at the centre undermining the role of woman in the society. Such literature excluded the possibility of feminine equivalents to its heroes of modern life. The solitary and independent life of the male was not open to women. The sexual division of public from private in the nineteenth century prohibited women from strolling alone in the city. Rachel further remembers the past memory and the negative treatment of Tom after giving divorce to Rachel. Narrators talks about the painful condition when she loosed her friend Megan. Tom abuses Megan and she dies mysteriously . Rachel as a hopeless person at the end of the relation with Tom, she discovers the letter sent by Tom in which he describes his next life with another girl. But the life of Rachel was distorted so she remembers the decision of Tom on the letter blaming to Rachel saying she is unstable and immoral person. Tom does not have any respect towards her. Rachel describes her lopsided relationship with Tom as:

He lied all the time, about everything. Even when he didn't need to, even when there was no point. ... Tom's whole life was constructed on lies — falsehoods and half-truths told to make him look better, stronger, more interesting than he was. And I bought them. I fell for them all... I wonder whether [I] would have loved the weaker, flawed, unembellished version. I think I would. I would have forgiven his mistakes and his failures. I have committed enough of my own. (154)

Narrator narrates the incidents of Rachel and her ultimate life. Rachel comes to the London to be educated, developed, and rich. She works hard to survive. She bears the problem of cultural adaptation. She contributed for the capitalistic society by

giving company too many males. And has never got respect by other. At the end, her ex-husband Tom efforts to kill her using sharp weapon. In the defense, she kills himself. She has to return in her original village in a ruined condition. She has no hope in the life; no one is coming to meet her. So, the ideals and ideologies of modern society become just as a fantasy and dystopian reality for her. She feels she is ruined and lost in the modern society. Rachel just remembers the past days and she has disillusionment created by the modern ideologies and culture. Modernity robs Rachel instead enlightening her.

Finally, representation of the middle class women in literature has now being changed due to the contributions regarding different theories and queries pioneered by new feminist critics especially after twentieth century. In the modern period, new feminist critics came with some new thought and ideologies to redefine past history about women written in art and literature. In addition, they raised the voice for the justice of the women and tried to review the history and rewrite the old literature that gave the new role to the women of the then period and inspire the present world's women.

Gradually, the role of women is started to be presented beyond the stereotypical tradition of portraying women in literature. As literature is considered to be the reflection of the society, the past literature represented the contemporary society by creating female characters to show the manner and tradition of the society. In the past, the female's contributions, which were most important for the regulation and expansion of the society, were neglected. Therefore, feminist came up with various versions of ideologies to rewrite the history of those unaddressed woman and tried to give justice by revisiting the traditional notion. *The Girl on the Train* is an epitome to reflect the modern England. The thesis explored the role of female, condition and sufferings of female even

in modern capitalistic society. The females were made invisible, used only for the male gaze as commodity value.

Hawkins shows the historical scenario of middle class women in modern city like London. Even after the great revolutions like French Revolution and World War II, though many things changed, the condition and status of women could not be changed. Hawkins has tried to present this bitter reality in the book creating a leading female character Rachel. The thesis clarifies that a girl being middle class girl from village cannot fulfill her dream in the modern city. Rather she has to face many sorts of insult and humiliations. Therefore, this thesis tries to raise the question upon western philosophy of civilization that cannot be justifiable for the all citizens and all human. Hawkins depicts the life of women which has to face many disparities in the society like gender wise, geographic wise and class wise. Therefore, Rachel represents most of the all western societies and traditions.

London is taken as most developed, civilized and highly educated society. However, there is lack of emotion, sentiments, and harmony. Hawkins has dealt this very situation by presenting many issues and life events of main character in relation to other minor characters in the book. Hawkins explicates the issues to show the major contributions of those middle class working women to develop the society but unfortunately, they are considered as manner less, uncivilized and immoral. The condition of the middle class female as in modernity is problematic due to their unclear identify and agency in the patriarchal society. The objectives to use this theoretical technique is to highlight the ultimate life that is painful, desperate and isolated getting return back to their original place. Those females are ruined due to patriarchy. Woolf questions modernity as oppressive project for females. Middle class women in the modern

capitalistic society where they are always used as commodity having negative identity among the so-called educated and civilized male. *The Girl on the Train* 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 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 country sides 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. For instance, the main character who has to be back at the end of her life though many males had relationship with her. Even her husband gives divorce, takes the decision to kill her. Ultimately, Rachel returned to her original place her fragmented life as the gift of modernity.

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