



BOOK REVIEW OF *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN*

WRITTEN BY PAULA HAWKINS

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement
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In English Department, Faculty of Humanities
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Submitted by:

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PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that this project is compiled by her without taking the results from other research in any university, in S-1, S-2, and S-3 degree and in diploma. In addition, the writer ascertains that she does not take the material from other publications or someone's work except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 22 August 2016

Nurachni Dwi Mukti S

MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Be happy with what you have while working for what you want.

(Helen Keller)

No matter what happens in life, be good to people.

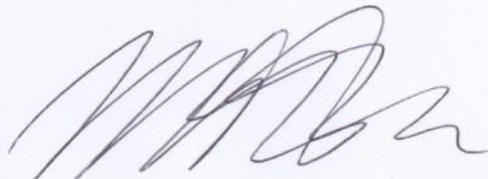
(Taylor Swift)

The writer proudly dedicates her final project to her family and best friends

Thank you for the support, motivation and love.

APPROVAL

Approved by
Advisor,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nurdien H.K.', written in a cursive style.

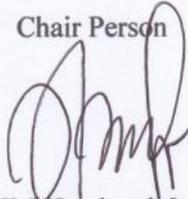
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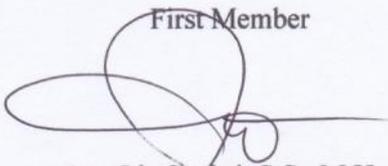
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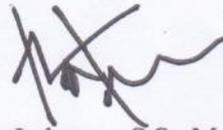
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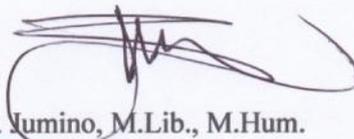
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The writer realizes that this final project is still far from perfect. The writer, therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this final project better.

Finally, the writer expects that this final project will be useful to the reader who wants to learn something about reviewing a novel and to understand a little bit more about *The Girl on the Train* written by Paula Hawkins.

Semarang, 22 September 2016

Nurachni Dwi Mukti S

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1. INTRODUCTION

Literary works are created by the authors to entertain the reader. The authors produce literary works based on their reality or their imagination. There are several types of literary works which are novel, drama, short story and poem. One of the most interesting literary works that the writer ever read is novel. Novel is a literary work that is created by the author. Novel presents a lot of themes such as love, adventure, friendship, betrayal and etc.

Novel is very interesting to be reviewed because the tragedy in the novel occasionally happens in reality, and the author has the ability to dramatize the story. A psychological thriller is interesting for the writer because she has never been in that situation so that the writer can feel the punch of adrenaline that makes her excited and scared at the same time. The content of the novel also makes the writer always curious about what will happen next in the story. *The Girl on the Train* novel is a psychological thriller which is created by Paula Hawkins as the author.

Another reason the writer chooses *The Girl on the Train* to be reviewed because the readers can be wiser to face their problem by using some moral values from this novel. *The Girl on the Train* was published on January 2015 and became number one New York Times Fiction Bestseller of 2015. This novel will become a movie produced by Marc Platt and Dreamworks Pictures and will be released on October 7, 2016.

This novel tells the reader about the mystery of a woman's disappearance named Megan Hipwell, that becomes national news. Two weeks after missing, her body was found buried in the Corly wood near Witney Station. It was found out that she was pregnant when she died. News spread that she also killed her child. Rachel, the girl on the train, is the main character of this novel. From Rachel's point of view, we will know who murdered Megan Hipwell.

The writer's purposes of choosing *The Girl on the Train* novel which is written by Paula Hawkins as the object of the writer's final project report are first, to expose the strengths and weakness of *The Girl on the Train* novel, and the second, to review some interesting points of this novel like theme and characters which attract the reader to read the novel.

Paula Hawkins had grown up in Zimbabwe, until 17 when she moved to London in hope to have a better life. She graduated from Oxford University and has three degrees in politics, philosophy and economics. After that, she became a journalist for 15 years at *The Times* until she decided to write her first psychological thriller novel *The Girl on the Train*. (<http://www.standard.co.uk/lifestyle/london-life-10133029.html>).

2. SUMMARY OF *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN*

The Girl on the Train is about the mystery of a missing woman named Megan Hipwell. The author tells the story from Rachel, Megan and Anna point of view.

However, the story develops from Rachel's point of view. Rachel Watson is a broken hearted woman, who is divorced from her husband Tom Watson who has had a new life with his new wife, Anna. Tom and Anna are still living in Rachel's old house at Blenheim Road, Witney. Meanwhile, Rachel is living with her college friend named Cathy in Ashbury. For the last three months, Rachel keeps taking the same commuter every day. She pretends to go to work because Cathy does not know that Rachel had been fired from her office in Hutingdon Whitely.

She often looks at the window and sees a couple's house near her old house with Tom. She calls them Jess and Jason, she assumes that they are a perfect couple. But, one day Rachel sees Jess kisses another man on her terrace, he is not Jason, not her husband. A day after that, Rachel decides to go to Witney Station to see what will happen to Jess and Jason. Rachel is drunk and when she arrives at Witney Station, she is suddenly blackout and does not know what happened. The next day, she feels pain all over her body, and there is news about a missing woman named Megan Hipwell. She is shocked because Megan is 'her Jess'.

Two days later, police comes to Rachel's house to ask for information about what she was doing at the Witney Station the night Megan went missing. Rachel is confused why police comes to her house and asks about what she did. Detective Inspector Garskill tells her that Anna saw her in Witney Station and told the police about her. Rachel is offended by the police questions that are too personal, and then she says that Megan's case is more important than her personal issue. Rachel tells the

police that she saw Megan kissed another man on her terrace from the train. But police assumes that Rachel is an unreliable witness because she was drunk when she saw Megan.

Felt herself involved in Megan's disappearance, she intends to tell Scott Hipwell and pretends that she is a friend of Megan from the Gallery. Rachel tells Scott that the man who kissed Megan is taller, slender and darker than him, from that, Scott believes that the man is Dr. Kamal Abdic, Megan's therapist. A day later Dr. Kamal Abdic is being arrested by the police, but shortly afterwards he is released because he is an innocent witness. Finally, on the First August, Megan's body has found at Corly Wood. Megan is dead and her death becomes national news.

Rachel keeps trying to remember about what she did the night Megan went missing but it does not work out. Thus, she decides to see a therapist which is Dr. Kamal Abdic. Shortly afterwards, there is a news that Megan was a child killer. It makes Scott feels shocked because he does not know that Megan was pregnant. He asks Rachel to accompany and help to calm him down in his house.

Anna feels suspicious of Rachel because she often comes to Scott's house. Then, Anna asks Tom to tell the police about this but Tom refuses it and decides to meet Rachel and ask her to stop seeing Scott Hipwell. The next morning, Rachel meets Dr. Kamal again to help her to remember the lost on her brain. Dr. Kamal says that she should focus on senses and circumstances when she was blackout, so that, she decides to go to Witney Station where Megan went missing. Anna sees Rachel

again around her neighborhood, it makes her feel sick about Rachel and finally decides to call Detective Riley. Then Riley asks Scott what is his relation with Rachel. Scott says that Rachel is just an old friend of Megan. So Riley tells Scott that it is a lie, Rachel has never known about Megan.

Scott is very angry knowing that after all this time Rachel has lied to him. Rachel regrets about what she has done to him, she never meant to hurt him. Then, not long after that, she remembers that Tom hit her in the underpass in the night Megan went missing. She feels angry and sad because after all this time Tom has lied to her. Now she also remembers that the woman she saw with Tom at Witney station is Megan.

After remembering everything she saw in Witney Station the night Megan went missing, she decides to go to Tom's house and asks Anna to leave the house. Anna also knows that this time, Tom has lied to her. Tom had an affair with Megan. Tom is surprised seeing Rachel at his house with Anna. Rachel says to Tom that she saw him with Megan in the night Megan went missing, Tom denies about that but then Anna says that she also found Megan's phone on his bag the day before.

Tom finally confesses to them that he had an affair with Megan. Tom feels insecure with Rachel so that he intends to kill her. However, Rachel can avoid Tom's punch with a corkscrew that he brought and swings it into his neck. Tom falls and dead. From this accident, Anna tells the police that it was a self-defense. Then, the police confirm that Rachel is not guilty.

3. REVIEW OF *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN*

The review consists of the strengths and weakness of *The Girl on the Train*. The strengths of this novel include theme and characters, and the weakness is the plot. The following discussion will explain the strengths and weakness of *The Girl on the Train*.

3.1. The Strengths of the Novel

3.1.1. Theme

Theme is an important element of the novel. An interesting theme will attract the readers to read the novel. According to Meyer in his book entitled *The Bedford Introduction to Literature: Second Edition*, “theme is the central idea or meaning of a story. It provides a unifying point around which the plot, characters, setting, point of view, symbols and other elements of a story are organized” (1990:196). The themes of *The Girl on the Train* are struggle and betrayal. *The Girl on the Train* novel has some lessons that can be learned by the readers. From the character of Rachel Watson, the author shows the readers about how she struggle to move on from her old life with Tom Watson. She divorced from Tom Watson because Tom cheated on her. She becomes a drinker after the doctor said that she cannot get pregnant. She becomes so depressed and drunk too much. After she lost her marriage, Rachel keeps taking the same commuter every day, going back and forth without purpose. But when she involved herself to Megan’s disappearance, she has new motivation in her life. “I feel like I’m part of this mystery, I’m connected. I am no longer just a girl on

the train, going back and forth without point or purpose. I want Megan to turn up safe and sound.” (Hawkins, 2015:134). Finally she feels helpful to other people. This novel teaches the readers that bad things will always happen to them, so stay strong and fight for their happiness.

The second one is about betrayal. It is shown when Tom was still with Rachel, Tom cheated with Anna, his current wife. Now, when Tom is with Anna, he is cheating with Megan Hipwell, his neighbor. Megan Hipwell is murdered by Tom Watson because she asks for his responsibility of her pregnancy. Megan Hipwell also threatens him to tell his wife, Anna Watson, so that Tom Watson decides to kill her. Tom Watson is a psychopath. He always lies about everything. He lies to Rachel and Anna too. He can cover all his lies neatly enough and does not feel guilty.

Megan and Tom are liars. Scott, Megan’s husband feels that during this time he does not really know about who Megan was. That actually Megan had a child named Libby who died on her hand a few years ago. Megan and Tom hurt people around them and their death is a punishment to them.

“I have the clearest memory of Scott talking about Megan, saying *I don’t even know who she was*, and I feel exactly the same way. 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. Anna, too. We loved him. I wonder whether we would have loved the weaker, flawed, unembellished version. I think that I would. I would have forgiven his mistakes and his failures. I have committed enough of my own. (Hawkins,2015:469-470)

From the quotation above, it describes that Rachel also does not know who Tom was because everything he told was a lie. This story shows positive moral value

that how smart someone can cover up his/her lies, it would always be found, so just be honest to yourself and to people around you.

3.1.2. Characters

The writer finds two strong characters that makes this novel becomes interesting to be read. Kennedy defines character as, “an imagined person who inhabits a story” (Kennedy, 1979:43). The two characters in this novel are interesting because they show the readers different side of a woman, and also give the readers moral values. Both characters are round character, their personalities change and develop along with the development of the plot in the novel.

3.1.2.1. Rachel Watson

In this novel the readers will know how the personality of Rachel Watson changes from a weak woman into a strong woman. Otherwise, the readers can learn that if they want to live a happy life they should not waste their time looking back at what they have lost and move on because life does not mean to be traveled backwards. Rachel Watson is a broken hearted woman. She shows sadness and depression side of a woman who had been left by her beloved husband. She has not been able to move on from her old life with Tom Watson. They both were very happy until she decided to be happier. She became so depressed and drunk too much when she knew she could not get pregnant. It made Tom bored with her. That was why he left her to another woman named Anna.

“For four years I’d had problems with alcohol, that my drinking had cost me my marriage and my job, it was costing me my health, obviously, and I feared it might cost me my sanity, too”. (Hawkins, 2015:282).

Like the title of this novel, Rachel is the girl on the train who sees Megan before Megan went missing. Rachel has new motivation when she involved herself to Megan’s disappearance.

“I feel better than I have in months. When I looked at myself in the mirror this morning, I could see the difference in my face: my skin is cleaner, my eyes brighter. I feel lighter. I’m sure I haven’t actually lost an ounce, but I don’t feel encumbered. I feel like myself – the myself I used to be” (Hawkins, 2015:144)

She has new spirit because she feels helpful in this case. She feels that finally there is something she can do for others. Furthermore, there are some distractions for her not to think about her old life.

3.1.2.2. Megan Hipwell

Megan Hipwell is also a round character, her personality changes from a carefree woman into a responsible woman. After what happened to her, she does not want to lie anymore. She wants to be honest to herself and to others. From Megan, the readers can learn that being honest means they must be responsible for what they have done, and whatever they have done, they deserve to be a better person.

In the beginning of the story, Megan does everything that makes her happy without thinking about the consequences. Megan and Scott have been married for three years but Megan is depressed because of her marriage.

“Lying next to him is like lying next to a fire. Sometimes I want to scream at him, just let me go. Let me go. Let me breathe. So I can’t sleep, and I’m

angry. I feel as though we're having a fight already, even though the fight's only in my imagination" (Hawkins, 2015:241).

Her life with Scott becomes so boring because she does not know whether this is the life that she ever wanted. That is why she is cheating with Tom Watson. She is also cheating with Dr. Kamal Abdic when Tom Watson left her. However, after she knows that she is pregnant, even though she does not know who the father of her baby is, she wants to be a better person. However, tragically she is murdered by Tom Watson.

"It might be the hardest thing I've ever had to do, but I'm going to tell the truth. No more lies, no more hiding, no more running, no more bullshit. I'm going to put everything out in the open, and then we'll see. If he can't love me then, so be it." (Hawkins, 2015:420)

3.2. The Weaknesses of the Novel

3.2.1. Plot

The Girl on the Train also has a weak point. The weakness is the plot. The plot used in this novel is a mixed plot. The readers would be confused if they do not read it carefully. Additionally, Meyer said that "plot is the author's arrangement of incidents in a story. It is the organizing principle that controls the order of events." (Meyer, 1990:38). In the first chapter, the author tells the story in current situation of Rachel Watson. For the last three months, Rachel keeps taking the same commuter back and forth, from Ashbury to London. She keeps pretending to go to work because Cathy, the owner of her house, does not know that Rachel had been fired from her office, as shown in the quotation below:

“It’s a relief to be back on the 8:40. It’s not that I can’t wait to get in London to start my week – I don’t particularly want to be in London at all. I just want to lean back in the soft, sagging velour seat, feel the warmth of the sunshine streaming through the window, feel the carriage rock back and forth and back and forth, the comforting rhythm of wheels on tracks. I’d rather be here, looking out at the houses beside the track, than almost anywhere else” (Hawkins, 2015:4-5)

In the next chapter, the story changes from Rachel’s life to Megan’s life. The author tells about Megan Hipwell’s situation one year earlier before Megan went missing. She is bored because of her marriage seen from the quotation below:

“I need to find something that I must do, something undeniable. I can’t do this, I can’t just be a wife. I don’t understand how anyone does it – there is literally nothing to do but wait. Wait for a man to come home and love you. Either that or look around for something to distract you.” (Hawkins, 2015:34)

From those quotations, the writer can conclude that it will make the readers hard to remember the detail of the story because the plot is complicated, which brings the readers into the current event and also the flashback event of the story.

4. CONCLUSION

The Girl on the Train is the first novel of Paula Hawkins. It is a great achievement that this novel became number one New York Times Fiction Bestseller of 2015 and will become a movie produced by Marc Platt and Dreamworks Pictures.

The theme and the characters become the strength of this psychological thriller novel because those elements give the readers moral values. From the tragedy of this novel, the readers can learn that they do not have to hold on to something or someone that makes them sad and they should always be honest to themselves and to

everyone around them. On the contrary, the plot becomes the weakness of this novel. The use of mixed plot will make the readers hard to understand the story.

In conclusion, *The Girl on the Train* is a recommended novel for those who like psychological thriller. By reading this novel, the readers can feel the punch of adrenaline that makes them excited and scared at the same time. How Paula Hawkins excites the readers by arranging the riddle of who murdered Megan Hipwell is really brilliant so that it makes this novel is interesting to be read.

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