Amnesia, Imagination and Subsequent Narration Twists in The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins

فقدان الذاكرة، التخيل وتحولات السرد في رواية
فتاة القطار للكاتبة باولا هوكينز

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Abstract:

      This paper aims at studying the fictional mind of the miserable divorced Rachel Watson, the main female character and narrator in the British Paula Hawkins' best-selling novel *The Girl on the Train* (2015), and its effect on the novel's narration. Since Rachel is portrayed as a mentally disordered woman controlled by the high power of imagination and an amnesia problem, her narrative voice is regarded as unreliable. Thus, it drives the novel's events into a mood of twists and suspense. As *the Girl on the Train*'s events go through Hawkins' unreliable narrative style, a few unexpected facts are revealed gradually, and towards the end, the readers surprisingly realize that the unreliable character in the novel turns out to be the most reliable. This paper, therefore, explores the mental limitations of the fictional character Rachel Watson, and considers the narratological twist phenomenon of the unreliable narration in *The Girl on the Train*.

Keywords: self-blaming, unreliability, narration twits, *The Girl on the Train*, Paula Hawkins

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فقدان الذاكرة، التخيل وتحولات السرد في رواية *فتاة القطار* للكاتبة باولا هوكينز

الملخص:

      يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة عقلية رايتشل واتسون، السيدة البائسة المطلقة في الرواية الأكثر مبيعاً لعام ٢٠١٥، *فتاة القطار* للكاتبة البريطانية باولا هوكينز. رايتشل واتسون هي الشخصية النسائية، والراوية الرئيسة في الرواية. جسدت المؤلفة بطلة الرواية بوصفها سيدة تعاني من اضطرابات عقلية، بسبب لجوئها لعالم الخيال، وكذلك عدم تذكرها لكثير من الأحداث، وبهذا أصبح دور رايتشل باعتبارها راوية للأحداث غير موثوق، وأسبغ على أحداث الرواية سمة التحولات المفاجئة للسرد والتشويق أيضاً. أدى اتباع الكاتبة لهذا الأسلوب في السرد إلى انكشاف بعض الأحداث غير المتوقعة في الرواية. وباقتراب الرواية من نهايتها يستنتج القارئ أن شخصية رايتشل غير الموثوق بها في الرواية، هي عكس كل التوقعات. لذا يناقش الباحث ما يدور بداخل عقل رايتشل واتسون، وما نتج عنه من ظاهرة تحولات السرد في رواية *فتاة القطار* ٢٠١٥.

الكلمات المفتاحية: لوم الذات، عدم الثقة، تحولات السرد، فتاة القطار، باولا هوكينز

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Introduction:

Working as a journalist helped Paula Hawkins later as a novelist to found her interesting storytelling style, complicated topics and ambiguous arrangement of characters. *The Girl on the Train* is Hawkins' first psycho-thriller novel which is full of shocking twists and curiosity over the truth. *The Girl on the Train* has achieved great success upon its release in 2015, spending about sixteen weeks at the top of the *New York Times* bestseller's list. It has also been adapted into a successful American movie carrying the same name in 2016. The novel creates a conflict between memory, imagination and appearances on one hand, and what reality is on the other, so it becomes unexpected for the readers to fully have a clue of the events and the characters from the first pages.

Paula Hawkins chose Rachel Watson, the desperate unemployed alcoholic divorced woman, to be the main female figure and narrator of *The Girl on the Train*. Before Rachel's divorce from her husband Tom, she was an average married woman who dreamed of a happy marriage and a baby. Yet, her bareness had another say. Her inability to have a baby caused her psychological deterioration until her marriage was ruined. Then Tom had his own life with another wife Anna and their baby girl that Rachel hoped to be hers. Rachel sinks into depression further and lives in her imaginary world, and then she starts to be alcoholic and suffers from memory blackout.

After her divorce, the thirty-two-year-old Rachel lives with her generous friend Cathy from university. Besides, she was fired from work for her drinking habits. Yet, she pretends to still be employed commuting daily from Ashbury to London by train also to intrude on her ex-husband's house in the suburb and harass him and his second wife repeatedly to the extent that she once took their baby girl. All this made Rachel look like an unreliable failure. Moreover, on her aimless daily train rides, she looks through the windows to observe the people living in the suburb, and then imagine their lives and even give them imaginary names and identities, especially a married couple whom she watches

carefully. The climax of the novel takes place when Rachel discovers that the female whose name is Megan was missing and then found dead. On the day of Megan's disappearance, Rachel was drunk on one of her pedestrian incursions in the suburb, and then realized on the next day when she woke up with bruises all over her body that she may have witnessed something significant about Megan's missing, but she cannot remember what happened.

Rachel's inability to recall what happened that night makes many of the novel's characters suspects even Rachel herself. Hence, the readers become curious and begin to guess what happened and who is involved in Megan's case till they surprisingly find out by the end of the novel that Tom is Megan's murderer for having an affair with her and bearing his illegitimate child. E. May (2015) comments in her review of the novel: "This book is one unsettling little thriller and the best bit about it is that no one can be trusted". In other words, Rachel's blackout and her unreliability as a narrator create the mysterious and complex tone in the novel and prepare for the plot twists because if Rachel remembers then there would be no puzzle to solve.

Methodology

I chose *The Girl on the Train* (2015) by Paula Hawkins because it is a novel which is full of unexpected narration twists, sudden change of characters' roles and mysteries that May (2015) describes "exist just outside of what [the readers] see on the surface". Rachel speaks out on one of her train rides reflecting on the train's passengers: "I recognize them, and they probably recognize me. I don't know whether they see me, though, for what I really am" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 5). I examine in this paper how memory and imagination can become confused and how this affects the narration of the selected novel and the readers' reception of the events and characters. *The Girl on the Train* is a thriller novel, a genre that is defined as "a tense, exciting, tautly plotted and sometimes sensational type of novel […] in which action is swift and suspense continual" (Cuddon, 1977, pp. 914-915). The real events in the novel are blurred and the readers tend to mix them with Rachel's imagination and her confused memory.

"Narrative Unreliability in Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* as a Strategy of Reader Immersion" by Tetiana Grebeniuk in *American and British Studies Annual* is an essential reference for the study. In her study, Grebeniuk discusses the narratological phenomenon of unreliable narration in *The Girl on the Train* and the readers' reception. Grebeniuk displays various contemporary definitions of unreliable narration: "The phenomenon of unreliable narration has commanded great attention from contemporary narratologists" (Grebeniuk, 2018, p. 36). For example, she quotes: "I have called a narrator reliable when he speaks for or acts in accordance with the norms of the work [the implied author's norms], unreliable when he does not" (Booth, 1983, pp. 158-159). She also mentions other narratologists who agree with Booth's definition: "[a] narrator is unreliable when he or she offers an account of some event, person, thought, thing, or other object in the narrative world that deviates from the account the implied author would offer" (Phelan et al. 1999, p. 94). Grebeniuk's study also discusses the narratologist Nünning's (2005) elaboration of the previous definitions of unreliable narration by adding the readers' perceptions and interactions: "A narrator is regarded as unreliable […] on the distance that separates the narrator's view of the world from the reader's or critic's world-model and standards of normalcy" (Nünning, 2005, p. 95).

Grebeniuk states that Nünning considers unreliability of narration as an "interpretative strategy of text reading through which the reader resolves ambiguities and textual inconsistencies of the narration" (Grebeniuk, 2018, p. 37). Based on these premises, narratology studies of unreliable narration are based on text interpretation and the reader's doubt about the narrator's story on one hand and the properties of the fictional world, characters, characters' relationships and roles in the text on the other. Thus, as Margolin (2015) asserts, the author of the text shifts the reader's attention from *what* is being narrated to *how*, in other words, to the narration process and to the narrator and to the circumstances and the means of informing.

Grebeniuk also mentions in her study that the readers' reaction towards unreliable narration is divided into two categories: "When readers understand that a narrator's information can't be taken as the

truth: (1) They reject those words and, if possible, reconstruct a more satisfactory account; (2) they […] accept what the narrator says but then supplement the account" (Phelan et al. 1999, p. 94). Other narratologists, as Grebeniuk studies, compare reader's reception of the unreliable narrator with those of psychologists: "Reading the [unreliable] narrative of a mentally unstable narrator may have the effect of increasing the reader's sympathy, tolerance, and understanding, placing the reader in the position of a privileged 'psychologist'" (Bortolussi et al. 2003, p. 83). When the readers gradually resolve the narrative contradictions and secrets of an unreliable narration, as in *The Girl on the Train*, they can congratulate themselves as they finally become in "the know" area of the author.

I analyze the novel's main character and narrator, Rachel, to achieve this study. I study her circumstances and their effect on her personality and mentality. I also discuss in this paper that Rachel's unreliability as a character and narrator in the readers' view is due to her blackouts at times, imagination at others, and her tendency to lie on other occasions. She herself admits her unreliability as a character and narrator for the readers in her own words: "What I know from my own observations, I don't really know" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 147). The paper clarifies that Rachel's blackouts affect her ability, and thus the readers' ability to resolve important questions related to Megan's case, and also related to Rachel's past with Tom.

The paper proves that memory authenticity in *The Girl on the Train* is questionable especially with the intrusion of imagination. Memory is a process where "the non-real takes over […] concrete life" (Kalampalikis, 2007, p. 72). It is not a straightforward journey, and it "is less stable than the events it recollects, and knowledge of what happened in the past is always subject to selective retention, innocent amnesia, and tendentious reinterpretation" (Brow, 1990, p. 3). So, memory is not pure, as it can be reconstructed. Applying this on the novel, the researcher notes that Rachel's memories are not pure, but interrupted by drinking habits, imagination and intense events that disrupt her personality and make her narration vulnerable to questions and suspicions: "I don't know whether what I'm seeing, feeling is real or not, imagination or memory"

(Hawkins, 2015, p. 233). In her mind, there is no one certain story to tell and this shakes her authenticity and reliability as a character and narrator in the reader's perception.

I also depicted in the paper the unexpected changes in the novel due to the protagonist's sudden memory recovery, and hence, I compared the narration and the characters before and after Rachel's memory recovery like depicting which memories are Rachel's actual ones and which are manipulated and conceived by the supposedly charming Tom. I conclude in this study that Rachel's past with Tom is later revealed to be the clue in answering the ambiguities in the novel and it is Tom who turns out by the end of the novel to be the actual unreliable villain. Tom pushes Rachel into a process of self-blaming behavior through gaslighting, which Tracy (2012) defines as a manipulation process where the abuser repetitively corrupts the victim to the point where they distrust their memory and perception, leading, in *The Girl on the Train's* case, to narration twists and sudden change of characters' roles.

Discussion

Rachel experiences anxiety during her marital life doubled with a sense of loss after her divorce, leading her to a condition of displacement and denial of reality. Everyday she rides the train without any real purpose watching the same places and sceneries. Midway, the train passes by her once-upon-a time home with Tom, now belonging to Tom and his new wife Anna:

> That was my first home. Not my parents' place, not flat shared with another student, my first home. I can't bear to look at it. Well, I can, I do, I want to, I don't want to, I try not to. Everyday I tell myself not to look and every day I look. I can't help myself, even though there is nothing I want to see, even though anything I do see will hurt me. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 22)

She insists on looking at the house despite the torture it causes. These daily train trips engrave Rachel's displacement; it is a physical displacement that mirrors a psychological one in the form of her sense of loss, bitterness, uselessness, aimlessness and self-blame.

Rachel's prolonged depression makes her try to escape reality through her overactive imagination and shoddy memory. The readers have to follow the main narrator's unreliable narration with all her imagination intrudes, memory deception and guesses. This causes many misunderstandings for the readers and creates the quest for reality out of her imagination and blackout problematic. For example, on her train trips, Rachel saw few torn clothes on the railway and immediately she began assuming to whom they belonged to and how they were abandoned there, such as being thrown there as trash or left by workers or something more mysterious:

> I read somewhere that a train can rip the clothes right off you when it hits. It's not that unusual, death by train. Two to three hundred a year, they say, so at least one every couple of days […] I look carefully, as the train rolls slowly past, for blood on the clothes, but I can't see any. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 21)

Rachel admits that she can create imaginative stories around trivial details like the previous one, and that her mother and ex-husband know that trait about her: "My mother used to tell me that I had an overactive imagination; Tom said that too. I can't help it; I catch sight of these discarded scraps, a dirty T-shirt or a lonesome shoe, and all I can think of is the other shoe, and the feet fitted into them" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 15). At the beginning of the novel, such created assumptions launch doubts in the readers' minds about the authenticity of anything Rachel will ever narrate.

Rachel's overactive imagination strikes more vividly by calling the inhabitants of house fifteen on Blenheim Road, whom she observes daily from the train, "Jess" and "Jason". The readers believe for a while that these are their real names before revealing that she has no idea who these people are, which intensifies her unreliability for the readers: "I don't know their names either, so I had to name them myself. Jason, because he's handsome in a British film star kind of way […] And Jess just goes with Jason, and it goes with her" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 26). Rachel does not only fabricate their names, but their everyday talking, the depth of their love and their whole life from morning time to bed time in her mind:

> He's a doctor, I think […] He's constantly on call, a bag packed on top of the wardrobe […] Jess with her bold prints […] and her beauty, her attitude, works in the fashion industry. Or perhaps in the music business, or in advertising- she might be a stylist or a photographer. She's a good painter too […] I can see her now, in the spare room upstairs, music blaring, window open, a brush in her hand. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 25)

Rachel assumed that "Jess" and "Jason" are "the perfect, golden couple" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 19) that she dreamed of but could not be with Tom: "They're what I lost; they are everything I want to be" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 26). In other words, Rachel searches for her lost perfect life in the unknown couple and thinks that what she imagines about them from her place in the far passing train is real. She enjoys imagining them the way she wants, and hence, the readers imagine the couple the way she does till they go through one of the plot twists and discover the opposite. Rachel saw her Jess with a man other than Jason, and soon she hears about the missing of the woman whose real name turns out to be Megan.

Rachel's feature of her inability to recall events forms another source of suspicion. It leads the other characters, the readers and even Rachel herself to constantly doubt and underestimate her narration and accounts especially of the night of Megan's disappearance: "Something happened, something bad. There was an argument. Voices were raised. Fist? I don't know, I don't remember. I went to the pub, I got on the train, I was at the station. I was on the street. Blenheim Road. I went to Blenheim Road" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 61). On other occasions, Rachel intentionally suppresses blackout memories, especially those related to her marriage, out of her fear that if she regains them through hypnotherapy, she will also regain the shameful and awful events she assumes she has committed. So, to avoid such undesirable feelings, she suppresses her blackout memories. On the other hand, the readers rely on Rachel as the main narrator to present precise narrative events. Yet, her inability to do so complicates the novel's plot and makes it more mysterious and adventurous. The readers will eventually find out that Hawkins' aim of featuring Rachel is to develop the novel's actions.

According to Grebeniuk, sympathy is what colors the readers' emotional immersion at the primary stages of the novel towards Rachel due to her childlessness, Tom's adultery, her divorce and her depression. Yet, sympathetic feelings change into suspicion and disapproval the moment Rachel claims her self-blaming confessions after her harassing night calls to her ex-husband and his new family:

> It's not the worst thing I've ever done, it's not as if I fell over in public, or yelled at a stranger in the street. It's not as if I humiliated my husband at a summer barbecue by shouting abuse at the wife of one of his friends. It's not as if we got into a fight one night at home and I went for him with a golf club, taking a chunk out of the plaster in the hall way outside the bedroom. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 30)

Rachel painted a scandalous picture of herself. She keeps on harassing Tom and Anna with phone calls all day and night during which she screams, cries and insults: "There's no one I want to talk to except for Tom. The call log on my phone says I rang four times at 11.02, 11.12, 11.54, 12.09 […] I remember now, I was crying. I told him that I still loved him that I always would" (Hawkins, 2015, pp. 29-30). This action stems from her constant blame of herself for being the cause of ruining her marital life: "Maybe that was the moment when things started to go wrong […] when I imagined us no longer a couple, but a family […] was it then that Tom started to look at me differently […] After all he gave up for me […] I let him think that he wasn't enough" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 77). She describes one of their quarrels about the matter from her perspective: "We had a horrible fight about it. I don't remember the details because I'd been drinking all afternoon, working myself up to confront him about it, so when I did, it was in the worst possible way" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 253). In her opinion, she failed to be a mother as she failed to be a wife.

Rachel also tends to lie, like when she introduces herself to Scott, Megan's husband, as her friend to discover more details about the couple's life and the reason for Megan's tragedy. The same happened with Megan's psychiatrist, in addition to her lying to Cathy about having a job and also lying to her ex-boss once in a café about waiting there for a job interview. These shameful facts about Rachel's life motivate the

readers to adopt a negative attitude towards her, as she herself admits: "I am no longer desirable […] It's as if people can see the damage written all over me" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 27). Thus, she starts to think of herself as worthless, drinks more, and becomes rude with others.

The readers of *The Girl on the Train* experience complex feelings towards the protagonist connected to their knowledge at every different stage of the reading process. A loss of confidence in her narration and accounts becomes exacerbated due to their awareness of her amnesia and imagination among the other mentioned instabilities: tendency to lie, self-blaming and low self-esteem. As a result, readers consequently search for clues themselves during the course of untangling the narration of the unreliable protagonist especially that they can estimate future adventures in the novel's actions connected with Rachel's instability.

Yet, towards the end of the events, Hawkins causes a shock to her readers by her sudden twist of events represented by Rachel's sudden memory recovery and thus retaining her reliability as a character and as a narrator. The process towards the end starts first when one of the detectives of Megan's case made a diagnosis of Rachel's state: "your behavior suggests that […] you are unwilling to move on, that you refuse to accept that your ex has a new family" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 118). The second step is when another diagnosis is given by Megan's therapist who realizes Rachel's hidden wish to punish herself for being so miserable. The detective and the therapist diagnoses of Rachel's psychological state give the reader the feeling of being, as Bortolussi and Dixon explained, "a privileged psychologist". Based on the previous events and narration, the readers can realize that Hawkins implicitly gives them the chance to guess the same conclusion of Rachel's psychological state.

Since then, Rachel begins to regain her self-confidence trying to re-consider her past life and to regard her suppressed doubts about Tom. The full recovery of Rachel and her reliability are merged at the moment of her realization that it was Tom who convinced her, and thus the readers, of her unreliability:

> Everything is a lie. I didn't imagine him hitting me. I didn't imagine him walking away from me quickly, his fists clenched.

> I saw him turn, shout. I saw him walking down the road with a woman, I saw him getting into the car with her. I didn't imagine it. And I realize then that it's all very simple. I do remember, it's just that I had confused two memories. I'd inserted the image of Anna, walking away from me in her blue dress, into another scenario: Tom and a woman getting into a car. Because of course that woman wasn't wearing a blue dress, she was wearing jeans and a red t-shirt. She was Megan. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 348)

One day, Rachel woke up remembering everything and accurately tangling the chain of events. It is Tom who hit her the night of Megan's murder and the woman next to him in the car was Megan and not Anna as Rachel thought. The accumulation of memories about Tom is crucial for Rachel to find out that Tom in her blackout-affected mind is completely different from the real Tom; the reality that she rejects for long to accept and to remember.

Throughout the novel, Rachel displays fleeting worlds for herself and the readers that provide deceptive representations of her life with Tom and his character. Yet, towards the end of the novel, Rachel regained her memories, and in turn, the readers shockingly discover Tom to be an abusive husband and Megan's killer. When her recollections become complete, a hundred and fifty pages later towards the end of the novel, she becomes able to solve the mystery. As soon as Rachel remembers and concludes that Tom is the murderer of Megan and their unborn baby, she decides to face him and tell Anna. Tom becomes the answer to all the novel's mystery and its entanglement of events.

Finding out that her initial understanding of events was manipulated by Tom, readers re-access Rachel's past and re-arrange their understanding of events as a kind of backtracking to make sense of the connection between the latter and the former. By making this kind of connection, readers realize that Tom uses a gaslighting process to dominate and devalue Rachel. Applying Tracy's mentioned definition of gaslighting, Tom corrupts Rachel's memories and state of mind when she is intoxicated to present Rachel as the abuser and Tom as the victim. He

uses gaslighting to blame Rachel as abusive and hysterical. On her part, Rachel only used to apologize, accepting everything as her fault, as Tom says: "After a while I learned that […] you don't ask what happened, you just say that you're sorry: you're sorry for what you did and who you are and you're never, ever going to behave like that again" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 336). Because of this, Rachel, as Connell (2005) describes women facing domestic violence, began to doubt herself and accept Tom's definition of her as incompetent and helpless.

Tom cleverly blames Rachel for everything: "'Do you have any idea how boring you become, Rachel? How ugly? Too sad to get out of bed in the morning […] It's no wonder I lost patience, is it? […] You've no one to blame but yourself" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 380). He continues humiliating and devaluing Rachel:

> 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 to you, cringing and wagging their tails. Begging. Hoping that this time it'll be different, 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. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 400)

The reason for Rachel's passivity is that the victims of gaslighting believe that they are always wrong, so they cannot speak or ask something for their benefit.

The following quotation is an example of how Tom always tries to convince Rachel when she is not completely conscious with things that never happened:

> I remembered that so clearly, but it wasn't true. I knew it wasn't true the next morning when Tom turned his back on me when I tried to speak to him. I know it isn't true because he told me how disappointed and embarrassed, he was, that I'd accused Clara of flirting with him, that I'd been hysterical and abusive. (Hawkins, 2015, p. 347)

He manipulates her memory by falsely accusing her of being abusive towards his boss' wife who is considered Tom's superior, and thus

accusing her of causing his embarrassment. He aims at blaming Rachel for things she has never done to create a wrong image of herself.

Rachel turns out to be a Tom-made psycho. Tom wrongly convinces her that their divorce was her fault for her abusive behavior towards him. This makes Rachel keep revolving in Tom's circle to get his forgiveness. She also delves into a permanent mood of oppression, negligence, self-blaming and self-rejection: "I felt isolated in my misery […] women are still only really valued for two things – their looks and their role as mothers. I'm not beautiful, and I can't have kids, so what does that make me? Worthless" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 112). Tom does not only deceive Rachel but also the readers, as Rachel realizes: "'You lied to me,' […] 'You told me everything was my fault, You made me believe that I was worthless. You watched me suffer, you---'" (Hawkins, 2015, p. 380). This paves the way for the narration twists and the change of roles.

Throughout the novel, Rachel is considered to be the unreliable character and narrator, but Tom turns out to be the biggest liar in *The Girl on the Train*. In this light, the woman who appeared to be a liar, a failure and the source of all trouble, becomes the one who seeks the truth and gives the readers the clue to the novel's mystery:

> works with unreliable narration contain disclosures of unreliable facts, locations of truth hidden under the cover of narration, as well as evidence of the possible recuperation of reliability by the narrator. Thus, within the process of reading an unreliable narrative text, the recipient's satisfaction is met only by conflict resolution, but by encountering insights into exactly how and why the real course of events has been distorted within the narrator's mind. (Grebeniuk, 2018, p. 47)

That unexpected twist of events is essential for psychological thriller, and this would not have been achieved without Rachel's memory blackout and her later psychic recovery and their reflection on the novel's narration.

Conclusion

The paper studies Rachel in *The Girl on the Train* as an unreliable character and narrator, and how this affects the novel's narratology. Rachel's unreliability, as explained, emerges from several reasons: her amnesia, which make her memories "like a picture out of focus" or "remembering a dream" (Goodwin et al, 1969, 1034), mixing the real and the imaginative world, lying for no reason, and her low self-esteem that makes her believe others', especially Tom's, view of the world and herself. After Megan's murder, Rachel's unreliability complicates the mystery for the readers and herself paving the way for internal and external conflicts, narration twists and unexpected switch of roles which define *The Girl on the Train* as a psychological thriller.

The novel ends with Rachel's final innocence and her desire to catch the morning train to start a new life. The unexpected turn of events also motivates an unexpected collaboration between the past enemies: Rachel and Anna. As for Tom, he ends up as the chronic liar and the unreliable disturbed individual in the novel. So, by the end of *The Girl on the Train*, the readers realize that the mystery is more than their suspicion towards Rachel's narration and character as drunken woman's aberrations. The paper concludes that the reader's perception of a work with unreliable narration is complicated. When the readers of *The Girl on the Train* solve the mystery, they move to "the know" area, and they achieve both intellectual satisfaction due to the solution of Megan's case and emotional satisfaction due to the protagonist's final recovery of her psyche and her reliability.

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