

The Portrayal of the Inner Self in Alex Michaelides's *The Silent Patient*, AJ Finn's *The Woman in the Window*, and Paula Hawkins's *The Girl on the Train*

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Abstract

Psychological realism is a literary theory in fiction that focuses on the inner thoughts and motivations of the characters. This thesis investigates the inner self in Alex Michaelides's *The Silent Patient* (2019), AJ Finn's *The Woman in the Window* (2018), and Paula Hawkins' *The Girl on the Train* (2015). This thesis aims to explore the inner self as well as the depiction of the interior moral and ethical dilemmas faced by the characters and the reasons that drive them in their actions. In addition, it is the purpose of this thesis to identify and apply the features of psychological realism, such as characters' thoughts and motivations, the portrayal of characters' minds and personalities, the depiction of the characters' psychological, the stream of consciousnesses and its relationship with such a novel, and the types of flashbacks. These literary works belong to the genre of psychological thrillers. The thesis found that the theme of the three novels revolves around abandonment. The analysis and comparisons among these works show a common theme of abandonment and depression. The findings reveal that inner conflicts, familial problems, heart wounds, and tragic memories drive the characters to become careless killers, cheaters, and depressed individuals with psychological problems. The similarities amongst the three literary works are manifested in loneliness, dissatisfaction, familial problems, and betrayal. The thesis concludes that the elements of psychology vary among the three literary works.

Keywords: psychological realism, the inner self, *The Silent Patient*, *The Woman in the Window*, *The Girl on the Train*