



Psychology of Women at Maternity in Emma Donoghue's *The Pull of the Stars*

¹Ashika. J, ² Dr. Manju Kumari. K

¹M. A. English Literature, Department of English SF (UG&PG), Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

²Assistant Professor, Department of English S.F (UG&PG), Nirmala College for Women, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu, India.

ABSTRACT:

Literature is the medium for writing which helps to explicit our feeling. Throughout history the human race has gone through a lot of crisis and natural calamity. These calamities are referred in work of literature which is been termed as pandemic literature. Emma Donoghue an Irish-Canadian novelist, literary historian. She has here own style of writing, where she takes the character in the novel. In the novel *The Pull of the Stars*, Emma Donoghue says about the Spanish influenza that struck Dublin in 1918 and how it affected maternity women. This paper examines the psychology of women during their maternity at the time of Spanish influenza.

Keywords: Maternity women, psychology, stillbirth, Spanish flu.

Spanish flu afflicted about half the world's population between 1918 to 1919. The name Spanish flu came because it was undoubtful that the flue came from Spain. The virus may have started in the United States or France, but Spain was neutral in World War I and did not suppress its news. People all around the world was dying, but the countries involved in World War I were censoring the news. Spanish flu was caused by H1N1 influenza A virus. The primary source for this virus was from a bird.

Many people all over the world perished from pneumonia and other respiratory ailments. This virus was been transmitted through air so that it will easily affect other people. There was no method to detect the flu, no medicine to treat the patients instead there were some common measure which they followed: Isolation, washing your hands, wearing mask and gloves and so on. This flu was mainly affected in United States.

The first outbreak was on March 1918, Queenstown, Harbour, Cork. By the early summer of 1918, the flu had an escalation to Ireland. The strange sickness outbreak was reported in Belfast on June 10 it primarily affected the female workers and the troops. Spanish flu is said to be the second deadliest pandemic in human history after the Black Death plague of 1346-1353.

Flu infected pregnant women have a higher risk of experiencing issues like preterm labor and premature birth that pregnant women who don't have the illness. The women may also have the consequence of chest infection or inflammation of the brain. The flu is been treated for the pregnant women by giving Antiviral medicine so that it can kill the virus.

Stillbirth is the loss of child during or after pregnancy. A birth that ought to have been joyful but ends in a tragic demise. It has immediate or long-term psychological effect. The vexation experience of stillbirth which can lead to psychological problem such as anxiety and depression. For women who have experienced loss, social support will be very helpful for their betterment of future. According to recent study published in the British Journal of Psychiatry, many women who have gone through the pain of stillbirth will be susceptible to Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) during the following pregnancy.

Jay Neugeboren in his famous quote says that 'A wife who loses a husband is called a widow. A husband who loses a wife is called as widower. A child who loses his parents is called as orphan. There is no word for a parent who loses a child. That's how awful the loss is'.

The novel *The Pull of the Stars* was narrated by the protagonist Julia who has been working as a midwife in a Roman Catholic hospital which did not have many workers. Julia was working in a Maternity fever ward, where she had three patients: Eileen Devine, Ita Noonan, Delia Garrett. Mrs. Devine fell into coma and passed away. Ita Noonan was a delirious woman. Delia Garrett was a very bold person but due to stillbirth she was affected psychologically.

Delia Garrett as soon as she comes to conscious she is looking for her daughter's face. But unfortunately, the baby is died. While Julia told this, she raised her voice hoarsely, asking what happened to my daughter. For consoling Garrett, she says "she's gone to the Angel plot" (105). Delia Garrett emotion was not been able to be controlled. "Delia Garrett's round cheeks were carved with salty lines"(106).

Delia Garrett was also thinking about her family mainly about her husband. The psychology of families is like the siblings may need to deal with their own emotions and their parents find some balance as the family tires to adjust to the loss, parents may need to deal with their own emotions as they find some anxiety, fear and excessive protection. According to the global research Nigerian women are been mostly affected by this problem. Delia Garrett, was unable to speak or even eat due to her intense frustration over the death of her child. "Delia Garrett had slid halfway down the pillows, her tea cooling on the little cabinet beside her, a biscuit dissolving in the saucer" (111).

After the incident she did not even mind the person who is coming to console her or pray for her. Father Dominic comes to visit her and says “Mrs. Garrett, I’m standing in for my church of Ireland colleague, a he’s under the weather, if you have no objection” (111).

But Delia Garrett was unwilling to speak to anyone because of her frustration. She desires solitude. Her response to father Dominic was “Her closed eyelids didn’t even flicker. Asleep, I wondered, or ignoring him?” (111).

For every parent, pregnancy is a miracle. There will be psychological changes throughout pregnancy, such as frequent mood swings, anxiety and weariness. Due to the loss of her child, Delia Garrett has been impacted by various types of psychology in this novel. Mother who had stillbirth frequently suffer from sadness and anxiety. Delia Garrett psych was affected due to the loss. She was extremely distraught but subsequently realized that she had a duty to look after her family.

Conclusively, Emma Donoghue in her novel *The Pull of the Stars* shows the psychology of Delia Garrett. She also realizes each part of the life is very challenging, being a woman, he has to face all those challenges.

References:

- Donoghue, Emma. *The Pull of the Stars*. 2020.
- “fetal death after pandemic influenza virus”. Google Scholar. Aug 2022.
- “Pregnant after a stillbirth or late term loss”. Tommy’s together, for every baby. Aug 2022.
- “Spanish Flu: what is it, cause, symptoms and pandemic”. Cleveland clinic. Aug 2022.