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## The Role of Social Support in Character Transformation: A Study of Gail Honeyman's *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*

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### ABSTRACT

Social support is a crucial pillar in psychological recovery and an individual's ability to establish social interactions. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* illustrates how forms of social support can catalyze changes in the main character's behaviour and mental health. However, previous research on Taylor's classifications of social support in novels remains very limited. The objective of this research was to identify and analyze the reflection of the three types of social support in the novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman and describe the role of each in plot and character development. The approach in this study is Genetic Structuralism intergrated with Social Support Theory. Data were collected in the form of dialog quotations, narratives, and descriptions that reflected social support, then classified according to Taylor's theory. The findings of the study showed that emotional support was most prominent, followed by informational support and instrumental support. Emotional support provides Eleanor with the empathy and understanding needed to rebuild her sense of self, while informational and informational and instrumental supports offer practical guidance and tangible assistance that empower her recovery. Together, these social supports drive Eleanor's healing and willingness to engage socially. The structuralist genetic approach reveals the author's personal perspectives on loneliness and kindness that emerge as foundational themes, illustrating how interpersonal connections are essential for personal transformation and social reintegration. This study highlights how literature reflects psychological realities and suggests that portraying social support can deepen understanding in both literary and psychological fields, encouraging writers to emphasize everyday kindness in character recovery.

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## INTRODUCTION

Social support defined as the unintentional or intentional helpful actions of others, including interpersonal behaviors among diverse employees that enhance individual psychological or behavioral effectiveness. This factor can include guidance, the provision of emotional support, collaboration, and the teaching of social skill structures. (Gray et al. in Wu et al, 2019) In accordance with the research conducted by Hafferan & Boniwell (2011) in Mufidah (2017), social support has been found to exert an influence on the stability of individual behavior. Johnson & Johnson (1991) in Aziz (2016) posited that social support originates from significant individuals in an individual's life. This perspective aligns with the assertion by Sarafino (1994), as cited by Sepfitri (2011), that social support can be derived from individuals within an individual's immediate social circle, including family members, close friends, or colleagues. According to Sarafino (1994), the concept of social support encompasses various forms, including emotional support, esteem support, instrumental support, information support, and network support. Social support in this study is used Shelley E. Taylor's social support theory. According to Taylor (2011) taxonomies of social support have generally classified support into a number of specific forms. These include informational support, instrumental support and emotional support.

Literary works are essentially a reflection of social reality. (Ali & Husain, 2023) The presence of social support is evident in one of the literary works that will be the subject of the researcher's study. *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* is the very first novel written by Gail Honeyman and publicly released in 2017. It is a literary work that is not a typical romance with a cliched love story. Instead, it tells the story of the protagonist. Sabudu (2020) points out that literature is a reflection of the social and cultural phenomena experienced by society is they personal or social. It is the responsibility of the literary text to present these phenomena in engaging way. This novel explores a variety of themes, including but not limited to loneliness, trauma, prejudice, recovery, small acts of kindness, and friendship. The narrative follows the protagonist, a woman struggling with social discomfort and reclusiveness who inhabits a position in an office in Glasgow, Scotland. Her social awkwardness is evident, and she is occasionally perceived as exhibiting antisocial tendencies. The life of Eleanor Oliphant, who is socially awkward and isolated from the outside world and society, begins to change when the characters around her provide social support.

A significant illustration of social support in the novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* occurs when the protagonist Eleanor Oliphant encounters Raymond. Eleanor world begins to change when she befriends her new coworker, Raymond. She has been living a solitary existence and avoiding social situations ever since. However, after meeting Raymond, Eleanor experiences what it's like to interact with people without feeling uncomfortable and receives sincere attention for the small things she does, which makes her feel safe and at ease. Together, they assist elderly man named Sammy, which opens Eleanor up to new friendships and experiences. As time progressed, Raymond's contributions to Eleanor's well-being and provision of social support were pronounced. However, there is also social support from a multitude of other characters in the novel as well.

In an interview with the Costa Book Awards in 2018, Honeyman stated that the inspiration for creating the characters and story in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* came after reading a newspaper article about loneliness. The article, which was an interview with a young woman, was unusual to Honeyman. In the article, the young woman stated that she would often come home from work on a Friday night and wouldn't speak to anyone until she went back to work on Monday morning. This behavior was particularly noteworthy to her, as she noted that she seldom encountered such a viewpoint from a young individual. It stood in contrast to the commonly held belief among people in their twenties that life is predominantly characterized by enjoyment, as indicated by activities such as frequent socializing and nighttime revelry. As previously stated, the novel was composed in the 2010s, a period during which society exhibited a heightened level of receptivity to discourse concerning mental health, historical trauma, and the significance of interpersonal relationships.

Even though numerous studies have examined the protagonist in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, there remains a notable lack of research specifically addressing the social support provided to Eleanor throughout the narrative. Most existing analyses primarily focus on the psychological trauma she endures, often overlooking the crucial role of interpersonal support in her recovery. For instance, Tiansyah et al. (2021), in their article *The Impact of Psychological Trauma on the Main Character in the Novel Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine by Gail Honeyman*, explore how Eleanor's traumatic experiences particularly the house fire deliberately set by her biological mother profoundly shape her personality and life. Similarly, Pratiwi (2023), in her thesis *Betrayal Trauma of Eleanor in Honeyman's Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, delves into the characterization of Eleanor's trauma and its resolution, highlighting how her struggles are depicted through both direct and indirect means, including her deteriorating mental health and isolated lifestyle. The narrative's resolution, as Pratiwi notes, begins with Raymond encouraging Eleanor to seek therapy, ultimately leading to her recovery under the guidance of Dr. Temple. In addition, Putranti (2023), in her research *Defense Mechanism Against Childhood Trauma of the Main Character in Gail Honeyman's Novel Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, investigates how Eleanor copes with her past trauma through psychological defense mechanisms, drawing on Freudian theory. Collectively, these studies emphasize the theme of trauma while frequently neglecting the equally significant theme of social support, which plays a pivotal role in Eleanor's journey toward healing. However, there has hardly ever been any discussion of the main character's social support.

This research seeks to address the gaps identified in the three previous studies by examining how social support influences the personality development and mental health of the main character in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*. By focusing on the interactions between Eleanor and the characters around her, the study reveals the significant role social support plays in her emotional healing and personal growth. Through a close analysis of these dynamics, the research highlights how Gail Honeyman not only portrays Eleanor's trauma but also offers a narrative of recovery made possible

through meaningful human connection. This approach provides fresh insight into how the novel critiques and reflects the transformative power of social support in the face of emotional and psychological struggles. The themes of trauma, mental health, social isolation, and loneliness resonate deeply with contemporary readers, as they mirror universal human experiences. Literature, as a medium, often reflects and critiques social realities, and by exploring how *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* represents these issues, readers can gain a deeper understanding of the profound impact they have on both individuals and society.

The researcher chose this topic because they saw that in contemporary society, social awareness began to decline, began to lack social interaction, for example, people began to become more individualized and more focused on technology, especially gadgets. So that sometimes they no longer care about the people around them. As mental health issues become more prevalent, many people are unaware of the existence of these conditions. However, with knowledge and recognition of these issues, we can provide help, even with minimal or small support, to those affected. The novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman was chosen by the researcher because of its interesting story with a unique characterization of the main character: Eleanor Oliphant, she is described as having a mental disorder as a result of trauma.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This research used close reading methodology. Close reading is defined as the careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of a text. A thorough examination of the text reveals an emphasis on the specific over the general, achieved through meticulous scrutiny of individual words, the syntax, and the sequence in which ideas are articulated. This meticulous analysis also uncovers formal structures. (Snow & O'Connor in Tarumingkeng et al., 2024) Close reading is recognized as a foundational method in literary research. Close reading was part of literary practices long before literary studies included critical methodological discussions of that practice. These discussions began in the 1920s. Its practice involves a meticulous and comprehensive examination of the text, with an acute awareness of linguistic nuances, the use of imagery, the employment of symbolism, and other literary devices. Close reading is characterized by three methodological stages: determining the text's readability and the purpose of reading, exploring the text, and interpreting its meaning. (Ohrvik, A., 2024; Wajiran, S.S., 2024)

This research also used a genetic structuralism approach that is reinforced by Social Support theory by Shelley E. Taylor (2011). The genetic structuralism approach was developed by Lucien Goldman, an approach to literature that emphasizes the analysis of the intrinsic elements and the sociology of literature related to the background and worldview of the author. (Azizah, 2022) The genetic structuralism approach allows the researcher to dissect not only the intrinsic element within the text but also to analyze the social and historical context, and the theory of social support helps to understand how these elements contribute to the creation of types of social support in the narrative. Genetics structuralism and social Support work together as a framework for this research to help reveal how social support portrays in the novel. With this method, the research is able to answer critical questions about social support.

### Data Collection

The main data of this research is the novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. This novel was chosen because it provides a compelling illustration of the significance of social support. The novel features a variety of characters that offer depictions of support that are crucial to the development of the main character. The secondary data from this research is the theory of social support by Shelley E. Taylor (2011). This theory is used to reveal how social support is provided to the main character through three types: informational support, instrumental support, and emotional support. Through these types, the researcher can examine which type is provided most frequently and which type has the most influence. Furthermore, the genetic structuralist approach enables the researcher to perceive the elements of the novel as an interrelated structure and also social structure-based worldview of the author. By employing this approach, the researcher can identify patterns or systems in the social support exhibited in the novel. These systems may include the interactions between the main character and other characters, as well as the manner in which dialogue and narrative structure demonstrate the social support provided to the main character.

## Data Analysis

The data analysis in this research centers on the role of supporting characters in providing social support to the main character, Eleanor Oliphant in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. Using a genetic structuralism approach, the study examines how interactions between Eleanor and characters such as Raymond, Laura, Sammy, and her therapist Maria Temple form a structured system that reflects recurring patterns of support. This approach enables a deeper understanding of how the narrative element; dialogue, character actions, and emotional exchanges are interconnected to convey empathy, care, and assistance. Key interactions are collected and analyzed to uncover how these characters express concern and offer help, both emotionally and practically. The research specifically focuses on identifying forms of social support, including informational, instrumental, and emotional support, through the dialogue and behavior of supporting characters. By analyzing how these characters ask questions, offer advice, and perform acts of kindness, the study explores how support is constructed within the story's narrative structure. From this perspective, the research not only identifies significant patterns of interaction but also reveals how the novel portrays Eleanor's journey toward healing and connection through the empathetic actions and words of those around her.

## FINDINGS

The researcher presented what have been found from novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman. From the three types of social support include informational support, instrumental support, and emotional support that provide of the several supporting characters in the novel. The data found by the researcher is explained as follows:

### Informational Support

Taylor (2011) stated that informational support as when one person assist another in understanding more about a stressful occurrence and determining what resources and coping method may be required to with it. Information support is defined as the provision of beneficial information, including but not limited to advice, suggestions, directions, reminders, and responses to the main character's question. For instance, an individual experiencing health concerns can access information and counsel from individuals in their social network, which can subsequently inform their decision regarding the pursuit of professional medical care. In the following quotations, the supporting characters who provide informational support to Eleanor are Raymond and Dr. Temple. In this form of social support, the following quotations are classified according to the type of quotations: suggestions, reminders, directions, and guidance.

### Suggestions

The suggestions here contain quotations that show infomational support provided by giving suggestions, also containing bits of advice to help the main character deal with problems and find solutions to the problems faced. Relevant quotations include the following:

*"Try me," he said. He looked at me, and I looked at him. "OK, if not me then try someone else. A counselor, a therapist..."* (Honeyman, 2017: 251).

In this quotation, Raymond provides advice and suggestions that can help Eleanor deal with the difficulties or problems she is facing. In this context the problem reffers to the incident in which Eleanor tried to take her own life in her house. This occurred subseqent to her exposure to dry ice during a concert, which triggered her childhood trauma related to fire. Fortunately, Raymond intervened and provided her with assistance. The phrase "Try me" shows that Raymond is ready to provide help. This shows the consistency of Raymond's role as a supporter. Morover, it has been demonstrated tha he is the first and most supportive character to Eleanor. However, if Eleanor perceives a lack of readiness or discomfort, Raymond offers an alternative option, such as a counselor or therapist. Informational support in this case is crucial as Raymond not only shows concern, but also provides a concrete alternative for Eleanor to seek more professional help. By suggesting a counselor or therapist, Raymond helps Eleanor see options that she might not have previously considered. However, the continuation of the dialogue in the novel Eleanor initially shows an attitude of rejection towards Raymond advice and suggestion.

She does not accept and thinks Raymond said something that is quite normal. This reaction can be attributed to a perception that the recipient's needs are being adequately met by the provider of the social support. The aforementioned quotation further illustrates the novel's theme of recovery from trauma, which Eleanor begins to open up about. To facilitate her recovery, Eleanor must confront her past. This quotation, therefore, functions as a symbol of hope, representing Eleanor's journey towards recovery and eventual healing.

Gail Honeyman, the novel's author, chose to include such advice as part of a narrative that illustrates the importance of social and professional support in the healing process of individuals experiencing trauma and loneliness. In an interview with The Guardian, Gail Honeyman stated that she wanted to move away from the narrative of the female protagonist being portrayed as a victim, and instead show the healing process through realistic and warm relationships. In this sense, Raymond serves as a symbol of a simple yet meaningful form of social support, reflecting often overlooked societal values such as empathy, patience, and selfless care.

The advice to seek professional help reflects the reality that sometimes support from friends or family alone is not enough to overcome deep mental issues. It also highlights the importance of addressing the stigma surrounding mental health and encouraging individuals to seek help when necessary. Honeyman utilizes the quotation to underscore pivotal themes in the novel, including the significance of human connection, the act of courageously self-disclosing, and the validation of seeking professional assistance as a crucial component of the healing process.

At the time of the novel's publication in 2017, mental health issues were beginning to receive greater attention in the United Kingdom, yet there was still a stigma attached to those who sought professional help. By including advice on seeking professional help in her story, Honeyman contributes to efforts to reduce such stigma and encourage open conversations about the importance of mental health.

*"Will you think about going to the doctor, at least? Wouldn't do any harm, would it?"  
I nodded. Again, he was being logical, and you can't argue with logic." (Honeyman, 2017: 253)*

The quotation above illustrates how Raymond provides Eleanor with considerate informational support. In this conversation, Raymond shows rational thinking by advising Eleanor to consult a medical professional, emphasizing that it would not be harmful to do so. He gives advice based on logic and practical considerations, which might help Eleanor feel calmer or understand her situation more clearly. This guidance is also emotional and provides Eleanor with a perspective that can facilitate more optimal decision-making. Raymond invites Eleanor to look at the problem from a more objective point of view and perhaps lead to more concrete problem solving. Eleanor's response to Raymond's logic is also seen in this quotation which shows a proven contribution as Eleanor nods her head, indicating that she finds the advice reasonable and worth considering.

In the above quotation, Gail Honeyman highlights the importance of mental health support and the stigma attached to seeking medical or psychological help in contemporary British society. With Eleanor's response of logical assent, Honeyman wants to illustrate how difficult it is for someone who has experienced trauma and isolation to acknowledge the need for help, even when the advice is very reasonable and caring. Eleanor is a very isolated character who is used to suppressing her feelings, so she tends to respond to advice with logic rather than emotion. This attitude reflects the British culture of the time in which the novel was written, where talking about mental problems or seeking medical help for psychological issues was still often considered taboo or shameful, as Honeyman also describes in the novel that loneliness and psychological problems were "new diseases" that were shameful and rarely talked about openly. By presenting Raymond's simple and natural advice, as well as Eleanor's stiff yet accepting response, Honeyman aims to normalize the conversation around mental health and emphasize that seeking help is a logical and healthy step, not something to be avoided or hidden. The novel was born amidst growing public awareness in the UK about the dangers of loneliness and the importance of social support and access to mental health services, as reflected in media reports and public discussions of the time. Honeyman consciously uses this dynamic to invite readers to reflect on their attitudes towards mental health and the importance of empathy and logic in supporting people who are struggling with personal issues.

*“OK,” she said patiently. “If it’s all right with you, to finish up, I’d like to suggest that we try something a bit different. It’s called the empty-chair exercise,” she said. I folded my arms and stared at her.*” (Honeyman, 2017: 265)

This piece of dialogue occurs in Eleanor's consultation session with Dr. Temple, a psychotherapist. Dr. Temple offers informational support to Eleanor in a patient and understanding way. By proposing the "empty chair exercise," Dr. Temple is not only giving advice, but also inviting Eleanor to try something different, which might help in her thought process or problem solving. Although Eleanor did not appear to show immediate enthusiasm or agreement by crossing her arms and looking at Dr. Temple, this showed that Dr. Temple respected Eleanor's choice to respond in the way she chose. Dr. Temple's informational support was not judgmental or imposing, but rather offered a gentler and more considerate alternative. This shows that Dr. Temple understands the importance of providing information or advice that allows Eleanor to take her own steps, by providing guidance that is not intimidating or requires direct action.

Gail Honeyman wrote this novel with the aim of realistically depicting the trauma recovery journey and the importance of social relationships in the process. The quotation about the "empty-chair exercise" reflects the psychotherapeutic approach that Dr. Temple uses to help Eleanor confront and uncover the past trauma that she has been suppressing. Honeyman chose this method because, in the contemporary British culture in which the novel was written, psychological therapeutic practices such as "talking therapy" and narrative approaches are increasingly accepted as an important part of mental health treatment. The use of techniques such as the empty-chair exercise is in line with the trend of psychotherapy in the UK, which emphasizes the importance of self-expression and the reconstruction of life narratives to overcome psychological wounds caused by traumatic experiences. Eleanor's rigid and defensive response to Dr Temple's suggestion shows a characterization consistent with the novel's overarching theme: isolation as both a defense mechanism and a shackle, where Eleanor habitually refuses help and shuts herself off from deep reflection. Honeyman deliberately shows this reaction to highlight how difficult it is for trauma survivors to open up, while emphasizing that recovery is a gradual process that requires trust, courage, and support from the surrounding environment. Thus, the choice of scenes and character responses not only reinforces the theme of trauma and recovery, but also reflects the changing culture in the UK that is increasingly open to mental health issues and the importance of therapy in modern life.

*“Today, Dr. Temple had asked about Marianne again of course and, when I’d shaken my head, she suggested that it might be helpful to think about my childhood as two discrete periods; before and after the fire, as a way of getting to the topic of Marianne. Yes, I said, it might be helpful. But very, very painful.”* (Honeyman, 2017: 309)

The quotation illustrates a plot that increasingly leads to the solution of the problem, where Eleanor must remember the dark events that happened to her in the past to help her get out of the trauma. This process, however, is not without its challenges, as it involves confronting her sister, who was also a victim in the incident. In this quotation, Dr. Temple provides information support to Eleanor with a subtle and caring approach. Dr. Temple is trying to help Eleanor understand and cope with her past trauma by suggesting a new way of looking at her childhood, which is by dividing it into two periods: before and after the fire. This approach suggests that Dr. Temple was trying to give Eleanor a more structured way to process the major events in her life by dividing the memories and associated feelings into categories that were easier to understand and manage. This was a form of support that helped Eleanor organize her feelings, even though it was still painful for her.

However, while Dr. Temple offers practical advice, she is also aware of how difficult the process is for Eleanor, which is reflected in Eleanor's line that it is very painful to divide her childhood into two periods. Dr. Temple gives Eleanor space to feel and express her emotional difficulties without neglecting the importance of addressing sensitive issues. With her empathetic approach, Dr. Temple supports Eleanor in looking deeper into her past, but she is also mindful of Eleanor's comfort and emotional boundaries, showing that her informational support is not only practical advice, but also an awareness of the emotional impact.

Gail Honeyman chose to include Dr. Temple's suggestion that Eleanor divide her childhood into two periods - before and after the fire - because she wanted to portray the trauma recovery process in a realistic and human way, where confronting and unraveling the past is an important step in therapy

and healing. This approach is consistent with trauma theory and medical narratives that emphasize the importance of gradually confronting traumatic memories so that individuals can gain new meaning and rebuild a healthy self-identity. In the interview, Honeyman stated that she was inspired by the theme of loneliness and wanted to highlight the importance of kindness and human connection in the recovery process, especially in a contemporary British culture that is becoming more open to mental health issues and the practice of psychological therapies. Eleanor's response of admitting that talking about the past would be painful shows the authenticity of the trauma survivor's experience, where resistance and fear are natural reactions when asked to confront old wounds. Thus, Honeyman uses this dynamic to emphasize that recovery is not straightforward, but emotionally challenging, and that professional support and self-narratives are key to the path to healing.

### **Reminder**

The reminder here contains quotation that show the informational support provided by reminding Eleanor of his serious condition that requires professional help to find a solution to the problem at hand. Relevant quotation includes the following:

*"Eleanor," he said eventually, "this is serious. If I hadn't come over when I did, you might be dead by now, either from the booze or from choking on your own vomit. That's if you hadn't overdosed on the pills or whatever."*

*I put my head on one side and pondered this.*

*"All right," I said. "I concede that I was feelin very unhappy. But doesn't everyone feels sad from time to time?"*

*"Yes of course they do, Eleanor," he said calmly. "But when people are feeling sad, they have a little cry, maybe eat too much ice cream, stay in bed all afternoon. What they don't do is think about drain cleaner, or opening their veins with a bread knife."* (Honeyman, 2017: 252)

In this quotation Raymond's informational support to Eleanor is very clear and explicit. First, Raymond conveys the seriousness of the situation confronting Eleanor, underscoring the real danger she is in, either from alcohol, overdose, or even choking on her own vomit. Raymond's actions are intended to alert Eleanor to the severity of her condition, emphasizing the imminent threat to her physical and emotional well-being. He provides her with information that confirms that what she is feeling and doing is not only extreme, but has fatal consequences.

Subsequently, Raymond goes to contrast the more common ways that others deal with sadness, such as crying, eating ice cream, or lying in bed, showing that Eleanor's way of dealing with grief is very unusual and destructive. By comparing these divergent coping mechanisms, Raymond gives Eleanor a different perspective on how people deal with their feelings in a safer and healthier way. This form of informational support aims to enlighten Eleanor, prompting her to recognize that her actions, such as contemplating dangerous acts, do not align with the strategies employed by the majority to cope with emotional distress. Raymond's approach entails the provision of more realistic information, with the objective of facilitating Eleanor's contemplation of seeking assistance or modifying her destructive mindset. The quotation also demonstrates a significant shift in Eleanor's disposition, initially characterized by a lack of acceptance of Raymond's viewpoint and suggestions, to one in which she was moved and unable to resist Raymond's explanation.

Gail Honeyman wrote this scene, featuring frank and confrontational dialogue between Raymond and Eleanor to highlight the dark reality of Eleanor's depression and suicidal tendencies, while also illustrating the mechanisms of denial and lack of self-awareness that trauma survivors often experience. Honeyman consciously chooses Eleanor's dismissive response as a reflection of British culture at the time of the novel's writing, where there was still stigma and shame around talking openly about mental health, as well as a societal tendency to mask or normalize emotional pain. In interviews, Honeyman revealed that he was inspired to write this novel after reading an article about the epidemic of loneliness in the United Kingdom, and wanted to authentically portray how someone can appear "fine" on the surface, while harboring deep wounds. By presenting Raymond as a figure who dares to confront Eleanor and distinguish between ordinary sadness and signs of crisis, Honeyman emphasizes the importance of honest and empathetic social support in the recovery process. The scene also shows that recovery cannot begin without acknowledging the real problem, and that denial is part of the long journey towards acceptance and healing.

### Directions

The directions contain quotations that demonstrate the informational support provided by directing the main characters in the process of resolving these encountered issues including the counseling process in Eleanor's trauma healing. The following quotations are relevant to the present discussion:

*"What about your other needs, Eleanor?"*

*"I'm not sure I'm quite following you, Maria," I said puzzled.*

*"Humans have a range of needs that we need to have met, Eleanor, in order to be happy and healthy individuals. You've described how your basic physical needs—warmth, food, shelter—were taken care of. But what about your emotional needs?"* (Honeyman, 2017: 280)

Mrs. Temple provides informational support to Eleanor in a caring and thoughtful way. Mrs. Temple asks questions that encourage Eleanor to think more deeply about her emotional needs, which Eleanor herself may not have fully understood or paid attention to. In this way, Mrs. Temple not only highlights the physical needs that are already being met, but also opens up space for Eleanor to understand the importance of her emotional well-being, which is also crucial to one's happiness and health. This quotation also shows that Dr. Temple is trying to provide a wider perspective and help Eleanor realize other aspects of her that may have been overlooked. She did not give direct answers or impose views, but instead, in an empathetic way, directed Eleanor to explore and explore her feelings and emotional needs. This reflects the importance of informational support in helping a person to develop holistically and find balance in her life. This consultation between Eleanor and Dr. Temple represents the plot that begins to move toward a resolution of the problem. And also represents the theme of Eleanor's recovery process from her trauma.

Gail Honeyman used the dialogue between Eleanor and Dr. Maria Temple about emotional needs to emphasize that fulfilling physical needs is not enough for one's happiness and mental health. Honeyman chose this approach because she wanted to realistically portray how the main character, Eleanor, who has only had her basic needs met, still experiences a deep emotional void due to past trauma and social isolation. Eleanor's confused response and difficulty in understanding the concept of emotional needs reflects Honeyman's view in an interview regarding Eleanor's attitude of often denying her condition, according to Honeyman, after experiencing some very challenging experiences in her past, the fact that Eleanor has not fully overcome or accepted all those events.

*"Good. Now, can you try closing your eyes for me, please, Eleanor? Sometimes it's easier to access memories that way. Take a deep breath in, and then let it all out. Great. And another . . . good. Now, I want you to think back. You're at home, and it's the day before the fire. What do you remember? Anything? Take your time . . ."* (Honeyman, 2017: 300)

Dr. Temple provided information to Eleanor in a calm and systematic manner, encouraging her to access her memories using relaxation techniques. This By asking Eleanor to close her eyes, take a deep breath, and focus on pre-fire memories, Dr. Temple provided instructions that led Eleanor to connect more consciously with her feelings and memories. This was a form of support that allowed Eleanor to go deeper into her feelings, creating space for deeper self-understanding through a structured process of reflection. This approach also reflects informational emotional support, where Dr. Temple not only provides physical direction, but also helps Eleanor to mentally frame her experience, which can pave the way for understanding and healing. By giving Eleanor space for quiet reflection, Dr. Temple acts as a contributor in the process of introspection, allowing Eleanor to tap into feelings and memories that may have been buried, thus giving her a better understanding of herself and her traumatic experience. This action aligned with the one of novel's central theme which is the recovery trauma process.

Gail Honeyman chose to use Dr. Temple's suggestion that Eleanor close her eyes and re-imagine the time before the fire as a technique to ease access to traumatic memories that are difficult to face directly. In interviews, Honeyman explained that she wanted to portray the trauma recovery process realistically, where facing the past gradually and with professional help is key to healing. This approach also reflects the contemporary British cultural trend of increasingly accepting the importance of psychological therapies and techniques such as visualization in overcoming emotional wounds. By using this method in the story, Honeyman emphasizes that recovery is not an instantaneous process, but

rather requires the courage to face painful memories slowly, so that readers can understand the complexity of trauma and Eleanor's journey towards healing.

*"Eleanor," he said, "look, I've got something to tell you, and you've got to promise not to be angry with me." I sat back and waited for him to continue. "I've been doing some research online about your mum, about what happened back then."*

*I stared at the grains of sugar. How could each one be so tiny, and yet so perfectly angular?*

*"Eleanor?" he said. "I'm not sure if what I found is right, but I googled arson, and the year it happened, and London, and there are some newspaper articles you might want to take a look at. We don't have to if you don't want to. I just wanted you to know, in case . . . well, in case you changed your mind about finding stuff out."* (Honeyman, 2017: 305)

This quotation illustrates how Raymond provides information support to Eleanor by giving careful and considerate direction with freedom. Raymond begins by asking Eleanor to promise not to be angry with him, which shows how sensitive the topic is. He carefully revealed that he had done some online research about Eleanor's mother and the fire incident involving Eleanor's family. Although he was unsure of the veracity of the information, Raymond felt it was important to tell Eleanor, leaving open the possibility that Eleanor could find out more if she felt ready. This shows that Raymond was trying to provide support in a way that allowed Eleanor to make her own decisions without being forced.

Raymond's approach also reflects an understanding of Eleanor's limits and feelings. He did not force Eleanor to read the articles she found and gave Eleanor space to decide whether or not she wanted to explore further. In this way, Raymond provides information that may be useful without being intrusive or pushy, demonstrating a caring attitude and a willingness to support Eleanor in the process of seeking truth or understanding according to Eleanor's comfort and readiness. In addition, the above quotation contributes to the development of the novel's plot, which increasingly leads to a point of clarity about Eleanor's dark past, which she has not really known. Raymond's efforts to find information about it have an important influence on the development of Eleanor's character.

In an interview on DIY MFA Radio Episode 208, Gail Honeyman explained that she chose to feature Raymond doing online research about Eleanor's past as a way to show real but non-judgmental care and support. Honeyman wanted to illustrate how the process of trauma recovery often involves the slow uncovering of difficult facts, and that support from loved ones can come in simple yet meaningful forms, such as helping Eleanor confront her past with concrete information. Eleanor's response of focusing on small things like grains of sugar illustrates her defense mechanisms and emotional difficulties in facing harsh realities, while also showing the emotional distance she still maintains. Honeyman also highlights in the context of modern British culture that openness to mental health issues and trauma is still developing, so a gentle and gradual approach is essential for someone like Eleanor to begin to accept reality and process it safely. In this way, Honeyman emphasizes that emotional support and information from others can be key in helping someone open up and begin the healing journey.

### **Guidance**

The guidance includes quotations that illustrate the information support provided to Eleanor as she navigates the challenges she encounters, including the counseling process that facilitates her healing from trauma. The following quotation are pertinent to this discussion:

*"But you're not your mother, are you, Eleanor? You're a completely separate person, an independent person, making your own choices."*

*She gave an encouraging smile.*

*"You're still a young woman—if you wanted to, you could have a family of your own one day, and be a totally different kind of mother. What do you think about that?"* (Honeyman, 2017: 319)

This quotation illustrates how Dr. Temple provides Eleanor with informational support in the form of positive advice and guidance. Dr. Temple's reminder and emphasis that Eleanor is an independent individual, separate from her mother, with the freedom to make her own choices is intended to help Eleanor see herself in a more positive and hopeful light. Dr. Temple's suggestion that Eleanor consider having a family and becoming a different mother is a hopeful direction and opens up new possibilities for her future. With an encouraging smile, Dr. Temple also provides feedback that affirms Eleanor's

abilities and independence and reminds her that she is in control of her life, giving Eleanor the confidence and encouragement to view her future with optimism. In addition, the above quotation also contributes to the character development and theme of Eleanor's major trauma recovery. She is still troubled by her evil mother figure, which makes her reluctant to have children, as the quotation continues. However, Dr. Temple does not stop trying to convince Eleanor to stop being trapped in her thoughts.

Gail Honeyman chose to use the suggestion in the quotation to emphasize the important message that Eleanor is a separate and independent individual, not just a shadow of her past or her mother. In an interview on DIY MFA Radio Episode 208, Honeyman explained that one of the main goals of the novel is to depict Eleanor's process of finding her own identity and strength beyond the trauma and influence of the past. The suggestion reflects hope and encouragement for Eleanor to look to her future with new possibilities, including building a life and relationships that are different from those of her mother.

*"Eleanor, I've worked with several clients over the years who've had similar worries to yours. It's normal to feel that way. Remember, though—we've just been discussing how different you are from your mother, the different choices you've made . . ."*

*"But Mummy's still in my life, even after all this time. That worries me. She's a bad influence, a very bad influence."* Maria looked up from the book where she was taking notes.

*"You're still talking to her, then?" she said, her pen poised.*

*"Yes," I said. I clasped my hands and took a deep breath.*

*"But I've been thinking that it needs to come to an end. I'm going to stop. It has to stop."*

*She looked as serious as I'd ever seen her.*

*"It's not my role to tell you what to do, Eleanor. I will say this, though—I think that's a very good idea. But, ultimately, it's your decision. It's always been your decision," she said, excessively calm and ever so slightly aloof. It was as though she was trying just a bit too hard to be neutral, I thought. I wondered why. (Honeyman, 2017: 319-320).*

The quotation illustrate dialog between Eleanor and Dr. Temple. Dr. Temple provided informational support to Eleanor through understanding advice and careful direction. Dr. Temple reminded Eleanor that the concerns she was feeling were normal, relating them to other client experiences she had dealt with, which provided a sense of validation to Eleanor's feelings. Dr. Temple then provided understanding feedback by acknowledging that while she did not want to direct Eleanor's decision, she still suggested that ending the relationship with her mother was a very good idea. This action from Dr. Temple demonstrates informational support that is not imposing, but leaves room for personal reflection while offering views that support healthier decisions for Eleanor. The quotation above also describes the peak plot of the main problem in Eleanor's trauma who still often hallucinates talking to her mother who she often says in the novel that her mother calls her regularly. However, in the consultation session, it began to show positive changes in Eleanor's character who was already aware and had the desire to stop the hallucinations. With the help of Dr. Temple's information and advice that was full of understanding and liberating, Eleanor felt herself understood and listened to without judgment.

Gail Honeyman chose to use the suggestion in the quotation to emphasize that Eleanor is an independent individual and different from her mother, who has been a source of trauma and negative influence in her life. In an interview, Honeyman explained that one of the main themes of the novel is Eleanor's journey to find her own identity and strength, despite her dark past and complicated relationship with her mother. The suggestion also reflects contemporary British cultural approaches that increasingly emphasize the importance of individual empowerment and mental health, where one is encouraged to make healthy life choices and build a future that is different from previous family patterns. Eleanor's response of still grappling with her mother's influence demonstrates the reality of the difficulty of breaking away from past trauma, while also marking the first step in the process of recovery and the formation of a new identity. In this way, Honeyman showcases how patient and understanding professional support can help a person begin to see new possibilities in their life and dare to make decisions for change.

### **Instrumental Support**

Instrumental support is described as providing tangible assistance, including services, financial assistance, and other specified aid or items (Taylor, 2011) Instrumental support is a direct assistance that is not only based on feelings but also involves direct involvement to alleviate the burden of the main

character. This instrumental support encompasses a willingness to allocate time to do specific things in a manner that is genuine, voluntary, and spontaneous. Furthermore, the provision of physical assistance, such as physical contact, in order to facilitate the resolution of the main character's difficulties is also included in this instrumental support. In the following quotations there is instrumental support given by Raymond, Laura, and Dr. Maria Temple to Eleanor. In this form of social support, the following quotations are classified according to the type of quotations: financial assistance, service assistance, physically assistance, and item assistance.

### **Financial Assistance**

The provision of financial assistance in this context is exemplified by quotation that illustrates the extent of social support, as evidenced by the act of purchasing beverages. This assertion is supported by the following quotation:

*“Raymond, wait!” I said. He turned back toward me, smiling.*

*“What is it, Eleanor?”*

*“The Guinness, Raymond. It was three pounds fifty.” He stared at me. “It’s OK,” I said, “there’s no rush. You can give it to me on Monday, if that’s easier.”*

*He counted out four-pound coins and put them on the table. “Keep the change,” he said, and walked off. (Honeyman, 2017: 69).*

This above quotation depicts Raymond's instrumental support to Eleanor in the form of his willingness to help or fulfill Eleanor's practical needs. Although Eleanor mentions the price of Guinness and tells Raymond that she can give it to him on Monday if that's easier, Raymond's gesture of turning his head with a smile shows that he is ready to help without rushing or feeling pressured. The support Raymond shows is a form of care that not only listens, but also gives Eleanor space to feel comfortable and unburdened, and provides support in practical matters such as payment or timing, which creates a sense of security and being cared for in their relationship. The instrumental support previously mentioned also demonstrates the theme of small acts of kindness, which convey a sense of sincerity and do not require reciprocity.

Gail Honeyman chose to use simple scenes like Raymond paying for Guinness and saying “Keep the change” as small forms of kindness and social support that meant a lot to Eleanor. In interviews and various sources, Honeyman emphasized that the novel focuses on the theme of loneliness and how small, sincere acts from others can pave the way for big changes in an isolated person's life. Eleanor's awkward and thoughtful response to the payment reflects her unfamiliarity and discomfort in receiving kindness, while also showing a slow development in her ability to build social relationships. Honeyman also underscores that in modern British culture, where loneliness is an increasingly prominent social issue, simple, empathetic interactions like these are crucial to building healthy human connections and supporting the emotional recovery process. By showcasing these small but meaningful moments, Honeyman illustrates how friendship and everyday kindness can be the foundation for Eleanor's character transformation.

### **Service Assistance**

Service Assistance includes quotations that demonstrate the social support provided by taking the time to help clean the house, prepare and serve meals, and provide services. The relevant quotations are as follows:

*“For fuck’s sake, Eleanor. Fine. Christ!” he said. “I’ll be round in an hour, OK?”*

*“Really, Raymond, there’s no need,” I said calmly. “I’ve had some food”—I didn’t know what time it was, and didn’t want to risk guessing whether it had been lunch or dinner—“and a shower, and I’m going to read for a while and then have an early night.”*

*“I’ll be round in an hour,” he said again, firmly, and then hung up. (Honeyman, 2017: 250).*

This quotation reflects Raymond's instrumental support of Eleanor in a firm yet caring way. Despite Eleanor's attempts to assure him that he has eaten sufficiently and is in good health, Raymond's actions demonstrate a practical concern for her well-being by making sure that he is not alone or lacking anything. By stating that he will be coming in an hour, Raymond shows a commitment to providing the necessary tangible support, even though Eleanor seems to be trying to refuse his help. The

aforementioned actions also contribute to the thematic framework of the novel, particularly the theme of small acts of kindness and friendship that are consistently ready to provide assistance at any moment.

Gail Honeyman chose to write the scene where Raymond insists on coming to Eleanor's house despite Eleanor's calm refusal because she wanted to show the importance of real presence and immediate support in the face of emotional crisis. In interviews on DIY MFA Radio Episode 208 and various other sources, Honeyman emphasized that the main theme of the novel is loneliness and how a simple yet decisive act from another person can be a turning point in the healing process of an isolated person. Eleanor's calm response and attempt to control the situation reflects her independent and introverted habits, while also showing the difficulty she has in accepting help. Honeyman illustrates that in modern British culture, where mental health issues are receiving increasing attention, consistent support and the physical presence of others like Raymond's is key to helping someone break out of isolation and begin to open up to positive change.

*"You're hilarious, Eleanor," she said. "You'll have to come round for drinks some time. And if you ever decide to cut your hair, bear me in mind, yeah? I'll give you mates' rates."* (Honeyman, 2017: 148)

This quotation describes Laura's instrumental support to Eleanor in the form of a helpful and friendly practical offer which also demonstrates the theme of small acts of kindness and friendship. Laura offers Eleanor the opportunity to come over for drinks from time to time, which shows concern for Eleanor's social or emotional needs. In addition, Laura's offer to give a reasonable price if Eleanor decides to cut her hair shows a more concrete form of practical support, which is to offer something that can help Eleanor in terms of finances or comfort. This offer shows Laura's concern in providing support through direct assistance that is functional, while maintaining a relaxed and non-demanding atmosphere, so that Eleanor feels valued and cared for.

Gail Honeyman chose to use a helping hand like the one in the quotation, where someone invites Eleanor to socialize casually and offers a special discount as a form of familiarity-because she wanted to show how light and humorous social interactions can be an important bridge for Eleanor who has been emotionally and socially isolated. Honeyman has stated in interviews that the novel was inspired by the issue of loneliness in modern society, especially in the United Kingdom, where many people feel alienated despite living in crowds. By presenting small warm and friendly moments like these, Honeyman emphasizes that simple kindness and invitations to engage in social relationships can pave the way for big changes in the life of a lonely person. Eleanor's awkward response to accepting the invitation reflects her character development as she slowly begins to open up and learn to trust others. This is in line with the novel's main theme of trauma recovery and the importance of human connection in the healing process, as well as reflecting contemporary British culture that increasingly recognizes the importance of social support and mental health. In this way, Honeyman underlines that humor and warmth in everyday interactions are key to overcoming isolation and building meaningful friendships.

*I realized that such small gestures—the way his mother had made me a cup of tea after our meal without asking, remembering that I didn't take sugar, the way Laura had placed two little biscuits on the saucer when she brought me coffee in the salon—such things could mean so much.* (Honeyman, 2017: 172)

This quotation reflects the instrumental support from Raymond's and Laura to Eleanor in the form of attention to her simple yet meaningful practical needs. Raymond's mother, by making tea without asking and remembering that Eleanor does not consume sugar, demonstrates a form of support that considers Eleanor's preferences and daily habits, providing comfort without needing to be asked. Likewise, Laura, who gently placed two small biscuits on a plate when bringing her coffee, offers something beyond just a drink but also care and comfort. These small actions reflect profound practical support, where both women give attention without seeking anything in return, creating a sense of being valued and cared for through highly personal and understanding gestures. This illustrates the theme of small acts of kindness, which also contributes greatly to Eleanor's character development.

Gail Honeyman chose this kind of narrative to illustrate how small kindnesses in everyday interactions can be an important bridge that opens Eleanor slowly to social connections and a sense of acceptance. In an interview, Honeyman mentioned that the novel was born out of a reflection on loneliness in modern society, particularly in the United Kingdom, where many young people experience isolation despite living in crowds. By featuring small moments of warmth and care, Honeyman

emphasizes that emotional recovery and character transformation do not always have to be through big events, but can start from simple things that show empathy and care. Eleanor's response as she begins to realize the meaning of these small acts of kindness reflects her character development as she slowly opens up and learns to trust others, in keeping with the novel's main theme of the power of human connection in overcoming loneliness and trauma.

*"Are you hungry?" he said gently. I thought about it. My insides felt wrong, very wrong. Perhaps part of that was related to hunger? I didn't know, so I just shrugged. He looked pleased.*

*"I'm going to make you some soup, then," he said. I lay back with my eyes closed.*

*"Not lentil," I said. (Honeyman, 2017: 247)*

This quotation illustrates Raymond's instrumental support for Eleanor in a thoughtful and practical manner. This occurs after the incident when Eleanor attempted suicide and was found by Raymond. Following this event, Raymond began to provide support, one aspect of which can be seen in the quotation where he gently and attentively asks if Eleanor is hungry, demonstrating awareness of her physical well-being. When Eleanor is unable to decide, feeling that something is wrong with her, Raymond expresses his intention to help by offering to make soup. His actions indicate concern for Eleanor's basic needs, such as food, to provide her with physical comfort. Furthermore, by responding to Eleanor's request not to make lentil soup, Raymond's capacity to adjust to her preferences is noteworthy, demonstrating a tangible support that is sincere and without expectation of reciprocity. This illustrates the theme of small acts of kindness, which also contributes greatly to Eleanor's character development and genuine friendship.

Gail Honeyman chooses to depict small moments like Raymond's in the quotation above, as well as Eleanor's confused and hesitant response, to emphasize how disconnected Eleanor is from her own basic needs due to her trauma and isolation. According to reviews and analysis of the novel, including from sources such as *Emotional Intelligence at Work* and various reviews, Honeyman wants to show that trauma recovery is not just about big changes, but also through small, empathetic interactions that help Eleanor begin to open up and trust others. Eleanor's response of not being sure if the "wrong" feeling inside her is related to hunger illustrates her confusion and alienation from her own body and emotions, a condition often experienced by trauma survivors. This also reflects the modern British culture in which the novel was written, where awareness of the importance of mental health and the role of social support in the healing process is growing, yet many people still struggle in solitude and have difficulty recognizing their emotional and physical needs.

*The kitchen floor gleamed and all the bottles had been removed, the work tops wiped down. There was a pile of folded laundry on one of the chairs. The table was bare save for a vase, the only one I owned, filled with yellow tulips. There was a note propped against it.*

*Some food in the fridge. Try to drink as much water as you can. Call me when you're up Rx (Honeyman, 2017: 249)*

This quotation above conveys the notion that Raymond's provision of instrumental support to Eleanor materialized through a very caring and tangible action. By undertaking tasks such as cleaning the kitchen, arranging items, and placing yellow tulips in vases, Raymond creates a clean, comfortable, and welcoming environment for Eleanor, demonstrating his concern for her physical and emotional well-being. A note written on the table, reminding Eleanor to drink water and contact her after waking up provided further support to ensure that Eleanor took care of her health. These actions contribute to the thematic framework of the novel, particularly the theme of small acts of kindness and friendship that are consistently ready to help.

Gail Honeyman chose to use a narrative like the one in the quotation, where Raymond cleans Eleanor's house, puts away empty bottles, folds laundry, and leaves a thoughtful note with food and a reminder to drink water-because she wanted to highlight the power of small acts and simple care in helping someone as lonely and traumatized as Eleanor. In an interview with Penguin Random House, Honeyman stated that the novel began with the idea of loneliness, especially the loneliness experienced by young people in modern society who are often isolated despite living in crowds. Raymond's actions reflect a real and empathetic form of social support, which is not dramatic but highly transformative for Eleanor, helping to pave the way for her emotional recovery. British culture at the time of the novel is

increasingly recognizing the importance of mental health and social support, and Honeyman is keen to show that simple, everyday kindnesses—such as cleaning the house and leaving notes of concern—can be an important foundation in rebuilding confidence and human connection.

### **Physically Assistance**

Physical assistance includes quotations that show social support provided by helping to support the main character when they are not physically strong or are about to fall and by picking up things that the main character is unable to pick up. Relevant quotations include the following:

*I tried to stand without assistance, but couldn't. I leaned on him, and then had to have his arm around my waist to assist me across the hallway. The bedroom door was open, the bed made up with the freshly laundered sheets. He sat me down, and then lifted my legs and helped me get under the covers. The bed smelled so fresh—warm and clean and cozy, like a little bird's nest. (Honeyman, 2017: 248)*

This quotation illustrates the instrumental or tangible support that Raymond provides to Eleanor in a thoughtful and practical manner. When Eleanor struggles to stand and move, Raymond gently wraps his arm around her waist to assist her in crossing the corridor, demonstrating his willingness to support her physically. His actions do not stop at physical assistance, but also encompass further care, such as helping Eleanor into bed, lifting her legs, and aiding her in getting underneath the blankets. The warm and clean bed also serves as a symbol of the comfort that Raymond creates for Eleanor, instilling a sense of safety and being cared for. All of this indicates that Raymond offers very real support, both physically and in his willingness to help Eleanor navigate her difficulties. It also contributes greatly to Eleanor's character development and shows the theme of growing friendship.

Gail Honeyman chooses to use the narrative of Raymond's help to Eleanor in this quotation to highlight the novel's main themes of healing and human connection, which are important in overcoming trauma and social isolation. Honeyman describes the moment Raymond helps Eleanor with warm and empathetic details, such as "a bed that smelled fresh and cozy like a little bird's nest," to show how Eleanor begins to feel a comfort and security that she had never experienced before. This is in line with the interviews and analysis, which suggest that the novel focuses on the potential of vulnerability as a path to social change and connection, and how caring human interactions can be the key to healing for the psychologically wounded. Honeyman, who hails from Glasgow, also addresses the cultural realities of modern society that often leave individuals feeling alienated and lonely, making genuine relationships such as those shown by Raymond particularly important in this context.

*I felt the Irn-Bru start to slip from my grasp and it fell on the floor and rolled around. He picked it up, gripped my elbow in his other hand and guided me to the kitchen. He sat me at the table and put the kettle on. I should have been offended that he was commandeering my living space, but instead I felt relief, overwhelming relief at being taken care of. (Honeyman, 2017: 250)*

In this piece of narrative, Raymond's instrumental support for Eleanor is evident in his attentive and direct actions. When Eleanor appears to be experiencing difficulty with the fallen Irn-Bru, Raymond promptly takes control of the situation and provides physical support by holding her arm and guiding her to the kitchen. By positioning Eleanor at the table and activating the kettle, Raymond offers practical assistance and fosters a supportive atmosphere, providing both physical and emotional comfort. The evidence indicates that Raymond made efforts to assist Eleanor in overcoming her difficulties. Even though the continuation of the quotation above shows a little tension between them, it shows Raymond's concern about what actually happened to Eleanor.

In the above quotation, Gail Honeyman shows how Eleanor Oliphant, the main character of the novel, begins to receive help and attention from Raymond. Raymond's action of helping Eleanor by picking up the fallen Irn-Bru and guiding her to the kitchen shows Raymond's care and patience. Eleanor's relieved and unoffended reaction when Raymond takes over her living space shows that she begins to feel comfortable with Raymond's presence and accepts his help. This shows the evolution of their relationship, where Eleanor begins to open up and trust the other person. In an interview with The Scotsman, Gail Honeyman mentioned that she wanted to explore the theme of loneliness and human relationships in this novel, and how the characters can help and support each other. In doing so,

Honeyman shows that supportive and caring relationships can help people overcome loneliness and difficulties.

### **Item Assistance**

Item assistance is defined as the provision of social support through the gift of items that are perceived as necessary by the main character. The following quotations are pertinent to the present discussion:

*"OK," she said gently, passing me the much-needed box of man-sized tissues, "time's is almost up now." She took out her diary. "Shall we agree to meet at the same time next week and come back to this?"* (Honeyman, 2017: 281)

In this quotation, the theme of small acts of kindness in the novel is depicted. As evidenced by the above quotation, Dr. Temple's instrumental support for Eleanor was characterized by a delicate yet systematic approach. Following the conclusion of the counseling session, Dr. Temple not only provided a tangible response to Eleanor's emotional state but also proactively scheduled the subsequent meeting. This indicates that instrumental support can be provided even in the smallest form of giving tissue.

In the above quotation, Gail Honeyman chose characters like Dr. Temple to show that recovery often begins with small but consistent support from others. In her interview, Honeyman emphasized the importance of the "transformative power of small acts of kindness," such as passing out tissues or scheduling regular meetings, which can help individuals like Eleanor feel valued and begin the healing process. This approach also reflects the social reality in Glasgow, where every day acts of kindness can have a huge impact in addressing loneliness and trauma.

*"It's nothing much," he said. I peered inside. There was a white cardboard box, from a bakery, tied with ribbon. There was also a tiny tin of "gourmet" cat food. "How lovely!" I said, delighted.* (Honeyman, 2017: 294).

The quotation illustrates Raymond's form of instrumental support for Eleanor through simple yet meaningful practical actions. This action aligned with the novel's central theme. By providing a box filled with cat food, given with thoughtfulness, Raymond not only meets Eleanor's practical need for pet care but also demonstrates concern and support in her daily life. Although it may appear to be a small gift, this action reflects a genuine effort to offer direct assistance that can enhance Eleanor's quality of life, providing comfort and happiness. Thus, the support provided by Raymond is concrete and can be directly felt by Eleanor, creating a positive impact in their relationship. While there is an emotional element in the act of gift-giving, the primary action in the quotation is the provision of physical items, which represents a form of instrumental support.

In the above quotation, Gail Honeyman wanted to show that such a simple act can have a huge impact in the life of someone who is isolated and emotionally scarred. In his interview, Honeyman emphasized that he wanted to highlight the importance of kindness, not in a dramatic form, but through everyday acts of thoughtfulness, which can be transformative for the right person at the right time. By using the character of Raymond, an ordinary, caring man, Honeyman illustrates that good men like Raymond often go unnoticed in fiction, even though they have important roles in real life. Raymond's actions also reflect Glasgow's culture of kindness and hospitality, which may not always be reflected in the city's image.

### **Emotional Support**

Based on Taylor's (2011) definition, emotional support can be conceptualized as the provision of physical and emotional warmth, as well as the nurturance of an individual, with the objective of reassuring the recipient that their self-worth is recognized by others and that they are held in high regard. Emotional support refers to the expression of empathy, appreciation, love, concern, and care for the feelings and mental well-being of the main character. This emotional support involves the expression of empathy and care towards individuals, allowing them to feel comfortable, protected, and loved and valued, more enthusiastic, and more closely connected, creating stronger emotional bonds and enhancing their mental well-being. In the following quotations there is instrumental support given by Raymond, Sammy, Laura, and Dr. Maria Temple to Eleanor. In this form of social support, the following

quotations are classified according to the type of quotations: words of concern, physical concern, empathy, and appreciation.

### **Words of concern**

Words of concern contain quotations that show emotional support provided by saying words of concern such as asking how she is doing, making sure she is feeling okay, and giving words of encouragement and words to Eleanor. The following are quotations that are relevant to this discussion:

*“You going to be OK getting home, Eleanor?” he said.*

*“Oh yes,” I said, “I’ll walk—it’s such a beautiful evening, and it’s still light.”*

*“Right then, I’ll see you on Monday,” he said. “Enjoy the rest of your weekend.” He turned to leave. (Honeyman, 2017: 69)*

Based on that piece of dialogue, the quotation reflects Raymond's emotional support for Eleanor through the concern and care he demonstrates by inquiring whether Eleanor would be alright on her way home. By expressing worry about her safety and comfort, Raymond creates a supportive atmosphere and shows that he cares about Eleanor's feelings. Eleanor's statement indicating that she will walk home because of the lovely night reveals that she feels comfortable and positive; however, Raymond's concern still provides the essential safety and emotional support. By expressing his hope that Eleanor enjoys the remainder of the weekend, Raymond strengthens their relationship and offers uplifting support, creating a stronger emotional bond between them.

The piece of dialog above also shows the development of Eleanor's character, which relates to the theme of the novel. Eleanor, who was initially socially isolated, began to feel comfortable interacting with others, and even though she was not yet completely free from the habit of isolation and there was still a compulsion, Eleanor shows progress by starting to try to be friendly and open herself to social experiences. Inspired by the topic of loneliness and social awkwardness, Gail Honeyman chose to use Raymond's simple words of care to highlight the importance of consistent human presence and attention in the life of someone who is lonely and isolated. In an interview, Honeyman explained that the novel was born out of a reflection on loneliness experienced by a young woman that intrigued her and made her realize that people experience loneliness at all ages: not just old age. With warm and caring dialog like this, Honeyman wants to show how simple, everyday interactions can be an important bridge to build social connections and help Eleanor feel cared for and not alone. Gail Honeyman also wanted to show the novel's seemingly small but profound impact support can have on a person's life despite the initial unfamiliarity of receiving and caring or kindness from others. During an interview with The Guardian, Honeyman stated that “There are many Raymonds in the world”, ordinary men of kindness and integrity, who are rarely portrayed in literature. Through this character, Honeyman shows that genuine kindness can be a catalyst for change in a person's life, even for those who are the most introverted and wounded.

*“What are you doing for the rest of the day, Eleanor?” Raymond asked gently. (Honeyman, 2017: 87)*

The quotation reflects the emotional support Raymond provides Eleanor through his considerate and attentive inquiries. Raymond's inquiry regarding Eleanor's plans for the remainder of the day underscores his concern for her well-being and feeling. This inquiry fosters an environment of shared communication allowing Eleanor to articulate her plans, thereby experiencing a sense of acknowledgment and appreciation. Raymond's actions reflect empathy and support that are crucial in maintaining their relationship, as well as helping Eleanor feel more emotionally connected during challenging times.

The previously cited dialog further exemplifies the overarching theme of the novel, which is characterized by the meticulous attention given to Eleanor's character development. Prior to this, Eleanor was depicted as being characterized by a state of profound loneliness; however, the attention she receives from Raymond serves as a catalyst for her to initiate communication and disclose personal experiences with others. In the quotation, Raymond's act of asking Eleanor about her activities at the end of the workday reflects Gail Honeyman's views on the importance of simple attention in overcoming loneliness. Honeyman focuses on how small acts, such as asking how someone is doing, can pave the way for deeper relationships and help isolated individuals feel valued. In her interview, Honeyman

emphasized that she wanted to highlight the "transformative power of small acts of kindness," such as saying a thoughtful word or making sure someone gets home safely, which can help individuals like Eleanor feel valued and begin the healing process.

*"Eleanor, love!" he said. "How are you? Great party, eh?"* (Honeyman, 2017: 175)

The emotional support provided by Sammy to Eleanor is shown through the warm greetings and attentiveness he shows. By calling Eleanor "love" and inquiring about her well-being, Sammy creates an intimate and caring atmosphere. His question about the recent party indicates his desire to engage in Eleanor's experiences and invite dialogue, which can offer comfort and emotional support. Besides contributing to her relationship with Eleanor becoming stronger and warmer, Sammy's emotional support above also relates to the theme of the novel, which centers on the growth of the main character, Eleanor, as she becomes bolder and more comfortable around people and breaks out of the lonely zone that often surrounds her.

Gail Honeyman used Sammy's kind and warm assistance in the quotation to show that the world, though often cold and painful for Eleanor, still holds room for kindness and spontaneous, humane social interactions. Honeyman wants to emphasize that in a complex and sometimes harsh world, genuine and spontaneous social interactions like these are essential to help one begin to feel connected and valued, thus paving the way for healing and positive change. This quotation also reflects contemporary British culture which increasingly recognizes the importance of empathy and social support in addressing loneliness and mental health issues.

*"D'you want to watch a film, Eleanor? Cheer ourselves up a bit?"  
I thought about this.  
"A film would be perfect," I said.* (Honeyman, 2017: 220)

The quotation illustrates the emotional support Raymond provides Eleanor through his offer to watch a movie together, aiming to provide comfort to both individuals. Raymond's suggestion of a pleasurable activity is indicative of his concern for Eleanor's well-being and his aim to enhance her mood. Eleanor's affirmation of the movie's suitability, as expressed in her statement, "the movie would be perfect," signifies her positive response to Raymond's initiative. This shared engagement fosters a sense of companionship, which has the potential to alleviate any stress or sadness Eleanor may be experiencing. This Raymond's emotional support is also indicative of the novel's overarching theme, which concerns Eleanor's evolution in her social interactions. Her receptiveness to invitations and her amiable demeanor exemplifies the positive development of her interpersonal skills. In her interview, Honeyman emphasized that she wanted to highlight the transformative power of small acts of kindness, such as speaking a thoughtful word or making sure someone gets home safely, that can help individuals like Eleanor feel valued and begin the healing process.

Gail Honeyman used moments of togetherness such as Raymond's invitation to watch a movie as a way of showing the importance of relationships that are not based on romance, but on presence and security. In several interviews, including with Penguin Books United Kingdom, Honeyman stated that she wanted to create characters who experience emotional growth not through romantic love, but through friendship and kindness from ordinary people. Eleanor's willing response to Raymond's invitation signals progress in her openness to social intimacy, which she had previously avoided due to past trauma.

*"How do you feel about this one?" he said, nodding toward the screen as he wrapped himself in his duvet. The highlighted selection said Sons of the Desert. I had no idea what it was, but I realized that I'd happily sit here in the warmth with him and watch a golf program if that was all there was.* (Honeyman, 2017: 221)

The quotation illustrates the emotional support from Raymond to Eleanor through his offer to watch a movie together as a way to comfort both of them. By suggesting a fun activity, Raymond shows concern for Eleanor's feelings and seeks to improve her mood. Eleanor's statement agreeing that "the movie would be perfect" indicates that she responds positively to Raymond's initiative, creating a moment of togetherness that can help alleviate any stress or sadness she may be experiencing. Eleanor's response also indicates that she is beginning to enjoy the companionship of others, despite its simplicity, which marks a development in her character from social isolation to comfort in human interaction. This action

reflects the importance of emotional support in building connections and providing comfort during difficult times, as well as demonstrating that the presence of a caring individual can make a significant difference in someone's emotional well-being.

As Gail Honeyman has stated in various interviews, the story of her novel is also about the power of small kindnesses. The above quotation reflects Gail Honeyman's view on how simple acts of kindness can help individuals who are isolated feel valued and begin the healing process. Honeyman's research seeks to demonstrate that positive changes in an individual's life often originate from small, caring interactions, such as the one Raymond initiated.

*"Safe home, Eleanor," he said. "Have a good weekend. See you Monday, yeah?"*

*"See you Monday, Raymond," I said, and I waved until the taxi turned the corner and I could no longer see him at the window. (Honeyman, 2017: 225)*

In the quotation reflects how Raymond provided emotional support to Eleanor through his caring and friendly sayings. By saying "Safe home, Eleanor" and "Have good weekend, Raymond shows caring of Eleanor safety and also hoping she had good weekend. Furthermore, Raymond's expression of desire to meet Eleanor, "See you Monday, yeah?" illustrates his commitment and relationship in Eleanor's life. The aforementioned dialogue evinces the warmth and intimacy of their friendship, thereby underscoring the presence of a profound emotional bond between Raymond and Eleanor. The above quotation reflects the author's view that she has been north in many interviews and radio shows about the focus and main theme she wants to highlight, which is the small kindnesses that can have a big impact on someone experiencing loneliness. In this quotation, Gail Honeyman also demonstrates that consistent and selfless attention from others, in this case Raymond, can be an emotional anchor for someone who has been living in extreme loneliness.

### **Physical concern**

Physical concern has been demonstrated to contain quotation that shows emotional support provided by repeated encounters, such as having lunch with Eleanor, hugging, kissing cheeks, and clasping hands as a sign of attention and to calm, and spontaneously visiting when bad things happen. The following are the quotations that are relevant to this discussion:

*Raymond and I continued to meet for lunch, roughly once per week. It was always on a different day, which annoyed me, but he was a man who was extremely resistant to routine (something that shouldn't have surprised me). (Honeyman, 2017: 198)*

The emotional support provided by Raymond to Eleanor is evident in their habit of continuing to meet for lunch, albeit on different days each time. Despite Eleanor's discomfort with the unpredictability of the schedule, the consistency of this practice underscores Raymond's dedication to maintaining a presence in her life. This behavior offers Eleanor a sense of stability and the essential support she needs in her isolated life. The significance of these routine interactions extends beyond mere social engagement, serving as a tangible manifestation of Raymond's concern for Eleanor's well-being and the profound value he places on her presence. This aspect of emotional support is crucial in providing Eleanor with a sense of companionship and validation, which is a fundamental aspect of emotional well-being. The aforementioned narrative provides substantial evidence that Raymond's endorsement had a significant impact on her relationship with Eleanor. This also shows the connection with the theme, character development and plot in the novel. There is a significant change in Eleanor's social isolation that begins to diminish.

Gail Honeyman describes the relationship between Eleanor and Raymond as a rare but powerful example of platonic friendship. In her interview with The Guardian, Honeyman stated that she wanted to showcase a friendship between a man and a woman that doesn't end in romance, as she believes this kind of relationship is rarely depicted in fiction. Through their interactions, Honeyman shows that small acts of kindness can have a big impact in someone's life. She emphasized that although Eleanor had a difficult past, with the support of people like Raymond, she began to open up and rebuild her life. Honeyman hopes that this novel can help spark a debate about loneliness and the importance of kindness in society.

*Raymond had slid around to the seat beside me and put his arm around my shoulders. He spoke in a soft, low voice.*

*"Ah please, Eleanor, don't cry. I'm really sorry . . . I didn't mean to snap at you, I really didn't . . . please, Eleanor . . ."*

*The strange thing—something I'd never expected—was that it actually made you feel better when someone put their arm around you, held you close. Why? Was it some mammalian thing, this need for human contact? He was warm and solid. I could smell his deodorant, and the detergent he used to wash his clothes—over both scents there lay a faint patina of cigarettes. A Raymond smells. I leaned in closer. (Honeyman, 2017: 201; 202)*

The above quotation reflects the emotional support from Raymond to Eleanor through attentive physical and verbal actions. By placing his arm on Eleanor's shoulder and speaking in a gentle voice, Raymond demonstrates empathy and a desire to comfort her. This physical touch provides a sense of comfort and warmth, which unexpectedly makes Eleanor feel better. Additionally, Raymond's sincere apology reinforces his emotional support, creating an atmosphere in which Eleanor feels heard, valued, and accepted. The combination of gentle words and physical touch reflects a profound and meaningful form of support for Eleanor's emotional well-being.

The quotation also further demonstrates a pivotal moment in Raymond and Eleanor's relationship, indicating signs of Eleanor's recovery from social isolation. Her statement regarding the positive experience of receiving physical contact indicates that she is beginning to feel comfort and warmth in human interaction, a sensation that had previously been absent. This development is indicative of Eleanor's character evolution, marked by an increased inclination toward interpersonal relationships and a growing understanding of the necessity for emotional support.

Gail Honeyman used this moment to show how physical touch and warmth from others could help Eleanor feel better and more connected to others. In interviews with various media, Honeyman mentioned that she wanted to explore how human connection can help people overcome loneliness and difficulties. By showing how Eleanor responds to Raymond's touch, Honeyman shows that even people who have social and emotional difficulties can feel the need for physical contact and warmth from others. This helps to establish a deeper and more emotional dynamic of the relationship between Eleanor and Raymond.

*It was surprising that he should bother with me, especially given the unpleasant circumstances in which he'd found me after the concert. Whenever I'd been sad or upset before, the relevant people in my life would simply call my social worker and I'd be moved somewhere else. Raymond hadn't phoned anyone or asked an outside agency to intervene. He'd elected to look after me himself. I'd been pondering this, and concluded that there must be some people for whom difficult behavior wasn't a reason to end their relationship with you. If they liked you—and, I remembered, Raymond and I had agreed that we were pals now—then, it seemed, they were prepared to maintain contact, even if you were sad, or upset, or behaving in very challenging ways. This was something of a revelation. (Honeyman, 2017: 254)*

The quotation describes how Raymond's emotional support for Eleanor has led to a significant change in Eleanor's understanding of interpersonal relationships. Eleanor feels surprised and touched by Raymond's decision to care for her directly, rather than handing her over to outsiders as she had typically experienced in the past. This action by Raymond demonstrates a level of care and commitment that Eleanor had never encountered before. Through this experience, Eleanor begins to understand that true friendship can endure even in difficult situations and that those who genuinely care will continue to support one another despite facing challenging behaviors. This realization marks an important turning point for Eleanor in understanding the value of sincere relationships and consistent emotional support, which she had never received before. The narrative also illustrates that Raymond's emotional support contributes to the growth of Eleanor's character as a protagonist, and shows a reflection of the theme of recovery that makes the plot develop further.

In this quotation, Gail Honeyman shows that consistent emotional support from a caring person like Raymond can be an important catalyst in the trauma healing process. Honeyman stated in an interview with Penguin Books that she wanted to highlight how experiences of loneliness and isolation can be transformed through the kindness and sincerity of human relationships. In a culture that tends to rely on formal systems to deal with personal problems, Honeyman shows that a personal and nonjudgmental human presence is much more meaningful.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is defined as the provision of emotional support, which involves providing assistance and encouragement when it is required, demonstrating readiness to listen with patience and attentiveness, and recognizing or validating the emotions experienced by Eleanor. The following quotations are pertinent to this discussion:

*"I really, really, really do not want to go to the Hawthorn House Hotel for light refreshments, Raymond," I said. "I want to stop thinking about death. I just want to go home, put on normal clothes and watch television."*

*Raymond stubbed his cigarette out and then buried it in the flower bed behind us.*

*"No one wants to go to these things, Eleanor," he said gently. "You have to, though. For the family." I must have looked sad.*

*"You don't need to stay long," he said, his voice soft and patient. "Just show face; have a cup of tea, eat a sausage roll—you know the drill."*

*"Well, I hope they've at least got a high meat content and friable pastry," I said, more in hope than in expectation, and shouldering my handbag. (Honeyman, 2017: 212)*

The above quotation illustrate dialog between Eleanor and Raymond when they will go to the light refreshmens after Sammy's funeral. Eleanor explains why she didn't want to go there. Then Raymond in response provided emotional support depict through, the gently encouraging to Eleanor. He offers a gentle reassurance, acknowledgeing that one enjoys such events but emphasising their necessity for family reasons. He also gently offers an understanding explanation of Eleanor's feelings of being uncomfortable at that place. Furthermore, the next reassurance offers emotional relief by minimizing the perceived durations of the unpleasant task. That statement addresses Eleanor's emotional distress by providing a sense of control and limit to the situation. This type of social support aims to empower Eleanor by making her feel that she can handle the event and take it on with minimal stress.

Raymond's emotional support above not only helped Eleanor cope with the situation at the time but also related to theme of the novel which is the trauma that was still a burden in Eleanor's life. Eleanor's reaction to the situation, which included humor despite the challenges, indicated a gradual process of overcoming her fears and avoiding thoughts associated with mortality. Raymond's compassionate concern fostered Eleanor's ability to manage emotional distress and gradually engaged her in social interactions, which were foundational to her recovery.

Gail Honeyman created the character of Raymond as a representation of human kindness and empathy that is often overlooked in fiction. In interviews, Honeyman stated that she wanted to show that there are many "Raymonds" in the world, ordinary men who are kind and compassionate, who do not often appear in fiction. Honeyman also emphasized the importance of showing that small acts of kindness can have a huge impact in the life of someone as isolated as Eleanor. In the above quotation Raymond's attitude and words of understanding towards Eleanor's feelings demonstrate Gail Honeyman's aim of highlighting small, genuine acts of kindness.

*"Whatever you want, Eleanor. You can talk to me anytime, you know that, don't you?"*

*I nodded; I found, to my surprise, that I did.*

*"I mean it, Eleanor," he said, the wine making him more earnest than usual. "We're pals now, right?" (Honeyman, 2017: 223)*

The conversation between Raymond and Eleanor demonstrates Raymond's emotional support marked by care and friendliness, as well as openness. Raymond expresses his willingness to listen to Eleanor whenever she wants to talk or pour out her heart. This quotation is also indicative of the relationship with the novel's theme, which is friendship and recovery. Eleanor's nodding response, which conveys sincerity, indicates that she is beginning to believe in the relationship, which is an important step in opening up to human connection after years of isolation. This reflects a sincere aspect of supporting Eleanor as someone with an emotional closeness. This is also emphasized in Raymond's statement "We're pals now right?" which reflects the bond between them becoming increasingly strong. This friendship not only facilitated Eleanor's social interactions but also contributed significantly to her transition from a state of loneliness to one of enhanced social connectivity.

The above quotation clearly shows the author's intention to present a story that is not clichéd with a romantic relationship, but Gail Honeyman said in several interviews with various media that the story

of platonic friendship between men and women is not widely featured in fiction. This is also based on the kindness of Raymond's character, which according to Honeyman, many people in the world like Raymond, who is an ordinary man who tends not to have a talent for romantic things but is kind and sincere, rarely exist in works of fiction.

*"Look, I know you're a very private person, and that's fine, but we're pals, you know? You can talk to me about stuff. Don't bottle things up."* (Honeyman, 2017: 251)

Raymond's emotional support for Eleanor is clearly evident through the empathy and understanding he demonstrates. Recognizing that Eleanor is a very private person, he encourages her to share her feelings rather than keeping everything to herself. His approach in inviting Eleanor to speak reflects his commitment to being a dependable friend, as well as his desire for Eleanor to feel comfortable in expressing herself. Raymond emphasizes the importance of communication and avoiding emotional suppression, which shows that he cares for her mental well-being. In this way, he creates a safe space for Eleanor to express herself, which is a crucial aspect of building a supportive and understanding relationship. This indicates that the aforementioned quotation is pertinent to the thematic element of friendship as explored within the novel's context.

The quotation highlights the author's deliberate choice to avoid a clichéd romantic storyline, focusing instead on a platonic bond. In various interviews, Gail Honeyman expressed that friendships between men and women without romantic undertones are underrepresented in fiction. She also emphasized that Raymond's character reflects many real-life individuals, ordinary, unromantic, yet genuinely kind, who are seldom portrayed in literature.

*Raymond reached for my arm, held it for a moment.*  
*"You're doing just fine, Eleanor," he said.* (Honeyman, 2017: 304)

Before the piece of quotation above, Eleanor had reminded Raymond not to make alcohol a habit if he did not want to end up like what happened to her. Raymond's action of grabbing Eleanor's arm and holding her momentarily demonstrates a form of sincere and caring emotional support. This gesture reflects Raymond's desire to provide comfort and reassurance to Eleanor, to soothe her worries, and to show that he is there for her. This support is not only reflected through words but also through gentle touches, which provide a sense of being valued and accepted in situations that may cause Eleanor to feel anxious or uncertain. The quotation also features the theme of friendship growing closer so that emotional as well as physical bonds have become natural and not a problem for Eleanor. This indicates that Raymond's support contributed to Eleanor's character development and recovery.

Gail Honeyman designed Raymond's character to embody the everyday kindness and empathy that is frequently underrepresented in literature. In several interviews, she noted her intention to highlight that many people like Raymond, ordinary, caring men, exist in real life but are rarely featured in fictional narratives. She also underscored how simple, thoughtful gestures can profoundly affect someone who lives in isolation, like Eleanor. Raymond's supportive behavior and gentle words in the quotation reflect Honeyman's goal of emphasizing the power of sincere, small-scale compassion.

*"What do I do?" I said, desperate, suddenly, to move forward, to get better, live. "How do I fix this? How do I fix me?"*

*Dr. Temple put down her pen and spoke firmly but gently.*

*"You're doing it already, Eleanor. You're braver and stronger than you give yourself credit for. Keep going."* (Honeyman, 2017: 311)

In this quotation, Dr. Temple provides Eleanor with emotional support characterized by confidence and sincerity. In moments of despondency, Eleanor found solace in Dr. Temple's empathetic words, which served to validate her internal strength and courage, even if she had not fully recognized them herself. Consequently, Dr. Temple's actions fostered a sense of self-efficacy in Eleanor, encouraging her to persevere in her endeavors. The effectiveness of Dr. Temple's approach is evident in its ability to inspire confidence and foster hope in Eleanor, underscoring her belief that she is on the right path, despite the challenges she faces. The emotional support mentioned above also represents the theme of small acts of kindness that occur through Dr. Temple's words of encouragement and motivation. These acts

contribute to Eleanor's character growth in better accepting help and especially increasing her comfort with social interactions.

Gail Honeyman chose to portray Dr. Maria Temple's support for Eleanor as the motivation for Eleanor to determine her path of change and healing. In an interview with The Guardian, Honeyman emphasized that although Eleanor had a traumatic past, she did not want to portray her as a victim or a compassionate person. Instead, she sought to show that Eleanor had agency and the ability to make her own decisions. Maria, as a caring professional, plays an important role in helping Eleanor open up and accept kindness from others.

### **Appreciation**

Appreciation contains quotation that shows emotional support given by expressing gratitude and appreciation for Eleanor's positive actions or contributions. The following is quotation that is relevant to this discussion:

*"Och, that's nice to hear," she said. "You can pop back into the salon anytime, you know—I'll always try to fit you in, Eleanor. You were lovely to my dad, so you were."* (Honeyman, 2017: 276).

The aforementioned quotation reflects Laura's profound emotional support for Eleanor, manifested through expressions of benevolence and transparency. By offering Eleanor the opportunity to return to the salon at any time and promising to always try to arrange time for her, Laura demonstrates that she values their relationship and is willing to provide unconditional support. The statement regarding Eleanor's benevolence towards her father introduces an emotional dimension, illustrating that Laura not only acknowledges Eleanor's positive actions but also establishes a profound sense of gratitude for them. This reciprocal relationship fosters a sense of emotional security and acceptance for Eleanor, who finds solace and support in Laura's presence. Laura's role as a source of comfort and understanding is crucial in Eleanor's emotional development. The quotation also illustrates the context of the friendship between Eleanor and Laura, which is one of the major themes of the novel. Consequently, the aforementioned emotional support contributes to the novel's structural framework. In this quotation, the desire of the author Gail Honeyman who has been conveyed in various interviews to express her opinion about the importance of small kindnesses that can be seen through actions in everyday life and words of praise, which are pleasant and make someone feel appreciated and not feel alone and realize that all this time she actually felt lonely and needed connection with others so that life would be better and more meaningful.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

The findings of this study indicate that, of the identified data of social support in the novel *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine*, emotional support is the most dominant, followed by informational and instrumental support. This pattern confirms that emotional support, manifested through empathy, concern, and reinforcement, acts as a core mechanism that facilitates Eleanor's recovery from trauma and loneliness. In accordance with Shelley E. Taylor's social support theory, the results show that emotional support provides the psychological security necessary for Eleanor to accept help. The provision of informational support, encompassing advice, guidance, direction, and reminders, as well as instrumental support, through practical help or accompaniment, further strengthen her adaptation and healing. The analysis further underscores the pivotal role of Raymond Gibbons as the predominant provider of social support. His consistent kindness and emotional availability serve as a testament to Taylor's notion that supportive relationships can enhance coping mechanisms and cultivate resilience. However, other characters, including Sammy, Laura, and Dr. Maria Temple, also played significant roles in offering various types of support that contributed to Eleanor's transformation of her self-image and lifestyle. Their actions demonstrate that recovery is not solely the result of one relationship, but rather a network of interactions that collectively reshape the protagonist's worldview and behavior.

From the perspective of genetic structuralism, these findings and analyses reveal that Gail Honeyman's narrative is profoundly influenced by social realities surrounding loneliness, emotional detachment, and the modern human need for connection. The depiction of Eleanor's measured reintegration into social interactions aligns with Honeyman's perspective as an author who employs her literary works to offer critical insights on social isolation in modern urban settings. The novel's emphasis

on platonic friendship, human empathy, and benevolent actions reflects the author's endeavor to reestablish significance within a fractured society. This approach is consistent with the genetic structuralist premise that a literary work is an embodiment of both the author's consciousness and the collective structures of the author's era. Honeyman's portrayal of social support is not merely a work of fiction; rather, it functions as a cultural commentary on the psychological ramifications of isolation and the ethical imperative of empathy.

A comparison of the present study with previous investigations on the same topic, including those conducted by Tiansyah, Putranti, and Pratiwi, reveals a complementary yet distinct contribution of the present research. Prior studies have centered on Eleanor's psychological trauma, defense mechanisms, and self-acceptance, emphasizing the internal processes of healing. In contrast, the present study extends the discussion by analyzing the external factors that enable that healing process, namely the social environment and interpersonal support. By employing Taylor's framework for systematic categorization of data, this study offers novel insights into the relational dynamics underlying Eleanor's psychological transformation. The results of the study corroborate previous findings that Eleanor's journey entails recovery and personal growth. However, the study introduces a novel perspective by demonstrating that such growth is facilitated by the consistent social support provided by the surrounding characters. Consequently, the present study does not contradict previously proposed interpretations; rather, it serves to elaborate upon them by illuminating the manner in which interpersonal relationships function as catalysts for self-reconstruction.

However, it must be acknowledged that this study is not without its limitations. The analysis is dependent on the qualitative interpretation of textual data, which introduces subjectivity in the classification of quotations into specific support categories. The researcher's personal judgment in distinguishing between emotional, informational, and instrumental support may influence the outcomes of data categorization. The absence of inter-coder verification compromises the reliability of the results. The study's exclusive emphasis on a single novel and utilization of a singular theoretical framework preclude the generalizability of its findings beyond the specific context of the analyzed work. Consequently, the findings cannot be used as a basis for extrapolating the representation of social support in literature in its entirety. Consequently, future researchers are encouraged to address these limitations through methodological refinement. The employment of multiple coders or the establishment of a codebook could serve to minimize interpretive bias and enhance reliability. A comparative analysis with other contemporary novels dealing with loneliness, trauma, or friendship could reveal whether emotional support predominance is unique to Honeyman's work or representative of a broader literary trend. A combination of qualitative literary analysis with reader-response studies or corpus-based methods would also help triangulate the data and strengthen the empirical foundation of the findings. Future studies could explore how different cultural contexts shape representations of social support and whether the same typology proposed by Taylor applies across diverse narratives. The present study corroborates the hypothesis that emotional support functions as the central axis of Eleanor's personal transformation.

## CONCLUSION

The social support identified in Taylor's theory; informational, instrumental, and emotional, play a central role in *Eleanor Oliphant Is Completely Fine* by Gail Honeyman, shaping Eleanor's life and recovery from trauma. Informational support, provided through advice, feedback, reminders, and responses to queries, is reflected in characters like Raymond and Dr. Temple, who guide Eleanor during moments of crisis, including her suicide attempt. Instrumental support is evident in the assistance from Raymond, Laura, and Dr. Maria Temple, ranging from financial aid and practical help, such as preparing meals or offering physical support, to acts of care that ease Eleanor's struggles. Emotional support, offered by Raymond, Sammy, Laura, and Dr. Temple, manifests in empathy, love, appreciation, and concern, which help Eleanor feel valued and encourage her to open herself to meaningful relationships. Together, these forms of social support enhance interpersonal interaction, foster healing, and shape the novel's structure by influencing its themes, character development, and plot progression.

The significance of social support in the novel extends beyond character interactions, as it underscores Eleanor's broader journey from isolation to connection. Emotional support highlights her gradual acceptance of human relationships, while instrumental support anchors pivotal moments of

recovery, symbolizing the role of tangible aid in overcoming life's challenges. Informational support strengthens her self-awareness and decision-making, driving the plot toward a resolution that emphasizes the transformative power of kindness. Genetic structuralism perspective portrayals mirror Honeyman's worldview, informed by her concerns on loneliness, particularly in young women, who are often stereotyped as carefree or socially fulfilled. By integrating acts of benevolence into the narrative, Honeyman suggests that even the simplest gestures of care have the capacity to profoundly influence an individual's life, challenging societal assumptions about loneliness and demonstrating the healing power of human connection.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

The researchers declare that they have no competing interests.

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