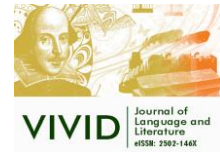


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Literature

Deep Grief and Recovery in Anne Enright's *The Gathering*

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A B S T R A C T

This research aims to present the results of the analysis in Anne Enright's *The Gathering* by using psychoanalytical criticism. The focus of the analysis is the psychological problem that experienced by the main female character in this novel, Veronica Hegarty, who presumably gets the difficulty in accepting her lovely brother's death. This research uses the psychoanalytical theory of Sigmund Freud's the unconscious, which leads to the another theory that is Prolonged Grief Disorder by Prigerson et al. This research has two results. Firstly, Veronica Hegarty is experienced Prolonged Grief Disorder which can be seen in her deep grief that causes the duration and the intensity of her grief is heightened. Secondly, the writer concludes that Veronica Hegarty tries to cope with her grief by recalling the memories about her brother. From those memories, Veronica realizes her mistakes she has done to him and self-forgiving herself to deal with it. By forgiving herself, she can cope with her grief and she later has the desire to continue her life again.

INTRODUCTION

The experience of losing a loved one to death is a universal phenomenon that gives pain for every person. This kind of loss called as grief. The Gale Encyclopedia of Mental Disorders stated that "Grief, which is also known as bereavement, is a term used to describe the intense and painful emotions experienced when someone or something a person cares about either dies or is lost" [1]. The emotional pain of losing a loved one, whether it is a spouse, child, parent, sibling, friend, or pet, can be the most severe suffering a person must endure. The grief caused by loss of the loved-one gives the emotional pain that every survivor has to cope with.

Grieving is normal that every person could experience it. Cohen et al as quoted by Howarth state that the process of normal grief followed by feelings of great sadness and anger, physical symptoms such as weight loss and insomnia, a preoccupation with death, and difficulty with

concentration [2]. The normal grief involves reconciliation, which defines as “the process that occurs as the bereaved individual works to integrate the new reality of moving forward in life without the physical presence of the person who died” (5). When the process of normal bereavement is interrupted, grief reactions become much more painful and it may develop complicated grief (5). Complicated grief named Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) causes the symptoms of normal grief heightens.

In reading *The Gathering* [3], the writer finds Veronica Hegarty gains development through her personality during grieving. She does not give up on her sorrow which later she could be coped with it unconsciously. She tries to examine the cause of her brother’s suicide by recalling her memories. She tries to bring back the past memories in order to find the reason why he commits suicide that might be have a bottom line with the past. This effort brings her to a conclusion through the reason of his suiciding. He ended his life because of the traumatic experience that always haunts him like forever. He has been sexually abused when he was nine. Veronica has seen it directly but she did not do anything to help, which presumably she might be terrified of it.

The writer assumes that this is the reason why she cannot accept his death because of her mistakes that could not be forgiven. But she later does not let herself having this guilt for so long. She realizes that there is nothing to do instead of forgiving herself. The self-forgiving later gives her the desire to continue her life again. Through Veronica Hegarty, the writer believes, Anne Enright in *The Gathering* is trying to emphasize that people who suffers from PGD could survive and cope with it individually.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Psychoanalytical Criticism (The Unconscious)

In this study, the writer applies the basic of psychoanalytical principles that established by Sigmund Freud. His theory called classical psychoanalysis is adapted to the literary criticism. In his study, Freud focuses on the individual unconscious. Guerin et al in *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* stated “the most of individual's mental processes are unconscious”[4]. Freud argues as quoted by Tyson that the notion of human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware, that is called as unconscious [5]. The unconscious is the place where the painful experiences and emotions, wounds, fears, guilty desires, and unresolved conflicts that we do not want to know or remember because it will harm us are stored in it.

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD)

Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) is the pathological grief based on the intensity and the duration of grief itself [6]. The study of grief is developed by many scientists based on the origin of the ideas of grief from Sigmund Freud in his article “Mourning and Melancholia” [7].

Complicated Grief (CG) is the origin term of Prolonged Grief Disorder that found by Prigerson et al in 1996 [8]. In developing this theory, the new term that qualifies in this study has been found to replace Complicated Grief (CG) to Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) in 2009 [9]). In other hand, Maciejewski et al argue that neither the symptoms of grief itself are atypical nor

pathological, but the symptoms itself remain too intense for too long that risk the PGD (1) [6]. While CG, “the pathology is attributed to factors other than grief, e.g. bereavement-related depression or trauma that interfere with otherwise normal grief processes” (2). Therefore, the person who is diagnosed as PGD’s patient must have at least five symptoms which experienced daily or to a disabling degree (9). In conclusion, the writer is going to analyze the main character’s psychological problem by understanding all of these symptoms to gain a better result in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Veronica Hegarty in *The Gathering* cannot accept her beloved brother’s death, that is Liam who dies at the age of forty. She loves him more than the other siblings and the only one that she loves in her family. He is just eleven months older than her which makes them become more closer like twins. They always together and never be separated even though they live in different places because they still keep the communication. Despite how close they are, it does not mean there is no fight between them. She felt like having love hate situation with Liam. She hates him because his bad attitude and treated him like a terrible annoying brother in their childhood. It causes him changed into a complete different person and started to drink when he was a teenager. He also get caught by the police for unspeakable crime when he was sixteen. But whenever she hates him, she never forget him and still be with him if he needs her. Veronica is like a “home” for Liam because she is the one who he wants to talk or to go with. However, as the time goes by the tension between them is getting heighten because she could not tolerate his misbehavior and made her turn away from him. It happened for almost four years and they begun to stop communicating since the last time she was seen him and decided to not meet him anymore. But this decision unexpectedly brought her through the eternal regret.

Liam dies tragically after he drowns himself in Brighton’s sea after four years without keep in touch with Veronica. There is no clear reason why he does it which makes Veronica try so hard to find his motive on doing it. Even none of his friends knew something wrong with him before he committed suicide. It seems like he dies in “silence” that there is no one expect it would happen to him. In his lifetime, Liam might be impulsive and vicious because he is an alcoholic, but dies by committing suicide is a terrible thing which Veronica could not believed he would do such thing. The death might be more acceptable if there is an accident involved, but suicide is beyond her rational thought. Knowing Liam dies tragically makes Veronica realizes the mistake she has done to him and it brings back the love that she has for him since they were children. She cannot accept the death of a brother who never hate her whenever there are so many mistakes she ever does to him without thinking it would be affected him badly. She also realizes that she is the only one who he could trust, but she chooses to stop believe in him, build the wall between them which makes he cannot reach inside her anymore.

Veronica Hegarty’s Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD) Symptoms and the Causes

Liam’s tragic death has caused Veronica to grief for a long time. She is grieving for more than five months and it ruins her life. She abandons her family, being an alcoholic, has no desire to live even jeopardizes herself sometimes, and think that there is no future for her. She is heavily damaged because the brother she loves dies and all she can see is just his grave. The original

symptoms of PGD have been developed by Prigerson et al in their article “Prolonged Grief Disorder: Psychometric Validation of Criteria Proposed for DSM-V and ICD-11” (1). There are several symptoms, such as difficulty to accept the loss and to feel that life is unfulfilling, empty, or meaningless since the loss (9). The writer uses those symptoms to examine the condition of Veronica Hegarty while grieving. Her psychological problems and the change of her behaviors are presumably suitable to the characteristics of PGD’s patient. In analyzing the PGD’s symptoms of Veronica Hegarty, the writer recognizes that there are several possibilities of the symptoms to be combined because some of her psychological problems refer to those symptoms which have similar issue defines in them. The writer divides the symptoms into three parts; first symptom, second symptom, and third symptom. Each of the symptoms are explained and by the cause and effect that happens in related events.

First Symptom

In the first symptom, the writer combines three symptoms; difficulty in accepting the loss, bitterness or anger related to the loss, and feeling stunned, dazed, or shocked by the loss. Those symptoms are referred to Veronica’s inability to accept Liam’s death. At the first phase, she is shocked by the death of Liam. His death affects her right after she told her mother the news several days since he dies. “And what amazes me as I hit the motorway is not the fact that everyone loses someone, but that everyone loves someone” (28). The fact Liam is dead brings her into a realization that she actually love him but she tried to hide it for all of this time. She feels the love filled her heart, but the beloved is gone forever. It shocked her and made her accidentally hit the motorway while driving.

The death that could not be accepted causes Veronica grieving for more than five months. She keep thinking about him and try to find the cause of why he commits suicide by recalling her mind. She intends to find a clue by recalling her mind in the past that probably might be the trigger which leads him dies. Moreover, she even cannot accept the fact that he is dead by suiciding. Veronica finally could feel the loss after she has seen his corpse in Brighton and it ruins her. But she cannot believe the fact that he is committing suicide consciously. It can be seen when her little daughter Emily says “I think it’s OK to kill yourself...You know, when you’re old” which makes her angry (175). She replies her by saying “Your Uncle Liam was not old, Emily. He was sick. Do you hear me? Your Uncle Liam was sick, in his head” (175). She refuses to believe that Liam has planned to kill himself whenever the fact of self-murder perceives in his dead body. He has found in Brighton’s sea wearing yellow jacket like the railway workers wear which presumably he wants people to find his body easily so people could take the corpse out of the sea as soon as he dies. There are stones in his yellow jacket’s pocket which assumes that it can weight his body and make it easy to drown himself. Those prove that he has planned to die by organizing everything. However, Veronica cannot accept the truth. She believes that he was drunk and accidentally drowned himself because he is an alcoholic and she resists the fact that he has stones in his pocket to weight his body for helping him drown himself.

According to the way Liam dies based on how she tend to believe, she still cannot accept it whenever she knows that there are a lot of internal conflicts and problems in his mind that cannot be beared by himsels alone. Whatever the cause of his death, whether he has planned it

or probably happens accidentally while he drunk, she still hate him because now he is dead. She hates Liam for leaving her alone by letting himself dies. Liam is the closest brother and she loves him so much when she realizes it after he dies. "...the sense of someone calling me home, but the only person who might be call was Liam and he was nowhere to be seen" (123). Whenever how bad Liam is, he will always be the best brother for Veronica. He never leaves her and always sticks with her. "In our teens, we wrote slick and 'hilarious' letters to each other, any time we were parted" (118). He also protects her by not allowing her to touch any drugs when they were in college. They living in an abandon storeys for couple days at that time and have party with drink, drugs, and sex. But no one offers her any drugs which presumably is because Liam has warned them for not letting her to consumes it. As time goes by, he always keep his concern through his little sister. He visited her in the hospital after she gave birth to her first child whenever he was living in England and Veronica was in Dublin at that time because he worried about her. Those several affections that he shows to her describe how much he loves her. But when he ends his own life and leaves her forever, it hurts her and it could not be forgiven. She becomes bitter and lover through her brother at the same time.

She even think that Liam has blamed her for having husband that can afford her life more than she ever could dreamed. "He blamed me for my nice house...nice daughters...my golf-loving husband...He treated me like I was selling out on something...because Liam did not allow dreams either..." (168). The Hegartys were poor and the eleven children always fight for who could wear the shoes, clothes, and share the bicycle. But then she turn into a cinderella when she married her husband Tom. She actually can afford her life when she work as a journalist on an interiors magazines but after married she has a house with five bedrooms, Saab 9.3 for her own, and credit cards. "And the fact that makes me cry is that there is nothing here [Brown Thomas] that I cannot buy" (189). She becomes very rich because of Tom and she thinks that Liam probably hate her for this while he bum around in England because he has no proper job.

She feels bitter through him because his death is just give her pain. "Liam never went to shop. So, in honour of Liam, I put the storage jars back and I drive home, pointing out all the changes to him, now that he is dead" (190). She turns her sadness into blame and anger to Liam because that is his fault for leaving her alone makes her suffers through her loss.

Second Symptom

This symptom is focusses on Veronica's inability to live her life after the death of her brother. There are three symptoms that the writer has combined, that is confusion about one's role in life or diminished sense of self, difficulty moving on with life, and feeling life is unfulfilling, empty, or meaningless since the loss.

She could not take care of herself and her family. She became an alcoholic after Liam died. She could not live a day without alcohol. She drunk in a bar, pub, or in her house when her daughters sleep. As an alcoholic, whiskey, wine, and gin are the most drink that Liam loves and keeping up with what he loves makes her feels closer to him and it can fulfill her need of him. Therefore, alcohol helps her to sleep. "...I always do drink – from the top of the wine bottle to the last, little drop. It is the only way I know to make the day end" (Enright 38). She has sleep problem while grieving and alcohol helps her to fall asleep. Her head is full of Liam which causes she has bad insomnia. She stuck on finding the reason why he kills himself and makes her tries to

recalling her mind to find a clue about his suicide which might have a bottom line with the past. She spends her time most to write those memories and abandon her role as a mother and wife. Her drinking habit also leads her to do the dangerous thing. She sometimes drives at midnight while drunk. “It was my headrest ghost who first called me out of the house...” (148). The writer assumes that this is an impulse of her need to clear her mind while driving in the quiet time because she could think better by doing it.

Having bad insomnia makes her cannot wake up in the morning to tidy up her daughters, Rebecca and Emily, and drives them to school. It forces her busy husband, Tom, to take care of them. She also leaves them for several days when she goes to England to bring Liam’s corpse back to Dublin. She does not really abandon them, but she just cannot take care of them fully in a day like what she does as always. This inadvertently abandonment is presumably because she is tired of her routine as a full time mother. Moreover, she needs time for grieving. Take a break from her routine is what she need to let herself grieve. Furthermore, she is not the only parent her daughters have. There is a husband who can take her place to take care of them. The writer also assumes that Veronica wants her husband to understand how hard her life for being a mother without his help. She is tired to see him busy with his work and abandon his family. It is time for him to take his role as a father, not just being as a financial support. There is no reason for him to avoid his duty because now Veronica has lost herself and cannot take her role as mother.

Grief does not only causes her cannot take her role as a mother but as a wife too. She gets the difficulty in an intimate relationship with her husband after Liam dies. She promised herself to not having sex with him anymore since the last time they did it on the night of Liam’s wake. She was too drunk and lost her mind, caused her seduced him to have sex. But as a result, she hated him because he did not refuse it and letted her ruined the day of Liam’s wake right after they had sex. It is presumably because she thinks that she should honor Liam and respects him by showing her deepest sorrow on that day. But she disrespects him by doing sex and it brings annihilation to her. Liam is lying in his coffin and cannot enjoy his life anymore but she mocks him by doing the thing that he cannot do because now he is dead and cannot pleasure himself anymore. Furthermore, she even could not enjoy sex with his husband anymore. “...I lay there with one leg on either side of his dancing, country-boy hips and I did not feel alive. I felt like a chicken when it is quartered” (40). Have sex with him feels tasteless and what she can think while they doing that is just how to end it.

Beside of the failure taking her role as a mother and wife, she also has no interest in her life. “This is how I live my life since Liam died. I stay up all night. I write or I don’t write. I walk the house” (36). She does not want to do anything and just spend her time thinking about Liam, writing to recall her mind, and abandon her family because her concern is just about him. Living without her beloved brother makes she cannot think that she might have the future. “I feel the future falling through the roof of my mind and when I look nothing is there. A rope. Something dangling in a bag, that I cannot touch” (39). She feels like there is no future for her since her brother dies and leaves her alone. It seems like his death has shutted down every desires, wants and all she could feel is just an endless silence of her life. She has lost her love and feels guilty which causes her loses her hope to continue her life.

Third Symptom

The third symptom is the inability to trust others since the loss. Veronica cannot trust anyone since Liam dies. She cannot trust her husband, parents, friend, even she does not want to meet any therapist to help her cope with her grief whenever she knows that her life is ruined by her sadness. The trust issue is triggered by the person she has trusted once but he betrays her. That is Lambert Nugent who abused Liam sexually when he was nine years old.

Nugent is a landlord of her grandparents' house and he is their good friend too. He uses their house's garage for vehicle raparation and visits them oftenly when Liam, Veronica and their little sister Kitty live with their grandparents. The grandparents welcome Nugent because he is such a nice person, especially with the children. They like him because he is good at children and always brings sweets and toys every times he meets them. Liam is the one who really loves to stick around Liam because he has something that he interested on it. He loves car and Nugent sometimes let him enter his garage where he can play or learn to repair the vehicles. In return, he also has something to take from him.

The nice and lovable man is just a mask that Nugent always wears when he meets people. The true person himself hides inside the mask is a monster that cannot be stopped when it comes to his desire. Nugent is a pedophile who is obsessed with Liam. He was a beautiful boy with "his lips flowerred bizarrely" and "the blue of his eyes was a dizzy thing" (163). And he was a small boy that makes he looks cute. That adorable boy attracts Nugent and makes him tries anything to get him. He was being nice with them, especially to Liam so he could comfort him and got closer to him without any troubles.

Veronica hates Nugent so much. She remembered him on the incident when she coincidetally catch him while he sexually abused Liam. There is no apology shows on his face whenever he has found out do a very bad thing. "...the look in his eye was one of very ordinary irritation" (146). But he just asked her out casually by saying "Would you ever get out of that" and she did, she closes the door and ran to the toilet upstairs (146). She ran because she terrified of that incident. "I don't know why his pleasure should be the most terrible thing in the room for me" (144). Seeing the sexual abusive when she was eight gave her a trauma.

Nugent has ruined her trust on him by hurting his beloved brother. The abuse really affects Liam mentally and makes him live in trouble because the trauma could not be released. But Nugent never bother to think about what will happen to him in the future because all he care about is just his pleasure. Liam likes him so much but he hurts him deeply. His trust has been betrayed by him and Veronica cannot accept his betrayal and will never forgive of what he ever does to Liam.

Nugent's betrayal really gave her pain and left a trauma she could not bear. It made her could not trust anyone and it kept growing up until thirty nine of her age. She even could not trust her family. She has ten siblings but none she could trust. Whenever there is Liam that she loves more, but still, she cannot put her trust on him after she decides that he is not deserve to be believed. She accused Liam rapped a girl at the police incident. There was no clear information about that and it just her assumption, but she put her final accusation on him. It caused her turned away from her beloved brother.

She also could not trust parents. She hated her father because he could not control his sexual drive which gave him have so many children. He even cannot afford his eleven children's needs and made his family live improperly. Not only making them suffers financially, but he also forcing them to endure the pain because he used violence in order to make them behave. Veronica could not forgive the slap he gave to her and her sisters many times which made them suffer. She also could not forgive him for beating her brothers more often than the girls.

Her mother is nothing better than her father. She is the worst. She is physically and mentally ill because of having so many children. She has twelve living children, but one dies when he was two. She also has seven miscarriages. She became terribly weak and blank minded after experiencing the first miscarriage and it continues for the rest of her life. She even cannot remember her children's name sometimes. She also has anxiety problem that makes her husband warns the children to not tell any bad things happen to their mother. "Don't tell Mammy" is their password when someone do a mistake or in trouble. All she need to know is everything good and they live happily. But one thing that makes Veronica really hate her is she cannot refuse her husband for have sex which cause them have so many children that cannot to take care of. They have sex too much but has no courage to refuse him whenever she does not want to do that or get tired. All Veronica knows about her mother that she is a vulnerable woman which not just give pain for herself, but also for the children she loves.

Besides them, Veronica also mistrust her husband. "The last time I touched him was the night of Liam's wake. And I don't know what is wrong with me since, but I do not believe in my husband's body anymore" (73). She was too drunk that night and too sad because all she could see is just her brother's dead body and made her lost her mind and accidentally asked sex to her husband. After she was sober, she regretted for doing that. She thought he should refuse it because having sex while her dead brother lying in his coffin at her mother's house was a great mistake. It made her stopped to trust him because he could not keep her away from something that she could hate later. Moreover, she did not enjoy to have sex with him anymore since she felt the hatred on him years ago. It is just about the right time to decide to stop having sex with him by using this incident as an excuse.

Her decision to not have sex with him anymore also invested by the loss of love for him. They started their relationship in a wrong way. They did one night stand while Tom was living with another woman at that time. And it continued several times until Tom broke up with her and married Veronica. Although he chose her to be his wife, she sometimes did not believe that he loved her. She thought he had being hate her since Rebecca was born. Her present always put them in fight for who would take care of her after the baby sitter left and made Veronica gave in. Her opinion about his hatred also strengthened by his decision to chose his career over his family. He put his job on the top of everything and made her loathed him. "Tom, my high-maintenance man, is upstairs dreaming his high-maintenance dreams of hurt and redemption in the world of corporate finance, and it is all nothing to do with me" (36). He was too busy with his job and spends most of his time for work. "...his job was an important job, that he couldn't be expected to be doing picks-up and Pampers and snot and drop-offs with so much importance around" (71). She forced to gave up her career as a journalist on an interior magazines so she could take care of her daughter and kept everythings in place. But there is something hanging in her mind that a man will not abandon his family if there is just work involved. He is probably

have an affair outside. "...I do not believe in Tom beside me...that he loves me" (133). Tom always said that he loved her and worried about her while she was grieving. "Don't stay up all night" as he said when he came home late and found her drunk wine in the kitchen because she got insomnia during grief (72). But she could not believe any of it.

Another fault that Tom has done is he hates Liam because he gave them the difficulties when he was alive. She remembered that "Tom looking at him with a face that was completely blank, while Liam chuntered on about how long it took corpses to go off these days" because Tom's father is dying at that time (125). He could not believe that Liam dared to talk about that while his father dying. He never liked Liam because he was vicious and always drunk. Moreover, Tom did not show his condolence through Liam's death because he was still busy with his work. He even brought his work home while they were waiting for Liam's corpse arrives.

Veronica sometimes also does not trust her daughters, eight years old Rebecca, and six years old Emily. "They don't really want me, I think. They are just putting up with me for a while" (38). She thinks that they are not really care about her because they seems too busy with themselves and forget her when they do not need her. But she cannot live without them and force them a little to get their attention. "So I get a daughter on the sofa and manhandle her into loving me a little..." (38). The present of daughters like drugs to keep her sane. "If I don't talk to them I think I will die of something..." (38). Talking with them is the most thing she loves every day and it remind her that she is still alive. But the love that she could see from them is not as much as hers and it disappoints her. She mistrusts them and doubt their love.

Veronica's trust issue is also might be seen when she has no friend to talk while grieving. There is no clear explanation in the novel whether she has friend or not during that time. She has some friends when she was young but it is not clearly mentioned whether she still keep their friendship or she might have the new one in her adulthood. But in her grieving time she locks herself from social and keeps her sadness alone. Therefore, she knows that her grief for losing her brother has harmed her whenever she does not know that she is suffer from deep grief or PGD. Her insomnia, drink habit, and endless sadness are the things that she really understand it has damaged her, but she does not go to any therapists to get a help. There is no one could be trusted even like a professional therapist might not help her. She wants to handle her sorrow with her own way by finding the cause of his brother's death.

The seven of nine symptoms that Veronica have is proved her to suffer from PGD. People who are diagnosed to have PGD must not have all of the symptoms. To be categorized as PGD's patient, they at least must have five symptoms [8].

Recalling the Past Memories as the Effort to Find the Source of the Deep Grief

Veronica is incapable from accepting Liam's death because he is not only the loved one but also there is something wrong with his death which bother her. She thinks that his reason for commit suicide has a relation to the past event. She remembers there is something happens to Liam when he is a child but she does not sure whether it is real or just her imagination. She wants to ensure it by recalling her mind and writes everything she remembers in the past. Remembering the past memories would give her a clue to find the truth. In her effort to bring her memories back, she writes the imagination stories about her grandparents and their friend.

Those writings are about the triangle love story between her grandmother Ada Merriman, her grandfather Charlie Spillane, and their friend whose also their landlord, Lambert Nugent. She is suspicious about the relationship between Merriman and Nugent because they were too close as Veronica remembered when she lived with her. She believes there is something hidden between them both. Writing their love story will fulfill her curiosity. Besides that, those stories trigger the past memories back that have buried in her mind.

The result of recalling her mind is she realizes that she has done several mistakes which leads Liam to live alone in his nightmares. It causes her feels guilty that harms her time by time. Her inability to live her life is because she has been eaten by her guilt and cannot run from it. She has done the biggest mistake to him. But if she helped him or did not forget about the abuse, it would save him from burning himself in Nugent's hell. "Even your sister – your saviour in a way, the girl who stands in the light of the hall – even she does not hold or remember the thing she saw. Because, by that stage, I think I had forgotten it entirely" (172). But it has forgotten for over decades and it buries in her mind. Her guilt over her dead brother would not be lifted because there is nothing to do to undo his death and fixes her mistakes. Those mistakes that cannot be forgiven and forces her to live with that makes her falling into the deep grief for so long.

Self-Forgiveness as an Effort to Deal with the Deep Grief

Putting Liam as the center of her attention later makes her come to an understanding about the cause of his death. He does not kill himself for nothing, but it is to end his pain. Drinking, being a troublemaker, never care about his life are just some sort of the efforts to stop his mental torment but it seems there is no cure for this. Her thought about that makes her later be able to accept his reason to end his life. This acceptance also brings her to the understanding about her involvement through this accident. She was the only one who knew the abuse happened but she forgot it and abandoned him while he was suffering from his trauma. He might be hoped that she would remember this and helped him to get through of it, but her reactions throughout his trouble life seemed like this memory have been forgotten since the day she has seen it. Her heedlessness might push him to walk into the sea and drowns himself. She is the one who causes his tragic death and she thinks it would not be forgiven.

She knows her mistakes about the memory she has forgotten. It should be told to anyone right after it has happened but it is no use now. But she cannot keep this secret alone because the guilt of it consumes her time by time. She has to reveal it and thus she could be freed from this. She wants to tell her brother Ernest about Liam's painful experience which later he could confess it to their family. Besides that, she presumably wants all of her siblings to understand what makes Liam damages his body with alcohol and becomes a troublemaker which causes a chaos in their family. Not only she herself, but she wants the rest of her family to forgive all of his mistakes which caused by the trauma that he cannot bear with. Forgiving Liam would let him rest in peace and lighten up her regret through the mistakes that she does to him. Her intention to confess the truth to Ernest brings her to do self-forgiving. She has forgotten his pain for thirty one years but now she will tell it and thus it could be changed her family's bad opinion through him. Therefore, the secret must be revealed. She wants to let them know that is Nugent who should to be blamed for all the bad things happen on Liam. The writer also

assumes that by telling the truth, Veronica wants their siblings to forgive herself for being coward and forgets the abuse because she has been terrified after she saw it. It also could fulfill her wish of Liam's forgiveness by accepting it from her siblings. This thought and all the positive vibes that come from it gives her the courage to forgive herself. By forgiving herself also causes her to want to live happily again.

Her desire for having a happy life makes her realize that her grief has damaged herself badly. "I have been falling for months. I have been falling into my own life, for months. And I am about to hit it now" (260). The grief causes her to live in her nadir and it gives her nothing but pain. This realization leads her to think about the solution to help her out of this bad situation. The only way to ease the pain is to deal with the grief. It encourages her to have faith and desire to cope with her grief, and thus she could continue her life again.

CONCLUSIONS

After reading and analyzing *The Gathering*, the writer concludes that this novel is not merely about a family gathering on the family's member funeral, but there is a trauma that needs to be coped by accepting the death of the loved one. The acceptance of the death relates to the main character's effort in order to find the source of her trauma which causes her to be stuck on her grief for so long. The analysis of the novel brings three major conclusions. The first conclusion is that the death of Veronica Hegarty's brother, Liam, causes her to experience the deep grief. The painful loss triggered by their close relationship in the past. Liam loves her unconditionally, but she cannot love him when he does several mistakes and forgets her love for him. Her regret for not loving Liam as much as he does which she realizes it after he dies tragically in an unacceptable way, gives her sorrow that she cannot bear. Moreover, Veronica suffers from Prolonged Grief Disorder (PGD). It is mainly proven by the intensity of her grief and the length of its duration. It is also depicted through the discussion of PGD's symptoms that fit to Hegarty. As for the people with PGD, the difficulty in accepting the loss would cause them to not move on with their lives. It gives them a bad effect which causes them to abandon everything involved in their lives.

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