



UNIVERSIDADE DA CORUÑA

FACULTADE DE FILOLOXÍA

MESTRADO INTERUNIVERSITARIO EN ESTUDOS AVANZADOS DO INGLÉS E
AS SÚAS APLICACIÓNS

Drowning Sorrows Away:

An Analysis of Alcohol Consumption in Two Chick

Lit Novels

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Academic course 2022-2023

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Abstract

The present Master's degree final project analyses the alcohol consumption pattern of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, two chick lit heroines set in two decades apart. As alcohol is often less stigmatized than other drugs, it tends to be misused or unnoticed. To carry out the analysis, a theoretical background based on a modern approach to addiction has been developed and considered. Furthermore, a three-approach methodology is applied: first, specific quotes extracted from each novel are examined using a set of six questions; second, the protagonists' alcohol consumption is assessed with the aid of a screening tool (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test); third, the alcohol use settings of each protagonist is explored. The findings point to an abusive alcohol consumption of both, Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, but with notable differences between their drinking patterns, likely to be a result of their past traumatic events.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to my advisor Dr. David Clark Mitchell for his inspiring guidance, support, useful suggestions and editorial corrections throughout the elaboration of this project. I am also truly grateful for your time, kindness and patience with me which have shed light at the end of the tunnel during the process.

I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. María Jesús Lorenzo Modia, Dr. José Manuel Estévez Saá, and Dr. Eduardo Barros Grela who enlightened me with their knowledge and wisdom during this course, gifting me with the opportunity to continue with my education 12 years after having graduated.

I could not have undertaken this journey without my best friend Cath. Thank you for always being my greatest support, for guiding me and for having the most enormous patience in this world. In short, thank you for being my lighthouse. Words can simply not express the gratitude I feel for having you in my life.

Special thanks to Sebas for being next to me, encouraging me to work but also forcing me to take a break when I was completely overwhelmed and not able to let go of my laptop.

I would never forget to pay thanks to my parents for understanding that, despite being on holidays, I could not spend as much time as desired with them. Also, for always making me aware of how necessary it is in life to fight for your dreams and not sit back. Their love and prayers have always been a source of courage and confidence for me.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this work is to analyse in depth the alcohol consumption of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, the heroines of two chick lit novels. The major reason for choosing chick lit characters is because one of the elements present in this specific genre is the excessive alcohol consumption by its protagonists (Harzewski 34). Furthermore, nowadays alcohol consumption is often less stigmatized than other substance uses and occurs at a wide and complicated spectrum, which can make it difficult to recognize when it becomes a problem, or even an addiction. These reasons, together with my own intransigent stance towards drug use, have propelled to the elaboration of this Master's degree final project.

The work is divided into five chapters. After the introduction, Chapter 2 provides an overview of the theoretical background and the methodology used to approach the data. Section 2.1 analyses the main characteristics and elements of the genre they belong to. Section 2.2 introduces the two novels to be examined: *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. In the following, section 2.3 presents a theoretical background which focuses on a modern approach to addiction by Dr. Gábor Maté. A further subsection expands on the concept of trauma in relation to addiction and focuses specifically on alcohol use disorder. The last section of Chapter 2 displays the methodology to extract the data for analysis. The approach to the data is threefold: first, section 2.4.1 contains a set of six questions which have been elaborated to extract data from specific alcohol related quotes in the novel; second, in section 2.4.2 the screening tool AUDIT is presented to assess problematic alcohol use with each protagonist and, third, the alcohol use settings of both characters is highlighted in 2.4.3. The data extracted with the aid of these three approaches is analysed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 discusses the findings in relation to the theoretical background. Last but not least, Chapter 5 draws the conclusions of this work.

The findings suggest that both chick lit heroines have a harmful relationship with alcohol. Nevertheless, Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant present two different drinking patterns. This could be due to past traumatic events each of them had to experience.

2. OVERVIEW

In this chapter, the novels which have been selected for this work, *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, are individually presented. In order to do this, section 2.1 brings forth a brief description of the chick lit genre, listing the main elements which characterise it, together with the common features of a chick lit protagonist. Once the novels are introduced in section 2.2, section 2.3 explores the modern approach taken nowadays to addiction by expert Dr. Gábor Maté, expanding on the definition of trauma and focusing on alcohol use disorder. Finally, section 2.4 expounds on the methodology used for this work, examining the three different approaches taken in order to extract the data to analyse.

2.1 Chick lit genre

The origins of chick lit date back to the year 1996 with the publishing of *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding. According to Mazza, these books are entertaining and many women can identify with them. The plots usually involve a woman in her 20s or 30s, going through everyday problems and challenges with her boyfriend, job, living situation, marriage, dating life... (24).

In regard to the genre's characteristic elements, Wells explains that chick lit novels usually collect the following: a) they have a love plot; b) they deal with the heroine's maturation; c) the heroine at work; d) their beauty issues, and e) shopping and consumption. Wells develops these elements as follows: first, the love plot will vary according to the marital status and age of the protagonist: if the protagonist is single, she will seek for a worth-while relationship and the candidate will usually be the less attractive of them; if the protagonist is married, she will discover that her husband has had an affair and, if she has an admirable boyfriend, she will jeopardize the relationship by talking with other men. Second, concerning the heroine's maturation, chick lit heroines are usually faulty which makes them much more

likeable than the characters around them. Usually, the heroine learns to appreciate herself, even though it is commonly by the approbation of her partner who has seen her in several embarrassing situations. Third, chick lit heroines have a job and their work-life plays an important role in the novel. Chick lit heroines tend to struggle at a low-level position job trying to show abilities they think they may not have. Fourth, chick lit protagonists are concerned with beauty. None of the chick lit heroines will be happily self-accepting and not worrying about their physical appearance. Finally, consumer goods are essential for chick-lit heroines, which soothe their inner anxieties (49-62).

In general terms, chick lit protagonists have common features. Using the satirical recipe to create a chick lit novel, designed by Anna Weinberg for *Book Magazine* in July-August 2003 (Harzewski 33), can help to depict the typical chick-lit heroine (see fig.1). According to this figure, the protagonist of a chick lit novel has to meet the following requirements: a) be a low-level employee in a media company; b) struggle with some kind of anxiety regarding one or more of the following issues: her body, her sex life, her biological clock, dying alone, a poor salary, and with one or several addictions (nicotine, shopping, alcohol, etc.), and c) her main aspiration in life is to find true love, usually in a cosmopolitan city. These three features craft the common protagonist of a chick lit novel. Moreover, the front covers of chick lit novels try to be visually appealing for readers of this genre as they mostly use pink, usually featuring an illustration of what the main character tends to consume, such as a cocktail, a stiletto, or a fashion bag (see fig.2).

**Make Your Own
Chick-Lit Novel!**

1. START WITH ONE YOUNG URBAN FEMALE
(who's a low-level
employee in:)

2. CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

a) PUBLISHING	b) PUBLIC RELATIONS
c) ADVERTISING	d) JOURNALISM

-- add --

3. ANXIETY ABOUT ONE OR ALL THE FOLLOWING:

a) BODY	b) SEX LIFE
c) BIOLOGICAL CLOCK	d) ANNOYING MOTHER
e) EMOTIONALLY IMMAIURE MEN	f) DYING ALONE
g) SHOPPING ADDICTION	h) INSUFFICIENT COLLECTION OF SHOES
i) NICOTINE ADDICTION	j) CRAPPY SALARY
k) EXCESSIVE ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION	

l) FINDING LOVE IN THE CITY OF:

1. NEW YORK	2. MANHATTAN
3. GOTHAM	4. LONDON

-- Mix it all together --

4. ZANINESS ENSUES.
Your book should look something like this:



<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">YOUR TITLE HERE</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">YOUR NAME HERE</div>	or	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">YOUR TITLE HERE</div>  <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;">YOUR NAME HERE</div>
---	----	---

Fig. 1. Recipe to create a chick lit novel (from Weinberg in Harzewski 33)

After having outlined the content and focusing now on the narrative style of chick lit novels, according to Ferris and Young, some authors exploit the confessional style of letters and e-mails, others employ the first-person narration to create the impression that the protagonist is speaking directly to the reader while others, such as Helen Fielding in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, exploit spontaneity with the use of the diary form. All these narrative techniques are believed

to appeal to the readers, and they link chick lit with a large body of women's fiction from earlier generations (4).

In the following section, the two novels taken as reference for this work are presented: *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. First of all, the reader is provided with a brief description of each one, highlighting their main features, and, secondly, each novel is put into context to understand the social factors surrounding them.

2.2 The novels

Bridget Jones's Diary and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* are the two chick lit novels which form the corpus of this work. While the first novel is considered *the* pioneer chick lit novel, the second novel is not categorised as such. Nevertheless, taking into account the main features of the chick lit genre presented in section 2.1, *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* could be categorised as such. In terms of the common chick lit heroine features, Eleanor Oliphant presents all of them: she is a woman in her thirties, working as a low-level employee in a graphic design company, who struggles with common problems (her body, her biological clock, her annoying mother, her excessive alcohol consumption...). In addition, she is obsessed with finding love in the city of Glasgow with a man with whom she has a crush. In light of the characteristic elements of the chick lit genre, *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* also holds all of them: first, the novel has a love plot; second, Eleanor Oliphant is faulty and will eventually learn to appreciate herself; third, the novel narrates her work-life where she spends most of her time; fourth, she is not satisfied with her physical appearance and, additionally, she has an issue with consumption. Thus, even though *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* seems to be a much darker, deeper and absurd novel than *Bridget Jones's Diary*, it could be suggested that it is a 21st century example of chick lit, with the subtle differences which could be a result of the gap of two decades between one novel and the other. In the following section, the first novel taken as reference in this work will be presented: *Bridget Jones's Diary*.

2.2.1 *Bridget Jones's Diary*

Bridget Jones's Diary is a novel written by Helen Fielding, first published in the year 1996 by Picador. The novel has roughly 72,000 words, and is divided into twelve different chapters. Each chapter is titled with the name of a month; thus, *Bridget Jones's Diary* narrates a year in the life of its protagonist. Throughout this booming novel, written in the form of a personal diary and using a first-person narrator, the reader learns about the life of a single woman in her thirties who is constantly fighting for self-improvement. She is also trying to form a functional relationship to silence all the voices around her which are constantly pressuring her to do so, since time runs against her biological clock. In addition, Bridget obsesses about her weight and her consumption of alcohol and cigarettes. At the beginning of each diary entry, Bridget summarizes in numerical data what she most obsesses about (see fig.2).



Fig. 2. Extract from *Bridget Jones's Diary*

The novel won the 1998 British Book of the Year Award and it has sold millions of copies worldwide and being translated into 32 languages. A few years after its publication, an acclaimed film adaptation of the novel was released directed by Sharon Maguire, starring actress Renee Zellweger as Bridget, Hugh Grant as Daniel Cleaver and Colin Firth as Mr Darcy.

Concerning the context of the novel, it is set in the year 1999. This means that if Bridget

Jones in the novel is 32 years old, she was born in the year 1967. Taking this into account, it is worth mentioning that Bridget Jones belongs to the Generation X¹. Bridget Jones represents the Generation X women who, at that time, were over their thirties and did not follow the steps of their mothers and grandmothers of having children. Women who were constantly threatened by their biological clock and pressured by society who saw them as “singletons”, term widely used in the novel.

For this work, two versions of the novel have been used: the paperback version from 1998 published by Picador special edition and the digital Kindle version by the same publisher in the year 2016 (see fig. 3). The paperback version used for this work has a total of 310 pages while the digital version has 324. The front covers of both versions are different. The paperback version has light colours such as white and yellow and has the shadow of a young woman with long hair smoking a cigarette looking out of the window. At the top left-hand side of the cover, one of the diary entries of Bridget is displayed (see fig. 2). On the contrary, the predominant colour in the *Kindle* version of *Bridget Jones's Diary* is pink, with yellow and white tones. In this case, the illustration of the cover is a big glass of wine. From these two covers, the last one presents the characteristic elements of the front cover of a chick lit novel, as mentioned in the previous section (see fig. 4). This might suggest that this feature commonly identified with chick lit genre, was introduced eventually possibly as a marketing strategy.

¹ People who were born between 1965 and 1980. Also known as the “baby bust” generation because natality declined with the introduction of the birth pill in the 1960s. This generation lived in a world of great advancements such as space exploration or the development of the computer. It was a moment when women entered the workforce, when they became more independent and divorces began to take place. It was in the 90s when there was a liberalisation of alcohol. This meant an aggressive reduction of prices in the supermarkets and people began to drink at home. Generation Xers were heavy consumers and drunk in high quantities. (see, e.g., Wikipedia https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Generaci%C3%B3n_X).

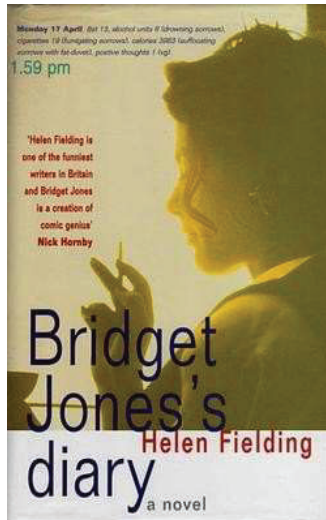


Fig. 4. Printed version cover of
Bridget Jones's Diary



Fig. 3. Kindle version cover of
Bridget Jones's Diary

2.2.2 Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine

Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine, written by Scottish writer Gail Honeyman and published in the year 2017, has won several awards and has put its author in the spotlight since then. Gail Honeyman, born in 1972, explained in an interview that the idea of the novel was sparked by an article she had read years before. In the article, a young woman talked about her daily routine which was strongly marked by loneliness. This confession made Honeyman reflect upon solitude and upon the difficulty of creating meaningful connections nowadays (Honeyman). Then, years later, this inspiration was transformed into *Eleanor Oliphant*, a character capable of bringing tears to readers' eyes, both of joy and sadness. The novel has 385 pages in the paperback version, 383 pages in the digital version and roughly 84,000 words. The book is divided into three main parts: *Good Days*, *Bad Days*, and *Better Days*. The title of each part already allows the reader to intuit the main feeling present in it, sensing the mental state of Eleanor right before diving into the different chapters which comprise each part of the book.

Eleanor Oliphant, as already presented in the title of the novel, is the main protagonist and narrator of this touching and unpredictable novel set in Glasgow. Eleanor narrates her life

as a young woman in her thirties who struggles with social relations and is meticulously strict with her daily routine. She works in a graphic design office and tries to avoid any human connection whenever she can. She spends the weekends with vodka, wine, pizza and phone calls with her emotionally abusive mummy. Her intangible routine is suddenly altered when she meets Raymond Gibbons, a colleague who ends up filling an enormous gap in Eleanor's life, bringing light and warmth to a survivor who would have never imagined she would feel cared for.

Contextualising the novel, it is set in the 21st century, in the year 2017. The reader can learn from the novel that she was born on the 7th of December 1987; so, at the time of the narration, she is in her thirties. Taking this into account, Eleanor belongs to the Generation Y². Even though Eleanor is a Millennial, she does not seem to belong to this generation. First of all, she is completely disconnected from the pop culture of Generation Y. For example, she does not know who SpongeBob Square Pants is, ““What is it supposed to be?” I said. “Is it... is it cheese?”” (Honeyman 208). Second, she had never been to a fast-food restaurant before visiting McDonalds in the book: “I was in a fast-food restaurant for the first time in my adult life, an enormous and garish place just around the corner from the music venue” (110). Third, despite belonging to the digital native era, she has no knowledge about computers: “I’m a very inexperienced technology consumer.” (22), and she does not know how to perform certain daily transactions such as ordering a pizza: “I wondered how they managed with the black pepper. Would the man bring a pepper mill with him? surely, he wouldn’t grind it over the pizza while he stood on the doorstep? I put the kettle on in case he wanted a cup of tea.” (23).

² Also known as Millennials. People born between 1982 and 1987. Technology is part of their everyday lives: all their activities are mediated by a screen. Digital natives are not satisfied with the world around them and tend to be ambitious. However, they are labelled as lazy and narcissistic and spoilt. They are required to be better trained to get a job because of the economic crisis. They are also known as the me, me, me generation (Time magazine, 2014)

For this work, two versions of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* have been used: the paperback version by HarperCollins Publishers in the year 2018 and the digital *Kindle* version from 2017 by the same publisher.



Fig. 5. Front cover of *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*

After the presentation of the two novels, the following section 2.3 unfolds the theoretical background concerning addiction.

2.3 Modern approach to addiction in society

The present section examines the approach taken by Gabor Maté, doctor and renowned addiction expert, towards addiction in connection with trauma. In order to do so, first of all, the term “addiction” is defined and explored. Then, the reasons behind why people may become addicted are discussed.

According to Maté in his work *In the Realm of the Hungry Ghosts*, an addiction is “any repeated behaviour, substance-related or not, in which a person feels compelled to persist, regardless of its negative impact on his life and the lives of others” (Maté ch.11). Maté points

out in his work that two main popular ideas exist concerning addiction. The first idea is that an addiction is a primary brain disorder that arises in the brain largely due to genetic reasons. The second idea is that addiction is a choice that people make. Even though he believes the first idea is closer to the truth, he does not consider that addiction has a genetic reason.

In the abovementioned work, Maté points out that humans have two fundamental human needs: attachment and authenticity. He defines attachment as follows:

attachment is the drive for physical and emotional closeness with other people. It ensures infant survival by bonding infant to mother and mother to infant. Throughout life the attachment drive impels us to seek relationships and companionship, maintains family connections, and helps build community. When endorphins lock onto opiate receptors, they trigger the chemistry of love and connection, helping us to be the social creatures we are (Maté ch.14).

He also explains that unsatisfactory attachments have a great impact on how we approach in our adulthood significant relationships. The coping styles we develop in our childhood with our earliest attachment relationships, shape the way we approach our adult relationships (Maté 106).

The second need, authenticity, is defined in his work *The Myth of Normal* as “the quality of being true to oneself, and the capacity to shape one’s own life from a deep knowledge of that self” (Maté 106). In other words, authenticity refers to being connected to ourselves, knowing how we feel and being able to act on it. According to the author, “an eventual clash, between two essential needs: attachment and authenticity” in childhood make humans lose themselves by disconnecting from their emotions and from their body. As a consequence, humans develop a negative view of themselves, of the world and a defensive view of other people. The loss of oneself is the essence of trauma (105).

In his documentary called *The Wisdom of Trauma*, Maté emphasizes that trauma is not what happens to you but what happens inside you. Taking this into account, addiction is not the

primary problem but an attempt to solve the problem. Issues seem to be rooted in childhood trauma, and addiction is the attempt to deal with the effects of childhood trauma. The solution is not to recognise what happened during one's childhood but to recognise the manifestations which occur in the present and transcend them by reconnecting with oneself and restoring the connection with the body and with emotions. Once this happens, recovery can take place. In other words, the purpose of any kind of healing is reconnection.

In short, Maté's approach believes that addiction is commonly rooted in early childhood and, usually, has an origin in emotional loss and trauma.

For the elaboration of this work, Maté's understanding of addiction has been adopted. Since trauma is a fundamental concept, the following section examines the two types of traumas which are mainly differentiated by the use of a small "t" and a capital "T" in spelling.

2.3.1 Trauma: "capital-T trauma" and "small-t trauma"

The word trauma has a Greek origin and it means "wound". Maté defines trauma in his work *The Myth of Normal* as "an inner injury, a lasting rupture or split within the self, due to difficult or hurtful events (...) lodged in our nervous system, mind, and body, lasting long past the originating incident(s), triggerable at any moment" (Maté 20). A distinction is also made between *trauma* written with a small "t" and Trauma written with a capital "T". According to Maté, "small-t trauma" refers usually to events which do not involve a life-threatening situation or any type of violence but which, anyhow, create a significant distress in the person: a breakup, the death of a pet, or a divorce, among others. On the contrary, "capital-T trauma" refers to events in which the life of the person is at risk: a sexual assault, a car accident, or a natural disaster, etc. Thus, the main difference between them relies on the type of traumatic event the person has experienced. Nevertheless, even though the former seems less significant, an accumulation of "small-t traumas" can produce the same, or even more, emotional and or physical responses in adults than a "capital-T trauma" (20-24). In words of Maté, both types

of trauma “represent a fracturing of the self and of one’s relationship to the world. That fracturing is the essence of trauma (23).

The following section delves into the addiction which is analysed in this work: the abuse of alcohol which, in medical terms, is referred to as “alcohol use disorder”.

2.3.2 Alcohol use disorder

In this section, alcohol use disorder (AUD) is defined, together with a brief explanation of the alcohol units system, employed in the United Kingdom, to measure alcohol consumption. For this work, the definition of AUD by the National Institutes of Health is adopted. An alcohol use disorder “is a medical condition characterized by an impaired ability to stop or control alcohol use despite adverse social, occupational, or health consequences” (NIH Turning Discovery into Health). In a scale, AUD is a brain disorder that can be mild, moderate, or severe. Lasting modifications in the brain perpetuate and make individuals vulnerable to relapse. Nevertheless, despite how severe the AUD is, evidence-based treatment with behavioural therapies, together with medications and support groups, have proven to be successful in order to recover and maintain abstinence (NIH Turning Discovery into Health).

In the United Kingdom, the quantity of alcohol that is drunk is measured with an alcohol units system. A unit of alcohol is equivalent to 10 ml or 8 g of pure alcohol (Drinkaware). In order to calculate how many units are in an alcoholic drink, the total volume of a drink in millilitres is multiplied by its volume and then divided by 1,000 (see fig. 6).

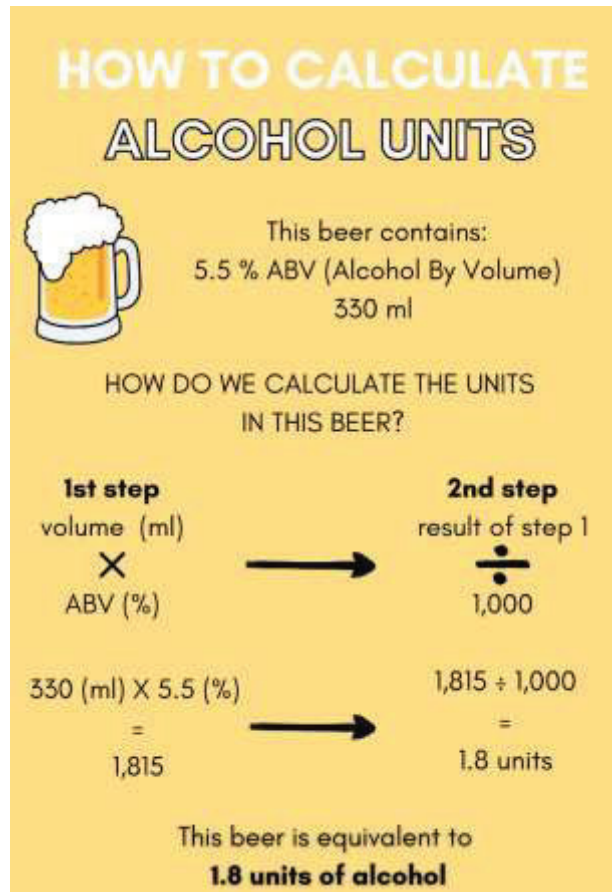


Fig. 6. Explanation of the alcohol units system in the UK

According to the UK's Medical Chief Officers, the safest number of units per week for both men and women is 14 units³. Hence, a safe quantity of alcohol per day for men and women would be between 2 to 3 units per day (Drinkaware). Furthermore, it is advisable to spread the units over three or more days, having drink-free days and no bingeing. This last term is defined as “drinking heavily over a short space of time” (NHS). Binge drinking can be extremely dangerous, as our bodies process approximately one unit per hour and even less for some individuals. The technical definition for binge drinking would be more than 8 units in a single session for men and more than six units for women (John). Following the alcohol units system

³ In other health related documents, women are advised to drink less units of alcohol than men, taking into account that physiologically, women are more vulnerable to the toxic effects of alcohol in comparison to men. For more information, see, e.g., <https://www.surrey.ac.uk/features/should-alcohol-limits-men-and-women-really-be-same>.

helps individuals to keep track and be aware of their alcohol consumption in order to look after their health.

This section has presented the modern approach to addiction chosen for this work and has distinguished between “small-t trauma” and “capital-T trauma”, key concept in the approach. Finally, this section has defined alcohol use disorder, providing a guide on how to measure alcohol consumption following the UK system of units. Now, section 2.4 presents the methodology employed in order to carry out this work.

2.4 Methodology

In order to obtain the data for this work, specific alcohol-related quotes are extracted from the digital versions of the novels (see section 2.4.1 below). Once the quotes are obtained, three different methods are applied to analyse the data: first, a set of questions, specifically developed for this work, are answered; second, the screening tool AUDIT is carried out for both protagonists; third, the alcohol use settings of Bridget and Eleanor are analysed. While for the first method only the information of the quotes is used, the second and third method also take into account the general reading of the novel.

2.4.1 Extracting quotes

In order to obtain the data to analyse the alcohol consumption patterns of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, a number of quotes have been extracted from the novels where the protagonists consume alcohol. The selection of these quotes has been carried out using the following criteria:

- 1) the roots “alcohol” and “drink” have been searched for in the digital version of the novels

- 2) from the extracts where these words appeared, the quotes where there is an alcohol use from Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant have been selected.

2.4.2 Methods of data analysis

Once the data is obtained, three different methods are applied to perform the analysis. The first method, especially developed for this work, consists in the obtention of data using a set of questions (section 2.4.1). The second method uses the AUDIT (see fig. 7) as a tool to assess the protagonists' alcohol consumption (section 2.4.2). Finally, the third approach explores with whom the heroines usually drink alcohol (section 2.4.3). Following, the three methods are explicated.

2.4.2.1 the wh- question method

With the extracted quotes of each novel, a set of wh- questions are answered, using the information obtained from each one of them. This approach has been developed specifically for this work and consists in categorising the data obtained in the most objective manner. This categorisation comprises a total of six wh- questions: *what* (type of alcohol beverage), *how much* (quantity of alcohol units consumed), *when* (day or part of the day the consumption takes place), *where* (place where it is consumed), *with whom* (people present in the moment of the consumption) and *why* (reason which stimulates the consumption). The main aim of this approach is to reduce researcher bias.

2.4.2.2 AUDIT

The second method that is used in order to analyse the alcohol consumption in each novel is the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT) (Babor et al. 17) (see fig. 7).

<p>1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?</p> <p>(0) Never [Skip to Qs 9-10] (1) Monthly or less (2) 2 to 4 times a month (3) 2 to 3 times a week (4) 4 or more times a week</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>6. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?</p> <p>(0) 1 or 2 (1) 3 or 4 (2) 5 or 6 (3) 7, 8, or 9 (4) 10 or more</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <p><i>Skip to Questions 9 and 10 if Total Score for Questions 2 and 3 = 0</i></p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?</p> <p>(0) No (2) Yes, but not in the last year (4) Yes, during the last year</p> <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <input type="checkbox"/>	<p>10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?</p> <p>(0) No (2) Yes, but not in the last year (4) Yes, during the last year</p> <input type="checkbox"/>

Fig. 7. AUDIT (from Babor et.al)

This test is a ten-question screening tool developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and published for the first time in the year 1989. Since then, it has been widely used by health workers and alcohol researchers. The main aim of this test is to assess alcohol consumption, drinking behaviours, and alcohol-related problems in order to provide a framework for a brief assessment and intervention to help individuals and avoid the harmful consequences of their drinking.

Once answers are recollected, the test is scored and an interpretation of the results takes place. Depending on the result, an individual can be at 4 different risk levels. For each case, an advisable specific intervention is provided (see fig. 8).

Risk Level	Intervention	AUDIT score*
Zone I	Alcohol Education	0-7
Zone II	Simple Advice	8-15
Zone III	Simple Advice plus Brief Counseling and Continued Monitoring	16-19
Zone IV	Referral to Specialist for Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment	20-40

Fig. 8. Results for AUDIT (from Babor et al. 22)

In this work, making use of the extracted quotes and the general reading of the novel, an AUDIT is carried out for both Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant. It is important to note here that the data obtained with this screening tool is not 100% reliable taking into account three aspects: first, in *Bridget Jones's Diary* there are no daily diary entries which means that not all her alcohol consumption data is recorded. The same occurs with Eleanor. Second, in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* there is no explicit timeframe, so the reader does not exactly know the period of time comprehending from the beginning of the novel to the end of it. Third, the answers for the AUDIT have not been answered by the real protagonists. Nevertheless, the data obtained from the extracted quotes and the close reading, proves useful to answer the AUDIT and get an estimate result of the alcohol consumption pattern of each character.

2.4.2.3 Social versus solitary drinking

The last method analyses the alcohol use settings of each character. For this purpose, the article written by Professor Creswell titled “Drinking Together and Drinking Alone: A Social-Contextual Framework for Examining Risk for Alcohol Use Disorder” has been

considered. In the article, she offers a social-contextual framework where she examines AUD risk (see fig. 9 below) by reviewing studies on the consequences of social versus solitary alcohol use. In addition, Creswell provides evidence of distinct emotion regulatory functions across settings. Summarizing other works, Creswell presents the following findings: first, she highlights that the use of alcohol in social events has been connected to positive emotionality and sociality while the use of alcohol in solitary is linked to negative emotionality and more social discomfort. In connection to this, this last form of alcohol use is associated to depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and lower distress tolerance. Furthermore, solitary drinkers tend to suffer from social anxiety and loneliness. Second, concerning the mechanism of risk of developing AUD for each form of drinking, she draws the attention to the fact that social drinkers report an enhancement of positive emotions and social experiences with alcohol use. As a consequence, individuals who are highly sensitive to this reward are particularly in risk of developing AUD. On the contrary, solitary drinkers drink for the following reasons: a) to cope motives; b) because they believe alcohol mitigates the negative effect, and c) they perceive inability to resist drinking while experiencing negative affect. Both social drinking and solitary drinking are associated to AUD symptoms such as loss of control over drinking, frequent hangovers or interpersonal problems. Finally, Creswell reports the findings of a study which concluded that individuals tend to engage more in social drinking when they are experiencing positive interpersonal experiences, while solitary drinking takes place on days with more negative interpersonal experiences (19-25). The figure below, illustrates how individual difference factors are linked to the two alcohol use settings (social versus solitary), and how there is a specific mechanism of use associated to each setting.

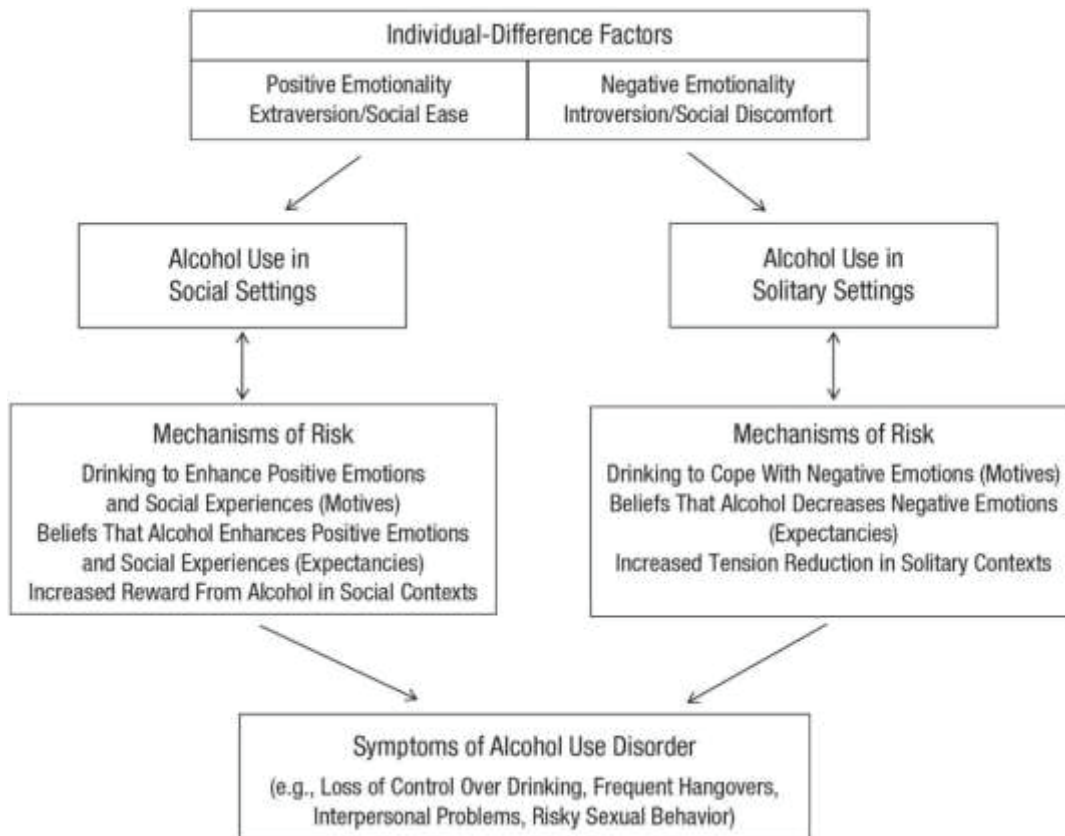


Fig. 9. Social-contextual framework of risk of AUD (from Creswell)

In this work, to analyse the alcohol use settings of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, the following method has been applied: from the six set of questions developed (see section 2.4.2.1), the data obtained from the extracted quotes in the question *with whom* has been collected for each novel. Also, the general reading of the novel has been considered. By analysing the answers of this specific question, in connection to Creswell's article, this work intends to shed light to the social-contextual framework of the alcohol use settings of each protagonist, together with its possible reasons and consequences.

Once the three different methods used for the analysis of this work have been explained, a brief summary is presented to conclude with Chapter 2.

2.5 Summary of the overview

The present chapter has unfolded as follows: first, the reader has been provided with a description of chick lit, highlighting the basic features and elements which comprise this specific genre, such as the portrayal of a young woman in distress, in constant search for love, dealing with self-improvement and struggling with anxiety issues. Then, these features and elements have been specifically identified in the presentation of each of the two chick lit novels used in this work: *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*. As it has been seen, both novels share an excessive alcohol consumption by their main characters. Thus, in order to analyse the possible nature of it, the modern approach to addiction developed by Dr. Gábor Maté has been explained. With this approach, the work intends to shed light to the drinking patterns of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, putting the focus on the concept of *trauma* as the possible cause behind this substance abuse. Furthermore, alcohol use disorder has been defined and the UK alcohol units system has been explained. Finally, together with the theoretical background, the methodology chosen to extract alcohol-related data has been introduced. First, the approach based on the extraction of quotes to obtain data has been explained. Then, the three methods applied to analyse the data have also been developed. As it has been seen, the findings are a result of the implementation of three methods: first, the answers of a set of questions; second, the use of the AUDIT and third, the analysis of the alcohol use settings of each chick lit protagonist.

Having introduced the theoretical background and explained how the research for this work is conducted, Chapter 3 presents the corresponding analysis of the findings obtained, after the application of the methodology proposed.

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

The present chapter is divided as follows: first, the findings obtained from the extraction of quotes from both novels are displayed in numerical data in section 3.1. Then, sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 analyse with the set of wh- questions three examples of the extracted quotes from *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, respectively. Section 3.2 introduces the AUDIT, which is then answered for Bridget Jones in section 3.2.1 and for Eleanor Oliphant in section 3.2.2. Furthermore, section 3.3 displays the numerical data of the analysis of the *with whom* question for each novel. Finally, the last section of this chapter summarizes the findings of this work.

3.1 Findings from the extracted quotes

In this section, three different quotes, as an example, are presented from each novel (*Kindle* version), together with a box answering the six wh- questions outlined in the methodology section. The whole of the extracted quotes with their corresponding analysis can be found in appendix A and B for Bridget and Eleanor, respectively.

Using the criteria established in the methodology section in order to extract quotes where an alcohol consumption takes place in each novel (see section 2.4.1), the results have been the following:

In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, the root “alcohol” appears 119 times in the book while the root “drink” appears 28 times.

In *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, the root “alcohol” appears 11 times while the root “drink”, a total of 75 times.

For Bridget Jones, the quotes where she drinks more than 6 units (also known as binge drinking (see section 2.3.2)) are used. The reason for choosing these specific quotes is to simplify and reduce the selection of quotes, due to the high number of times (119) the root

“alcohol” is present in *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. Furthermore, by doing so, the quotes obtained for both novels is similar. Thus, a total of 14 quotes are used from *Bridget Jones’s Diary* while 13 quotes are used from *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*.

The following section presents three quotes extracted from *Bridget Jones’s Diary* with the answers to the wh- questions.

3.1.1 Quotes extracted from *Bridget Jones’s Diary*

Following, three examples of quotes extracted from *Bridget Jones’s Diary* are presented, in which she consumes alcohol:

➤ Quote 1, page 110

“Several cigarettes and a lot of fiddling with a credit card later we were in, to find water flooding everywhere. We couldn’t turn the taps off. Dan rushed downstairs, returning with a spanner and a bottle of Scotch. (...) so we ate the pizza and had a bottle of wine and a few more cigarettes and some more Scotch”.

Table 1. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 110

WHAT	Scotch Whisky and wine
HOW MUCH	14 units
WHEN	Friday 28 April, late at night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	her Australian neighbour Dan
WHY	to cope with stress

In this quote, Bridget Jones is at home at 8:45 pm on Friday 28th of April. When she is about to take a bath, her friend Magda turns up at her doorstep really angry and crying because her husband had cheated on her. Bridget decides to go downstairs, leaving the water running in the bathroom. Suddenly, Bridget’s neighbour lets her know from the window that the water is coming down to his flat and when she runs upstairs, she realises she has been locked out. In the

end, her Australian neighbour Dan helps her to get in and they end up drinking at Bridget's place. They have Scotch Whisky and a bottle of wine, and Bridget calculates a total of 14 units at the beginning of her diary entry (see section 2.2.1). The reason behind all this drinking was a stressful situation.

➤ Quote 2, page 187

“Just called Jude. I told her a bit about the tragedy with Daniel and she was horrified, immediately declared a state of emergency and said she would call Sharon and fix for us all to meet at nine (...) Gor es wor blurry goofun tonight though. Ooof. Tumbled over”

Table 2. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 187

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Tuesday 8 August
WHERE	out and about
WITH WHOM	her friends Sharon and Jude
WHY	to cope with sadness

In this quote, Bridget goes out with her friends Sharon and Jude on Friday the 4th of August. This plan is organized by her friend Jude in order to help Bridget who is sad. Bridget ends up drinking a total of 7 units of alcohol, not specified. The reason for drinking is because she feels very sad after finding out by Daniel that he is getting married with someone else.

➤ Quote 3, page 294

“Course is OK — everyone drunks office Christmas parties. Is a good fun. Must gust sleep — doen mattr about clothesoff”.

Table 3. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 294

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	9 units
WHEN	Tuesday 19 December
WHERE	at the office disco
WITH WHOM	workmates
WHY	to socialize

In this quote, Bridget decides to go to the office disco on Tuesday the 19th of December to celebrate Christmas with her workmates. There, she ends up drinking a total of 9 units of not specified alcohol, and she ends up very drunk.

The in-depth analysis of these three quotes exemplifies how all the extracted quotes have been analysed. The 14 quotes analysed can be found in Appendix A.

After having analysed the selected quotes for Bridget Jones, the findings can be summarized as follows: Bridget Jones uses alcohol several times during the week. She drinks different alcoholic beverages such as cocktails, beer, liquors and wine. Her alcohol consumption is high, having during the month several binge drinking sessions. The vast majority of times she drinks in company with other people when socializing at parties or meeting with her friends. Nevertheless, she also has solitary drinking sessions at least once a month. She tends to drink when she is struggling with emotions such as stress or sadness.

In the next section, three examples of quotes from *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* are examined.

3.1.2 Quotes extracted from *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*

Following, three quotes extracted from the novel in which Eleanor Oliphant drinks alcohol are presented, with its corresponding wh- question box answered.

➤ Quote 1, page 10

On Fridays, I don't get the bus straight after work but instead I go to the Tesco Metro around the corner from the office and buy a margherita pizza, some Chianti and two big bottles of Glen's vodka. When I get home, I eat the pizza and drink the wine. I have some vodka afterward. I don't need much on a Friday, just a few big swigs. I usually wake up on the sofa around 3 a.m., and I stumble off to bed. I drink the rest of the vodka over the weekend, spread it throughout both days so that I'm neither drunk nor sober. Monday takes a long time to come around.

Table 4. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 10

WHAT	Chianti wine and Glen's vodka
HOW MUCH	2 bottles of vodka (80 units) and 1 bottle of wine (9 units)
WHEN	on a Friday night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to shut down pain; to sleep

In this quote, Eleanor explains her weekend routine at home on her own. Every Friday after work she goes to Tesco Metro and she buys a margherita pizza, a bottle of wine and two bottles of Glen's vodka. She gets home and has wine with the pizza and then she drinks some vodka. Nevertheless, every weekend, she continues drinking her two bottles of vodka (80 units) during Saturday and Sunday reaching a state of being not completely drunk but not sober either. For this reason, Mondays tend to be a hard day for her when she goes back to the office.

➤ Quote 2, page 25

I'd finished eating my poor-quality pizza and was jumping up and down on the box, trying to crush it small enough to fit into the bin, when I remembered the brandy (...) —a bottle of Rémy Martin, full and unopened. I unscrewed the cap and took a drink. It wasn't as nice as vodka, but it wasn't bad (...) the brandy was both warming and soothing, and I kept sipping. When I awoke, it was just after 3 a.m., and the pen and

notebook were lying on the floor. Slowly, I recalled getting sidetracked, starting to daydream as the brandy slipped down (...) A mouthful of brandy remained in the bottle. I downed it and went to bed.

Table 5. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 25

WHAT	Rémy Martin brandy
HOW MUCH	1 bottle of brandy (28 units)
WHEN	on a Friday night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to shut down pain; to sleep

In this quote, Eleanor had a busy Friday and did not make it to Tesco Metro. She finds a leaflet of pizza delivery and decides to order, for the first time, a pizza for herself. She wanted to order some wine too but it was not possible. Taking into account that she did not have any alcoholic beverage to drink as she usually does on Fridays, she remembers that she has some Rémy Martin brandy stored. She ends up drinking a whole bottle of brandy on her own and falls asleep.

➤ Quote 3, page 179

I don't suppose you've got any vodka or Magners drink, by any chance?" I said. He raised an eyebrow. "I'm absolutely fine now, after the sausage rolls and the catnap," I said, and I was. I felt floaty and clean, not intoxicated, just very pleasantly numbed to sharp feelings. He laughed. "Well, I suppose I could go for a glass of red, right enough," he said. "Red what?" I said. "Wine, Eleanor. Merlot, I think—whatever was on special at Tesco this week." "Ah, Tesco," I said. "In that case . . . I think I'll join you.

Table 6. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 179

WHAT	wine
HOW MUCH	9 units approximately
WHEN	Sunday after Sammy's funeral
WHERE	at Raymond's flat
WITH WHOM	Raymond
WHY	to continue drunk and not feel pain

In this quote, Eleanor is with Raymond at his place after he found her at Sammy's funeral completely drunk and being intimidated by a waiter. After a short nap at the funeral, he takes her home and they decide to watch a film. Eleanor asks for some alcohol and, even though Raymond is concerned taking into account that she was still a bit drunk, they drink together a few glasses of two different bottles of wine. Eleanor drinks because she wants to keep up with her drunkenness.

After the depth analysis of the abovementioned examples, the 13 extracted quotes with their corresponding wh- question box can be found in appendix B.

After having analysed the selected quotes for Eleanor Oliphant, the findings can be summarized as follows: Eleanor usually drinks every weekend from Friday after work to Sunday. Sometimes she also drinks during the week but very rarely. She normally drinks vodka and wine but she also drinks other beverages such as beer. Her alcohol consumption is high, taking into account that only in the weekend she drinks a total of 89 units of alcohol. Her weekend drinking routine takes place on her own and at home. When she drinks in other places, it is usually with other people. The most common reason for drinking is to cope with negative emotions.

Having extracted and analysed quotes from both novels, in the following section the AUDIT is used to assess the alcohol consumption of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant.

3.2 AUDIT results

In this section, the AUDIT (see section 2.4.2.2 & fig. 7) is answered from the perspective of each chick lit heroine beginning with Bridget. These answers are based on the information extracted from the quotes and on the general reading of the novel itself. In order to do so, each question is presented one by one with its corresponding answer and data to support it.

3.2.1 AUDIT results for Bridget Jones

Bridget Jones's Diary contains for each month a series of diary entries. At the beginning of the majority of them, she includes the number of alcohol units she has drunk that day. It is important to note that not all entries contain this information and not all the 365 days of the year are recorded. Thus, even though the total units of alcohol recorded are 358, the real amount of alcohol units she has drunk at the end of the year are 3,836, as she mentions at the end of the novel in the summary of her year (Fielding 310). Thus, the reader can assume that there has been much more alcohol consumption which took place on days which do not have a diary entry. To carry out the test, this detail is taken into account. A table has been created in order to facilitate the extraction of data regarding Bridget's alcohol consumption. This table illustrates the total number of times and alcohol units Bridget has registered in all her diary entries (see Appendix C).

Following, the 10 AUDIT questions are answered, bearing in mind the extracted quotes and the general reading of the novel.

Figure 10 presents question number 1 of the AUDIT:

1. How often do you have a drink containing alcohol?

(0) Never [Skip to Qs 9-10]
 (1) Monthly or less
 (2) 2 to 4 times a month
 (3) 2 to 3 times a week
 (4) 4 or more times a week

4

Fig. 10. AUDIT question 1

For question number 1, the answer could be ‘4 or more times a week’ (4). Taking as an example the month of January, she records a total of 10 entries (see Appendix C) and she mentions that she has drunk 7 days of those 10 days. She has drunk on the 9th, 11th, 12th and 14th of January which can be four times in the 2nd week of January. The following week, she has drunk on the 17th, 18th, 19th, 22nd and 23rd. Thus, it could be assumed that she drinks 4 or more times a week.

Figure 11 presents question number 2:

2. How many drinks containing alcohol do you have on a typical day when you are drinking?

(0) 1 or 2
 (1) 3 or 4
 (2) 5 or 6
 (3) 7, 8, or 9
 (4) 10 or more

3

Fig. 11. AUDIT Question 2

For question number 2, the answer could be ‘7,8 or 9’ scoring (3). Analysing her diary entries, the number of units which appears with more frequency is six units or more with a total of 19 times throughout the novel (see Appendix C). This could mean that, if 9 units for example is equivalent to five glasses of wine, and the number of units is 6 or higher than 6, on a typical drinking day she can have between 7, 8 or 9 drinks. In special occasions, even more.

Figure 12 presents question number 3:

<p>3. How often do you have six or more drinks on one occasion?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p> <p><i>Skip to Questions 9 and 10 if Total Score for Questions 2 and 3 = 0</i></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div>
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Fig. 12. AUDIT Question 3

For question number 3, the most suitable answer could be ‘monthly’ (2). Taking January again as an example and thinking of each drink as glasses of Chardonnay wine, which is her favourite, each glass is equivalent to 2.3 units. Six glasses of Chardonnay wine would be a total of 13.8 units approximately and the only day when she drunk so many units was the 1st of January when she recorded a total of 14 units (Fielding 7).

Figure 13 illustrates question number 4 of the AUDIT:

<p>4. How often during the last year have you found that you were not able to stop drinking once you had started?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 30px; height: 30px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">2</div>
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Fig. 13. AUDIT Question 4

For question 4, Bridget might like to answer ‘monthly’ (2). She has drunk more than six units of alcohol every single month and in more than one occasion, being January and May the highest number of times (see Appendix C).

Figure 14 presents question 5 of the AUDIT:

5. How often during the last year have you failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking?

(0) Never
 (1) Less than monthly
 (2) Monthly
 (3) Weekly
 (4) Daily or almost daily

3

Fig. 14. AUDIT Question 5

For question number 5, the answer could be ‘weekly’ (3). At the end of the novel, Bridget writes in her summary of the year that she has had 114 hangovers, in other words, “free days” (Fielding 310). *Free days* because she fails to be productive and do what she was expected to do the following day. If a year has 365 and she has had a total of 114 days of hangover, this means that every 3 days approximately, she has had a hangover in the past year. Her hangovers are recorded in the novel: “For ten days now have been living in state of permanent hangover and foraging sub-existence without proper meals or hot food (...) It’s 10 a.m. Have not done Christmas shopping. Have not sent Christmas cards. Got to go to work. Right, am never, never going to drink again for the rest of life. Aargh – field telephone” (295).

Figure 15 introduces question 6 of the AUDIT:

6. How often during the last year have you needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drinking session?

(0) Never
 (1) Less than monthly
 (2) Monthly
 (3) Weekly
 (4) Daily or almost daily

0

Fig. 15. AUDIT Question 6

Question 6 could be answered with ‘never’ (0). There is no specific data in the novel in order to answer this question so it is assumed that after a heavy drinking session, Bridget does

not get herself going with a morning drink. In addition, as seen in the previous question, her hangovers tend to be intense so it would make sense that she does drink in the morning the following day. Nevertheless, it seems that she does not.

Figure 16 introduces question number 7 of the AUDIT:

<p>7. How often during the last year have you had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p>	<table border="1"><tr><td>3</td></tr></table>	3
3		

Fig. 16. AUDIT Question 7

For question number 7, Bridget might want to answer ‘weekly’ (3). As seen in question 5, it could be assumed that every 3 days approximately she has a hangover. Furthermore, there is evidence in the text which proves that she feels guilty: “Right, am never, never going to drink again for the rest of life” (Fielding 295) and that hangovers accentuate her obsession with her body: “Oh God, why am I so unattractive? Cannot believe I convinced myself I was keeping the entire weekend free to work when in fact I was on permanent date-with-Daniel standby” (26).

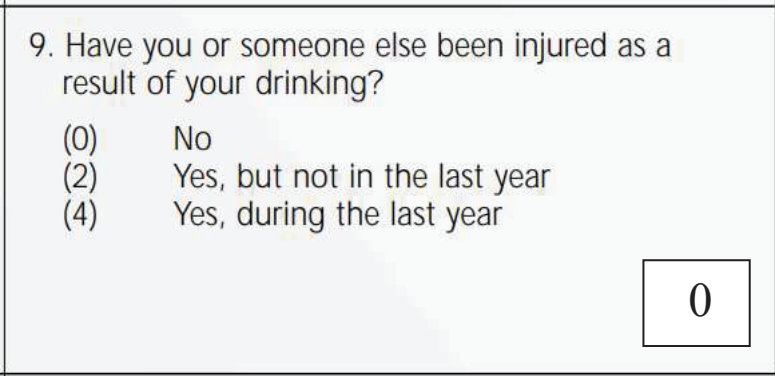
Figure 17 presents question 8 of the AUDIT:

<p>8. How often during the last year have you been unable to remember what happened the night before because you had been drinking?</p> <p>(0) Never (1) Less than monthly (2) Monthly (3) Weekly (4) Daily or almost daily</p>	<table border="1"><tr><td>0</td></tr></table>	0
0		

Fig. 17. AUDIT Question 8

For question 8, the most adequate answer might be ‘never’ (0). There is no evidence in the novel in order to state that Bridget has not been able to remember what happened the night before because of drinking. Thus, it can be assumed that Bridget does not suffer from blackouts.

The next figure presents question 9:

A screenshot of a question from the AUDIT questionnaire. The question is: "9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?". Below the question are three options: "(0) No", "(2) Yes, but not in the last year", and "(4) Yes, during the last year". In the bottom right corner of the question box, there is a small square box containing the number "0".

9. Have you or someone else been injured as a result of your drinking?

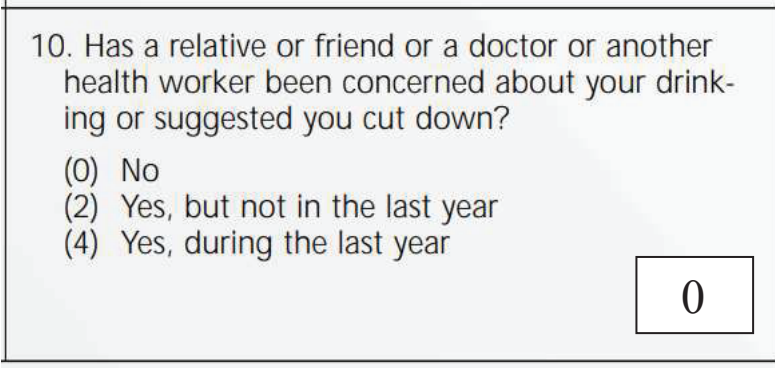
(0) No
(2) Yes, but not in the last year
(4) Yes, during the last year

0

Fig. 18. AUDIT Question 9

For question 9, the answer could be ‘no’ (0). There is no evidence in the novel of Bridget or someone else being injured as a consequence of her drinking.

Finally, the following figure illustrates the last question of the AUDIT:

A screenshot of the final question from the AUDIT questionnaire. The question is: "10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?". Below the question are three options: "(0) No", "(2) Yes, but not in the last year", and "(4) Yes, during the last year". In the bottom right corner of the question box, there is a small square box containing the number "0".

10. Has a relative or friend or a doctor or another health worker been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down?

(0) No
(2) Yes, but not in the last year
(4) Yes, during the last year

0

Fig. 19. AUDIT Question 10

Question 10 of the AUDIT could be answered with ‘no’ (0). There is no evidence in the novel where someone raises concern about Bridget’s alcohol use.

After the 10 questions of the AUDIT, the total number of items for Bridget’s alcohol consumption pattern is 17. According to the results box (see fig. 8), Bridget would be at risk

III, which comprises results from 16 to 19 items. The advisable intervention for Bridget would be simple advice with brief counselling, together with continued monitoring.

Having answered the 10 AUDIT questions for Bridget Jones and obtained an estimate result to assess her alcohol consumption, the next section assesses Eleanor Oliphant's alcohol use pattern.

3.2.2 AUDIT results for Eleanor Oliphant

In the following section, the AUDIT is answered for Eleanor Oliphant, based on the extracted quotes and the general reading of the novel.

For question number 1, which asks how often you have a drink containing alcohol, from the 4 possible answers (see fig. 10), the one Eleanor might choose could be '2 or 3 times a week' (3). Eleanor drinks every weekend starting after work on Friday, and continuing on Saturday and Sunday. Thus, she drinks 2 to 3 times a week: "I don't need much on a Friday, just a few big swigs. I usually wake up on the sofa around 3 a.m., and I stumble off to bed. I drink the rest of the vodka over the weekend, spread it throughout both days so that I'm neither drunk nor sober" (Honeyman 10).

For question number 2, which asks how many drinks containing alcohol you have on a typical day when you are drinking (see fig. 11), from the four possible answers, the one chosen for Eleanor could be '7,8 or 9' (3), taking into account the following quote where Eleanor explains what she usually drinks on a Friday night: "When I get home, I eat the pizza and drink the wine. I have some vodka afterward. I don't need much on a Friday, just a few big swigs" (Honeyman 10). In this quote, she mentions that she drinks a bottle of wine and a few drinks of vodka. Thus, supposing the bottle of wine has 750 ml and an average glass of wine is 5 oz., a bottle of wine holds five glasses of wine. A few swigs of vodka can be approximately two glasses so, the wine together with the vodka, can be a total of 7,8 or 9 drinks approximately.

For question number 3, which asks how often you have six or more drinks on one occasion (see fig. 12), the one Eleanor might choose is 'weekly' (3). As it has been seen in the previous two questions, Eleanor drinks 2 or 3 times a week (see question 1) and on Fridays, for example, she has more than six drinks (see question 2). Thus, she drinks more than 6 drinks on one occasion weekly, taking into account that she does it every weekend.

Question number 4 asks how often during the last year you have found that you have not been able to stop drinking once you had started (see fig. 13). For Eleanor, out of the four possible answers, the chosen one could be 'weekly' (3). In her weekend routine, she drinks on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. On Friday, she drinks 9 units of wine and a few units of vodka but by Sunday, she has drunk 80 units of vodka non-stop until she finishes the two litre bottles she has bought on Friday: "I drink the rest of the vodka over the weekend, spread it throughout both days so that I'm neither drunk nor sober" (Honeyman 10).

Question number 5 asks how often during the last year you have failed to do what was normally expected from you because of drinking (see fig.14). From the four possible answers, the answer which could best suit Eleanor is 'never' (0). In general terms, Eleanor Oliphant is presented as a responsible person who is able to drink throughout the whole weekend and cope on Monday when she is back to work even though, in her own words, "Monday takes a long time to come around" (Honeyman 10). There is no evidence in the novel where she does not succeed to carry out a task because of drinking. The only exception would be when, after trying to commit suicide, she is away from work for a period of time, but this event included the use of pills.

Question number six asks how often during the last year you have needed a first drink in the morning to get yourself going after a heavy drink session (see fig. 15). From the four possible answers, the answer 'weekly' could suit Eleanor. (3). As seen in the previous questions, after a heavy Friday drinking session, she begins drinking vodka in the morning on Saturday and Sunday and spends the weekend drunk.

Question number 7 asks how often during the last year you have had a feeling of guilt or remorse after drinking (see fig.16). Out of the 4 possible answers, Eleanor could choose ‘less than monthly’ (1). In the novel, there are no clear signs that Eleanor feels guilty after drinking. A reason to support this can be the fact that she does not suffer hangovers: “Classic hangover symptoms. Thankfully I never suffered from them, blessed as I am with an iron constitution” (Honeyman 249). Furthermore, there is a moment where she is aware of the state of her house because of not cleaning it but she does not feel ashamed at all: “I ought to feel ashamed that someone will find the place in this state, but I feel nothing” (Honeyman 192).

For question number 8, which asks how often during the last year you have been unable to remember what had happened the night before because you had been drinking, (see fig. 17), out of the 4 possible answers, Eleanor might answer ‘never’ (0). There is no evidence provided in the novel concerning this matter.

Question number 9 asks if you or someone else has been injured as a result of drinking (see fig. 18). In this case, Eleanor might answer ‘No’ (0). There is no evidence in the novel of injuries as a result of Eleanor’s drinking.

For the last question of the AUDIT, which asks if a relative or a friend or a doctor or another health worker has been concerned about your drinking or suggested you cut down (see fig. 19), the most suitable answer for Eleanor could be ‘Yes, during the last year’ (4). On the one hand, the owner of the local shop where Eleanor buys her alcohol bottles and, on the other hand, her friend Raymond show concern. Following, two examples are presented where this concern is depicted. First, the moment in which Eleanor goes to buy alcohol in a deplorable state after having been heavily drinking and Mr. Dewan, the owner of the shop, is aware of her state: “Mr. Dewan handed me the bottles in a blue plastic bag. The smell of it, the chemical reek of polymers, made my stomach churn even harder. “Take care of yourself, Miss Oliphant,” he said, head tilted to one side, unsmiling” (Honeyman 196). Second, when Raymond goes to Eleanor’s home after being 3 days away from work and realises in what state she is: “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 already overdosed on the pills or whatever” (205). Nevertheless, Raymond is not only concerned about her drinking but about her suicide attempt.

After having answered the 10 questions of the AUDIT, the total number of items for Eleanor’s alcohol consumption pattern is 20. According to the results box, Eleanor would be at risk IV, the highest of all, which comprises results from 20 items onwards. The intervention advisable for Eleanor would be a Referral to a Specialist for Diagnostic Evaluation and Treatment (see fig. 8).

After having undertaken the AUDIT for both chick lit protagonists, the results can be summarized as follows: while Bridget Jones scores a total of 17 points, Eleanor Oliphant scores a total of 20 points. Despite having a similar result, Eleanor is considered to be at a higher risk of developing AUD in comparison to Bridget Jones. Nevertheless, both protagonists are likely to have an outstanding issue with alcohol consumption which would require medical assistance.

Before discussing these findings, the next section presents the results obtained by applying the third methodological method of analysing the alcohol use settings of Bridget and Eleanor.

3.3 Social versus solitary drinking data presentation

As it has been seen in section 2.4.2.3, the third method of analysis consists in examining the alcohol use settings of both characters, taking as a reference the article written by Creswell which establishes the social-contextual framework of risk of AUD exposed in the abovementioned section. This analysis is carried out using the answers to the question *with whom*, developed for this work (see section 2.4.2.1), applied to the extracted quotes and with

the information gathered through the general reading of the novel. Following, the findings of the analysis are presented:

In *Bridget Jones's Diary*, from the 14 extracted quotes (see Appendix A), she social drinks in 11 occasions, in 2 she solitary drinks and in one it is not specified. Thus, according to this data, she could be considered chiefly a social drinker.

In *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, from the 13 quotes extracted (see Appendix B), she drinks on her own in 6 of them. It is significant to note that she repeats her drinking behaviour every weekend. Hence, from the general reading of the novel, Eleanor can be considered mostly a solitary drinker.

Having analysed the findings, the next section provides a brief summary of the results obtained to bring to an end this chapter.

3.4 Summary of the findings

After carrying out the methodology chosen for this work, the following findings can be reported:

Bridget Jones' tendency is to drink every week high amounts of alcohol, having different sessions of binge drinking. She drinks different kind of beverages, especially wine. According to the AUDIT, she could be considered to be at risk III of developing an AUD, scoring a total of 17 points. This result could require simple advice, brief counselling and monitoring. Concerning her alcohol use setting, the findings have shown that Bridget usually social drinks, even though sometimes she also drinks on her own. Finally, she tends to drink to socialize or when she is struggling with certain emotions such as sadness.

Eleanor Oliphant's tendency is to drink every week high amounts of alcohol, especially during the weekend. She usually drinks vodka and wine but when she socializes, she also drinks beer. According to her AUDIT score (20 points), she could be considered to be at risk IV, at a higher risk than Bridget and at the most dangerous level of all. This result could require an

immediate diagnosis followed by the most adequate treatment. Contrary to Bridget, Eleanor usually drinks on her own at home, even though sometimes she drinks with other people at public places. Finally, she usually drinks to cope with negative emotions.

Having summarized the findings, Chapter 4 presents a discussion connecting the theoretical background with the data obtained.

4. DISCUSSION

Following the analysis of the data, Chapter 4 discusses the findings for Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, bearing in mind the theoretical background of this work. The objective of this chapter is to connect all the information which has been provided throughout this work, in order to be able to reach conclusions. This chapter begins in section 4.1 with an individual discussion related to Bridget Jones, followed up by the corresponding one for Eleanor Oliphant in section 4.2. Finally, 4.3 discusses the main similarities and differences between both characters and their alcohol consumption patterns.

4.1 Alcohol consumption in *Bridget Jones's Diary*

After the analysis of the data using the methodology proposed for this work, this section connects the theoretical framework to the findings corresponding to Bridget Jones.

Bridget Jones has grown up with her two parents, Pamela and Colin. Bridget has a brother called Jamie, who seems to not be much in contact with the family. After more than three decades married, Pamela meets a man and decides to separate from her husband. Pamela is depicted as a person who is selfish and tends to make decisions without considering others. On the contrary, Colin is depicted as a supportive and kind person. The relationship between them appears to be insecure. Pam flees with another man and Colin seems to be ambivalent in his attachment to her, giving the impression of acceptance and putting up with questionable attitudes from his wife. With this family scenario, there might have been a clash between her attachment and authenticity needs during her life (see section 2.3). There are two circumstances in which Bridget mentions being traumatised: first when she admits having self-esteem issues: “Wise people will say that Daniel should like me just as I am, but I am a child of Cosmopolitan culture, have been traumatized by supermodels and too many quizzes and know that neither my personality nor my body is up to it if left to its own devices” (Fielding 59) and, second, when

referring to Daniel: “I have major trauma every time he disappears for lunch or puts his coat on to go at the end of the day: to where? With whom? Whom?” (67). In light of the first trauma she mentions, there is a strong sense of disapproval with her own self. The last trauma might be the result of growing up with an insecure attachment role model by her parents. Concerning the different types of trauma (see section 2.3.1), it could be stated that Bridget Jones is traumatized with a small “t”, as she has a constant interpersonal conflict with herself and she feels insecure in her love affairs, tolerating sexual harassment and being mistreated by Daniel.

To mitigate all the emotions product of her unstable nervous system, Bridget Jones uses alcohol several times during the week. In connection to the research on social and solitary drinking settings exposed in section 2.4.3, Bridget drinks to be at ease in social environments, expecting to enhance positive experiences and not feel affected by the social pressure she is usually surrounded by. On the contrary, she tends to drink at home on her own when she is struggling with negative emotions, expecting to decrease her discomfort. When she drinks in social settings, she obtains an increased positive reward from alcohol and when she drinks in solitary settings, she feels a tension reduction. As a consequence, she tends to lose control over drinking and she suffers from frequent hangovers the following day (114 in a year). Her hangovers affect her physically, not being able to cope in general with her responsibilities the following day, and also emotionally, having negative and intense feelings of sadness, anxiety, etc. and suffering from low self-esteem: “Oh, why am I so unattractive? Why? Even a man who wears bumblebee socks thinks I am horrible. Hate the New Year. Hate everyone. Except Daniel Cleaver” (Fielding 17). Furthermore, under the hazardous effects of alcohol, she engages in risky sexual intercourse: “I seriously think I am pregnant. How could we have been so stupid? Daniel and I were so carried away with euphoria at being back together again that reality seemed to go out of the window – and once you’ve . . . oh look, I don’t want to talk about it” (115). In light of her alcohol consumption, Bridget Jones can be considered a heavy drinker. She surpasses more than once a month the recommended alcohol units per week and she tends to

binge drink having in one session more than six units of alcohol, reaching in some occasions the alarming number of 14. Taking into account the results of the AUDIT, Bridget could be at high risk of developing an AUD, if not already suffering it, if we take into account that not all her yearly alcohol consumption is recorded in the novel. Bridget Jones is aware and concerned of her heavy drinking but she tends to have an excuse for every time she overdrinks. Her alcohol abuse awareness can be seen in her diary entries where she records every day how many alcohol units she has drunk and counts meticulously her consumption to have a total number by the end of the year and be able to judge herself accordingly. In her diary entries, every time she drinks or she does not drink, she writes a comment next to the alcohol units: “alcohol units 9 (poor)” (292), “alcohol units 0 (v.g. Have discovered delicious new alcohol substitute drink called Smoothies – v. nice, fruity)” (247). Thus, when she has sessions of abstinence, the following days she ends up drinking double. On the contrary, when she drinks too much, there is always a reason that excuses it: “2 units (romantic Valentine’s Day treat – 2 bottles Becks, on own, huh)” (49), “alcohol units 2 (but the Lord’s Day)” (55), “alcohol units 14 (but effectively covers 2 days as 4 hours of party was on New Year’s Day)” (7).

In short, Bridget Jones’ personality and alcohol consumption seem to be the result of past traumatic events, which, even though not life-threatening, appear to have caused a great impact on her. At the end of the novel, even though she believes her year progress has been excellent (308), her summary does not report much improvement concerning her alcohol consumption and other life aspects she had intended to change. Thus, it could be beneficial for Bridget Jones to work more on herself and avoid regulating herself so much on food and alcohol.

In the upcoming section, the character Eleanor Oliphant is discussed, following the same criteria as in the just presented section.

4.2 Alcohol consumption in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*

After the analysis of the data using the methodology proposed for this work, this section connects the theoretical framework to the findings corresponding to Eleanor Oliphant.

Focusing on the modern approach to addiction by Dr. Gabor Maté can help to understand Eleanor Oliphant and her alcohol consumption. From the two fundamental needs, attachment and authenticity, Eleanor Oliphant did not have any of them fully covered during her childhood. There were two major events which could explain this: First, Eleanor suffered constant neglect, violence, and emotional abuse by her mother. Second, she suffered a life-threatening event where she lost her mother and sister, resulting in complete abandonment when she was still a child. (Honeyman 263). On the one hand, concerning attachment, Eleanor did not feel loved and safe. On the other hand, her authenticity need was sabotaged constantly by her mum who, by physically and verbally abusing her, sent her the message that she was not good enough. As a result, Eleanor was not able to be herself and connect entirely to her emotions and body.

Throughout the novel, her loss is reflected on her way of living. Eleanor lives on autopilot: she is in total disassociation with herself, a common defence mechanism for our minds, especially after a severe traumatic event in childhood (Schäfer et al.88). Following up with the two types of trauma (see section 2.3.1), Eleanor's inner injury can be considered a capital-T trauma. While reading the novel, the reader can perceive how Eleanor's childhood trauma distorts her reality and how she feels unworthy of love, respect, and happiness.

As Eleanor grew up with a physically and verbal abusive mother, she has learnt to normalise abuse. In the past she even had an abusive partner called Declan who would physically and emotionally abuse of her: "He used to punch me in the kidneys, slap me—he fractured twelve bones, all in all. He stayed out some nights and then came home and told me about the women he'd been with. It was my fault, all my fault. But still, I know he shouldn't have done that. I know it now, anyway." (127). Furthermore, as she had a conflict during her

childhood with the attachment need, she has noticeable issues to socialize with other individuals and lacks social skills. Thus, at the beginning of the novel she does not have any friends and lives a solitary life. With this scenario, it might not be surprising that Eleanor used alcohol as an attempt to shut down the intense pain she suffered by her past traumatic events, which haunted her ever since she was born.

Analysing her alcohol consumption, the following ideas could be pointed out: first, her childhood trauma and issues with attachment could explain her tendency to be a solitary drinker. Following the research by Creswell (see section 2.4.2.3), her solitary drinking habit seems to be linked to negative emotionality, as she is an introvert, feels social discomfort, and suffers from loneliness. She drinks to cope with pain in order to shut down her negative emotions, which she manages by overdosing with vodka: “I’d had too much to drink because I’d had too much pain, and there was nowhere else it could go but down, drowned in the vodka” (178), “I was also thinking that I might buy some more vodka, just a half bottle, to top up what remained. I yearned for that brief, sharp feeling I get when I drink it—a sad, burning feeling—and then, blissfully, no feelings at all” (76). The fact of not feeling pain anymore when she overdrinks, creates a vicious chain where Eleanor creates a dangerous habit of drinking every weekend. The habit is such that on days when her weekend is altered, she feels anxious and in urgent need of drinking.

Second, she is a heavy drinker. If the maximum recommended alcohol units for a woman per week are 14, only at the weekend, she drinks a total of 89 units of alcohol. With this scenario, Eleanor would most certainly be an ideal candidate for a diagnosis evaluation and treatment for AUD (see section 3.2.2). Third, despite of this vast quantity of alcohol consumption, Eleanor is unaware and not concerned about her drinking problem, likely to be a consequence of the disconnection from her inner self. In one occasion when she goes to the local shop early in the morning and the owner refuses to sell her alcohol, she reflects upon it not understanding the reason why:

Why couldn't you just purchase it in the same way that you bought, say, milk—to wit, at any shop at any time that it was open? Ridiculous. I suppose it's to ensure that alcoholics are protected from themselves for at least a few hours each day; although, rationally, that makes no sense. If I were chemically and psychologically addicted to alcohol, I'd ensure I had a ready supply to hand at all times, buying in bulk and stockpiling. It was an illogical law; really, what was the difference between buying vodka at ten past nine in the morning and at ten past ten? Vodka is, for me, merely a household necessity, like a loaf of bread or a packet of tea (115).

Moreover, when she attempts against her life and Raymond finds her at home on her own in a miserable state and is extremely concerned, she tries to lighten up the situation:

This was such a ridiculous summation of my situation that I almost laughed. Raymond wasn't usually prone to exaggeration but this was over the top, and I couldn't allow it to stand as a factually accurate description of what had happened that night. "Raymond, I simply had a bit too much vodka after a stressful evening, that's all. It's hardly symptomatic of an illness (204).

Towards the end of the novel, when she begins counselling, she slowly reduces her alcohol consumption. Following Gábor Maté's theory, Eleanor would be healing and reconnecting slowly, though painfully, with her lost inner self.

Once she begins healing, even though she finds it difficult not to drink, she manages to cope with her impulses: "Sometimes, after counselling sessions, I desperately wanted to buy vodka, lots of it, take it home and drink it down, but in the end I never did. I couldn't, for lots of reasons, one of which was that if I wasn't fit to, then who would feed Glen? She isn't able to take care of herself. She needs me" (252). This quote is significant and can be connected to the concept of attachment seen at the beginning of this section. Before therapy, the only attachment she kept since she was a child was her plant Polly:

She came with me from my childhood bedroom, survived the foster placements and children's homes and, like me, she's still here. I've looked after her, tended to her, picked her up and repotted her when she was dropped or thrown. She likes light, and she's thirsty. Apart from that, she requires minimal care and attention, and largely looks after herself. I talk to her sometimes, I'm not ashamed to admit it. When the silence and the aloneness press down and around me, crushing me, carving through me like ice, I need to speak aloud sometimes, if only for proof of life (49).

Once she had begun therapy, Raymond gifted her with a cat whom she named Glen, after her favourite vodka. The fact of taking on the responsibility of looking after an animal can be interpreted as an improvement and the right path towards her healing. Furthermore, this means that she would have company at home with her, after so many years of solitude. For her, having a cat meant a responsibility which she was willing to undertake and felt thankful for: "It isn't annoying, her need—it isn't a burden. It's a privilege. I'm responsible. I chose to put myself in a situation where I'm responsible. Wanting to look after her, a small, dependent, vulnerable creature, is innate, and I don't even have to think about it. It's like breathing" (252).

In short, Eleanor's character and alcohol consumption seem to be a consequence of her past traumatic events. As Maté mentions in his body of work, trauma is not what happens to you, but what happens *inside* of you as a result of what happens to you. Having this in mind, the impact of Eleanor's childhood events seems to have been devastating for her, and finding shelter in alcohol was for her the road to take to be able to cope with her daily suffering. Despite her alcohol abuse and the seriousness of her mental state, it seems as though at the end of the novel there is a ray of sun to shed hope to the situation. Unfortunately, Eleanor had to hit rock bottom to realise how in need of help she was. Probably, if Raymond had not been in her life at that time, the novel could have had a tragic ending. In the end, Honeyman shows how necessary the need for attachment is to survive. In the end, Raymond and Glen the cat seem to have given a sense of belonging to Eleanor, so much needed. Hopefully, with this need in process of

recovery and with her therapy sessions with Dr. Temple, Eleanor will be able to reconnect with herself and enjoy life as it is.

After the individual discussion of the alcohol consumption use of the protagonists of each novel, the next section shows a brief comparison in order to establish the similarities and differences in their alcohol consumption propensity.

4.3 Similarities and differences between the alcohol consumption of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant

The last section of this chapter compares and contrasts Bridget and Eleanor's alcohol consumption.

Concerning their childhood, while Bridget was brought up by her parents and seemed to have a structured life (though slightly unstable), Eleanor was brought up by her mum and lived with her sister until she was 10. Then, she became an orphan. Both seem to have experienced trauma in their lives but, while Bridget's is a small-t trauma, Eleanor's is a capital-T trauma. Nevertheless, both characters suffer and seem to use alcohol to cope with their past traumatic events, following the chick lit model (see fig. 1).

In regard to their alcohol consumption, both drink alcohol every week socially and on their own. When they drink socially, it tends to be to fit in with the situation, while when they drink on their own, the consumption is connected to negative emotions. Both are heavy drinkers, but, according to the data, Eleanor seems to drink more: while Bridget drank a total of 3,836 alcohol units in a year, if the reader interprets that *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* narrates a year in Eleanor's life, only taking into account her weekend routine of 89 alcohol units, she would have drunk more than 4,000 units. Furthermore, their drinking consequences differ. When they heavy drink, Bridget encounters risky sexual practices and the following day she suffers from heavy hangovers and low self-esteem. On the contrary, Eleanor seems to assimilate alcohol in a smoother way. Despite drinking 89 units every weekend, even though

she finds it slightly hard to get back to work on Monday, she is able to cope with it. This could be interpreted as Eleanor becoming more tolerant to alcohol, with the receptors of her brain gradually adapting to the effects of alcohol use (Drinkaware).

Last but not least, there is a difference in how they tackle their issue: Bridget keeps a diary where she records her daily alcohol consumption while Eleanor is not even aware of her alcohol problem. In this sense, Bridget seems to be more connected to her inner self than Eleanor, who lives in total disassociation with herself. Even though Bridget keeps an obsessive track of her alcohol consumption in her diary, it does not seem to be helping her much, rather the contrary, as she tends to reward herself in an unhealthy manner every time she has a drink-free day.

At the end of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, no solution for Bridget's alcohol use is mentioned while in *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, the reader feels hopeful for the protagonist as she begins to go to therapy sessions, shedding a ray of light at the end of her dark tunnel.

In short, although Bridget and Eleanor's excessive alcohol consumption seems to be the way of coping with their own past traumatic events and both seem to be at a dangerous point with alcohol use, it can be interpreted that Eleanor is in a darker place than Bridget. Eleanor goes one step ahead and tries to commit suicide during the novel. This event marks a significant difference between them as it might suggest that Eleanor is in urgent need for help.

The next chapter draws the final conclusions, providing an overview of this work, final reflections and a proposal for further studies in connection to the topic discussed.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Throughout this work, the main aim has been to give visibility to the abusive alcohol use of Bridget Jones and Eleanor Oliphant, two chick lit heroines from the novels *Bridget Jones's Diary* and *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine*, respectively. To do this, an in-depth analysis of the alcohol consumption pattern of both protagonists has been conducted. For this analysis, a methodology based on three different methods has been applied, together with the corresponding findings. The combination of both has been adequate in the pursuance of shedding light on the hazardous patterns both chick lit heroines have in regard to alcohol use.

The analysis of this work leads to the following conclusions: first, us as human beings, are the result of the past events which caused an impact inside of our inner self, especially those which occurred during our childhood, when we are still building our physical and emotional parts. Second, bearing this in mind, a compassionate approach should be taken towards those engaged in any type of abuse or addiction and, in words of Gabor Maté's famous quote, ask ourselves "not why the addiction, but why the pain". Third, this work has highlighted the importance of having a social circle around us which is essential for our physical and emotional well-being. If we take Eleanor's case as an example, her destiny might have been tragic if it had not been by the support and care of Raymond, her new friend.

Bearing in mind that alcohol abuse is so extended in today's society, future research could be desirable. First, on the correlation between capital-T trauma and small-t trauma in connection to alcohol use in social and solitary settings, as in this Master's degree final project the use of two examples is not enough to generalise. Second, further research on the connection between alcohol consumption and nationalities might extend the explanation on alcohol consumption. In this work, both protagonists live in the United Kingdom, a country where alcohol is commonly known as being part of the social life of their dwellers. Nevertheless, this work has not taken this factor into consideration in the analysis. Finally, after writing this work

and expanding my knowledge on addiction, my perspective has changed. My intransigent vision of substance use disorder has shifted into a more compassionate one, being able now to understand that behind an addiction, there is a broken human who will hopefully manage to put all their pieces back together one day.

APPENDIX A

Extracted quotes from *Bridget Jones's Diary* with corresponding wh- question boxes

➤ Quote page 7

“9st 3 (but post-Christmas), alcohol units 14 (but effectively covers 2 days as 4 hours of party was on New Year’s Day), cigarettes 22, calories 5424 (...) Food consumed today: 2 pkts Emmenthal cheese slices 14 cold new potatoes 2 Bloody Marys (count as food as contain Worcester sauce and tomatoes)” (Fielding 7).

Table A1. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 7

WHAT	2 Bloody Mary’s and other beverages
HOW MUCH	14 units
WHEN	New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day
WHERE	at a party
WITH WHOM	not specified
WHY	to celebrate New Year; to socialize

➤ Quote page 34

Had it not been for Sharon and the fuckwittage and the fact I’d just drunk the best part of a bottle of wine, I think I would have sunk powerless into his arms. As it was, I leapt to my feet, pulling up my skirt. ‘That is just such crap,’ I slurred. ‘How dare you be so fraudulently flirtatious, cowardly and dysfunctional? I am not interested in emotional fuckwittage. Goodbye. (Fielding 34)

Table A2. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 34

WHAT	wine
HOW MUCH	8 units
WHEN	Friday 27 January
WHERE	at Daniel Cleaver's flat
WITH WHOM	Daniel
WHY	Went out for dinner

➤ Quote page 41

“By this time I'd had a good half-pint of '82 Pauillac myself. ‘Is it one in three marriages that end in divorce now or one in two?’ I slurred with a pointless attempt at sarcasm. ‘Seriously, old girl,’ he said, ignoring me. ‘Office is full of them, single girls over thirty. Fine physical specimens. Can't get a chap’” (Fielding 41).

Table A3. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 41

WHAT	'82 Pauliac wine
HOW MUCH	9 units
WHEN	Wednesday 1 February
WHERE	dinner party with married couples
WITH WHOM	Magda, Jeremy and other couples
WHY	to cope with social pressure

➤ Quote pages 82-84

9st, alcohol units 9*, cigarettes 42*, calories 4295*. *If can't splash out on birthday, when can I? (...) 7–7.05. Prepare Grand Marnier soufflés. (Actually think will have a little taste of Grand Marnier now. It is my birthday, after all.) 7.05–7.10. Mmm. Grand Marnier delicious (...) 7.40 p.m. Hmm. Best plan,

surely, is to get into the bath with a glass of champagne then get ready. At least if I look nice I can carry on cooking when everyone is here and maybe can get Tom to go out for the missing ingredients. (Fielding 82-84)

Table A4. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote pages 82-84

WHAT	Grand Marnier liquor and champagne
HOW MUCH	9 units
WHEN	Tuesday 21 March
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to celebrate her birthday

➤ Quote page 98

“Party got off to a bad start when could not see anyone that I knew to introduce to each other. Found myself a drink then spotted Perpetua talking to James from the Telegraph” (Fielding 98).

Table A5. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 98

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Tuesday 18 April
WHERE	at Kafka’s Motorbike launch party
WITH WHOM	workmates and other guests
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote page 110

“Several cigarettes and a lot of fiddling with a credit card later we were in, to find water flooding everywhere. We couldn’t turn the taps off. Dan rushed downstairs, returning with a spanner and a bottle of Scotch. (...) so we ate the pizza and had a bottle of wine and a few more cigarettes and some more Scotch” (Fielding 110).

Table A6. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 110

WHAT	Scotch whisky and wine
HOW MUCH	14 units
WHEN	Friday 28 April, late at night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	her Australian neighbour Dan
WHY	to cope with stress

➤ Quote page 111

“Twenty-two hours, four pizzas, one Indian takeaway, three packets of cigarettes and three bottles of champagne later, Daniel is still here. I am in love” (Fielding 111).

Table A7. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 111

WHAT	champagne
HOW MUCH	12 units
WHEN	Saturday 29 April
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	Daniel Cleaver
WHY	to cope with emotional stress

➤ Quote page 135

“9st 3 (why? why? from where?), alcohol units 7 (Saturday), cigarettes 17 (positively restrained, considering), number of correct lottery numbers 0 (but v. distracted by filming)” (Fielding 135).

Table A8. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones page 135

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Saturday 20 May
WHERE	not specified
WITH WHOM	not specified
WHY	it's Saturday

➤ Quote pages 156-160

“8st 11, alcohol units 7, cigarettes 2, calories 4587 (ooops). (...) Daniel had lit a fag and was calling down to room service for six cans of Fosters. ‘Do you want anything, Bridge?’ he said, smirking. ‘Cream tea, maybe? I’ll pay’” (Fielding 156-160).

Table A9. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote pages 156-160

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Sunday 25 June
WHERE	Mini break with Daniel at Wovingham Hall
WITH WHOM	Daniel Cleaver
WHY	she felt humiliated by Daniel

➤ Quote pages 167-169

“8st 11 (v.g.), alcohol units 7, cigarettes 8, calories 6245 (sodding Una Alconbury, Mark Darcy, Daniel, Mum, everybody) (...) ‘Bridget!! Super to see you. Have a Pimm’s,’ she said” (Fielding 167-169).

Table A10. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote pages 167-169

WHAT	Pimm’s
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Saturday 29 July
WHERE	at the Vicars and Tarts party
WITH WHOM	Mark Darcy and guests
WHY	embarrassment; social pressure

➤ Quote page 187

“Just called Jude. I told her a bit about the tragedy with Daniel and she was horrified, immediately declared a state of emergency and said she would call Sharon and fix for us all to meet at nine (...) Gor es wor blurry goofun tonight though. Ooof. Tumbled over” (Fielding 187).

Table A11. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 187

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	7 units
WHEN	Tuesday 8 August
WHERE	out and about
WITH WHOM	her friends Sharon and Jude
WHY	to cope with sadness

➤ Quote pages 273-274

“Immediately though, Jude appeared with a glass of Grand Marnier. ‘What happened?’ she said. I told her the whole story, pouring the Grand Marnier straight down my throat as I did. Jude didn’t say a word but immediately went and fetched Mark Darcy” (Fielding 273-274).

Table A12. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote pages 273-274

WHAT	Grand Marnier liquor
HOW MUCH	9 units
WHEN	Tuesday 21 November
WHERE	at home hosting a party
WITH WHOM	Tom and guests
WHY	she feels nervous

➤ Quote page 294

“Course is OK — everyone drunks office Christmas parties. Is a good fun. Must gust sleep — doen matttr about clothesoff” (Fielding 294).

Table A13. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 294

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	9 units
WHEN	Tuesday 19 December
WHERE	at the office disco
WITH WHOM	workmates
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote page 297

“9st 4, alcohol units 12, cigarettes 38, calories 2976, friends and loved ones who care about self this festive tide 0” (Fielding 297).

Table A14. Wh- question box for Bridget Jones quote page 297

WHAT	not specified
HOW MUCH	12 units
WHEN	Tuesday 23 December
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	she feels very lonely

APPENDIX B

Extracted quotes from *Eleanor Oliphant is Completely Fine* with corresponding wh-question boxes

➤ Quote page 10

On Fridays, I don't get the bus straight after work but instead I go to the Tesco Metro around the corner from the office and buy a margherita pizza, some Chianti and two big bottles of Glen's vodka. When I get home, I eat the pizza and drink the wine. I have some vodka afterward. I don't need much on a Friday, just a few big swigs. I usually wake up on the sofa around 3 a.m., and I stumble off to bed. I drink the rest of the vodka over the weekend, spread it throughout both days so that I'm neither drunk nor sober. Monday takes a long time to come around. (Honeyman 10)

Table B1. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 10

WHAT	Chianti wine and Glen's vodka
HOW MUCH	2 bottles of vodka (80 units) and 1 bottle of wine (9 units)
WHEN	on a Friday night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to shut down pain; to sleep

➤ Quote page 16

"I had been drinking sour white wine, warm and tainted by the plastic glasses the pub made us drink from. What savages they must think us! Billy had insisted on buying it, to

thank me for inviting him. There was no question of it being a date. The very notion was ridiculous” (Honeyman 16).

Table B2. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 16

WHAT	sour white wine
HOW MUCH	not specified
WHEN	on a Thursday night
WHERE	at a charity gig
WITH WHOM	her workmate Bill
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote page 25

I’d finished eating my poor-quality pizza and was jumping up and down on the box, trying to crush it small enough to fit into the bin, when I remembered the brandy (...) —a bottle of Rémy Martin, full and unopened. I unscrewed the cap and took a drink. It wasn’t as nice as vodka, but it wasn’t bad (...) the brandy was both warming and soothing, and I kept sipping. When I awoke, it was just after 3 a.m., and the pen and notebook were lying on the floor. Slowly, I recalled getting sidetracked, starting to daydream as the brandy slipped down (...) A mouthful of brandy remained in the bottle. I downed it and went to bed. (Honeyman 25)

Table B3. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 25

WHAT	Magners beer
HOW MUCH	2.6 units
WHEN	weekend
WHERE	at a pub
WITH WHOM	Raymond
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote page 60

Right,” I said, “thank you. In that case, I’ll have a Magners drink, please, on your recommendation.” He opened a brown bottle and put it on the bar. He put some ice in a tall glass and placed it next to the bottle. “What’s that?” I said. “The Magners.” “And what’s the empty glass for?” “It’s for the Magners,” he said. “Am I expected to pour the drink from the bottle into the glass?” I said, puzzled. “Isn’t it your job to do that?” He stared at me and then slowly poured the brown liquid over the ice and put it down quite hard; indeed, he practically slammed the bottle onto the counter. (Honeyman 60)

Table B4. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant page 60

WHAT	Rémy Martin brandy
HOW MUCH	1 bottle of brandy (28 units)
WHEN	on a Friday night
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to shut down pain; to sleep

➤ Quote page 112

“I nodded, wondering which singer he was talking about, and moved to the bar area to gather my thoughts. I wouldn’t gain entry without a ticket, that much was clear. And there were no tickets available. I ordered a Magners drink, remembering from last time that I’d be required to pour it myself” (Honeyman 112).

Table B5. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 112

WHAT	Magners beer
HOW MUCH	2.6 units
WHEN	Friday evening
WHERE	at a pub
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	she was disappointed

➤ Quote page 123

Laura appeared with two flutes of urine-colored fizzy liquid—much to my surprise, I drank mine down in three gulps. It was dry and biscuity, and extremely delicious. I wondered if it was expensive, and whether it might in due course come to replace vodka as my beverage of choice. Laura noticed, and topped up my glass. “You’re like me—I only drink bubbles,” she said approvingly (...)” I finished my cup of wine and poured some more. (Honeyman 123)

Table B6. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 123

WHAT	Prosecco
HOW MUCH	9 units approximately
WHEN	weekend
WHERE	at Sammy's homecoming party
WITH WHOM	Laura, Raymond and other guests
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote pages 144-152

I followed him gratefully to the bar. The prices were gratifyingly low, and I drank my Magners quite fast, comfortable in the knowledge that I'd brought enough money for several more (...) He finished his pint. "Same again?" he said. I nodded (...) "As you know, I was with Declan for a couple of years," I said. "And you also know how that turned out." More Magners (...) "I'll just nip to the bar," he said. "You still on the Magners?" I felt strange, stirred up. "I'll have a vodka with cola, please," I said, knowing from experience that vodka would be good for whatever ailed me (...) I went to the bar and bought myself a Magners and a vodka and cola, and, after a moment's thought, a pint of beer for Raymond (...) The drink I'd bought him was going to go to waste. I picked it up and drank it down, the whole pint, acrid and bitter tasting. (Honeyman 144-152)

Table B7. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote pages 144-152

WHAT	Magners beer and vodka with cola
HOW MUCH	12.4 units
WHEN	Saturday night
WHERE	At a club, celebrating Keith's birthday
WITH WHOM	Raymond; alone
WHY	to socialize; to shut down pain

➤ Quote page 177

I was on my fourth vodka by now, and the funeral service was there in my mind, but it didn't hurt (...) The barman, who had become less handsome as time had worn on, picked up my glass, filled it back up with vodka and a dash of cola and returned it to me. (...) I'd had too much to drink because I'd had too much pain, and there was nowhere else it could go but down, drowned in the vodka. Simple, really. (Honeyman 177)

Table B8. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 177

WHAT	vodka with cola
HOW MUCH	5 units
WHEN	weekend
WHERE	at Sammy's funeral
WITH WHOM	the waiter at the crematorium
WHY	to ease the pain

➤ Quote page 181

I don't suppose you've got any vodka or Magners drink, by any chance?" I said. He raised an eyebrow. "I'm absolutely fine now, after the sausage rolls and the catnap," I said, and I was. I felt floaty and clean, not intoxicated, just very pleasantly numbed to sharp feelings. He laughed. "Well, I suppose I could go for a glass of red, right enough," he said (...) I was very disappointed when it ended, and also to see that we had eaten all the crisps and drunk most of the wine, although Raymond had had far more than me—I couldn't drink wine as quickly as vodka or Magners drink, it seemed. (Honeyman 181)

Table B9. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 181

WHAT	wine
HOW MUCH	9 units approximately
WHEN	Saturday night
WHERE	at Raymond's flat
WITH WHOM	Raymond
WHY	to continue drunk and not feel pain

➤ Quote pages 186-188

Raymond returned from the bar with a plastic pint of beer for himself and, without having asked, something paler for me. "Cider?" I shouted, over the din. "But, Raymond. I don't drink cider!" "What do you think Magners is, you daft bint?" he said, nudging me gently with his elbow. I sipped reluctantly—it wasn't as nice as Magners, but it would do (...) "Let us retire to an inn or public house, Raymond—a quiet one—and please, allow me to buy you some beer in recompense for this wasted evening (...) "Do you know much about music, then?"

I asked, as we walked toward a pub which Raymond assured me was quiet “A proper old man’s pub,” he said, whatever that was. (Honeyman 186-188)

Table B10. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote pages 186-188

WHAT	cider and other beverages
HOW MUCH	at least 5 units
WHEN	Tuesday night
WHERE	at 2 different pubs
WITH WHOM	Raymond
WHY	to socialize

➤ Quote page 197

I played the scene in my head again, over and over, remembering the second thing that I’d realized that night. It was later and I’d been standing further back, right in the middle of the crowd. I’d gone to get yet another drink, and the path to the front of the stage had closed up while I’d been at the bar. I’d downed the vodka—my sixth? Seventh? I don’t remember. (Honeyman 197)

Table B11. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 197

WHAT	vodka
HOW MUCH	7 units approximately
WHEN	Tuesday night
WHERE	at a gig
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	sadness; disappointment

➤ Quote page 192

All of the empty vodka bottles are in my sight line, dropped on the floor when they were finished. I don't know how long I have been lying like this. I don't recall how I ended up on the floor of the kitchen, or why I am naked. I reach for the bottle beside me, anxious about how much remains, instantly relieved at its heaviness. This is the last one, however. When this bottle is done, I have two choices: get off this floor, get dressed and go and buy more; or kill myself. Actually, either way, I'm going to kill myself. It's simply a case of how much vodka I drink before I do it. I take another big mouthful and wait for the pain to be released. (Honeyman 192)

Table B12. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant quote page 192

WHAT	vodka
HOW MUCH	more than 80 units
WHEN	during the week
WHERE	at home
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	self-harm; to commit suicide

➤ Quote page 218

“It was 11 a.m. I wasn't supposed to be drinking, but I wiped away my tears, went into the nearest pub and ordered a large vodka. I silently raised a toast to absent friends and drank it down fast. I walked out before any of the daytime drinkers could begin an interaction with me. Then I went home and got into bed” (Honeyman 218).

Table B13. Wh- question box for Eleanor Oliphant page 218

WHAT	vodka
HOW MUCH	1.4 units approximately
WHEN	11 am, weekday
WHERE	at a pub
WITH WHOM	alone
WHY	to ease the pain after therapy session

APPENDIX C

Alcohol units recorded in *Bridget Jones's Diary*Table C1. Record of alcohol units in *Bridget Jones's Diary*

MONTH	N° OF DIARY ENTRIES	N° OF ALCOHOL UNITS							TOTAL UNITS
		0	1	2	3	4	5	6 (+)	
JANUARY	10	2	0	2	0	1	1	4	47
FEBRUARY	15	2	2	4	0	3	3	1	46
MARCH	7	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	27
APRIL	10	6	0	0	0	0	1	3	38
MAY	8	3	0	0	0	1	0	4	29
JUNE	8	0	1	0	4	1	1	1	29
JULY	4	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	10
AUGUST	9	3	0	0	3	1	0	2	26
SEPTEMBER	8	0	0	1	2	1	0	0	12
OCTOBER	8	4	0	0	2	0	0	2	17
NOVEMBER	12	2	0	3	2	2	1	2	40
DECEMBER	8	0	1	2	1	2	0	2	37

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