



# The Impacts of Untreated Childhood Trauma Depicted in Dolores Redondo's *The Invisible Guardian*

**Nabila Shafa Salsabila**

English Literature, Universitas Brawijaya, Indonesia

E-mail: [salsasea@gmail.com](mailto:salsasea@gmail.com)

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**ABSTRACT:** Growing up, sometimes parent(s) unconsciously inflict trauma to their child, but in some cases, the parent(s) intentionally inflict harm to their child. As the child grows older, the impact of these traumatic events did not disappear easily from the survivor's life. This study analyzes the impact left by traumatic childhood in adult life of Amaia Salazar, a Homicide Inspector who was obliged to go back to her hometown, and a place where this traumatic childhood took place in her childhood. This study uses psychological approach to literature as the main theoretical framework. Result from this study displays some of the impact left by Amaia's traumatizing childhood. Amaia is shown to have insomnia and frequent nightmares, problem with her maternal instinct and womanhood, and flashback and re-traumatization. All of these are combined impact of a traumatic childhood.

**Keywords:** psychology, literature, childhood, trauma, impacts

## 1. Introduction

According to Wicks-Nelson & Israel (1997), trauma is an occurrence that differs from daily situations and could accumulate the feelings of severe stress and unhappiness. Interpersonal trauma could result in emotional struggles which could lead to emotional vulnerability as feelings of violation and betrayal that inhabit the sufferer (Lilly & London, 2015). These feelings can disturb the sufferer's emotional response system, thus leading to internal regulation difficulties at a later stage (Barlow, Goldsmith-Turov & Gerhart, 2017). If parent(s) already subject a trauma to a child, the child's core system recognizes that a secure attachment has not yet formed and is lacking protection, resulting in emotional hesitation. In the early years, it is important to have a sense of safety and support to strengthen the child to explore the environment with confidence and independence, regardless of possibility of failure (van Rosmalen, van de Horst, & van der Veer, 2016). A child that goes through a traumatic event could have emotional hesitation, which could further impact their behavior in later years.

One of the most seen consequences of an untreated childhood trauma is sleep disturbance. Noll, Trickett, Susman, & Putnam (2006) explained that sleep disturbance is one of the most troublesome factors that the childhood trauma victim suffered, because sleep disturbance is attached to comfort and safety, and once these feelings have been compromised during their childhood, these attached feelings be situated removed from the victim's night-time regime. Displaying signs of sleep disturbance and nightmares in children who have experienced trauma are the most dominant symptom of post trauma



(Wamser-Nanney, & Chesher, 2018). The symptoms and signs of untreated childhood trauma that are experienced by the sufferer.

When the sufferer refuses to contemplate on the traumatic events to protect their own wellbeing can be considered as a defense mechanism known as denial rather than a coping method (Tapia, 2014). The sufferer can also take responsibility for their own traumatic events, hence making the process to mentally revisit the traumatic events (re-traumatization) (Frazier, 2000). Hiskey and colleagues (2008) found that adult survivors experienced a later life reactivation of the memories of the traumatic events that had an intense and vivid aspect within the same subjective potency experienced during the actual traumatic events. Most of the participants in Brady and colleagues (2004) research resurfaced the memories of traumatic events were triggered by sensory reminders or anniversaries of the traumatic events. When faced with similar situations that could trigger different responses, the trigger could be as simple as sensory reminders such as smell, noise, and visual.

The reason why I chose a novel as the object of this study is because written literature is one of the oldest forms of literature. The earliest examples of written literature were first spotted in ancient Mesopotamia. According to Chafe (1982) distinct the particularity and context-free character of written language with the implicitly and context-dependent nature of oral language. By using a novel as an object, it is also easier in collecting the data that later will be used in this study.

In this study, the main character of the novel, *The Invisible Guardian* by Dolores Redondo, Amaia Salazar, is a childhood trauma survivor. The novel itself has the genre of crime and supernatural. The novel was written originally in Spanish, but later translated to English in 2015, published by HarperCollins. *The Invisible Guardian* is the first novel of *The Baztan Trilogy*, written by Dolores Redondo. The three novels have been made into movies and all available on streaming service Netflix.

Amaia Salazar is a homicide inspector who must return to her hometown that she always desired to escape from being back home makes Amaia back on having nightmares, and flashbacks of her childhood memories are back to haunt her. Amaia returned to Baztan, Navarra to inspect a murder case of a teenage girls, as she starts to get deeper on her investigation, she needs to keep her rationality as the lines between mythology and reality in her life begins to blur. Amaia must investigate a series of mysterious murder while also “revisit” the very old place where the traumatic events happened in her childhood. Old Basque mythology such as “the Basajaun”, a creature from the Basque mythology would also be named in this study as the reality slowly crumbles in front of Amaia’s eyes.

The reason why I chose Dolores Redondo’s *The Invisible Guardian* is because first, the main character of the novel is a female homicide inspector, which is rarely found in the genre of crime in written literature. Second, because the story takes place in Spain, and most crime novels I have read take place in either America or Asia. Lastly, the irony of a homicide inspector who is expected to be always rational, are having a second thought in supernatural beings while investigating the series of murder happening. I use



a psychological approach to analyze some effects on an untreated childhood trauma in the main character of the novel, Amalia Salazar.

The formulated problem of the study is how untreated childhood trauma can affect the adult life of the main character in the novel *The Invisible Guardian* by Dolores Redondo. Therefore, the object of the study is to know better and to understand how untreated childhood trauma can affect the adult life of the main character in Dolores Redondo's *The Invisible Guardian*.

## 2. Method

Psychology, defined by William James from his *The Principles of Psychology (1890)*, is the science of mental life that provides acute discussions of topics. The word psychology itself is derived from Greek, “psyche” that has the meaning soul and “logos” that has the meaning knowledge. Jung believed that the unconscious was inherited from the past collective experience of humanity, and is made up of a collection of knowledge and imagery which is born within everyone and is shared by all human beings due to the ancestral experience. He also believed that this collective unconsciousness is expressed through universal archetype—signs, symbols, or patterns of thinking and/or behavior that are inherited from our ancestors.

Psychology and literature are two subjects that complement each other in relationship, because psychology is a study that looks inside of human minds, whereas literature reflects the human mind in real life. According to Feldman (2012), “Psychology is a science dedicated to the study of behavior and mental process”. Abrams (1999) explains psychological criticism as: “a work of literature primarily as an expression, in fictional form, of the state of mind and the structure of personality of the individual author. This approach emerged in the early decades of the nineteenth century, as part of the romantic replacement of earlier mimetic and pragmatic views by an expressive view of the nature of literature.”

On characterizing each character in literary work, the study of psychology helps define these characters. When making their work, the author of a certain literary work must have their own specialty. Psychological approach looks at the evidence of psychological conflicts and reaction towards certain situations suffered by certain characters within the literary works.

Psychological interpretation can afford many profound clues toward solving a work's thematic and symbolic mysteries, but it can seldom account for the beautiful symmetry of a well-wrought poem or a fictional masterpiece. Thus, making psychological approach the most suited method for reading beneath the lines at analyzing literary work. In this thesis I will use a psychological approach to literature, specifically using the approach of childhood trauma. The psychological approach



functions as a tool to analyze the behavior of the main character, Amaia Salazar, in *The Invisible Guardian*.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### 3.1. Insomnia and Nightmares

Amaia Salazar, the main character of *The Invisible Guardian*, is a survivor of childhood trauma, and she has insomnia and frequent nightmares on her sleep. As Horwitz et al (2001) said in their journal before about insomnia and nightmares being one of the recurring impacts seen in adults who were abused as a child. Jung (2005) stated that a personal mother is the carrier of the Mother Archetype, who holds the most important role.

The novel started with the author revealing about Amaia's routine of waking up when she is called to the crime scene. "These remnants of an interrupted night of insomnia stayed with her all the way to the crime scene, even though it was over an hour's drive from Pamplona" (Redondo, 2015, p. 9). From the start, the author already explained about Amaia's insomnia and trouble sleeping, indicating that her condition of trouble sleeping is important information for the readers. In this quote, Amaia was described to drive her car to the crime scene, which is over an hour's long.

"She envied James's ability to disconnect from the day's troubles and close his eyes as soon as his head hit the pillow. She always took a long time to relax enough to sleep; sometimes she read for hours before she managed it, and she would wake up at even the smallest noise during the night." (Redondo, 2015, p. 33).

Different from Amaia, her husband, James is the type of person who easily falls asleep, once he is in the bed, and Amaia has always envied his husband's ability to do this. The novel explained that although Amaia has already become an inspector for 4 years, and the tension has decreased, she still has problems in getting a good-quality sleep. Amaia is not the type of person that could fall asleep easily, she usually has a routine for herself to "tire" herself, such as reading a book for hours, and when she manages to fall asleep, she would wake up at the smallest noise possible. "The year she was promoted to inspector she would fall exhaustedly into a deep, amnesiac sleep, only to wake up two or three hours later with her back paralyzed by a painful spasm that would prevent her from dropping off again." (Redondo, 2015, p. 34). Amaia is a light sleeper who easily woke up by the smallest noise, and she rarely falls into a deep sleep, this happens as a combination of her trauma as a child, and her job as a homicide Inspector.



In this part, I could see the exact detail of her trouble sleeping. Once she could sleep, the sleep did not last that long, and once she woke up, she could not force herself back to sleep again.

“She used to leave a small lamp on the landing switched on so that its slanting light would reach the bedroom and help her orient herself when she woke with a start from one of her frequent nightmares.” (Redondo, 2015, p.34). She proceeded to read her book after this, and knowing she still could not fall asleep, she then planned what to do on the next day, and she chatted with her husband who was awoken, until he fell asleep again. Frequent nightmares are also one of symptoms of dysthymia, patterns of depressed symptoms that have been mostly experienced by the survivors. (American Psychiatric Association, 1987). From this excerpt I could also conclude that Amaia’s habit of leaving a small lamp when she sleeps is one of the impacts of her childhood abuse. Quoting National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2005) “...Repeated exposure to trauma therefore may result in a situation-specific “state” becoming a more permanent “trait”, Amaia’s trouble in sleeping could be considered as a permanent trait because of a childhood trauma.

Amaia did not want to admit that her husband's presence near her when she is asleep comfort and it soothes her knowing that her husband is near her, in her most vulnerable state. “She needed his presence while she was asleep” (Redondo, 2015, p. 68). Sometimes Amaia even got annoyed when she woke up and could not find James near her. In the novel it was pointed out that Amaia would feel ridiculous to ever admit this to her husband. “She didn’t manage to sleep so deeply there as when she was in bed, but she preferred it, because she knew that if she got into bed, it would be impossible.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 68). Dolores Redondo seems to retell and repeat about Amaia’s trouble sleeping and nightmares throughout the novel. As if making sure the reader of the novel knew and to not forget about Amaia’s insomnia and trouble sleeping.

“It was a part of her, like a genetic trace, it was where she returned to in her dreams, when she wasn’t dreaming about the dead bodies, assailants, killers and suicides which mingled obscenely in her nightmares.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 87). Other than insomnia, the author also lets us know that she has frequent nightmares in her sleep. The nightmares that Amaia has are getting more vivid and intense, more than usual now that she is back in her hometown, Elizondo. “...as she found herself coming out of the dream as if she were in an elevator going up at top speed out of the abyss in which she was trapped, and she forgot the details almost immediately.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 174).

“No, my love, I’ve seen you overwhelmed by cases on other occasions, and this is different. Then there are the nightmares ... You’re having them too often. And there’s what you told me yesterday when I found you in front of the workshop.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 176). Amaia’s husband, James also realized that her

nightmare has been getting more intense and frequent than before they were in Pamplona. She has also started to sleepwalk in her sleep now. When presented with a stressful environment, people that already have nightmares sometimes get a more intense and vivid nightmare. Their nightmares reflect their stressful life during the day. Weygandt, cited from Sigmund Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (2010), stated that "For it maybe often observed, apparently indeed in the great majority of dreams, that they lead us directly back into everyday life, instead of releasing us from it". Waking up from a nightmare, whether it is from her night sleep or just a nap, most of the time, Amaia wakes up confused and shocked. "The phone vibrated on the wooden bedside table, making a noise like an electric saw. Amaia sat up in bed, confused and shocked, almost sure she had shouted out..." (Redondo, 2015, p. 232).

"Did I wake you up? I'm sorry.' 'Don't worry, it doesn't matter,' she answered. I almost owe you a favour, she thought." (Redondo, 2015, p. 232). She was sleeping when her colleague called her, which made her come back to reality. She even thought that she almost owed her a favour for "waking" her up from her nightmare. This time she dreamt about the killer of the current murder cases she has been working on, in her dream the killer was seen to brush "her" hair, and as Amaia tried to scream, the killer said to her to not be afraid of *Ama* (mother), she is not going to eat her up. When Amaia was a kid, her mother would usually go to her bed and hover around her in the middle of the night to say, "Don't be afraid of *Ama*, little bitch. I'm not going to eat you," (Redondo, 2015, p. 232). Indicating that even when Amaia is an adult now, the memories of her as a child still show up now and then, haunting her.

Before falling asleep, Amaia felt that she couldn't sleep even for a minute, hence she decided to just clean her gun, and after she finished cleaning the gun and started to put the gun back together, she suddenly saw a nine years old version of herself, holding the gun she just finished cleaning. In her "dream", Amaia sees her younger self pointing the gun at herself "and lifted the barrel until it was resting against her ear," (Redondo, 2015, p. 249). Amaia then woke up, and found that there was a woman, leaning over her. "'Amaia, Amaia, wake up, you're dreaming, wake up!' A click that seemed to come from inside her head flooded the room with light from the bedside lamp. 'Amaia, are you alright?' (Redondo, 2015, p. 250). When her sister, Ros, was waking her up, from her sleep, Amaia realized that it was all just a nightmare, "'I'm alright, it was a nightmare,' she said," (Redondo, 2015, p. 250). Ros, looked as worried and pale as explaining to Amaia that she was shouting, "'You were shouting,' her sister muttered, alarmed. 'Was I?' 'You were shouting a lot and I couldn't wake you up,'" (Redondo, 2015, p. 250). Amaia said that she did not recognize that it was her sister at first when she opened her eyes. Same goes with Ros, because in the moment of panic and confusion, Amaia pointed her gun at Ros. Apologized for making her sister scared and she said that

the gun wasn't loaded. Amaia then said how the last few days have been stressful to her, hence her nightmare got more intense.

After that, Ros asked Amaia about what was exactly happening and the reason for Amaia's nightmare, because James told Ros about how Amaia suffered from nightmares almost every time she fell asleep. Amaia did not want to confess straightaway, her reason is because her job, and nightmares are perfectly normal considering what her job is. She also added how one of the reasons she always sleeps with her lights on is because she wants to avoid this kind of mishaps. "I leave it on precisely to avoid what happened today, because what I suffer from aren't exactly nightmares. What happens is that I enter a light sleep in which I'm constantly alert and during the night I experience'" (Redondo, 2015, p. 253). One of the major reasons why Amaia always leaves her lights on while she sleeps is that when she wakes up she knows and recognizes straightaway where she is to calm down. What Amaia said proved that her troubles sleeping and nightmare comes as one of the impacts of childhood trauma she received in the past.

Ros explained further to Amaia about how this nightmare's condition of her is not good for Amaia, particularly after what happened today, "You almost shot me, Amaia" (Redondo, 2015, p. 235). Ros also said that nightmares could be normal, but once these nightmares proceed to a suffering, and waking up confused and incapable of telling whether she was asleep or awake, it is no longer considered normal. Having dealt with nightmares for most of her life, Amaia thought that this kind of thing is normal, just the part when she was holding a gun that she felt remorseful to her sister. From her resistance I could tell that Amaia is an obstinate person. Amaia doesn't like to be told what to do, and stubborn to advice given to her, even though the advice given was for her own goodness.

"And nightmares can be normal, but only up to a certain point; it's not normal that they cause you so much suffering, that you wake up with a jerk, incapable of telling whether you're asleep or awake. I saw you, Amaia, and you were terrified.'" (Redondo, 2015, p. 253).

After pulling an all-nighter examining evidence in Dr. Takchenko's laboratory in Ainsa, Amaia finally went back to the Elizondo right after the sunrise. Jonan, her colleague, managed to get some sleep while on the way back to Elizondo, and he suggested she sleep in the station after this, even for a short time. Amaia, on the other hand, disagreed with the idea, "The idea of sleeping alone again did not appeal to Amaia at all: besides, she felt as though staying awake would somehow prevent things from getting worse." (Redondo, 2015, p. 274). By thinking about how her sleeping could get things worse, the author implicitly tells the reader that Amaia knew about her sleep condition and yet she still had not managed to get help. In this part, one of the reason



why Amaia refuse to sleep is because she conclude to herself that her sister was probably involved in the case she was working on.

After a long time of not having a deep sleep, Amaia finally fell into one, with James next to her. In her sleep, Amaia dreamt of her mother, the dream felt “realistic”. The presence of her mother was described as “malignant” by the author. Just like Amaia’s other nightmares before this, her mother was depicted to be standing next to Amaia’s bed, while observing Amaia her in her sleep, smiling crookedly. Deep down, Amaia knew that this was just a dream, but the aftermath of her trauma, did not just go away easily, the panic and fear she felt as a child come back to haunt her in the present. Amaia knew better than anyone else that she should just open her eyes, yet Amaia was afraid to open her eyes and see her mother standing near her bed.

“She opened her eyes, saw her and yelled. Her shouts mixed with James’s, who was calling her from far away, and with the sound of bare feet running along the passage. Amaia leapt out of bed crazy with fear, a small part of her aware that her mother was no longer there.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 294).

After waking up in a confused and panic condition, Amaia then get dressed and took her gun, she felt somewhat that she needed to end this all, and then she ran to her family’s bakery shop.

### **3.2. Flashback and Re-Traumatization**

When a child age 6 to 11 could show a different combination of internalizing symptoms, these symptoms include irrational fears and sleep problems and nightmares (Hodas, 2006). This is what happens to Amaia as can be inferred from the following quotation:

“She didn’t dance, because she wanted to keep watching them, because she wanted that ritual to last a bit longer, and because she knew that if she got up and joined the group the dance would end immediately as soon as she brushed against her mother, who would leave them with a ridiculous excuse, like she was tired already, she didn’t feel like dancing anymore or she had to go and check on the bread cooking in the oven. Whenever that happened, her father would give her a desolate look and carry on dancing with the little girl a while longer, trying to make up for the insult, until her mother came back into the living room five minutes later and turned off the record player, claiming that she had a headache.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 67)

Amaia still remembers clearly on how her mother neglected her, her mother was always seen either neglecting Amaia or abusing her. In this moment, Amaia who was still a child know better not to dance with her mother because her mother will make excuses to stop the dance. Hence, she was on the side, watching her parents, and both her sisters to have fun. This neglect stayed on Amaia’s memory until a few decades later.





Amaia had accepted the fact that she is in fact a victim of a childhood trauma, and made peace with that. However, she tried to forget her past, and she dislike her past. While she resides? In Elizondo, she has been relieving her trauma for quite some times. “No, it’s a long time since I’ve thought about it and, furthermore, it’s a part of my past I don’t like. And being here again seems to stir up all those feelings again, like resurrecting old ghosts.’ She sighed.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 100). While in Pamplona, Amaia rarely remember her past, especially the traumatic one. Re-traumatization or flashback does happen to the victim when they are presented with similar feelings, situation, or location where they receive the abuse as a child.

Amaia had a flashback to her first communion as a child, she was so happy, as she got a new dress and got her hair done at the hairdresser. The next day after that, her mother sat her down and cut her hair off, Amaia did not realize this until she saw a thick plait of her hair on the table, “She remembered feeling violated when she touched her head and being blinded by her boiling tears.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 103). When her father come in, he tried to stop her mother, and brought Amaia away from her mother, “he groaned, picking her up and carrying her out of the kitchen as if they were fleeing from a fire.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 103).

Amaia recalled how her father tried to convince and persuade her mother to “take those little white pills that stopped her despising Amaia.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 103). As a little girl, of course this event traumatized here, up to the point that she question herself , is it her fault, “She asked herself whether it was in any way her fault that she looked so little like her mother and so like her dead grandmother, her father’s mother. Was that a reason for not loving your daughter?” (Redondo, 2015, p. 103). This abuse happened to her when she was eight years old, after her first communion, Amaia was described, “She couldn’t remember when she had ever felt so happy either before or after” (Redondo, 2015, p. 102). This abuse of her mother still exists even when Amaia was a grown up, whereas it might seem to be not a big deal, but for an eight-year-old that was feeling happy one day, and the happiness was being taken away the next, this event is traumatic.

Redondo depicted the lingering feeling left behind by the traumatic events on an innocent child in a very heart wrenching way. Amaia’s father was always to try and take the neutral side, he would try and convince Amaia that “her mother wasn’t well, that she took pills so as not to behave that way towards her...” (Redondo, 2015, p. 103), but instead of feeling better after hearing her father explanation, she felt worse.

When Amaia visited her sister, Flora in the workshop, Amaia felt nostalgic, as the familiar aroma welcomed her. “If she closed her eyes, she could almost see her father in his white trousers and vest rolling pin while her mother weighed out the ingredients



in a measuring jug, her hands covered in flour and giving off the smell of aniseed which Amaia would always associate with her.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 129). However, these euphoric feelings of nostalgia did not last long as she was suddenly hit by “an overwhelming wave of dark memories, and the echoes of the past made her freeze up completely.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 129). Amaia’s unconsciousness made her recall all the traumatic events that happened to her a long time ago in the past, at the workshop.

A few days later, Amaia went to the workshop alone at night, she was already nervous and afraid for some reason, and when James suddenly called her, she drew her weapon towards him. James talked to her about his worries, and tried to talk her out, “I don’t understand why you’ve suddenly started behaving as if we’re all against you,” (Redondo, 2015, p. 168). The past weeks was hard for Amaia as the investigation leads to Ros’s ex-husband as the suspect, and Amaia need to question Ros. She became distant in the past few days, putting up a wall around her. James confessed that he initially thought that Amaia would become a “radical urbanite like so many other people who grow up in small towns do after they move away. A girl brought up in a rural area who goes off to live in the city, becomes a police officer and leaves her roots behind...” (Redondo, 2015, p. 168). James suspected that there is more than meets the eye behind Amaia’s behavior in the last few days.

James keeps on cornering and asking Amaia to tell him what is wrong. At first Amaia felt angry but then she melts when she saw the concern on James’s face. Amaia finally told James about what was happening to her.

“They’re ghosts, James, ghosts from the past. Your wife, who doesn’t believe in magic, divination, basajauns or genies, is haunted by ghosts. I’ve spent years trying to hide away in Pamplona, I have a badge and a pistol and I’ve avoided coming here for a long time because I knew that if I came back they would find me. It’s everything, all this evil, this monster who kills little girls and leaves them by the river, little girls like me, James.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 169)

James, confused about what Amaia was saying, and Amaia continued with “It was evil that made me comeback, the ghosts have risen up from their graves, alerted by my presence, and now they’ve found me.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 169). Amaia believed that what made her having flashback is because she is back in Elizondo, her hometown, a place where she also had a lot of bad memories with.

A few years earlier, when Amaia was already lived in Pamplona, she sometimes visited Elizondo at the weekends. That time, her mother was already sick and disabled, and was in the care under Alzheimer’s diagnosis in a hospital, and it was Amaia’s turn to watch her mother, and despite her mother’s weakened state. The horror that Amaia felt is still there, “She was aware of her fear, and that was the first time that she had been

alone with her since she'd been a child." (Redondo, 2015, p. 245). Amaia already was an adult and a police officer, yet the feeling of horror stayed with her until her adult life. She tried to make herself invisible at the room, afraid of waking up her mother. As she was reading one of her sister's magazines, she glanced at her mother and screamed. "Her mother was looking at her, leaning up on her left side with a twisted smile and eyes shining with lucidity and malice." (Redondo, 2015, p. 245). Redondo always depicted Amaia's mother as a malignant person who has a "twisted" smile towards Amaia, and is always heard saying "Don't be afraid of your Ama, little bitch. I'm not going to eat you." (Redondo, 2015, p. 245), whether this was in her nightmares or to her in life.

Shocked, Amaia curled up and crushed her sister's magazine, "She stayed like that for a few seconds, her heartbeat out of control and her logic insisting that she had imagined it, that fatigue and her memories had played bad joke on her" (Redondo, 2015, p. 245). Amaia stayed alert and scared of her mother, tried to get close to her mother who was trying to say something because it was inaudible to her, and when she leans in towards her mother. Her mother suddenly opened her eyes, "...her penetrating, cruel eyes, which should just how much she was enjoying this.", "No, I won't eat you, although I would if I could get up." (Redondo, 2015, p. 246). Amaia was so scared that she even stumbled on her way out, because her mother continued to watch her, "...with those malignant eyes, laughing in satisfaction of the fear she was provoking in her daughter..." (Redondo, 2015, p. 246). Being in a weak state did not mean that her mother would calm down a bit from hating Amaia, she even lured her to get close to her just to scare her.

In Amaia's birthday in Spring 1989, her mother purposely gave Amaia an ugly school satchel that she ever seen, "Her eyes filled with the tears of a little girl on her birthday, tears of pure disappointment." (Redondo, 2015, p. 140). And when her mother asked her what is wrong with the gift, Amaia who was disappointment have a lot to say did not say a thing, "There were many things she wanted to say. That it was a horrible present, that she had already known she wouldn't be getting the denim dungarees, but she hadn't been expecting anything like this." (Redondo, 2015, p. 140). Amaia concluded that the present her mother gave her was not a result of last-minute rush, but it was "...planned and chosen with the utmost care to cause the desired effect." (Redondo, 2015, p. 141).

After a series of events keep on happening, Amaia woke up confused from her nightmare, and she ended up on the workshop again. She felt a strong nostalgic feeling of what happened to her decades ago, "The smell of flour and batter enveloped her, suddenly transporting her to a night from her childhood," Being in a weak state did not mean that her mother would calm down a bit from hating Amaia, she even lured her to get close to her just to scare her." (Redondo, 2015, p. 295). Amaia kept on walking until



she reached the storage jars, where she looked at and then panic of what was going to happen. "...as her breathing sped up at the fear of what was going to happen, what was coming next." (Redondo, 2015, p. 295).

She imagined herself back to her nine years old self. "Tears filled her eyes, blinding her for a moment." (Redondo, 2015, p. 296). Amaia was having a re-traumatization, as explained in a chapter before this. "The terror made her shiver, but she stretched her trembling fingers until she touched the clean surface of its metal bulk while her mother's voice thundered powerfully in her head." (Redondo, 2015, p.296). Amaia's feeling of terror grew, and block out everything else, "'You don't love me,' she whispered. And she knew that she had to flee." (Redondo, 2015, p. 296).

Her re-traumatization was very strong and intense, and she was trying to run away, the feeling of terror and horror was not easily escaped. "There was no point in fleeing because it was inevitable that she would die that night." (Redondo, 2015, p. 296). Amaia even tried to protect herself from the blow she thought she was going to receive. She was laying on the floor, broken. "And although she felt the second blow, it didn't hurt anymore." (Redondo, 2015, p. 296). She was breathing hard and felt the air cleared before her. But in Amaia's vision, she still "sees" her mother. "Her mother was still there, leaning against the table, watching her." (Redondo, 2015, p. 296). Her perception was so realistic, and she could see her mother with detail from that night, as she suddenly saw her younger self and her mother, "...leaning over her own face, studying her features... Her mother's mouth was contracted in an expression of curiosity that didn't reach her frozen eyes, which remain unmoved," (Redondo, 2015, p. 297).

While Amaia was re-enacting the night from her childhood, James, her aunt, and her sister Ros came and was looking at her from the workshop door. Her aunt tried to bring Amaia back to reality by calling her name softly, but Amaia was still not present. "Kneeling on the floor, Amaia looked towards the old kneading through with an expression on her face that was almost a childish pout." (Redondo, 2015, p. 297). The third time her aunt called her, she jumped and was surprised, and she drew her gun and point it to the void. Her aunt kept trying to call Amaia, when she finally snapped back and saw her aunt who tried to calm her. Amaia's aunt did a great job in calming and snapping Amaia out of her re-traumatization. When Amaia realized her gun is still in her hand, she was surprised, "She lowered the weapon very slowly." (Redondo, 2015, p. 298). She felt so sorry towards James and Ros who was still watching her from the door.

When they all back on the house, she was silent all the time, "...she felt secretly selfish and satisfied, because, along with the incredible fatigue assailing her, she felt renewed, like Lazarus rising from the dead." (Redondo, 2015, p. 298). James asked Amaia and her aunt about what had happened that made Amaia do the re-enactment.



He aunt then explained that what Amaia was doing was relieving a moment of great danger. “And she was doing so with the same intensity as if it were occurring at that instant.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 299. James asked about the trigger of this event, “It can be anything, an episode can be triggered by anything, but I suppose that being here in Elizondo will have been a contributing factor... The workshop, those crimes including young girls... And the truth is that it has happened to her before. It happened to her a long time ago, when she was nine years old.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 300).

“When I was nine years old, my mother followed me to the workshop one night and hit me on the head with an iron rolling pin; she hit me again when I was lying unconscious on the floor, then she buried me in the kneading trough and tipped two fifty-kilo bags of flour on top of my body. She only told my father because she thought I was already dead. Because of this, I lived with my aunt for the rest of my childhood.” (Redondo, 2013, p. 300).

Amaia finally told James about what happened to her decades ago in the workshop, Engrasi told that by talking about it is the best way for Amaia.

The four of them talked about this for a little while, James asked Engrasi why didn't they talked about that night earlier on Amaia's younger years, Engrasi answered that deep down she hoped that Amaia would have forgot it, “But how could a little girl stop thinking about the harm her own mother wanted to do her? How could she stop missing the kisses she would never give her, the bedtime stories she would never tell her?” (Redondo, 2015, p. 302). On trying to help Amaia, Engrasi goes all the way out, and tried to play the role of her mother, “I tried to play that role, I put her to bed each night, I cared for her, and loved her more than anything else in the world. God knows if I'd have a daughter of my own, I wouldn't have loved her more.” (Redondo, 2015, p. 302). However, despite of all Engrasi's effort, the ghost that have been haunting Amaia is back to terror her once she stepped her foot in the place where it all happened a long time ago.

#### **4. Conclusion**

From the result of this research, I can conclude that symptoms such as insomnia, trouble falling asleep, flashback of the abuse, and re-traumatization, are impacts of untreated childhood trauma. As Amaia was back to her hometown where the abuse happened when she was a child, she started to feel some of the symptoms that are buried deep, to resurface in her life. Amaia's nightmare are worsened and she even experienced re-traumatization in her family's bakery shop, the place where her mother tried to kill her when she was a child.

The impacts of childhood trauma do not just disappear in a day or two, when the child who received the abuse did not get the treatment needed, the impact of this abuse



could go all the way into the child's adulthood, resulting disturbance on their daily lives. Nightmare from their past could haunt them, resulting them to be scared to falling asleep, hence the insomnia. Re-traumatization is also one of the impacts that remained even until a person reaches an adulthood. Re-traumatization did not always show or being experienced in their adulthood, sometimes the trauma is buried deep, until there is something that triggered the re-traumatization; the same smell of the perpetrator, anniversary of the event, the weather when the abuse happened, and the place where it happened.

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