

Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with us*: The Devastation of Abuse

Mohamad Iadid Ashrai Hassannudin, Anis Shahira Bazlan

Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Kuala Pilah, Malaysia

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2024.807156>

Received: 29 June 2024; Accepted: 11 July 2024; Published: 13 August 2024

ABSTRACT

Violence against women, such as sexual and physical abuse, has been addressed widely in contemporary literature, such as novels, poems and short stories. Moreover, the portrayal of gender violence has been the theme of modern literature. Although the depiction of abusive experiences is much represented in contemporary literature, domestic violence against women is not being addressed towards the consequences of traumatic experiences against women. Therefore, this paper presents the text analysis of Colleen Hoover's 'It Ends with Us' in representing the trauma of the main character, Lily Bloom, through her personality, attitude and behaviour towards her relationship with her father and personal relationships. Using Murphy's characterisation theory, a textual analysis of the text was conducted to study the character's personality traits regarding her past trauma. This theory identifies the main character's attitudes through the narration of Colleen Hoover. Caruth's Theory of Trauma is also utilised to categorise the representation of trauma that the character has experienced after the analysis of the character's behaviour patterns. The collection of traumas has been identified as the result of repeated and prolonged domestic violence and abuse. Hence, by understanding the relationship between the characterisation and past trauma of the main character, it has been found that the types of traumas are embedded through her attitude and behaviour patterns.

Keywords: domestic abuse; violence; trauma; women; characterization

INTRODUCTION

Domestic abuse has become a silent killer in our society. Although men and women can perpetrate domestic violence without restriction to marital, heterosexual, or homosexual relationships (Brown, 2004), 85% of the victims are women (Rennison, 2003). In addition, recent research indicates that 55% of Asian women have experienced domestic violence from their partner in comparison to 30% of women globally who have faced domestic violence at least once (Yoshihama et al., 2020). Moreover, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and its impacts have caused an increase in this number (UNODC, 2021; Moreira & da Costa, 2020). Men believe they can dominate women due to women's low social status and authority to prove their masculinity, thus causing them to act violently (Jewkes, 2002; Amalia et al., 2021).

Lack of knowledge about this issue makes it more difficult for abuse victims since they are unsure of what to do or where to go when they are placed in traumatic circumstances. Since trauma is a frequent result of domestic abuse, most victims would need to figure out how to deal with their trauma while still in their relationships or even after leaving them. According to Ali et al. (2016), domestic violence can be classified into three different categories, which are physical, sexual and psychological violence. The perpetration of domestic violence by the abusers is from men as well as women without restriction to marital, heterosexual or homosexual relationships (Brown, 2004).

It is supported by the findings of Yong & Sia (2023) that the number of domestic violence reports among Malaysians increased by 57% or 1893 report calls from women in distress via Talian Kasih (Caring Hotline) during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. The number of investigation papers declared during the lockdown

rose to 526 in connection to domestic violence as most Malaysian women are forced to stay at home with their abusers or assaulters for a more extended period than usual due to these restrictions imposed by the government (Yong & Sia, 2023). Therefore, the men feel they have the power to dominate women since it demonstrates their masculinity and women are perceived as having low social values and authority, which makes it easier for men to act violently.

The health of women and children is also affected by domestic violence. Many studies have found that domestic violence has a direct effect on women and their health. According to Miller & McCaw (2019), women who suffer from domestic violence report having conditions such as asthma, stroke, and poor reproductive health. Aside from women, children who are exposed to domestic violence are affected mentally and physically. They are also at risk of being a victim of domestic violence or a perpetrator of violence itself. (Miller & McCaw, 2019).

Humm in Lestari et al. (2019) mentions that "violence against women is widespread and common" and is the product of the patriarchal society. Issues regarding women who are seen as submissive and compliant are still never wholly debated. This is because the public still has the perception of an "ideal" woman who is only expected to live for their family and only take care of domestic matters. Hence why, women are prone to being abused as they are seen as weak human beings. Because of the patriarchal society, more women are reluctant to report abuse because they fear that no one will listen. As a result, they suppress their emotions, which eventually causes mental stress and trauma.

The representation of violence is also found in literary studies reflecting the "soul and voice of the voiceless people" (Sheikh et al., 2022, p. 28) in portraying and critiquing real issues and events that occur in society (Nassoba & Samanik, 2022). It is also believed that the length and complexity of novels can deal with the imaginative human experience (Burgess, 2021) as "novels imitate reality" (Said, 2013, p. 42). However, domestic violence against women is not being addressed towards the consequences of traumatic experiences against women regardless of the depiction of abusive experiences that is much represented in contemporary literature.

Colleen Hoover is an American author who has produced 26 novels in young adult and new adult romance genres. She is also best known for the controversial and hard-hitting topics in her writing. Among those, *It Ends with Us* (Hoover, 2016) has garnered much attention from readers through her social media presence. The novel was published in 43 languages and was the top-selling print book in 2022, making its spot on *The New York Times Best Seller List* for over 90 weeks (Schonfeld, 2023). *It Ends with Us* is heavily filled with "riveting drama and painful truths", thus emerging the theme of domestic abuse, which has then caused controversy in society as some people believe that the novel is romanticising the abuse (Kirkus Reviews, 2016).

The protagonist, Lily Bloom Blossom, a small-town girl from Maine who relocated to Boston to realise her ambition of owning a floral store, is the focus of *It Ends with Us*. During the process, she develops feelings for Ryle Kincaid, a neurosurgeon. Despite having only recently begun dating, the relationship is put at risk when Lily's ex-boyfriend, Atlas Corrigan, reappears in her life, causing Ryle to reveal his actual self out of jealousy. Trauma is depicted throughout Hoover's novel as the main character struggles to escape her abusive past and must deal with it. She constantly considers the consequences of her decisions due to traumatic incidents in her past, which makes making decisions for her much more difficult. Hoover's novel entirely paints the picture of real-life domestic violence cases and the victim's struggle to break free through the underlinings of domestic abuse.

Findings from previous research showed that there is a significant interest in further research on the representation of trauma (Rundqvist, 2020) and violence against women in literary texts (Zabihzadeh et al.,

2015; Arrasyid & Sajarwa, 2022). Therefore, this research aims to investigate how domestic violence is portrayed through the trauma experienced by Lily Bloom Blossom, the main character in *It Ends with Us*:

- i. How is trauma represented through the main character's personality, attitude and behaviour towards her relationship with her father and personal relationship?
- ii. What is the classification of the type of trauma that the main character has experienced?

RELATED LITERATURE

The Representation of Domestic Violence and Trauma in Literary Text

Literary texts are sources used to portray and criticise real issues and events that occur in our society (Nassoba & Samanik, 2022). This is because the length and complexity of novels can deal with the imaginative human experience (Burgess, 2021). When it comes to the issue of domestic violence, Haaken (2010) argues that there is a shortage of knowledge and depiction regarding gendered violence in literature. She points out that there are insufficient works done to address the connection between literary texts and abuse representation in the context of domestic violence. However, Rundqvist (2020) adds that representing domestic violence through literature can be beneficial as both the issue and novels are complex and do not fit into any category.

Over the past few decades, there has been a rise in the representation of trauma in fiction (Rundqvist, 2020). Trauma involves feelings and trauma from a single traumatic event or experience. Whitehead (in Rundqvist, 2020) notes that "trauma fiction seeks to foreground the nature and limitations of narrative and to convey the damaging and distorting impact of the traumatic event". Tying this to the abuse that happens similar to the novel, Harne and Radford (2008) describe how children who experience domestic abuse are more prone to be afraid and anxious than compared to people their age as past trauma and traumatic memories do affect the mind of the characters (Heidarizadeh, 2015). Such a situation is found widely in *It Ends with Us*, where Lily, who has witnessed her father abusing her mother, exhibits anxiety and terror in everything she does.

According to Dwiastuti and Yamin (2016), this type of genre is popular in raising awareness of domestic abuse towards the victims and ways to empower them to fight against the enablers of violence. However, their study only analysed the novel through the perspectives of the characters' attitudes and reactions towards the issue of domestic violence. Similarly, a thorough text analysis of the story examined the characters that brought light to social patterns of gender domination in society (Lima & Bruno, 2023). By understanding the female and male characters, feminism ideology was embedded towards the oppression of women (Lima & Bruno, 2023).

However, limited studies have been done on the characterisation of the character in the text towards the stages of trauma from domestic abuse. Therefore, this study investigated the representation of trauma that influenced the character's personality, attitude, and behaviours using Murphy's (1972) theory of character and characterisation and Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (1996) in the scope of trauma studies for literary criticism to identify the defence mechanisms of traumas.

The Murphy's Theory Of Character And Characterisation And Cathy Caruth's Theory Of Trauma

In this theoretical review, the characterisation theory is used to analyse the main character of *It End with Us*, Lily Bloom. Through this theory, the character and characterisation of Lily Bloom are studied deeply to identify the trauma stages through her personality, attitude and behaviour. Characters are one of a novel's most important components. As readers are lured into their lives, characters cannot be disregarded. It is entirely up to the author to help the reader better understand the character (Gil, 2006).

Based on the author's facts, readers may occasionally have to interpret the characters' traits themselves. According to Gil (2006), characters represent figures in the book, while characterisation is the process that creates them. In a book, characters are regarded as figures made up, and their characterisation makes them who they are.

Murphy (1972) suggests nine methods for distinguishing character characterisation, as seen in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. Murphy's theory of character and characterisation (1972)

Personal Description	The writer illustrates a character's physical looks and the way they dress.
Another sees characters	The writer explains the character from another character's perspective and judgements.
Speech	The writer describes how the character talks in terms of intonation and language.
Past life	The writer brings readers into the character's past to give a deeper insight into the character's background.
Conversation to others	The writer describes the character through conversations with other characters -- their opinions and what they think about the character.
Reactions	The writer describes the way the character reacts to different situations.
Direct comment	The writer himself/herself provides information and comments about the character.
Thought	The writer gives the readers more insight by making readers dive into what is in the character's mind.
Mannerism	The writer presents information on the characters by describing their mannerisms and habits.

This study also used a psychological approach to analyse the trauma of the main character, Lily Bloom. It is identified through the defence mechanisms employed by the protagonist due to the trauma she has experienced. According to Caruth (1996), the definition of trauma is defined as an immense experience of unanticipated or catastrophic events that the person will respond to. The event occurs in a delayed, unrestrained repetition of hallucinations occurrence and other invasive phenomena.

It can be concluded that trauma is a painful feeling to recollect and rethink the incidents all over again. Thus, the person will integrate the past and present realities, making it inevitable for a person's consciousness to differentiate reality from implausible scenarios (Sarungu & Andayani, 2023).

Herman (2015) stated that trauma is frequently acquired from threats to a person – orally or physically or even when someone encounters abuse or death. However, Caruth (1996) argues that trauma is "a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event".

Table 2 illustrates three main types of traumas used to categorise the types of traumas that the character experiences.

TABLE 2. Caruth's theory of trauma (1996)

Acute trauma	It results from a single incident.
Chronic trauma	It is resulting from repeated and prolonged such as domestic violence or abuse.
Complex trauma	Resulting from exposure to varied and multiple traumatic events.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative analysis by closely reading Colleen Hoover's novel *It Ends with Us* (Hoover, 2016). This examination examined the characterisation of the main character, Lily Bloom, through words, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and discourse. A literary study was conducted using secondary sources as reference material and obtaining detailed information from multiple sources, thus enabling a subjective understanding of the phenomenon.

Close reading is a crucial literary analysis technique that thoroughly reviews the text and reveals deeper meanings, structures, and intricacies. It can significantly strengthen methodological rigour in qualitative research by guaranteeing a comprehensive and meticulous text examination. This approach is beneficial for analysing literary works such as Colleen Hoover's "*It Ends With Us*," where the complexities of character development, themes, and narrative framework are essential for evaluating the text's more profound implications. Close reading is meticulous and thorough, and its interconnections within the text reveal multiple layers of meaning (Brummett, 2010).

An analysis of Lily Bloom's characterisation involves closely examining her descriptions, speech, prior life, and reactions. By analysing specific vocabulary and expressions used to depict Lily, we might acquire a deeper understanding of her mental condition and the consequences of her traumatic encounters (Murphy, 1972). The protagonist's personal descriptions, speech, past life, reactions, direct comments, thoughts, and mannerisms were studied using Murphy's Theory of Characters and Characterisation (1972) to represent the trauma of domestic abuse. By analysing the protagonist's characterisation, Caruth's Theory of Trauma (1996) was employed to determine the trauma that the character experiences. Through an analysis of Lily's past encounters with domestic violence, we may get insight into how these experiences shape her current behaviour and interpersonal connections. This examination allows us to comprehend the enduring consequences of trauma and the difficulties associated with healing and recovery (Caruth, 1996).

Through a close reading of the novel, the protagonist's personality, attitude and behaviour of the character were highlighted and categorised into nine related categories of Murphy's Theory of Characterisation (1972) that were personal description, characters seen by another, speech, past life, conversation to others, reactions, direct comment, thought and mannerism. As such, this assisted in identifying the behaviour that would be connected to the protagonist' experiencing and witnessing domestic abuse as a kid and as a partner in a relationship. The protagonist's attitudes and behaviour were summarised in reflecting on her trauma towards the abusive relationships with her father and partner by determining the type of trauma that the protagonist experienced through Caruth's Theory of Trauma. After identifying the characters' characterisation, the types of traumas, such as acute, chronic and complex, were observed to categorise the main character's personality, attitude and behaviour. Figure 1 below provides the conceptual framework to answer the research objectives formulated for this study.

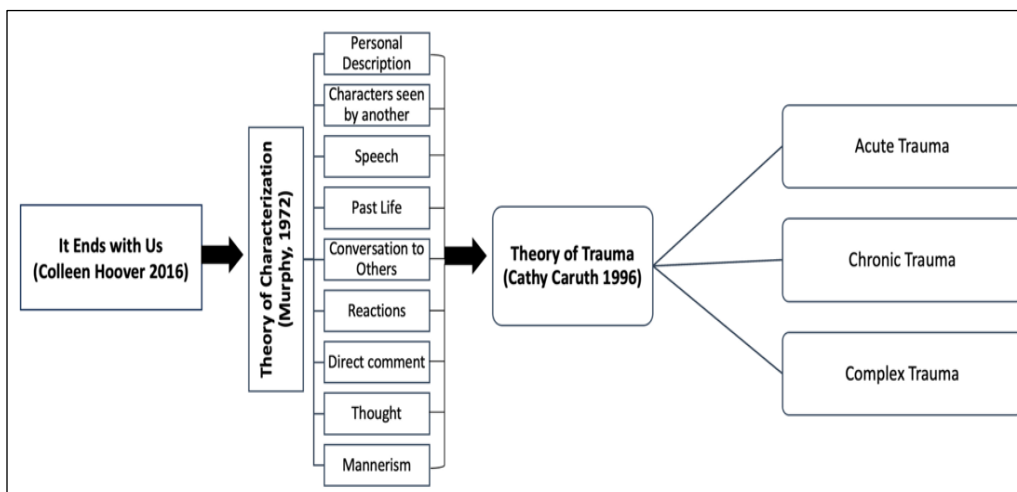


FIGURE 1. Conceptual framework

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Representation of Trauma Through Lily Bloom's Attitude And The Types of Traumas Hatred Towards Her Father

No one expected Lily Bloom to have come from a rough household as she came from a well-off and respected family; therefore, no one saw any flaws in her family except for Lily. Ever since Lily was a child, she hated her father. This was brought on by her father's abuse towards her mother. She despised the fact that her mother would stay with her father despite his mistreatment of her. This was because her mother would readily accept her father's faults and offer forgiveness easily.

Moreover, she had always hated her father to the point where she would kill him, even when she was a teenager. The author's portrayal of her thoughts and mannerisms shows the trauma her father has caused her. She only experiences this when her father mistreats her mother.

"If I had access to a gun or knife right now, I would kill him. As soon as I walked into the living room, I saw him push her down. They were standing in the kitchen, and she had grabbed his arm, trying to calm him down, and he backhanded her and knocked her straight to the floor. I am pretty sure he was about to kick her, but he saw me walk into the living room, and he stopped".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 64)

The subsequent abuse that she witnessed did not only involve her mother being hurt, but her too. As she tried to help her mother, she was pushed by her father, causing her to hit her head.

"I jumped on his back, and I was hitting him on the side of his head. I do not know what happened. I just remembered one second I was on his back, and the next second I was on the ground, and my forehead hurt like you would not believe".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 110)

However, even when she was hurt, her mother told her not to tell anyone and "tell them you slipped on the ice (Hoover, 2016, p. 110)". She resented her mother for doing this since it was an illustration of how she attempted to hide the truth from others and only to let people see the positive side of her father. She hated that her mother could not alert authorities or the public to what was happening. When she grows up, she swears that she does not wish to resemble her mother.

Not only did she have resentment and hatred for her father while he was alive, but even after he passed away. This is because her father left her with so many traumatic experiences. During her father's funeral, Lily was requested to share five great things about him. However, Lily refuses to be the one who delivers the eulogy. She lied to her mother by saying she was not comfortable speaking in front of a crowd, but the truth was, she did not want to do it because she had no respect for her father.

"I just did not want to do it because I feel like eulogies should be delivered by those who respected the deceased. And I did not much respect my father".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 19)

This extract shows that even after his death, she had lost all respect towards her father, and she wanted nothing to do with him. During the eulogy, she only stood at the podium, introduced herself, and found it hard to find nice words to describe her father because "there was not one great thing I could say about that man (Hoover, 2016, p. 20)".

"Maybe if I read through these journals, I will somehow find a little strength for forgiveness. Although I fear I am running the risk of building up even more resentment".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 30)

Her resentment towards her father has caused trauma to her, mentally and emotionally. Furthermore, she relived some of the darkest times in her life when reading her childhood diaries since she was reminded of all the terrible things her father had done. Lily attempts to forgive him but finds it difficult to do so.

Seeks Stability in Her Relationships

Lily Bloom, who was raised in an abusive home, wants to find a partner who is different from her father. She tries to better herself by only entering relationships with men she is sure are ideal for her. She does not rush into relationships; instead, she takes her time getting to know the man. The day she met Ryle Kincaid on the rooftop of his apartment, Lily found him attractive when she looked at him. She described Ryle as a "beautiful, well-manicured, smells like money (p. 8)" man.

As she continues to exchange information and naked truths with Ryle throughout the conversation, Ryle begins to get flirty with Lily and makes her sway.

"You asked for the most recent thought, so I gave it to you. You are beautiful. I am a guy. If you were into one-night stands, I would take you downstairs to my bedroom, and I would fuck you."

"I cannot even look at him. His statement makes me feel a multitude of things all at once.

Well, I am not into one-night stands".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 21)

Ryle's familiarity with one-night stands makes Lily awkward because she never does such things. She lacks the spontaneity to engage in one-night hook-ups because doing so would violate her principles. She refuses the idea of one-night stands even when tempted by a man she finds attractive because engaging in such behaviour does not give her stability in relationships.

"I tend to become jaded easily because no one ever meets my standards. I feel like I am on an infinite search for the Holy Grail. ... I could never sleep with someone if I did not see it going anywhere".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 23)

She is unwilling to change her stance because she is idealistic and wants to date the "perfect guy." Ryle and Lily parted ways on the rooftop that night, only to cross paths again several times later by chance.

Lily is now a friend and the boss of Ryle's sister, Alyssa. As Alyssa invites Lily to her birthday party, Lily surely knows she will see Ryle at the party. She is half excited and half nervous about bumping into Ryle. This is because Ryle gave Lily a bouquet of lilies before the party, leaving Lily unsure whether Ryle wanted to date her. She hopes Ryle wants to be serious about her because of how he treated her.

Lily brought her friend the night of the party because she did not want to attend alone. Ryle was upset and appeared jealous when he saw her "date". Lily became even more irritated and puzzled. She was even more unhappy to see that Ryle had a blown-up, blurry picture of her in his apartment taken from the rooftop encounter the first night. This made Lily confront Ryle with his feelings. She wanted answers and Ryle to tell her his true intentions.

"Stop flirting with me. Stop hanging pictures of me in your apartment. Furthermore, please stop sending me flowers. Because when you do those things, Ryle. It hurts (p. 89)."

(Hoover, 2016, p. 89)

Lily begs Ryle not to give her false hope if he wants to be serious with her to fulfil her goal of finding a committed relationship. She sincerely wants Ryle in her life, but only if he changes his approach to dating. As time passes, Ryle decides to attempt it because he loves Lily. Lily is pleased with his choice, believing she has met her ideal partner.

Due to her trauma, Lily is highly cautious and romantic in her search for the right partner. She makes every effort to find a stable relationship with a man. She searches for a man who would be the opposite of her father – someone who would love her and not mistreat her – because she does not want to end up like her mother.

Forces Herself to Accept Abusive Relationships

Living a regular life might be challenging for Lily Bloom after witnessing her mother being abused by her father nearly every day. Even after growing up and moving alone to a different city, she continues to live with the consequences of her trauma. She establishes rules to abide by to avoid becoming like her mother. However, when she knew Ryle was abusive, it was difficult for her to accept it. She is aware, however, that in order to move past the abuse, she must force herself to take the abusive nature of her relationship and the fact that the person she loves is an abuser.

Victims of domestic abuse never find it easy to accept the reality. The journey to her acceptance of her abusive relationship was not easy. To be able to do so, the first step she took was to address her emotions and feelings that were related to the trauma.

"...sometimes the things that matter to you most are also the things that hurt you the most. And to get over that hurt, you must sever all the extensions that keep you tethered to that pain".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 280)

It will be much easier to accept the situation's truth if she accepts her trauma. Lily was able to see that accepting the fact that Ryle was toxic and abusive was the only way to end the relationship. She may easily find closure as a result.

Lily was in a state of confusion over what to do with Ryle. On the one hand, she still loves Ryle because there were so many happy memories they made together, and the time they spent together "were some of the best moments of my life (p. 335)". On the other hand, she felt like she could never trust Ryle, and she did not want to be put in an abusive situation all over again. To solve her problem, she went to her mother for advice. Her mother, being a victim of domestic abuse, fully understood what Lily was going through.

"Do not be like me, Lily. I know you believe he loves you, and I am sure he does. However, he does not love you the right way. He does not love you the way you deserve to be loved. If Ryle truly loves you, he would not allow you to take him back...That is the kind of love a woman deserves, Lily".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 335)

Listening to her mother made her learn more about her relationship. Her mother somehow shone a light on the situation, making her realise how bad her relationship was. Even if she loves Ryle, she has to force herself to accept her abusive relationship and acknowledge that her relationship can cause her further trauma.

Lily finally accepted her abusive relationship when she discovered she was impregnated with Ryle's child. She hated the fact that the baby was Ryle's – the man who laid his hands on her, although she loved him. She made an effort, nevertheless, to put this hatred aside. She is aware that the child needs a resilient mother in order to survive life. Therefore, she decided to leave Ryle. She realises the innocent child does not deserve a life like

hers, even if she still loves Ryle and wants the relationship to work. Lily does not want her child to grow up in an abusive environment, especially because she has personal experience with it.

"I know that I have to do what is best for her. For the relationship, I hope she builds with her father. I do not make this decision for me, and I do not make it for Ryle. I make it for her".

"Ryle?"

"When he glances at me, he is smiling. Nevertheless, when he assesses the look on my face, he stops."

"I want a divorce".

(Hoover, 2016, p. 358)

The above quote demonstrates that Lily chose her daughter. She is aware that if it were not for the child's future, she would have returned with Ryle and made an effort to work things out. She forces herself to acknowledge the harsh nature of the situation and decides to leave for the benefit of her child. Her behaviour in accepting the relationship shows that she has come to terms with the trauma she experienced.

Chronic trauma is characterised by recurring and extended exposure to distressing experiences. Lily's experience entails her observing and surviving instances of domestic violence perpetrated by her father during her formative years and subsequently encountering the same mistreatment in her relationship with Ryle.

Lily's constant exposure to her father's violent behaviour towards her mother can be deemed chronic trauma. Findings suggest that children who experience domestic violence are prone to enduring psychological and emotional difficulties, such as anxiety, sadness, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Gustafsson et al., 2022).

To sum up, using the theory of Murphy's Characterization, the researchers could analyse Lily's attitudes and behaviour by looking at her descriptions, speech, past life, reactions, direct comments, thoughts, and mannerisms that the author provided through the narration. By looking at Lily's characterisations and characteristics, the researchers could focus on her attitudes that had led to her trauma. Lily is also subjected to direct abuse by her father. The continuous and continual exposure to violence creates a profound and ingrained sense of fear and distrust, which subsequently impacts her adult interactions and relationships (Ellis et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the theory of trauma has been adapted to identify how the attitude of the character reflects her trauma. This theory also categorises which type of trauma the main character experiences. In this novel, the main character is seen to have experienced chronic trauma, which was the result of repeated and prolonged domestic violence and abuse. This is because, as a child, she had witnessed multiple abuse that goes on between her parents. Lily's trauma extends beyond physical abuse; the emotional and psychological burden of residing in a violent household also has a substantial impact. Complex trauma encompasses a broader range of mistreatment, which includes emotional abuse and neglect (van der Kolk, 2014).

She was also a victim of repeated abuse when she was with her partner, Ryle Kincaid. Lily's connection with Ryle encompasses not just physical assault but also emotional manipulation and control. The presence of several forms of abuse exacerbates her trauma, resulting in a complicated and varied experience (Dutton & Goodman, 2019). Furthermore,

According to van der Kolk (2014), complex trauma has a significant impact on individuals, causing issues with managing emotions and forming interpersonal connections. The findings are exemplified by Lily's volatile emotions and her intricate relationship with Ryle. It is further elaborated by Dutton & Goodman (2019) that the implications of emotional abuse and manipulation highlight that these encounters can be equally

detrimental to individuals as physical violence. The findings are compatible with Lily's internal conflicts and emotional distress in her relationship with Ryle.

Based on the findings, three significant themes depicted the representation of Lily Bloom's trauma through her attitude and behaviour, which include feelings of hatred towards her father, seeking stability in her relationship and forcing herself to accept an abusive relationship. Her resentment towards her father had caused trauma to her mentally and emotionally. Furthermore, she relived some of the darkest times in her life when rereading her childhood diaries since she was reminded of all the terrible things her father had done. Lily's adult life is characterised by an ongoing pattern of abuse in her relationship with her partner, Ryle. Gustafsson et al. (2022) emphasise the enduring psychological repercussions of experiencing domestic violence, which encompass a greater vulnerability to anxiety and despair during maturity. This reinforces the depiction of Lily's persistent psychological and emotional challenges stemming from her early life encounters. Moreover, the ongoing cycle of violence exemplifies the recurring pattern of trauma and the impact of early experiences on later life decisions and vulnerabilities (Sarungu & Andayani, 2023).

Lily attempted to forgive him but found it difficult to do so. Not only that, but due to her prior trauma, Lily was extremely cautious and romantic in her search for the right partner. She tried to find a stable relationship with a man and searched for a man who would be the opposite of her father – someone who would love her and not mistreat her – because she did not want to end up like her mother. Findings also demonstrated that victims of domestic abuse never find it easy to accept the reality, whereby the journey to Lily Bloom's acceptance of her abusive relationship was not easy. Complex trauma often results in changes to one's self-perception and identity. Lily's challenges regarding her self-esteem and her internal dilemmas concerning affection and aggression are indicative of the underlying psychological repercussions (Sarungu & Andayani, 2023).

Lily's employment of denying and rationalising as coping techniques is indicative of complex trauma. These behaviours demonstrate her efforts to regulate intense emotions and uphold a feeling of normality amidst the surrounding disorder (Herman, 1997). To be able to do so, the first step she took was to address her emotions and feelings that were related to the trauma.

CONCLUSION

The representation of Lily Bloom's trauma in *It Ends with Us* was observed through her attitude, actions and behaviours towards situations triggering her past traumatic experiences. In the analysis, the main character displayed anger, fury and fear when confronted with challenging situations resulting from the trauma that she had endured when she was a child and teenager despite having characteristics of strength, bravery and empathy. The abusive relationship between her parents had shaped her approach to relationships, causing her to be cautious and pursue only profound connections. The main character's past and present experiences have resulted in chronic trauma, which was evident in her attitudes, actions and behaviours. Hence, the characterisation of the main character provided insights into the types of traumas she had experienced, which were intricately woven into her attitudes and behaviour patterns, thus proving the significance of literary discourses in explicating the repercussions of traumatic experiences of domestic violence against women.

REFERENCES

1. Amalia, R., Suwandi, S., & Anindyarini, A. (2021). Violence in the Novel "Atas Singgasana" by Abidah El Khalieqy. *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding*, 8(1), 111-119.
2. Arrasyid, N. D., & Sajarwa, S. (2022). Expressions of Violence against Women in French Novel *Syngué Sabour* and the Indonesian Translation. *Humanus: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-ilmu Humaniora*, 21(2), 263-281.

3. Brown, G. A. (2004). Gender is a factor in the response of the law-enforcement system to violence against partners. *Sexuality and Culture*, pp. 8, 3–139.
4. Brummett, B. (2010). *Techniques of Close Reading*. SAGE Publications.
5. Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
6. Dutton, M. A., & Goodman, L. A. (2019). Emotional Abuse and Its Implications. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 34(4), 678–698.
7. Fowler, R. (2013). *Linguistics and Novel*. London: Routledge.
8. Gallop, J. (2007). The Ethics of Close Reading. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 23(2), 47–60.
9. Gil, E. (2006). *Helping abused and traumatised children: Integrating directive and nondirective approaches*. Guilford Press.
10. Gustafsson, H. C., Cox, M. J., & Blair, C. (2022). Maternal Parenting as a Mediator of the Effects of Domestic Violence on Preschool Children's Intellect and Emotion Regulation. *Child Development*, 93(3), 1120-1137.
11. Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books.
12. Heidarizadeh, N. (2015). The significant role of trauma in literature and psychoanalysis. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 192, 788-795.
13. Herman, J. (2015). *Trauma and recovery: The aftermath of violence—from domestic abuse to political terror*. New York: Basic Books.
14. Herman, J. L. (1997). *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror*. Basic Books.
15. Hoover, C. (2016). *It Ends With Us*. London: Simon & Schuster.
16. Jewkes, R. (2002). Intimate partner violence: Cause and Prevention. *The Lancet*.
17. Miller, E., & McCaw, B. (2019). Intimate Partner Violence. *New England Journal of Medicine*, 380(9), 850–857.
18. Moreira, D. N., & da Costa, M. P. (2020). The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the precipitation of intimate partner violence. *International Journal of Law and Psychiatry*, 71.
19. Murphy, M. J. (1972). *Understanding Unseens: An Introduction to English Poetry and the English Novel for Overseas Students*. London: Allen and Unwin.
20. Nassoba, R. F., & Samanik, S. S. (2022). Domestic Violence Issue as seen in the Meomoir *Brutally Honest* by Melanie Brown. *Linguistics and Literature Journal*, 3(1), 1-10.
21. Rundqvist, J. (202). *Trauma, Gendered Violence and Coping-mechanisms in Colleen Hoover's It Ends With Us*. Linnaeus University, Department of Languages. Sweden: Linnaeus University.
22. Said, E. W. (2013). *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. London: Granata.
23. Sarungu, L. G., & Andayani, A. (2023). The Analysis of Lily Bloom's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*. *TANDA: Jurnal Kajian Budaya, Bahasa dan Sastra* (e-ISSN: 2797-0477), 3(01), 9-18.
24. Schonfeld, A. (2023, July 7). Everything to Know About Blake Lively's Upcoming Movie, 'It Ends With Us'. Retrieved from People: <https://people.com/movies/everything-to-know-about-it-ends-with-us/>
25. Sheikh, E. Y., Al-Shami, I. A., & Alshageri, S. (2022). Representation of Violence in Yemeni Novel: A Study of Fekriah Shahrah's 'The Smile Owner'. *Journal of Social Studies*, 28(4), 27–37.
26. van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Penguin Books.
27. Yong, S. S., & Sia, J. K. M. (2023). COVID-19 and social wellbeing in Malaysia: A case study. *Current Psychology*, 42(12), 9577-9591.

28. Yoshihama, M., Dabby, C., & Luo, S. (2020). Facts & Stats report updated & expanded 2020: Domestic Violence in Asian & Pacific Islander Homes. Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence.
29. Zabihzadeh, S., Hashim, R. S., & Chua Chen Wei, G. C. (2015). Domestic Violence against Women in Atiq Rahimi's *The Patience Stone*. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 15(3).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mohamad Iadid Ashrai Hassannudin is an English lecturer in Academy of Language Studies at Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Kuala Pilah. Since joining the faculty, Iadid Ashrai Hassannudin has been involved with research related to aesthetic literature reading, corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and gender language. He is also a member of the Malaysian Corpus Research Network. He researches climate change, mental health, and palm oil discourse through corpus linguistics.

Anis Shahira Bazlan is a lecturer at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Kuala Pilah. Her research interests include sociolinguistics, discourse studies and political discourse.