

## Miles's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's Ugly Love

Anindya Lintang Pancarani<sup>1)\*</sup>, Danu Wahyono<sup>2)</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Universitas 17 Agustus 1945, Surabaya

<sup>2</sup>Universitas 17 Agustus 1945, Surabaya

*Corresponding Author*

[pancari02anindya@gmail.com](mailto:pancari02anindya@gmail.com)

**Abstract:** The title of this study is Miles's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's Ugly Love. The objective of this research is to examine the trauma suffered by Miles Archer as the main character. It uses qualitative method, and the research design is using psychological approach as a literary approach. The study aims to explore and find the cause of the trauma, and their effects on the character, and how the character solves the trauma. The results shows that the cause of his trauma is relate to the abandonment by his first love Rachel due to the car crash that result the death of their newborn baby. He is not just devastated by Rachel's departure, but also the death of his son which make him lose person he loves the most. After Rachel left him, he promises himself not to fall in love with anyone again. The effects of his trauma also reveal that he faces difficulty and problems with relationships. The way Miles solves his trauma is by facing and accepting his fear and learning how to manage his feelings in order to heal.

**Keywords;** *trauma; cause; effect; solve*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

When someone experiences an awful time, it is impossible to avoid this type of mental issue. Many people do not believe those problems that they face affect their mental health. It can change the way they behave, act or even their personality. Some issues like depression, anxiety or trust issues are examples of what can happen with someone who faces problems or issues in their life which also can be caused if they have been experiencing bad things. According to Townsend & Morgan (2017) when someone experiences a certain event or incident that leaves a wound in their mind, they often forget what happiness looks like. When they ignore those feelings and not try to do anything about it, the pain will linger along with them continue their life. Slightly, this feeling can affect their future life, because of the trauma that they have had over the past.

*Ugly Love* is a novel written by American author named Colleen Hoover. The story is about two main characters named Tate Collins and Miles Archer. However, Miles's life is so interesting since he hides his past life privately. Miles Archer works as a professional pilot. Miles is a very quiet and closed-off person. People around him do not know who he really is. Because he is hard to emotionally approach and it is hard for him to be open about himself, especially his past. Until he meets Tate Collins. Tate is one of Miles's pilot sister's friends named Corbin. One day, they agree to have physical relationship without involving feelings. Their relationship gets complicated and makes Tate uncomfortable. Tate has tried multiple times to ask why he does it, but Miles does not want to open about what makes him this way. The more Tate asks about his past, the more he has caused his pain due to his awful experience. The reason that Miles does not want anyone to know about what happened in his past is only because he wants to forget the pain, he carries over the years. He thinks tells the story, only makes him remember the tragedy of the night that he loses the two most important people in his life. He often experiences anxiety when the topic of his six years past comes up. He often takes it out on Tate, either by word or their physical relationship unconsciously. He feels he deserves to take the blame for the incident that took away his happiness. But after all he does, Tate is still willing to help him to forgive himself and move on with his life.

### 2. METHOD

The study uses descriptive qualitative method in analyzing Miles's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's Ugly Love. Descriptive research is considered as a deliberate way of collecting, studying, organizing, and summarizing information about current situations, methods, procedures, patterns, and connections between things. This approach involves interpreting the data accurately which helps understand the existing facts within a studied group, offering descriptions (Calderon, 2006).

This research uses psychological approach to analyze Miles's Trauma in Colleen Hoover's Ugly Love. A psychological approach is like a specific way that psychologists and researchers look at how people behave, think, feel, and understand their minds (Wellek & Warren, 1949). The object of the study is trauma suffer by Miles Archer as the main character in *Ugly Love*. The type of data in *Ugly Love* novel consists of

phrases, sentences, and some dialogues. There are two types of data sources. The data sources consist of secondary and primary data. Primary data in this study is Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love*. The secondary data are taken from other references such as related previous study, journal, articles, and internet sources. The research instrument is the researchers themselves since they did all the data collection and the data analysis. The researchers read the whole story of *Ugly Love* by Colleen Hoover. The source of the data used in this research is the novel *Ugly Love* written by Colleen Hoover. It was published in 2014. The data are in the form of quotations from the novel and directly concerned with the objective of the research.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. The Cause of Miles' Trauma

##### 3.1.1 Interpersonal and Relationship Experience

Miles Mikel Archer who goes by Miles is a 24 years old airlines pilot. Miles is known as a confident, bright, and easy-going personality. He has dose of friends and enjoys spent time to socialize. But after the incident which takes two most important people in his life Miles guarded and reserved when it came to his emotions and personal life. He had built walls around himself, keeping his past hidden and avoid emotional attachments due to a traumatic event in his past that had a significant impact on him. It can be seen in the quotation below:

*Miles,*

*I'm sorry.I can't do this. It hurts too much..My mother is taking me backto Phoenix. We're both staying there.It's all too complicated, even between the two of them now. Your fatheralreadyknows.Itried to stay. I tried to love you. Every time I look at you, I seehim.Everything is him. If I stay, everything will always be him. Youknow that. I know you understand that. I shouldn't blame youI'm so sorry.*

*Love,Rachel.(Hoover, 2014: 284-285)*

The quotation above is evidence of how Miles discovers the feelings of being by the person he trusts and lov ¾? \$@ ð? "€# was left the next day after the tragic incident. Miles was upset since she left without saying goodbye and told him this through a paper sheet. The fact that Rachel said she does not blame him and yet left him all alone describes how she felt about him. But the sad thing is Rachel is not the only one who feels sad over the death of their newborn son, Miles lost him too, and now Rachel decided to go is make Miles lose both most important people that he wants to have a future with. He felt betrayed, he trusted Rachel so much and gave all his heart to her. There is nothing left for him, and the pain he must carry is so much that he cannot handle it. So that is why he promises himself not to ever fall in love with anyone again, so he will not feel the same pain repeatedly.

##### 3.1.2 One Time Event

The main cause of Miles's trauma is happening because the night after his son was born. Miles was driving the car and being overwhelmed by the happiest day of his life. And that makes him lose his focus on the road, which causes a crash and their car jumped into water. Little did he know, his happiest day became his unforgettable day for him with carries guilt.

*I'm wet. It's cold. My head hurts. My arms hurt.*

*I can't see her, I can't see her, I can't see her, I can't see him.*

*Silence.*

*Silence.*

*Silence.*

*DEAFENING SILENCE.*

*"Miles!"*

*I open my eyes.*

*It's wet, it's wet, there's water, it's wet.*

*Water is in the car. (Hoover, 2014: 270)*

The quotation above shows the horrific night incident that always haunted him for years. At that time, right before the accident happens, Miles is joyful about the life he had. He gets the future with his loved one and celebrated the birth of their son in hospital. But just like that, his joy was taken instantly. Even when he is unconscious, the image he sees is only Rachel and Clayton. So, it's hard for him to process that one tragic event takes away his happiness and completely changes his life in a short period of time. The memory of that specific night will always come up every time he closes his eyes. Clayton.

##### 3.1.3 Loss and Sadness

After the incident, Miles faces the reality of how everything can change in an instant. His grief and guilt over the death of his son make him battle with a sense of great sadness. He lost his newborn son who only experienced one day of his. It all happens because of his own negligence. His guilt over Rachel for being unable to give him the happy life he promised just makes him drown more in sadness.

### 3.2 The Effects of Miles's Trauma

#### 3.2.1 Problem With Relationship

After getting abandoned by someone who he loves the most. Miles finds it difficult to trust and get involved in the feeling of love towards someone else. He has given up everything to Rachel and believes their feelings are mutual. But, in the end, Miles was left alone while still processing his life that had turned upside down. So, Miles believes, there are no such genuine feelings, and Miles finds it hard to believe someone will not leave him. So, he decided to avoid dating and any attachment relationship for over six years. But after those years, Miles is finally attracted to his best friend's sister Tate. And still does not want to involve his feelings in the relationship, so he makes an agreement to only have a physical relationship with her and warns her to do the same thing, which does not involve feelings in their relationship. It can be seen in the quotation below:

"It's not that I don't like you, Tate." He sighs heavily and runs his hands through his hair, gripping the back of his neck. "I just don't *want* to like you. I don't want to like *anyone*. I don't want to *date* anyone. I don't want to *love* anyone. I just . . ." He folds his arms back across his chest and looks down at the floor.  
(Hoover, 2014: 83)

The quotation above clearly shows how Miles does not allow himself to feel love again even after six years. The trauma he has over the commitment relationship terrifies him. Just to think of it, Miles does not believe if anyone will ever love and never leave him. He believes, if he allows himself to love someone, it means he has to be ready to feel the pain. And Miles does not want to feel that pain again. So, he tries so hard to prevent his feelings towards someone and maintain the boundaries between him and the other. For example, when he spent so much time with Tate, he slowly feels attached to her. He admires her care, loving and intelligence, but one he relies on the start to get feelings for her, Miles decided to step back and become the cold and distant person as he used to be.

#### 3.2.2 Emotional Impact

Due to his past traumatic experience, Miles has suffered from trauma for over six years. The main effect of this trauma disorder has an impact on his emotions. For example, he often seems mad or angry when the question about his past comes up. Or he is denying his own feeling over the love he have towards Tate. And sometimes Miles seems to fail to move on from his traumatic past by experiences a flashback or the feeling of guilt towards Rachel unconsciously.

He's not sick.

He's crying.

Hard.

So hard he isn't even making a sound. I don't even know the guy, but the obvious devastation he's experiencing is difficult to witness.

(Hoover, 2014: 15)

The quotation above shows how Miles deeply upset, showing signs of being in a lot of emotional pain. It seems like something from his past might have hurt him a lot. He is using alcohol to try to deal with these feelings. What is really striking is that he is crying hard, but without making any noise. This suggests he might have learned to hide his feelings because of something tough he went through before. His appearance reflects how much this past pain is still affecting him emotionally. The way he is handling his emotions, using alcohol to cope, and the clear distress he's in all point to something really tough he's been through. This moment shows a glimpse into how much his past experiences are still hurting him inside.

### 3.3 How Miles Solves His Trauma

Miles can overcome his trauma by facing his biggest fear. Rachel is the key to Miles's healing process. Although Miles has an intimate relationship with Tate, and she tries to help him to get through his trauma, Miles must deal his trauma on his own, because the cause of his trauma is the feeling of guilt with Rachel. So, when he decided to face his fear and meet Rachel, he sees how Rachel is able to move on with her life. Rachel is the person that makes him out from his trauma.

"Rachel, I . . ." He looks back at me again. "I don't know why I'm here." I do. I can see it in his eyes. I got to know those eyes so well when we were together. I knew all his thoughts. All his emotions. He wasn't able to hide how he felt, because he felt so much. He's always felt so much.

(Hoover, 2014: 300)

The quotation above shows Miles's struggle to articulate his thoughts and feelings coherently. It reflects his internal struggle, suggesting that he might be grappling with unresolved emotions or uncertainties, unable to provide a straightforward explanation for his actions or presence. Overall, this quote

also shows Miles's emotional complexity, hinting at his internal conflicts, confusion, and the intricate nature of his emotions, which he finds difficult to express or comprehend fully in that moment.

Based on research discussion above, it can be concluded that the cause of Miles's trauma is related to the tragic events causing of Rachel's departure and Clayton's death. These circumstances reveal the deep cause of loss and the lasting impact of guilt. It shows how Miles's emotional experiences, where memories of the past continue to affect his current life, making it difficult for him to open and form genuine connections.

The effects of Miles's difficulties with intimacy and trust affect not only his romantic relationships but also how he interacts with friends and family. The barriers he puts up around his feelings are clear evidence of the deep and widespread effects of his unresolved trauma.

However, the most important part of this story is about how Miles changes and feels better. As he faces his hidden feelings and goes back to painful memories after meeting Rachel, we see how he starts to feel better. When Miles says comforting things to himself, it is a very important moment that shows he's being kind to himself and taking a brave step towards feeling better. The book mixes therapy, thinking about oneself, and being open about feelings to show how someone recovers from bad experiences.

The way Miles solves his trauma is by facing his own fear. His decision to meet Rachel is change his perspective, the way she able to move on and have a happy life makes him realize he can do the same. Also, Miles and Tate's relationship is very important. They become a safe place for each other where Miles gets the courage to deal with his past. Through patience, understanding, and always supporting each other, they help each other heal.

In conclusion, Miles can cope with his trauma by facing and accepting his past that haunted him for years. With the help from someone who is patient and shows him their love he is always terrified of. Miles is slowly able to start opening about his past and gaining the trust of other people around him, especially Tate who has opened his mindset about loving someone.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Using psychological approach in analyzing the conversation in the literature, the results uncover that Miles's trauma originates from the unfortunate circumstances surrounding Rachel's leaving and Clayton's demise, emphasizing the deep feeling of sorrow and lasting remorse he endures. The emotional loads he carries result in challenges with intimacy and trust, which have a significant influence on his relationships with both romantic partners and loved ones. Nevertheless, the story also exemplifies Miles's progression towards recovery and personal development. Miles develops the ability to treat himself with more compassion and gains the bravery to progress by directly facing his repressed emotions and distressing recollections, notably during his interaction with Rachel and his connection with Tate. By engaging in therapy, engaging in self-reflection, and receiving support from others, he finally reconciles with his history and initiates authentic relationships, highlighting the profound impact of confronting one's concerns and embracing love and support from others. Given the significant role of using psychological approach in discovering trauma on individuals' lives and relationships as portrayed in literary works, future researchers can further explore the intricacies of trauma narratives, since they play a crucial role in revealing the effects of trauma on people's lives and relationships as portrayed in literary works. Researchers may get a deeper understanding of how trauma influences characters' experiences and relationships in literature by using interdisciplinary techniques that integrate psychological analysis with literary interpretation. This multidisciplinary approach has the potential to provide useful insights that not only enhance our comprehension of trauma representation but also guide therapeutic treatments and support techniques in real-world situations.

#### REFERENCES

- Aulia, M. G. 2018. "An Analysis of Trauma Found in Paula Hawkin's The Girl On The Train". Thesis. Surabaya: Faculty of Literature Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya.
- Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. 2018. "Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches". Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dewani, R. 2023. "The Impact of Trauma in Literature". Vol. 11, No 3, March, 2320-2882.
- Felman, S., Laub, D., M.D. 1922. *Testimony: Cries of Witnessing in Literature Psychoanalysis and History*. Routledge: New York.
- Hoover, C. 2014. *Ugly Love*. Atria Paperback: New York.
- Jones, E. 2014. "Beyond The Pleasure Principle by Sigmund Freud". [https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/assets/pdf/freud\\_beyond\\_the\\_pleasure\\_principle.pdf](https://www.libraryofsocialscience.com/assets/pdf/freud_beyond_the_pleasure_principle.pdf). Retrieved 24th October, 2023.
- Liyah, K. K. 2021. *Psychological Trauma of The Main Character in E.Lockhaer's We Were Liars*. Thesis. Malang: Department of English Literature, Faculty of Humanities. Universitas Negri MaulanaMalikIbrahim.
- Mandal, D. K & Singh, S. 2022. "Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic Perspective On Trauma Theory With Special Refrence To Hysteria". Vol. 6 No. 4, hal. 10256-10260.
- Pandasari, R. K. 2014. "The Cause and Effect in Melinda's Traumatic Experiences: A Psychosocial Analysis in Anderson's Speak". Thesis. Yogyakarta: English Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Language and Arts, Yogyakarta State University.

- Perennia, R. F. 2021. "Childhood Trauma and Its Effects on Charlie, The Main Character In Perks Of Beng A Wallflower Novel". Thesis. Semarang: English Literature Program, Faculty Of Language and Communication Science, Sultan Agung Islamic University Semarang.
- Shoukat, L., Wahid, S., & Arshad, K. 2020. "An Analysis Of Personal And Collective Trauma In Khaledhosseini's Novel Sea Prayer". Vol. 6 No. 2, hal. 117-130.
- Sulaeman. 2014. "The Analysis Of Trauma Ins Staub's Novel Scared To Death. Thesis. Makassar: English And Literature, Department Adab And Humanity Faculty, State Islamic University Of Alauddin Makassar.
- Van der Kolk, B. A. 2014. *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. Viking: New York.
- Wahyuni, H. 2016. "Faktor Resiko Gangguan Stress Pasca Trauma Pada Anak Korban Pelecehan Seksual". Khazanah Pendidikan.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Anindya Lintang Pancarani** is an undergraduate student at the English Literature Study Program, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. She can be contacted at [pancari02anindya@gmail.com](mailto:pancari02anindya@gmail.com).

**Danu Wahyono** is a Senior Lecturer at the Undergraduate Program in English Literature, Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya. His research interests include literary studies, American studies, Racism, and Psychology of Literature. He can be contacted at [danuwahyono@untag-sby.ac.id](mailto:danuwahyono@untag-sby.ac.id).