

LILY BLOOM AND HER RADIOACTIVE MEMORY: A STUDY OF TRAUMA BONDING IN *IT ENDS WITH US*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.22909870>

Keywords

Radioactive Memory, Trauma Bonding, Domestic Abuse, Generational Trauma, *It Ends with Us*

Article History

Received: 25 June 2026

Accepted: 05 September 2026

Published: 23 September 2026

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Abstract

This study explores novel *It Ends with Us* (2016) by Colleen Hoover from the major concept of Radioactive Memory which is the umbrella term of Trauma Bond Theory. Radioactive Memory means the painful memories of past that keep affecting the person long after the original event has ended. These painful memories influence decisions and shape the person's mind for future choices. The protagonist of novel, Lily Bloom, grows up in an abusive household by witnessing her mother's abuse at the hands of her father. The main objective of the study is to explore Radioactive Memory under the framework of Trauma Bonding in *Lily Bloom* and how her past memories become radioactive in present and how she struggles against haunting past and overcomes it. For achieving these objectives, study uses descriptive qualitative approach to analyse the text by focusing on Lily's childhood diaries, flashbacks, reversal of Atlas in her life and her chaotic inner thoughts. The study finds that Lily's memories of her father come to the surface when she experiences violence at the hands of Ryle. She merges the voice of Ryle with the voice of her father, when he seeks apology from her. Further, Lily finds herself caught in a situation similar to her mother's and speaks like her mother while dealing with Ryle, making the same excuses to stay in a cycle of violence she promised herself she would never enter into. Finally, these memories becomes her strength with the birth of her daughter and she chooses to leave her husband to end the generational cycle of abuse. The study concludes that *It Ends with Us* (2016) is significant portrayal of Trauma Bonding in contemporary fiction.

1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Colleen Hoover was born on December 11, 1979 in Sulpher Springs, Texas. She attended Texas A & M University of Commerce, from where she earned a degree in social work. After college she worked as a social worker and a teacher. She is a well known American author and novelist. She was named one of the 100 most influential people in the world by Time Magazine in 2023. Colleen Hoover is famous for her 2016 novel *It ends with Us*. Hoover also has written many other influential works which

include *Point of Retreat* (2012), *Ugly love* (2014), *Maybe Not* (2014), *Confess* (2015), *Without Merit* (2017), *Heart Bones* (2020) and *Maybe Now* (2022). Her novels delve into themes of love, hope, grief and mental illness. Hoover's novels offer hope and sense of healing, allow readers to get a deep understanding of character's struggle and motivations.

Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016) is a contemporary novel that explores the themes of domestic abuse, trauma and love. The story begins with Lily Bloom, who is born in an abusive home, where her father used to harm

her mother physically. Thus, these experiences of her parent's relationship shape her understanding of making connection with other humans.

When novel opens, Lily sits on the roof of apartment after performing eulogy on the funeral of her father. There, a man appears named Ryle Kincaid, a neurosurgeon who was kicking the chairs because of death of his patient, who was shot by his own brother accidentally. At the roof both tell some naked truth to each other and then Ryle asks for one night stand but Lily refuses.

After six months Lily moves to Boston, where she wants to start her own floral business. There she meets Alyssa who offers to work for Lily and later she becomes Lily's close friend. In Boston she again meets Ryle and comes to know that he is Alysa's brother. In the start Ryle is reluctant in being relationship and toward marriage but later on they both fell in love with each other. However as the story proceeds Ryle begins to show his abusive nature and violent behaviour that reminds Lily of her parents' relationship and the behaviour of her father toward her mother.

Furthermore, story narrative shifts into past when Lily begins to read the journals that she had written in her teenage, there she introduces a homeless boy known as Atlas Corigan. Lily helps him and treats him with kindness and love because he is a homeless boy. They both fall in love and Atlas becomes her first love because of his support and emotional safety towards her when she confronts abusive environment in her home.

Similarly, Lily marries Ryle and when she becomes pregnant, faces the haunt of her past memories because she becomes the victim of domestic abuse through the hands of her husband Ryle. Lily does not want that her child grows up in the same abusive environment once she herself had experience during her own childhood. So, she decides to give her child a prosperous life by making a brave decision of leaving Ryle. So, story concludes with the lines that emphasize the end of abuse.

1.2 Historical Background

This study employs Trauma Bond, specifically the concept of Radioactive Memory to explore

how past's agonizing events linger memory and continue to shape anyone's present actions and future choices. This theory delves deep into the text to provide insight to understand how protagonist's life is influenced by unresolved trauma and lack of decision making ability. So, these memories that have lasting effects on person's life like any radioactive materials that lasts for a long duration, haunts the present and future as well and makes the life painful.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is radioactive memory in Trauma Bonding?
2. How Lily's memories become radioactive for her in present life?
3. How she struggles and over powers such haunting traumatic past?

1.4 Research Objectives

1. To define radioactive memory in Trauma Bonding.
2. To analyze how Lily's memories become radioactive in her present life.
3. To highlight how she struggles and over powers such haunting traumatic past.

2 Literature Review

This section examines relevant studies, analyzes their contributions, and explores how these inform and affect the current research. Many researchers have worked on novel *It Ends with Us* (2016) by Colleen Hoover from different perspectives which includes domestic abuse, psychological effects on the life of different characters and the devastation of abuse. Some of these works are discussed below.

Dwiastuti & Yamin (2019) focuses on domestic violence in novel *It Ends with Us*. The study argues that novel help in understanding simplified domestic violence despite raising awareness about abusive relationship. The study uses the theories of attitudes and hegemonic femininity to explain the behaviour of Lily's friends and family towards her abusive relationship with her husband. The study argues that the novel makes the victims of domestic abuse powerful. It also emphasizes that domestic violence is a big social problem and different world's famous cultures consider

it a personal marital problem. The study discusses female characters such as Alysa and Jenny Bloom. Alysa is the sister of Ryle and shows sympathy towards Lily but she is confused about violence. Later she advises Lily not to accept domestic abuse at the hand of her brother and says that she will never talk to Lily again if she accepts him again. Alysa also rationalizes Ryle's actions as a result of childhood mishap. The study claims that Alysa represents hegemonic femininity because she supports patriarchy. On the other hand, Lily narrates her whole abusive story to her mother because her mother has also gone through same situation, where her husband violates her physically and emotionally. She advises Lily to break this cycle and does not try to deal like her. Her mother cannot provide her practical support but she can only offer her emotional support. The study claims that according to these female character leaving the abuser is a enough action.

Kanishkaa (2023) mostly focuses on silent voices of abuse faced by victims. Kanishkaa untangles the brutal truth of domestic abuse, analyzing authority structure, deceptive tactics, and the deep rooted causes of psychological violence. Furthermore, Kanishkaa examines the psychological and emotional condition of leading characters of the novel from domestic abuse and also brings silent screams up to the surface that echo into the pages of novel. Kanishkaa uses descriptive qualitative methodology to analyze the novel because findings are in the form of words. Researcher describes the psychological condition of main characters and the way these characters struggle to search the ways to cope with traumatic situations. In this work, researcher discusses protagonist Lily who suffers abuse at the hand of her father and husband, and points out the enduring fear of her father losing his temper causes tense environment in the home. Furthermore, researcher examines Lily's psychological condition "Lily suffers greatly because of psychological effects of her phobia." Similarly researcher tries to provide ways to reduce domestic abuse that plan should be made that what to do even in worse condition. In the same way, researcher argues that if abuse causes psychological problems then consult for

psychological counseling. According to researcher if women want to avoid domestic abuse then they must become financially independent. Kanishkaa concludes the work arguing, to break the circle of abuse not only require confident but also require to recognize the power of self-esteem.

Sarungu & Andayani (2023) explore the emotional feelings present in the main character of novel, Lily Bloom. This study explores the causes and effects of trauma and discusses the coping mechanism of Lily Bloom with her trauma. To analyze her trauma, writer uses the theories of Cathy Caruth, Judith Herman and James Pannebaker. The work uses four keywords to explain and analyze the trauma of Lily Bloom namely as psychological trauma, causes of trauma, effects of trauma and expressive writing as a coping mechanism. To define Psychological Trauma, according to Jayne Leonard, is a response to the event that a person finds highly stressed. Then researcher presents different causes of trauma such as witnessing domestic violence or sexual assault, being abused as a child, surviving a natural disaster etc.

Patidar (2024) in this work focuses on Gynocritical criticism under the shadow of feminism. Feminism that should not only based on the opinion of equality between men and women but also between women themselves. Patidar, by keeping in view gynocritical feminism, discusses androcracy system and patriarchal society that violate and abuse women and keep them away from writing and presenting themselves through women language. Sole aim of androcracy is to keep women silent.

Patidar in this work explores the writings and women's experience. Researcher argues that how societal and cultural laws and norms shape the mind of women and what they feel when they are in situation of domestic violence. Patidar argues that any society while making societal rules must consider literature as a main source to make the reliable communication way between men and women. Patidar untangled the issue of women language that they should present themselves through their own writings and change the narratives that are built by men and are misrepresented. Women can break the

silence upon the mishaps like domestic abuse only through writing.

Kamalakannan (2024), in this study focuses on the psychological condition of victims of domestic abuse. This study argues that domestic abuse leaves deep and lasting scars on its victim, not only physically but also mentally. Kamalakannan's study aims to explore psychological toll of domestic abuse in *It Ends with Us*, considering trauma and mental health struggles Lily faces and emotional complexity of breaking free from the cycle of abuse. Similarly, study also focuses on mental and emotional consequences of abuse as represented in novel, adding wide range of conversation about hidden psychological scars left by domestic violence. Kamalakannan also refers towards different writers and their contributions regarding trauma caused by domestic abuse. This work mentions Judith Herman's trauma theory that highlights how domestic abuse results in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), characterized by flashbacks, hypervigilance and emotional numbness.

Hassannudin and Bazlan (2024) examine the devastation of abuse in the life of victims of domestic abuse. This paper presents the text analysis of *It Ends with Us* by representing the trauma of main character, Lily Bloom, through her personality and behaviour towards her personal relationships and father. This study uses Murphy's Characterization Theory and Caruth's Theory of Trauma to analyze the text by considering character's personal characteristics regarding her past trauma. Through this theory, paper examines the character and characterization of Lily Bloom to identify different trauma stages through her personality, attitude and behaviour. According to this study, Murphy suggested nine methods for distinguishing character's characterization. Similarly, Caruth provides three different forms of trauma i.e Acute Trauma, Chronic Trauma and Complex Trauma. This study also focuses on psychological approach to analyze the trauma of the main character, Lily Bloom, and it is pointed out through defence mechanisms used by the protagonist due to trauma she has observed.

Cantikawati & Tawami (2024) explore the psychological structure of the main character,

Lily Bloom, by analyzing Id, Ego and Superego through the perspective of Sigmund Freud theory of Psychoanalysis. The study explores that Id dominates the main character. Lily Bloom psychological structure results from her past trauma which is caused by violence carried out by her father and her husband. Initially, the study explains the Literary Psychological Theory to understand the psychological structure of Lily Bloom. The work explains that literary psychology is a branch of academic study that analyse and interprets literary texts, authors, and readers through the application of various psychological theories and concepts.

Salsabila (2024) exposes the dynamics of domestic abuse through the experiences of main character, Lily bloom, and her efforts to escape from a brutal relationship. The study uses Lenore Walker's Cycle of Violence Theory to explain how abusive relationships establish and remain continues. The study aims to analyze how Lily experiences physical abuse in her marriage with her husband, how the violence forms a repeating cycle and how she eventually escapes the violent relationship. Salsabila begins by claiming domestic violence as a social issue. The study shows that abuse is not limited to physical torture but it also consists of psychological manipulation, threats, financial control, emotional torture and societal discrimination. The research highlights that domestic violence is mainly about authority and control where one controls the other through fear and manipulation. This fear and control of partner results in leaving emotional and psychological wounds on victims.

Pooja and Reshmi (2024) untangle the appearance and unintended consequence of gender based violence and protagonist's efforts to beat sufferings. The study significantly pays attention to observations of Lily Bloom and explains how trauma, social expectations, and patriarchy shape the lives of women. The study exposes that novel represents a real picture of domestic violence and its effects on the mental condition of women. The study explains that Lily grows up in an abusive household where her father is used to harm her mother physically. These horrible observations during childhood affects protagonist's emotional

development and establishes traumatic situation that continues to haunt her in adulthood. Similarly, study highlights that Lily hates her father because of his violent behaviour and she also does not establish a good relationship with her mother because she is still unable to understand that why her mother bears such abusive behaviour of her father and does not take any action against him.

The reviewed literature powerfully highlights the important contributions made by former researchers in understanding the subject. However, despite these efforts, important gaps may be left, importantly concerning the role of Radioactive Memory that lingers in the mind of Lily Bloom and shapes the protagonist's present and future as well. On the other hand, many previous studies have focused on domestic abuse, violence faced by Lily Bloom and different sides of her trauma but very least consideration has been given to the role of Radioactive Memory. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by investigating the role of Radioactive Memory under the umbrella term of Trauma Bonding, with the purpose of adding new observations and contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

3 Methodology

This chapter consists of different aspects about the methodology of this research work. This chapter mainly consists of elements like nature of research, theoretical framework, delimitations of study, and sources of data. The aim of this chapter is to accommodate clear outline to understand how research has been carried out and research objectives will be achieved.

3.1 Methodological Framework

This research adopts a qualitative approach to analyze the traumatic experience of protagonist Lily Bloom in her life and role of memory shaping her mind. By employing textual analysis, themes, symbols and psychological patterns, the research aims to explore how trauma and memories of past events haunt her in present life as well as future, in *It Ends with Us* (2016). The analysis also consists of some diaries, journals, and flashbacks as a qualitative

tools through which memory moves too and fro in the novel. The data for this purpose is taken from the novel, *It Ends with Us* (2016). This is significantly present through the character of Lily Bloom by using the concept of trauma bonding.

3.2 Theoretical Framework

This research has been done from the perspective of Trauma Bond Theory, specifically the concept of *Radioactive Memory* which exposes that traumatic experiences remain active in our subconscious and continue to affect our emotions and behaviour. This theory describes how past memories of agony and pain come to surface during time of stress and depression, contributing to present relationships and future choices.

Trauma Bonding is a psychological condition in which a person forms a strong emotional attachment to someone who is abusive, controlling, or harmful, because the relationship is built on a cycle of pain and temporary affection. Trauma bond is an aspect that makes it significantly complicated for women to abandon their abusive romantic relationships and that's why it is often a reason for women to stay in an increasingly violent relationships. Trauma Bond theory presents two aspects that define abusive relationships, namely (1) a power imbalance within the relationship, and (2) an intermittency of abuse within the relationship. By considering power imbalance within relationship, it is considered that offender retains more relational power than victim. The power imbalance within the relationship defines that how the trauma bond cycle starts and is maintained for the duration of relationship. The second component of trauma bond is the periodic nature of abuse, which proposes that offender is intermittent in behaviour regarding reward like love and hope and punishment as physical, emotional and verbal abuse. These two factors influence the presence of trauma bond within abusive relationship by causing a paradoxical attachment. In the beginning, when a person experiences abusive scenario, at this time individuals feel hope and love in the relationship but as the abuse remains continuous without any improvement in the behaviour

then the individuals come to point where their emotional attachment to their partner overcomes by some logical reasons about the decision of their relationship.

Radioactive Memory is a metaphorical term used in psychology, trauma studies, and literary criticism to describe a type of memory that continues to affect a person long after the original event has ended, just like radioactive material keeps emitting radiation even after the source is gone. Radioactive Memory refers to painful, traumatic, or intense memories that erupt again and again over the time and keep effecting emotion, thoughts and behaviour. It is often unconscious, lasts for years, causes emotional pain, and affects relationships, identity and decisions.

4 Discussion and Analysis

It stops here. With me and you. It ends with us.
~ Colleen Hoover

Throughout the history women remain the victim of domestic abuse. They are controlled and psychologically tortured by the men. This chapter provides a detailed textual analysis of novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover through the theoretical light of trauma bonding and radioactive memory. This chapter examines how traumatic experience, emotional manipulation, periodic affection, fear and guilt mold the psychological condition of protagonist Lily Bloom. The analysis delves significantly on the formation of Lily's emotional attachment with her lover Ryle Kincaid, who later becomes her husband. This chapter will also analyze the traumatic memories of Lily Bloom that continuously interfere her decisions, emotions and struggle for self identity throughout the novel.

The theory of Trauma Bonding explains the psychological condition in which a person develops a strong emotional attachment to someone who is abusive, controlling, or harmful, because the relationship is built on the cycle of pain and temporary affection. In the novel, Lily shows the effects of trauma bonding, although she experiences domestic violence and psychological abuse through the hands of her husband Ryle Kincaid but still she remains emotionally connected to him. This attachment is not only the result of love; rather

it consists dilemma, fear, hope for the change, and memories of agony and love. Trauma bonding exposes that why sufferers most of the time struggle to overcome the abusive relationships even when they know that they are being abused.

Moreover, Radioactive Memory is an important tool in this analysis. Radioactive Memory is a psychological term which describes a type of memory that repeatedly affects a person long after the original event has ended. It haunts the person emotionally and psychologically after the traumatic event. These painful memories of past continuously flash upon the mind of victim and build behaviour, tendency toward relationships, personal choices and individual responses. Novel represents that Lily Bloom in her childhood observes domestic violence in the relationship of her parents. The memories of such domestic abuse in adulthood become radioactive for her because they continue to interfere her choices of relationships and her life. So, the memories of past are present in her sub conscious and unconsciously control her actions, fear and decisions.

This chapter exposes how Colleen Hoover through the character of Lily Bloom describes the cyclic nature of abuse and trauma that haunts the victim over the time again and again. The analysis explains that memory just does not work as a recollection of past events but it points out that it is an active psychological force that controls the victim's present life and future, as well it influences their emotions, decisions and behaviour. In the novel Colleen Hoover presents journals, flashbacks, cyclic pattern of abuse, emotional conflicts to represent destructive effects of trauma bonding and radioactive memory on victims of domestic abuse. When Lily becomes the victim of domestic abuse at the hands of her husband Ryle Kincaid, at that time the traumatic memories of her mother's suffering help her to understand the destructive cycle of abuse. These memories of her past in the end make her able to break the cycle of abuse by leaving her husband for herself and the better future of her daughter. So, in the novel, Trauma leads to self-awareness and self-esteem. From the novel many sources can be extracted

that may be listed as the trigger of her radioactive memory.

4.1 Domestic Abuse

Lily Bloom in her childhood experiences abusive relationship of her parents, where her father continuously abuses her mother. So, the base of Lily Bloom's radioactive memories is situated in her childhood. This observation of abuse in her childhood does not only cause trauma but also makes her able to mix love and violence as joint force. Lily in her first meeting with Ryle at the rooftop reveals her hatred toward her father by confessing that, "As his daughter, I loved him. But as a human, I hated him." (p. 11). This passage shows her inherited hatred for her father because of his abusive behaviour towards her mother which causes her trauma in her childhood. Lily openly accepts that she loves him only because he is her father but she hates him as a human. He misbehaves her mother and abuses her physically repeatedly which becomes the main cause of her hatred towards him.

Similarly, in this meeting they both reveals some naked truth to each other. Lily tells him about his father violent behaviour towards her mother:

My father was abusive. Not to me - to my mother. He would get so angry when they fought sometimes he would hit her. When that happened, he would spend the next week or two making up for it. He would do things like buy her Flowers or take us to a nice dinner. Sometime he would buy me a stuff because he knew I hated it when they fought. When I was a kid, I found myself looking forward to the nights they would fight. Because I knew if he hit her, the two weeks that followed would be great. (p. 11)

This passage is one of the most important in the novel related to Radioactive Memory. Lily in her adulthood remembers her childhood experience and accepts that as a child she unconsciously feels pleasure in pain and compares abuse with reward. It shows the effects of trauma bond on her where cycle of violence proceeds by volatile love. In Trauma Bond, victim of abuse finds attachment to abuser through the cycle of pain and reward and finds it difficult to leave the abuser. In this

passage, Lily accepts her memory openly and it signifies that memory never fades completely It erupts again and again over a minute incident. This memory has been suppressed by her over years and carried by her silently, but when she meets Ryle on the rooftop then Hoover provides her language and she expresses her burden through naked truth.

4.2 Diaries of Lily Bloom

In the novel, Lily writes letters to a TV host Ellen DeGeneres in which she writes her daily life happenings. As in the novel, she declares, "I addressed each of my entries to Ellen DeGeneres." (p. 21). This line suggests that Lily finds comfort in writing to Ellen. These diaries consist of her past memories that perform the role of radioactive memory in her adulthood. The written memories in the diaries come to the surface when Lily starts reading them after the death of her father. These diaries consist of good memories as well as bad. As Lily says, I swore I'd never read these again, but with the passing of my father, I've been thinking about my childhood a lot. Maybe if I read through these journals I'll somehow find a little strength for forgiveness. Although I fear I'm running the risk of building up even more resentment. (p. 21)

This passage clearly explains that Lily struggles to open the journals again and read them because it will renew her past wounds It exposes how radioactive memory works. At some extent she realizes that these memories of past with the rereading of journals would be dangerous for her, because these memories are still alive in her mind. These memories of past are not passive rather they are active and present in her sub-consciousness, they just need a trigger to resurface again. Somehow these diaries become the root cause of triggering her radioactive memories. Whenever, she opens the journals, she confronts herself to another dose of radioactive memories from the original source. Lily cannot make herself apart from these diaries because they remind her of her original identity. These radioactive memories are cause of her difficulty and also a road to self-awareness.

Similarly, entries add in her journals during teenage the layer of these radioactive memories.

In one of her journal entries she expresses her exposure to violence:

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. (p. 46)

This passage represents her authentic event of trauma that occurs in her teenage. Lily preserves this moment of violence in her mind, but after years Lily's this radioactive memory continues to emit psychological effects on her personal life in shaping her mind. These diaries are significant because these preserve memories and they can be read again. Lily in her adulthood starts reading them and so revives her painful events of past that constitute her mind. It shows that how *Radioactive Memory* works and remains active unconsciously and comes to surface during events of stress and weakness. Lily in her childhood observes this trauma of domestic abuse when she enters the living room and finds her father physically abusing her mother by pushing her down on the floor. Her mother tries to relax him but he remained violent and knocked her on the floor. This observance of violent episode leaves deep scars on Lily's psychological condition and makes her careful in adult age to choose her husband who is different from her father. So, this passage in the adulthood performs the role of radioactive memory in the life of Lily, as it erupts and guides her to choose a life partner who is not violent like her father.

Similarly, there is another episode of radioactive memory in the novel while reading the journals. As in the text:

I drop the journal on my chest. I'm surprised to feel tears running down my cheeks. Every time I pick up this journal I think I'll be fine--that it all happened so long ago and I won't still feel what I felt back then. (p. 87)

This passage is the obvious example where journals carry the radioactive memory for Lily. While reading the diary that she has written in her childhood, tears start falling down her cheeks and she begins feeling the weight of her past memories. She begins reading these diaries with the purpose that the events of violence occurred long ago and they will not affect her

in the present and she thinks that the terrified events of past that traumatized her in the past would have lost their intensity and would not feel the same again, but reading to them renews her old wounds.

Similarly, reading diaries further intensifies her memories of past relationship. As in the text: I'm such a sap. It gives me this longing to hug so many people from my past. Especially my mother because for the past year, I haven't really thought about everything she had to go through before my father died. I know it probably still hurts her. (p. 87)

This passage is another clear example of Lily Bloom's radioactive memory that ignites from reading the journal. She considers herself an idiot because of reading those journal that brings painful memories of past into her consciousness. These journals trigger her memory and she starts feeling empty and craves for many of her near and dear ones. Diaries significantly compel Lily to think of her mother for her sorrowful past filled with the torture of her father that is consist of both physical and psychological. Lily is unable to recall the painful incidents of her father's treatment towards her mother. She is well aware that her mother still feels the pain of wounds that were given by her father.

Moreover, *Radioactive Memory* does not apparently follow a person but also it interferes in particular and definitive moments, enforcing past to influence to the present situation. For Lily Bloom this influence occurs in her relationship with her lover, Ryle Kincaid initially, but lately she marries him. Ryle is an intelligent and hardworking neurosurgeon but he is also influenced by the trauma of his childhood event of killing his brother by shooting him accidentally. Lily, after marrying him, observes the same behaviour at the hands of Ryle as her mother has faced through the hands of her father.

4.3 Mother's Silence

It is important to look at the character of Lily's mother. Her actions and behaviour become a source of radioactive memory for Lily Bloom in her adulthood. So, Lily's mother's actions and behaviour develop her mind while forming relationships in her adult life. Lily's mother

throughout her marriage life remains passive against her husband and does not responds his abuse while sacrificing her own self-esteem and identity. Lily silently internalized such behaviour while asking her mother to leave her father. As in the novel:

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 wouldn't believe. My mom was sitting next to me, holding my head and telling me she was sorry. I looked around for my dad, but he wasn't there. He'd gotten into his car and drove off after I hit my head... On the way there she only said one thing to me. When they ask you what happened, tell them you slipped on the ice. (p. 80)

This passage is one of the significant example from the novel related to her mother's acceptance of violence and inflicting this acceptance in her daughter. Hoover describes that one evening Lily's father abuses her mother. Lily after witnessing this comes to help her mother. She jumps on her father's back to take him away from her mother but Lily injured herself by the push of her father. Her father shows violent behaviour not only to her mother but also to her. This event laid the foundation of trauma in Lily Bloom. On the way to to hospital Lily's mother only told her that when she is asked in the in the hospital about the injury, she must tell them an accident rather than her father's violent actions. So, in case of Lily's marital relationship with Ryle, it comes to the surface as a radioactive memory. When Ryle beats Lily then this memory of her mother's silence over her father's abuse, ignites in her mind to remain calm and silent in time of violence and there is no need to tell anyone about the treatment of her husband in order to protect their marriage. This teaching of her mother leads to the acceptance of inter-generational violence and to remain silent over abuse at the hand of husband.

In case of Lily Bloom, the first incident of abuse at the hands of her husband Ryle takes place when they were drinking in the kitchen. Ryle accidentally injured his hand at the hot stove. As in the text: "I'm still laughing as I lean over to get a look at Ryle's hand. I hope he didn't hurt it too bad" (p. 135). This line shows

that she is drunken and laughing ridiculously at Ryle while showing concern for his injury. This laughing of Lily marks the beginning of abuse. Ryle after watching Lily's laugh bursts into anger and shows his dark and violent nature to Lily for the first time by abusing her physically. As in the text:

I'm instantly not laughing anymore. I'm on the floor, my hand pressed against the corner of my eye. In a matter of one second, Ryle's arm came out of nowhere and slammed against me, knocking me backward. There were enough force behind it to knock me off balance. When I lost my footing, I hit my face on the cabinet door handles as I came down. (p. 136).

This passage marks the beginning of violence in the life of Lily Bloom through the hands of her husband Ryle. He initially shows love and gentle nature towards Lily but turns into violent person who abuses her physically over a minute matter which ignites the radioactive memory of her childhood. Lily's memory comes to the surface with the memories of her parents relationship that how her father used to abuse her mother violently. When Ryle knocked her down on the floor she can only feel her self as her mother in-front of her father. She views Ryle like her father as violent and abusive. After this incident, Ryle feels sorry for his action and rushed towards Lily to help her. As in the novel, " I'm so sorry, it all happened so fast. I didn't mean to push you, Lily, I'm sorry. I don't hear Ryle's voice this time. All I hear is my father's voice" (p. 136). This is the most significant evidence of radioactive memory in the novel. Through Ryle's words of apology Lily literally listens to the voice of dead father who is speaking to her mother. This incident brings back the flashbacks of past into her present life. Lily experiences abuse at the hands of her husband, Ryle, just identical to her mother who faces abuse from her husband, so , the pattern of abuse is identical. Here, Hoover merges the father's voice with Ryle's voice and present husband's powerful image of how radioactive memory functions. It does not fade forever but erupts time and over into present, superimposing past trauma onto current situations.

Lily becomes the victim of trauma bonding. Despite knowing that she is abused by her husband but somehow she finds herself in a condition to return back to Ryle. As in the novel:

I want to lash out at him and react like I always wish my mother would have reacted when my father hurt her, but deep down I want to believe that it really was an accident. Ryle isn't like my father. He's nothing like him. I need to feel his sorrow. He regret. I get both of these things in the way he kisses me. (p. 138)

This passage is the most important example of trauma bonding where the victim despite experiencing physical as well as psychological abuse, remains connected to abuser due to periodic love. Lily knows that Ryle has abused her like her father in the past used to abuse her mother. This event emphasizes the model of her mother's experiences at the hands of her husband, who despite being physically abused various times stays with him. Same is the case with Lily, whose radioactive memory reinforces trauma bond and forces her to accept Ryle's apologies. She is caught into the cycle and cannot avoid it, even knowing her parents relationship but she is unable to avoid it because the cycle is covered with earlier affection and understanding. She remains connected with Ryle because of intermittent pattern of love and tenderness towards her by Ryle. As in the novel, "He's not like my father. He can't be. He's nothing like that uncaring bastard" (p. 137). This shows Lily's views about Ryle after witnessing abuse from him. Ryle's intermittent behaviour of violence and tenderness compels her to not compare him with her father. She thinks that this happened accidentally and Ryle was angry. He is not like her father, he accepts his wrong doing and apologizes her and promises her not to do that again.

Similarly, after the first incident then there happens another incident of violence between Lily and Ryle which triggers her Radioactive Memory and brings the flashbacks of her painful past. Ryle finds Atlas' number in Lily phone's case and bursts into anger without asking any explanation. As in the text,

I open the door and run after him. He's taking the stairs two at a time, and I finally reach him when he is at the landing of the second floor. I shove myself in front of him and grab his shirt in my fist. Ryle, please. Let me explain. He grabs my wrists and pushes me away from him. (p. 170)

This passage presents another episode of violence activating her radioactive memory. When Ryle comes to know about the phone number of Atlas present in Lily's phone cover, he thinks of betrayal and bursts out of anger. He left the apartment in anger without asking any explanation from Lily. Then Lily follows him down the stairs to tell the truth. However, Ryle does not listen to him and pushes her down the stairs which results in cut on her face and losing consciousness. This incident takes her back to the memory of her parents and triggers her trauma. She thinks of her father who is abusing her mother. She considers Ryle similar to her father who is abusing her in a similar way as her father has done in the past. After this violent event Ryle tries to soothe her through tender words and gentle care but this time anger takes over Lily. She does not want to act like her mother in front of her husband. She does not want to tolerate his violence silently and tries to act different from her mother. As in the novel, "Now get the fuck out of my apartment" (p. 172). This shows that she can't be like her mother. She is a strong woman as her mother could not be. Then Alyssa, Ryle's sister, comes to know about this incident, she forced her brother to tell the truth to Lily of his past. Ryle, apologetically tells her that in childhood, when he was six years old accidentally shoot his elder brother who was only seven. As in the text, "I was trying to put everything back inside his head. I thought I could fix him, Lily" (p. 178). This line represents his past that made him violent and angrier over a minute incident. He can't control himself despite taking therapy classes.

As Ryle declares, "Since this happened, there are things I can't control. I get angry. I black out" (p. 178). In this line Ryle describes the reason of his violent nature to Lily. The consequence of this made Lily again to sustain Trauma Bond through Radioactive Memory of her past. She thinks of her father who was only

harsh to her mother and showed no excuses for his violent nature. As in the novel:

But if I'm emulating my mother's behaviour, then that would mean Ryle is emulating my father's behaviour. But he isn't. I have to stop comparing us to them. We're our own individuals in an entirely different situation. My father never had an excuse for his anger...he treated my mother was much worse than what's happened between Ryle and me. (p. 179)

This passage exposes the most intense paradox of Trauma Bonding. Radioactive Memory of Lily, watching her mother enduring abuse of her father provides her two options. She should leave Ryle or endure the emotional cycle of Trauma Bond. She assumes that if she is enduring abuse like her mother then Ryle is acting like her father and inflicting violence onto her. But due to trauma bond she compels herself to stop comparing Ryle with her father. She thinks that Ryle has traumatic past same like her that's why he cannot control himself whereas, her father never showed any tenderness towards her mother and never felt remorse or regretful over his violent actions. So, the memory of her father enables her to make difference between Ryle's and her father's violent actions. The memory furthermore warns her and traps her about the future decision. After witnessing violence in childhood, she is well aware that she must not follow her mother's footsteps of enduring abuse in silence rather she must be different from her. Eventually, emotional architecture built by years of witnessing cyclical abuse pushes her towards the same choice as of her mother.

4.4 Relationship with Atlas

Atlas Corrigan is the childhood love of Lily Bloom. Atlas is a homeless boy who lives in the neighbourhood of Lily Bloom. Lily helps him and provides everything to him. Atlas is the most important part of Lily's life. During Lily's childhood trauma, he helped her to overcome that trauma. Atlas' memories are good as well as create problems for Lily in her marital relationship.

Initially in childhood, when Lily is suffering from her parents' violent relationship, Atlas becomes a source of comfort for her in a time

of distress. As in the text, "I laid my head on his shoulder and then I did the most embarrassing thing. I just started to cry. I don't cry very much, but I was still so upset by what happened yesterday" (p. 81). This line represents that when Lily was struggling from the trauma of her parents then Atlas's shoulder becomes a sign of relief for her, where she can cry and relax herself. Atlas becomes a safe place for her that soothes her radioactive memories of torture.

Similarly, when Lily and Atlas meet in present time, she is in an abusive relationship with Ryle, who is abusing her like her father, used to abuse her mother then radioactive memory influences her and she thinks of the past when Atlas promises her that he will come back for her, as in the novel:

I'm going to make a promise to you, he said. When my life is good enough for you to be a part of it, I'll come find you. But I don't want you to wait around for me, because that might never happen. (p. 157)

This passage shows that in the past Atlas makes a promise to her that he will return for her when he will become financially stable. But in the present time, Ryle's violent behavior tortures her to trigger her radioactive memory and she thinks about the promise of Atlas, as in the text, "I had no idea how hurt I still am that he never came back for me. If he'd have just come back for me like he promised, I would have never even met Ryle. And I would have never been in this situation" (p. 213). This small passage represents her mental and psychological condition in which she is trapped brutally due to violence of Ryle. His violent behaviour ignites her radioactive memory of the past that Atlas never returns still hurts her because if he has returned to Lily, according to his promise, then she would have been in a good condition rather than with Ryle in an abusive household. Moreover, Lily's past with Atlas causes a lot of problems for her in her marital relationship with Ryle. When Ryle comes to know about Atlas through many things that Lily keeps from her childhood like diaries and magnets, he starts abusing her because of her past which activates the radioactive memories of her parents' abusive relationships. As in the text, "Why he is still here, Lily?" (p. 196). This line evaluates that

Lily's past with Atlas is creating hurdles in her present life and causing Ryle to behave violently and abuse her. Ryle becomes violent and shows his darker side, as in the novel, "All I can see when I squeeze my eyes shut is my mother crying on our old living room couch; my father forcing himself on top of her. Hatred rips through me and I start screaming" (p. 197). This passage exposes Ryle's violent nature. This violent event occurs when Ryle comes to know about Atlas. Ryle tries to rape Lily as in the past and Lily witnesses her father raping her mother. She only watches Ryle as her father who is assaulting her and raping her just like her father. This violent event ignites her painful trauma and she considers herself as her mother lying on the same bed on which her mother was assaulted. So, Atlas' memories provide her relief in time of distress but also brings destruction for Lily in her marital relationship.

4.5 Lily's Struggles and her Traumatic Past

The journey of Lily from entrapment in radioactive memories to ultimate independence is not simple. Lily struggles from her internal conflict. Initially, she remained trapped in a situation, as emotionally bounded to Ryle and her growing awareness of the cyclic violence she is living in.

Lily Bloom struggles throughout the novel. Her struggle is marked by the difference between what she knows and what she feels. Lily's childhood memories provide her the road where to go but the trauma bond sustained by her radioactive memories keeps her emotionally connected to Ryle, despite becoming victim of abuse through his hands. Initially, due to trauma bond she remains indecisive towards Ryle. She tries to rationalize her relationship with Ryle. As in the novel:

Sometimes there are moments that both parties regret. And I wonder how I'd feel about myself had I just left him after that first incident. He never should have pushed me, but I also did things I wasn't proud of. And if I'd have just left, would that not be going against our marriage vows? For better or for worse. I refuse to give up on my marriage that easily. (p. 182)

This passage is one of the most important in the novel regarding Lily's internal struggle and conflict about her marital relationship. She is trapped in a trauma bond, that's why despite Ryle's violent behaviour, she tries to save their marriage. Lily questions herself that after first event of violence if she has left him then this would have never happened again. Instead of leaving Ryle, her thoughts push her towards her husband despite knowing the cycle of abuse in which she is living. Lily's mind is trapped in a trauma bond that's why she is unable to think clearly to make a permanent decision. Similarly, Lily also blames herself for the violent actions of Ryle. Although she is abused by Ryle but due to her trauma bonding, her mind starts to seek for different arguments to share blame on herself that she is equally responsible for his violent actions. Then Lily's internal struggle against her husband influences her that if she leaves him it will be against the honour of their marriage and it will declare her a bad woman without honour. That is why she tries to make her marriage bond strong rather than leaving Ryle she starts believing in herself. As in the text, "I am a strong woman. I've been around abusive situations in my whole life. I will never become my mother. I believe that a hundred percent. And Ryle will never become my father" (p. 182). This line expresses her internal strength and belief. Lily's radioactive memory influences her. She is of the view that, she is stronger and will never become like her mother as submissive. She believes that Ryle is sensible and a good person, who will never become like her father.

4.6 Resolving the Memory

In the same way, Lily overcomes her haunting past through gradual psychological development. Again the radioactive memory of her mother influences her to make a decision about her future, whether to leave Ryle or not. As in the novel:

I know these are the things that once went through my mother's head. But the difference between the two of us is that she had more to worry about. She didn't have the financial stability that I have. She didn't have the resources to leave and give me what she thought was a decent shelter. (p. 209)

This passage is the important example of Lily's overcoming her Radioactive Memory and moving towards permanent decision about her life. Financial stability is first step towards her self-recognition. Lily compares herself with her mother financially. Lily is of the view that her mother was dependent on her father who was unable to provide her a better life and shelter that one can provide to her children. That is why she was unable to leave her husband. On the other hand, Lily is financially stable because of her floral business in Boston. She is not dependent on her husband and can survive alone. Due to financial independence, she is able to provide her daughter a better life that her mother always wanted for her. So, this understanding of financial stability becomes the first step toward her overcoming of past trauma and making final decision for her future.

Similarly, Lily's psychological development enhances when Ryle returns from England. When he returns he finds Lily pregnant by looking at her belly. Ryle begins to feel sorry for his violent actions that he has done to her before going to England. He wants her forgiveness but Lily's anger erupts and her psychological development enables her not to remain silent and passive in front of Ryle. Her psychological development enables her to speak in front of him and overcome her radioactive memories causing trauma in her life. When Ryle tries to seek her forgiveness, she yells at him, as in the text, "I'm sorry I attacked you" (p. 239). But Lily does not listen to him and replies "You have no idea, Ryle! None! Fuck you! Fuck you for doing this to me!" (p. 239). This line represents her anger and resentment towards Ryle. Lily's psychological development made her able to speak in front of him and breaking the stereotype of silencing and accepting abuse at the hands of husband.

Moreover Lily's further outburst at Ryle intensifies her present agency. She overcomes the passive radioactive memories into active and powerful energy. As in the novel:

Yes, I kept the magnet Atlas gave me when we were kids. Yes. I kept the journals. No, I didn't tell you about my tattoo. Yes, I probably should have. And yes, I still love him. And I'll love him until I die, because he was a huge part of my life. And yes, I'm sure that

hurts you. But none of that gave you the right to do what you did to me. Even if you would have walked into my bedroom and caught us in bed together, you still would not have the right to lay a hand on me, you goddamn son of a bitch! (p. 240)

This passage is most important about Lily's overcoming of her traumatic past. She represents her agency by speaking in front of Ryle. This outburst is not simply emotional release rather it is a step toward overpowering her passive radioactive memories. Here she does not justify or bring the comparison of her father. Lily's language becomes active tool to represent her existence as a human with agency. Lily refuses the silence of her mother and speaks totally in her own voice to represent herself. This outburst marks the turning point in her life. It not only result in her relationship with Ryle but also results in changing her own history of trauma.

Finally, birth of her daughter, Emerson, helps Lily to see her future clearly and marks the breaking of violence. When her daughter is born, she thinks that it is a best time for making a decision about future, whether to live in an abusive a household or to provide her daughter a happy life by leaving her abusive husband. As in the text:

I look at Emerson and I look at Ryle. And I know that I have to do what's best for her. For the relationship I hope she builds with her father. I don't make this decision for me and I don't make it for Ryle. I make it for her. (p. 264)

This passage is most significant regarding Lily's transformation and her future decision. She does not want her daughter to live in an abusive household as of herself. She takes a step for her daughter to provide her a happy life by breaking the cycle of abuse. Lily does not forget her past and radioactive memories rather her new love, Emerson, helps her to create new memories that are stronger than the painful memories of past. So, she takes this decision for her daughter and transforms her radioactive memories of past into an active force that helps her make a decision to leave Ryle for her daughter's sake.

In the same way, novel ending signifies Lily's complete dominance over her haunting

traumatic past. She completely overpowers her radioactive memories with the birth of her daughter. As in the novel:

Cycles exist because they are excruciating to break. It takes an amount of pain and courage to disrupt a familiar pattern. Sometimes it seems easier to just keep running in the same familiar circles, rather than facing the fear of jumping and possibly not landing on your feet. My mother went through it. I'll be damned if I allow my daughter to go through it. I kiss her on the forehead and make her a promise. "It stops here. With me and you. It ends with us." (p. 266)

This final passage of the novel marks the ending of generational violence and the cycle of abuse moving from generation to generation. Word 'Cycles' represents that repeating nature of violence across the generations. Lily is of the view that breaking such abusive patterns are difficult and it requires lot of efforts to overcome this generational violence. Lily's haunting radioactive memories of her mother's past and her own past, now have become the guide for her to break the abusive cycle. Lily's radioactive memories will never fade permanently rather they will always present in her sub conscious. She does not try to show that she is healed rather she affirms that abusive radiation of generational violence will end here and she will never let them to pass to next generation. The title of the novel in the last line is a promise to her daughter that the generational violence does not end with her mother or with Lily herself rather this pattern of violence ends with them collectively, marking the end to generational violence and breaking the chain of abuse.

5 Conclusion

Radioactive Memory represents traumatic memories that continue to influence person's behaviour, emotions, relationships and future choices, long after the original event has ended. This research is carried out under the guidance of three research questions such as: what is radioactive memory in trauma bonding, how Lily's memory becomes radioactive for her in present life, and how she struggles and overpowers such haunting traumatic past. This

research adopted qualitative approach to analyze the traumatic experience of protagonist by focusing on textual analysis of the text relevant to theoretical framework.

The main findings of this research are the presence of *Radioactive Memory* that dominates the life of Lily Bloom throughout the novel. The analysis exposes that Radioactive Memory is not passive rather it is an active agent that repeatedly comes to the surface and actively shapes the mind of Lily Bloom for her future choices. It exposes Lily Bloom to the childhood memories of traumatic experiences of her parents' domestic issues that ignite like radiation in her present. The diary that Lily writes to Ellen becomes the main source of ignition of Radioactive Memory. When Lily reads these diaries in her adulthood, it takes her back to agonizing past and makes her fresh confrontation to the painful events of past. The study represents that *Radioactive Memory* is a beneficial, effective, and proper theoretical framework for the analysis of different literary texts. This study exposes that domestic abuse endured by individuals is not based on weakness rather it is tolerated because of psychological patterns that are deeply rooted in the mind of observer and moves from generation to generation. *It Ends with Us* is a contemporary literary work that is suitable for this role and presents them with honesty. This novel represents silence of women during the experience of domestic violence and makes it appear to show the world. Similarly, novel represents the true sacrifices made for the breaking of generational patterns of violence. It represents the position of women in a male dominated society that are victimized through power but remain silent for the case of honour. So, story of Lily is about the power and role of past memories in her life. The story that begins from the rooftop of a building and first meeting with Ryle, ends with painful event of leaving her husband for the sake of her daughter's life. Lily's past memories become a source of great courage for the breaking of abusive cycle that are consist of generation and eventually Lily becomes successful.

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