

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF GRIEVING ON MILES' CHARACTER IN THE NOVEL *UGLY LOVE*

MENGANALISIS DAMPAK PROSES BERDUKA PADA KARAKTER MILES DALAM NOVEL *UGLY LOVE*

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Abstract

The painful loss can influence one character's development as described by psychological fiction work. Coleen Hoover's book Ugly Love follows the protagonist's emotional journey following the deaths of his mother and kid. The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological effects of grieving on the main character, Miles Archer using Kübler-Ross's theory of the grief five stages. Using qualitative method and a literary psychology approach, this study traces the main character's journey to acceptance while examining how his self-destructive actions and relationship patterns reflect unresolved grief. The findings of this study are showing that the main character attempts to confront his trauma, seek reconciliation, and begin emotional healing. This study highlights how stories related to grief in literature can reflect people's emotional experiences in real life, which reveals the deep grief. According to the study's findings, addressing the psychological effects of loss in fictional characters shows the effects of personal development and wholesome relationships.

Keywords: character's development, grieving, process, emotional journey, Kübler-Ross' theory

Abstrak

Kehilangan yang menyakitkan dapat memengaruhi perkembangan sebuah karakter seperti yang digambarkan dalam karya fiksi psikologis. Buku Coleen Hoover Ugly Love mengikuti perjalanan emosional sang tokoh utama setelah kematian ibu dan anaknya. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah menyelidiki efek psikologis dari kesedihan pada karakter utama, Miles Archer dengan menggunakan teori Kübler-Ross berkaitan dengan lima tahap kesedihan. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan pendekatan psikologi sastra, penelitian ini menelusuri perjalanan karakter utama menuju penerimaan sambil menelaah bagaimana tindakan merusak diri sendiri dan pola hubungannya mencerminkan kesedihan yang belum terselesaikan. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa karakter utama mencoba untuk menghadapi traumanya, mencari rekonsiliasi, dan memulai penyembuhan emosional. Penelitian ini menyoroti bagaimana cerita yang terkait dengan kesedihan dalam literatur dapat mencerminkan pengalaman emosional orang-orang dalam kehidupan nyata, yang mengungkapkan sifat kesedihan

mendalam Menurut temuan penelitian, mengatasi efek psikologis dari kehilangan melalui karakter fiksi memiliki efek pada perkembangan pribadi dan hubungan yang sehat.

Kata Kunci: *perkembangan karakter, kesedihan, proses, perjalanan emosional, teori Kübler-Ross*

Introduction

As a universal human experience, grief has long been a fascinating topic in literary studies because it provides deep insights into the emotional and psychological changes that occur after profound loss. By enabling readers to observe characters' grieving processes and consider their own experiences, literature acts as a mirror and window into the human psyche.

Studying how grief is portrayed in literature provides important information for psychological analysis. In literature, psychological analysis typically focuses on troublesome characters. In Sin (2022) research, it is analyzed Naomi's grief in *the Book of Ruth*; it demonstrated how biblical narratives can be reinterpreted through Kübler-Ross's model, while Nurjanah (2023) examination of C.S. Lewis's *A Grief Observed* illustrated a complete progression through all five stages following the death of a spouse. Maranda and Wahyuni (2019) studied *Did You Ever Have a Family*. It expanded the discourse by exploring how multiple narrative perspectives can enrich the understanding of grief. However, those

studies leave unaddressed the phenomenon of incomplete grief process seen in the main character in *Ugly Love* Novel, namely Miles' case, where key stages (anger and bargaining) are noticeably missing. This article offers fresh perspectives to contribute new insights about how literary depictions could mirror actual cases of complex or detained grief.

This study examines the intricate psychological impact of grief on Miles Archer, the tormented protagonist of Colleen Hoover's contemporary romance novel *Ugly Love* 2014. Through the theoretical framework of Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief. Because Miles experiences several heartbreaking losses, including the death of his mother from sickness, the horrific accident that claims his young son, and the ending of his relationship with Rachel, the child's mother, his path offers a particularly dramatic case study in traumatic grief.

In the book *The Psychology of Grief* by Richard Gross (2018), it is stated that for most people, love is the most profound source of pleasure in our lives, while the loss of those we love is the most profound sense

of pain. Hence, love and loss are two sides of the same coin we cannot have one without risking the other. These cumulative losses trigger a complex grieving process that fundamentally alters Miles' personality, worldview, and capacity for intimacy, rendering him emotionally unavailable and trapped in cycles of self-destructive behavior.

The theoretical framework of Kübler-Ross (1969, 1973) model is particularly valuable for this analysis, although there is a deviation on Miles' grief process from the Kubler stages of grief. By comparing Miles' psychological experience on complicated grief, this study is beneficial to literary analysis and psychological theory. It is demonstrating how fiction can analyze psychological phenomena on its character. The literary representations may help readers recognize and understand similar patterns in their real lives.

Method

This study employs qualitative method and using psychological literary criticism to trace Miles' emotional trajectory throughout *Ugly Love*. Close reading of key passages reveals how Hoover constructs Miles' psychological profile through his interactions, internal monologues, and evolving relationship with Tate Collins. The

analysis focuses particularly on three crucial aspects: the manifestations of Miles' prolonged denial phase (evidenced by emotional numbness and avoidance of intimacy), his extended depression (marked by self-isolation and substance abuse), and his eventual, partial acceptance (signaled by tentative emotional vulnerability). Significantly, the absence of anger and bargaining stages in Miles' grief process suggests a unique case of emotional bypassing, where traumatic guilt over his son's death prevents normal progression through the mourning cycle. The literary psychology approach was chosen to allow for an in-depth examination of the character's psychological transformation, emotional responses, and behavioral patterns as depicted in the literary text Priyatno, Amir, and Rahman (2024).

The book *Ugly Love* (Hoover 2014) served as the data source. Sections that disclosed Miles Archer's emotional state, interpersonal relationships, and coping strategies after experiencing traumatic loss were given special consideration. For supporting information, scholarly articles on grief theory, psychological studies of bereavement, and literary analyses of contemporary fiction were consulted. The novel was systematically read and annotated

as part of the data collection process. In order to find and underline pertinent portions that demonstrated Miles' grieving symptoms, or noteworthy turning points in the character's journey were chosen. Deviations from the anticipated trajectory were also the focus of the analysis. Dialogue, internal monologues, and narrative descriptions that disclosed the character's psychological state were given special consideration in the analysis.

Result and Discussion

Result

This study examines Miles Archer's grief trajectory in Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love* through the lens of Kübler-Ross's Five Stages of Grief model. It has yielded several profound and nuanced findings that significantly contribute to our understanding of literary representations of grief and psychological responses to traumatic loss. In the past generation, thanks in large part to Dr. Kübler-Ross's great achievements, our society has made major advances in dealing with death and dying, or as it is now often called, end-of-life-care. In most end-of-life cases, especially those within institutions, death is almost always anticipated (Siegler 2019).

The findings show that the grief sequences in Miles' psychological journey

process, the researcher closely read the text several times. Important passages that showed emotional reactions, psychological embody Kübler-Ross' model proposes a progression through **denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance**. The analysis demonstrates that Miles' grief journey omits two crucial stages - anger and bargaining. At the same time, Miles experiences intensifying and prolonging the phases of denial, depression, and acceptance. The grief sequences provide important insights into how traumatic loss and profound guilt be able to alter fundamentally psychological responses to bereavement.

Denial

Denial is a stage illustrates what people mostly experience while facing death, loss, grief, or significant changes in their life. This stage can be described as an act of escapist gesture and manner leading them to motivate their self-defenses mechanism automatically (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019). Miles exhibits an extended and intensified denial phase lasting six years, characterized by systematic emotional avoidance rather than mere disbelief about his losses. It is told in this novel how Miles is in the phase of grieving. The first instance of despair occurred when his mother passed

away, and after that Rachel and Clayton have left him. The loss of Rachel deeply devastates Miles, as she represents a figure who could replace his mother's role. Consequently, the castration or severance of maternal is repeated in Miles' life, triggering an unconscious reaction that becomes uncontrollable as he

faces this conflict (Baga 2021). He lives his life full of guilt and chooses to ignore his as he faces this conflict feelings.

Miles chooses to isolate himself by no longer wanting to involve feelings for women; he would rather not feel love anymore. This can be seen from the following data.

"The ugly parts of love can't lift you up. They bring you down. They hold you under. Drown you. You look up and think, I wish I was up there. But you're not. Ugly love becomes you. Consumes you. Makes you hate it all. Makes you realize that all the beautiful parts aren't even worth it. Without the beautiful, you'll never risk feeling this. You'll never risk feeling the ugly. So, you give it up. You give it all up. You never want love again, no matter what kind it is, because no type of love will ever be worth living through the ugly love again. I'll never let myself love anyone again, Rachel. Ever". (*Ugly Love*, 2014, P. 285-286)

Quotation above is the beginning of the grieving process that changes Miles' personality, in the sentence **"...no type of love will ever be worth living through the ugly love again. I'll never let myself love anyone again, Rachel. Ever."** It can be seen how Miles doesn't want to feel love anymore because love will only bring tremendous pain. From here, changes began to occur in Miles, he no longer wanted to involve his

feelings in any relationship.

This change carried over until Miles met Tate Collins. The next instance of denial is evident when Miles emphasizes to Tate that it is not about disliking her but rather his unwillingness to experience love in the conventional sense. This illustrates how Miles actively attempts to distance himself from his own emotions, avoiding deeper emotional involvement in his relationship with Tate.

"Is it me specifically you don't want to love, or is it love in general you don't want to experience?"
He pulls me away from his chest so he can look at me while he answers my question. "It's love in general I don't want, Tate. Ever. Its you specifically that I just...want." (*Ugly Love*, 2014, P. 216)

"I've gone six years without feeling anything for anyone. Not that I could have controlled the feelings I was experiencing toward Tate... I tried like hell" (*Ugly Love*, 2014, P. 314)

In this situation, Miles makes it clear that it's not Tate he doesn't like but love in general that he doesn't want. This means that Miles actually likes Tate but he doesn't want to get into further feelings, Miles chooses to ignore that love.

It is evident from the data that Miles attempted to escape the love that people can often experience throughout his period of denial and isolation. Miles believed that he no longer wanted to experience love after losing two extremely important individuals in his life, Rachel and Clayton, since the beauty of love is not worth the suffering that comes with losing a loved one. Miles felt that he did not want to feel love anymore. Miles decided not to love anyone anymore. The deliberate rejection is shown in this reference. His internal admission demonstrates how this defensive stance becomes more and more maintained.

Anger and Bargaining

After the denial phase, a person who is grieving typically moves on to the next stage. The second stage of grieving is usually anger. After realizing that this first phase is real and

factual, the suffering person will move into the anger phase. This phase makes one criticize God and question why the tragedy happened to them. God is unfair in their opinion, and this will lead them into a sense of discontent and bearing grudges. Furthermore, they will project negative emotions toward their surroundings, hatred toward everyone, and lose trust. The projection of anger can be pointed at family, surrounding people, friends, strangers, and even inanimate objects. They can also place the blame on their dying loved ones or the deceased (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019).

The third stage is bargaining. This stage comes after people succeed in managing the anger stage. People may feel remorseful and encourage themselves to change or negotiate with others, such as with people around them, their environments, and their deceased loved ones to return to their normal lives, their previous lives (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019).

Miles' grieving process is different from others' and reflects his character. Colleen Hoover may have used this pattern

from a narrative perspective to emphasize Miles' emotional struggle before he ultimately finds acceptance and to demonstrate how deeply his loss affected him. Miles Archer skips the stages of anger and bargaining and simply experiences the three stages of grief, which are denial, depression, and acceptance. His personality and the circumstances surrounding his loss help us understand this. Miles has a calm and emotionally reticent character. He suppresses his emotions instead of expressing them, which is why the anger stage of his grieving process remains hidden. Furthermore, he does not try to change what happened by bargaining or negotiating the faith. Rather, he blames himself and feels intense guilt, which causes him to go straight from denial to depression.

Depression: Self-Punishment as Grief Expression

Depression is identified as the fourth

stage in Kübler-Ross's stages of grief, where individuals often experience profound sadness, emotional numbness, and isolation. Kübler-Ross explains that people in this stage may experience disrupted sleep patterns, excessive crying, and feelings of hopelessness and may turn to substances like alcohol as a coping mechanism (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019). This stage allows individuals to confront the depth of their loss and experience the full weight of their emotions, often feeling overwhelmed and unable to engage in normal daily activities.

Miles's depression manifests as active self-punishment rather than passive sadness. He was abusing booze on the days of the painful remembrances and isolate himself from the environment. The story is showing how Tate found Miles unconscious on the influence of alcohol. Under the influence of alcohol, Miles called Rachel's name and apologized to her while crying loudly. The quotation below illustrates this.

"Miles?" He inhales a huge breath, slowly lifting his face to look at me. His eyes are mere slits and bloodshot red. I'm not sure if that's a result of the crying or the alcohol. "I'm so sorry, Rachel," he says, lifting a hand out toward me. He wraps it around the back of my neck and pulls me forward toward him, burying his face in the crevice between my neck and shoulder. "I'm so sorry." His eyes are so full of hurt when he drops to the pillow. "You hate me so much," he says as he grabs my hand. His eyes fall shut again, and he releases a heavy sigh. (*Ugly Love*. 2014, P. 16)
Tate, who witnessed Miles' condition, said, "Even though he's asleep, he somehow still looks as if he's in a world of pain." (*Ugly Love*. 2014, P. 16)

From the quotation above, this sentence shows that even though Tate doesn't know what happened to Miles in the past, the pain he feels can be seen. This instance shows the characteristics of depression that Miles feels.

Besides Tate, Miles' friend, Ian, wondered about Miles attitudes. Ian stated that Miles looks like zombie because he does not show any emotions about his feelings for six years. Ian likens Miles to a

zombie which means like a living corpse, which can also mean that physically Miles is alive but mentally Miles is dead. Because Miles is very self-contained and ignores his feelings. This is the impact of the depression phase that Miles went through. This description about Miles' self-punishment informs that his pain was moving on for years. He always kept on his suffering. Below is the statement of Ian about Miles condition.

"I'm tired of this, Miles. Six fucking years I've watched this zombie walk around in your place." (*Ugly Love*, 2014, P. 292)

This statement demonstrates the depth of his self-loathing emerges in his condition of pathological mourning. The confession;

"I didn't deserve happiness at all, because I'd take it away from the only two people I'd ever loved". (*Ugly Love*, 2014, P. 312).

This statement is showing how depression became both his atonement and prison.

Acceptance Through External Reconciliation

Acceptance is the final stage in Kübler-Ross's model of grief, characterized by the realization and acknowledgment of the loss. This stage is marked by a stable state of emotions, where individuals understand that they cannot change the reality of their loss, but they can continue living. Acceptance does not imply forgetting or ignoring the loss but rather making peace with it and moving forward (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019).

The journey for Miles to reach the acceptance stage was far from simple; it required significant time for him to forgive himself and come to terms with what had happened. Trapped in the stages of denial and depression for six years, Miles grew accustomed to living in isolation. He believed that by detaching himself emotionally, he could shield himself from the recurring pain of loss he had experienced in the past. Unknowingly, Miles suppressed not only his feelings of love but also his capacity for

happiness and sadness. As a result, no one truly understood how Miles felt.

The first person to witness Miles express his grief was Tate. As previously described during the depression stage, when Miles passed out in the hallway apartment because of the influence of alcohol, Tate was the one who found him and comforted him. This event is also the first time Miles meets Tate. This marked the moment when someone provided comfort to Miles as he released his sorrow. For someone like Miles, who had concealed his emotions for years, opening up to another person was immensely challenging. However, during a relapse triggered by his past, Tate remained

by his side. At that point, Miles started to develop feelings for Tate, but he needed time to become comfortable with the idea of being emotionally vulnerable with others.

During Miles' relationship with Tate, Tate grew frustrated with Miles' apparent inability to change. It became increasingly difficult for her to stay with someone who refused to share his feelings and open up about his life. Ultimately, Tate decided to leave him. Her departure left Miles in deep inner conflict, torn between wanting to stay with Tate and letting her go. This internal struggle persisted until Miles encountered Cap, a worker at his father's apartment complex, who offered him a pivotal piece of advice. The advice is:

"Miles", he says quietly. There's determination in his voice, like he needs me to take him seriously. I always do. "You believe you took away that girl's chance at happiness, and until you confront that past, you won't ever move forward. You're gonna be reliving that day every single day until the day you die, unless you go see for your own eyes that she's okay. Then maybe you'll see that it's okay for you to be happy, too." (Ugly Love, 2014, P. 296-297)

In this advice, Cap encourages Miles to visit Rachel to check on her well-being; if Rachel is doing well, then Miles deserves to feel happy and forgive himself. Since the accident happened to them together, no one asked for it; it was just an accident. Perhaps meeting Miles and Rachel can relieve the guilt that has burdened Miles for six years. Miles followed Cap's advice and went to Phoenix to meet Rachel, and it turned out

that Rachel was fine and even had her own little family.

When Miles finally gathers the courage to meet Rachel, he witnesses firsthand how she has been able to move forward with her life, as she is now married with a family. It is clear that Rachel, too, had a difficult time accepting what had happened, but for Miles, the situation was even more challenging. He lost a child and carried a profound sense of

guilt toward Rachel due to the accident. Miles directly apologizes to Rachel, and she forgives him. And finally, Miles can forgive himself too. Miles tells Rachel that he wants

He nods. "I want to love her so much, Rachel," he says, breathing out the words like they've been pent up forever. "I want that with her so much. I'm just scared the rest of it will never go away." "The pain will never go away, Miles. Ever. But if you let yourself love her, you'll only feel it sometimes, instead of allowing it to consume your entire life." (Ugly Love, 2014, P. 305)

In the sentence "I want to love her so much, Rachel," the "her" Miles is referring to is Tate. Miles really wants to love Tate, but

he is afraid of the past wounds he feels. Rachel's absolution: "The pain will never go away, Miles. Ever. But if you let yourself love her, you'll only feel it sometimes". (Ugly Love, 2014, P. 305)

This sentence provides the necessary external permission for self-forgiveness. Miles became convinced after Rachel said that Miles deserved to feel that love again; past wounds will never go away, and Miles should be able to live with the wounds instead of letting them consume him forever. This sentence made Miles accept the situation and forgive himself. Miles arrived at the acceptance phase. After seeing Rachel, Miles goes to see Tate to fix their relationship. Miles achieves acceptance only through interpersonal validation rather than internal resolution. The next instance occurs when Miles meets with Tate after he has received forgiveness from Rachel and, more importantly, has forgiven himself. At this point, Miles is determined to repair his relationship with Tate, seeking a chance to move forward and rebuild the emotional connection they had once shared.

I'm still trying to gather myself when the bathroom door opens and he walks back into the living room. I look up at him and can't look away. Something is different. He's different. The smile on his face... the peacefulness in his eyes... the way he carries himself like he's floating. It's only been two weeks, but he looks so different. (Ugly Love, 2014, P. 309). Tate observes the transformation, "Something is different. He's different...the peacefulness in his eyes" (Ugly Love, 2014, P. 309)

This sentence underscoring how acceptance came through connection rather than isolated insight, modifying Kübler-Ross's conception of this final stage. The data above is Tate's point of view seeing Miles after he has accepted his past wounds. He appears noticeably different than usual; he seems calmer and happier. He comes to Tate to tell his true feelings, that he loves Tate and wants to fix their relationship the way it should be. Miles tells Tate everything that happened in the past that made him the person he is.

Miles' experiences significantly transform the arrangement. The story's plot demonstrates how he drastically extended and intensified the remaining phases while utterly ignoring the rage and bargaining stages. The most notable example of this deviation occurrence in Miles' character development is his complete lack of visible anger after the tragic deaths of his mother from a protracted illness and his young son in a horrific accident. Given that rage is generally seen in psychological literature as a universal reaction to such severe losses, this discovery is especially noteworthy (Kübler-Ross 1969, 1973; Siegler 2019). The fact that he passed by the whole bargaining process is also remarkable. Rather, Miles transformed himself right away, becoming a responsible individual. He goes straight from denial to

more severe, self-destructive depression as a result of it.

The temporal dimension of Miles' grief emerged as another critical discovery, with the analysis documenting an extraordinarily protracted six-year period during which he remained entrenched in alternating states of denial and depression. This extended duration far exceeds both clinical expectations for normal grief resolution and typical literary portrayals of mourning periods. A close look at the text showed that this long-lasting pain showed up through a web of unhealthy thoughts and behaviors: ongoing emotional numbness, avoiding close relationships, isolating himself emotionally, and repeated drinking problems linked to traumatic remembrances. Particularly revealing was Miles' construction of elaborate psychological defenses against emotional connection, most painfully evident in his tortured relationship with Tate Collins, where he maintains intense physical intimacy while vehemently denying and suppressing any emotional attachment, creating a destructive paradox that forms the novel's central conflict.

The precise mechanism of Miles' eventual change to acceptance is arguably the most clinically relevant finding. Contrary to the internal, self-directed acceptance process described in traditional grief models,

Miles' psychological breakthrough required distinct external catalysts operating in sequence: first, the unsolicited but crucial intervention of Cap, who serves as a wise mentor figure voicing the novel's thematic insights; and second, the emotionally charged face-to-face reconciliation with Rachel that provides the necessary external validation of his worthiness for forgiveness. This aspect of healing shows that for people dealing with grief mixed with deep guilt and self-blame—especially when they feel responsible for the loss—getting forgiveness from others might be necessary before they can forgive themselves. In order to demonstrate literature's exceptional ability to portray intricate psychological processes that clinical models frequently oversimplify; the story painstakingly follows how Miles is ultimately able to start letting go of his own self-condemnation after witnessing Rachel's ability to forgive and move on with her life.

Discussion

These complex findings in this research demonstrates how literature could be a media of psychoanalysis, creating chances to connect different fields and question established ideas. When we look at grief research as a whole and compare it to other stories about loss, Miles Archer's experience

raises important questions about whether stages theory of grief can be applied to everyone and how different culture's view mourning, which need to be carefully considered.

The complete absence of anger and bargaining stages in Miles' grief trajectory presents a substantial challenge to traditional sequential models of bereavement, inviting us to reconsider the applicability of stage theories to cases of traumatic, guilt-laden loss. This deviation aligns with contemporary critiques of stage theories as being overly rigid and prescriptive (Stroebe, Schut, and Boerner 2017), while simultaneously reflecting gender-specific patterns in emotional expression that have gained increasing recognition in thanatological research. Miles' consistent internalization of pain rather than outward rage corresponds with studies suggesting men frequently manifest grief through action (or purposeful inaction) rather than emotional displays, with his complete suppression of anger potentially representing an extreme example of masculine grief expression shaped by cultural expectations. The complete absence of bargaining may be linked to the unexpected and violent way his son died, research shows that people are less likely to bargain when dealing with accidental deaths than with

expected losses from illness, indicating that how a loss happens can greatly affect how someone grieves, which stage models do not fully consider.

The extraordinary six-year duration of Miles' active grief process provides compelling material for discussing contemporary understandings of complicated grief and its narrative representations. This long period is much longer than what is usually considered normal for grieving and what we see in stories, indicating that popular books (like *Ugly Love*) might explore feelings that do not fit typical diagnoses. Miles' cases clearly show how strong feelings of self-blame can create a never-ending cycle of grief that does not resolve on its own, supporting recent research on prolonged grief disorder (Prigerson et al. 2021) and highlighting how literature can explore deep psychological issues.

The important part that making peace with other characters in helping Miles accept his loss shows that traditional grief models might not fully consider how social connections help with healing, especially when guilt is involved in grief. This finding is especially important for therapy, suggesting that for some complicated grief cases, helping people reconcile with others might work better than just focusing on their own thoughts and feelings.

Comparative analysis with other significant literary grief narratives reveals how Miles' experiences both converges with and diverges from established patterns, enriching our understanding of how fiction engages with psychological phenomena. His trajectory contrasts sharply with Naomi's pronounced anger in Sin's (2022) analysis of *the Book of Ruth*, while Lewis's methodical progression through all stages in Nurjanah's examination of *A Grief Observed* (2023). Also, showing intriguing parallels with the frozen grief depicted in Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* (Didion 2005). These differences highlight how the way people show grief is deeply influenced by a mix of their personality, cultural background, and the story's goals, indicating that literary works can express emotional complexities that go beyond what psychological models can explain. Miles' journey is similar to how survivor's guilt is shown in trauma stories, where people often punish themselves instead of showing normal signs of grief, highlighting a unique type of stories about loss that deserve their own analysis.

As a work of popular romance fiction, *Ugly Love* ultimately provides narrative closure through Miles' healing and new relationship—a resolution that may privilege literary satisfaction over strict psychological

verisimilitude. This tension between narrative conventions and authentic emotional representation warrants systematic investigation across multiple genres, as it likely affects how readers understand and process grief through literature. The novel's eventual happy ending serves important psychological functions for readers by offering hope and modelling recovery, which suggests that literary representations of grief can be beneficial.

Ultimately, this study exemplifies how the reciprocal value of bringing psychological frameworks to literary analysis while allowing literary texts to interrogate, challenge, and expand those frameworks. Miles Archer's complex grief journey offers both a psychologically nuanced character study and a compelling case for re-examining established theories. His experience reminds us that grief, whether in life or literature, resists simplistic categorization, following instead the intricate pathways shaped by individual psychology, social context, cultural expectations, and the irreducible uniqueness of human suffering.

The research highlights how literature can uniquely show the complexity of grief, helping us understand this common yet deeply personal experience better, and suggests that ongoing conversations

between literary studies and psychology could be beneficial for both fields. By attending carefully to how complex works of fiction like *Ugly Love* represent psychological phenomena, we gain not only deeper appreciation for literary art but also potentially valuable insights into the human condition that could inform therapeutic practice and psychological research.

Conclusion

This study has addressed its research purpose by demonstrating how Colleen Hoover's *Ugly Love* presents an innovative literary case study of non-linear grief progression, challenging conventional psychological models through its portrayal of Miles Archer's truncated grieving process. The novel shows a different kind of grief that does not follow the usual stages of anger and bargaining, instead focusing more on denial and depression, which offers new ideas for both literary trauma studies and how we understand unusual grief patterns. By showing that Miles' acceptance comes more from repairing his relationships with others than from dealing with his feelings alone, the research introduces a new idea to grief theory, highlighting the importance of including support from others in therapy for those dealing with trauma-related loss. The

study establishes fiction's capacity to document psychological phenomena that challenge clinical models, providing valuable case material for understanding how guilt and self-perception can fundamentally reshape the grieving process.

These findings open up new chances for research that combines literary analysis and clinical psychology, especially in understanding how men and women express grief differently and how stories can help heal trauma. Through this lens, researchers can explore how different narratives—whether found in literature or personal stories—can teach us about the complexities of grief and recovery. By examining these narratives, we can better understand the diverse ways individuals experience and express their pain, ultimately guiding therapeutic practices that honor these unique journeys.

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