



UNIVERSIDAD INTERNACIONAL DE LAS AMÉRICAS

FACULTAD DE INGLÉS

**TRABAJO FINAL DE GRADUACIÓN PARA OPTAR POR EL GRADO DE
BACHILLERATO EN INGLÉS CON ÉNFASIS EN TRADUCCIÓN**

Título de la investigación:

A New Historicist Analysis of Domestic Abuse and Social Awareness in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*

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May, 2026

Acknowledgements

I want to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor, Ms. Catalina Guerrero Troyo. She was a key part of this thesis. She is an incredible professor and professional who demonstrated responsibility, patience, and dedication, providing invaluable guidance throughout the entire process.

I would also like to thank the professors who accompanied me throughout these past three years. Most of them played an important role in my academic formation, but I would especially like to mention those who truly made a difference in my journey: Katia Jiménez Abarca, Carlos Zeledón, Yenori Edwards, María José Braddick, and Lawrence Vega.

Finally, I would like to thank my classmates, who were very important during this stage of my life and shared many meaningful learning experiences with me.

Dedication

First of all, I want to thank God for the opportunity He gave me. He has helped me in many moments of my life. Besides, I would like to thank my mom, Amalia Virginia Corrales García. She made it possible for me to study this career and to become a professional today. Thank you so much for being my greatest support in this life.

I want to thank my dad, Dennis Abarca Martinez, for always being the one who needed something from the university and was always there, for always instilling in me the importance of education in my life and how important it has been; my aunt, Isabel Corrales García, for being another huge support in this process; and finally, my boyfriend, Oliver Brenes Alfaro, for being so patient and present during my university years. I want to thank my friends and family who have always been there for me in one way or another.

Abstract

This research analyzes the representation of domestic abuse and social awareness in *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover through a New Historicist perspective. The main research question guiding this study is: How does the novel represent domestic abuse as a cultural discourse, and how does it contribute to social awareness within contemporary society? The participants of this study are the fictional characters of the novel, particularly Lily Bloom, Ryle Kincaid, and Atlas Corrigan, whose experiences reflect patterns of abuse, resilience, and empowerment.

The study follows a qualitative and descriptive research design, applying New Historicism and Feminist Literary Theory as analytical frameworks. Data were collected through textual analysis of the novel, supported by academic sources related to gender violence and cultural studies.

The findings reveal that Hoover's novel not only portrays the psychological and physical dimensions of domestic abuse but also challenges romanticized narratives that normalize violence. The character development illustrates the tension between love and harm, highlighting the cultural pressures that silence victims.

In conclusion, *It Ends with Us* functions as both a literary text and a cultural intervention that promotes awareness, empathy, and resistance. Through Lily's decision to break the cycle of abuse, the novel contributes to contemporary conversations about gender equality and social transformation.

Resumen

La presente investigación analiza la representación del abuso doméstico y la conciencia social en *It Ends with Us*, de Colleen Hoover, desde una perspectiva neo-historicista. La pregunta central que guía el estudio es: ¿Cómo representa la novela el abuso doméstico como un discurso cultural y cómo contribuye a la conciencia social en la sociedad contemporánea? Los participantes de esta investigación son los personajes ficticios de la novela, en especial Lily Bloom, Ryle Kincaid y Atlas Corrigan, cuyas experiencias reflejan patrones de abuso, resiliencia y empoderamiento.

El estudio sigue un enfoque cualitativo y un diseño descriptivo, aplicando el Nuevo Historicismo y la Teoría Literaria Feminista como marcos teóricos. La recolección de datos se realizó mediante el análisis textual de la novela, respaldado en fuentes académicas sobre violencia de género y estudios culturales.

Los hallazgos revelan que la obra no sólo representa las dimensiones psicológicas y físicas del abuso doméstico, sino que también cuestiona las narrativas románticas que normalizan la violencia. El desarrollo de los personajes evidencia la tensión entre amor y daño, destacando las presiones culturales que silencian a las víctimas.

En conclusión, *It Ends with Us* funciona como texto literario y como intervención cultural que promueve conciencia, empatía y resistencia, contribuyendo a las conversaciones contemporáneas sobre igualdad de género y transformación social.

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Chapter I

Introductory Framework

New Historicism situates literary works within their cultural and historical contexts, emphasizing how texts both reflect and shape power relations. Literature, from this perspective, is not isolated from history but actively participates in social discourses. This approach is particularly useful for analyzing Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016), a novel that addresses intimate partner violence while engaging with contemporary cultural narratives surrounding gender, trauma, and resilience.

The relationships portrayed in the novel illustrate how social norms and expectations influence Lily Bloom's experience of domestic abuse. Her internal conflict between staying with Ryle or leaving him reflects not only personal emotions, but also broader cultural ideals related to love, forgiveness, and family. Hoover highlights how fear of judgment, emotional dependence, and social pressure shape Lily's decisions, demonstrating how ideology influences individual behavior in contexts of violence.

Furthermore, the novel operates as a site of resistance, challenging traditional romantic narratives that often idealize male dominance and female endurance. By portraying Lily's decision to leave Ryle, Hoover constructs a counter-narrative that emphasizes autonomy, self-preservation, and social responsibility. In this sense, *It Ends with Us* aligns with New Historicist thought, which recognizes literature as a space where dominant discourses may be questioned and alternative voices can emerge.

1.1 Problem Statement

Domestic violence remains a serious global issue that affects millions of women despite growing awareness and prevention efforts. According to the World Health Organization (2024), approximately one in three women worldwide has experienced physical and/or sexual violence

by an intimate partner. These statistics demonstrate the persistence and magnitude of the problem.

Literature has the potential to function as a powerful tool for social reflection and awareness. Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* presents a contemporary portrayal of domestic abuse, exposing the emotional, psychological, and generational struggles faced by survivors. The novel draws attention to the difficulty of breaking cycles of violence and challenges the cultural silence that often surrounds abusive relationships. However, while much research on domestic violence focuses on sociological or psychological perspectives, fewer studies explore how contemporary literary texts contribute to shaping public understanding and social awareness of this issue. This reveals a gap between literary analysis and real-world social concerns.

This research seeks to address that gap by analyzing *It Ends with Us* from a New Historicist perspective, linking the fictional narrative to broader cultural discourses on domestic abuse. In doing so, the study highlights literature's potential to foster critical reflection, empathy, and social consciousness.

1.2 Objectives

1.2.1 General Objective

To analyze the representation of domestic abuse and its cultural implications in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* through the lens of New Historicism

1.2.2 Specific Objectives

- a. To examine the development of key characters in relation to experiences of abuse and resilience
- b. To apply New Historicist concepts to interpret the decisions and social commentary in the novel
- c. To evaluate the historical events that contextualize the narrative of *It Ends with Us*

1.3 Antecedents

The first significant antecedent is that of Lima and Xavier (2023), who examine Ryle's character as a psychological concept that embodies the contradiction of abusive partners who both possess charm and violence. Their research examines how Hoover complicates the figure of the "villain" by portraying Ryle as a deeply human yet profoundly destructive individual. From New Historicism, this study is especially pertinent as it draws attention to how cultural stories have traditionally romanticized bad habits under the guise of passion, masculinity, or profound love. In the case of *It Ends with Us*, this insight is particularly important, as the book is often advertised and read as a "romantic" book, when in fact, its narrative deconstructs romanticized notions of toxic love.

Moreover, Lima and Xavier (2023) stress that such depictions run the danger of normalizing abuse since readers could misinterpret passion with violence or see control as a kind of love. Hoover counters this, though, by eventually deconstructing the myth of perfect violence. Hoover shows how abusive behavior is frequently buried behind socially respected identities by depicting Ryle's duality—the compassionate doctor on one hand and the abusive partner on the other. This literary strategy not only undermines the conventional image of the romantic antihero but also places the book within current debates on gender-based violence.

Hoover's story also shows how it is by positioning Ryle within both the literary tradition of the romantic antihero and the cultural reality of domestic violence that society can end up. *Ends with Us* negotiates the line between criticism and representation. This conflict between the romantic and the violent is not only a literary device but also a means of cultural commentary supporting the book's purpose. for social awareness enhancement. Readers are encouraged to see how little warning signals in a relationship—frequently neglected or rationalized—can turn into harmful cycles of abuse. This method of the book's handling of Ryle's character not only questions conventional romantic clichés but also aligns with broader social initiatives to dismantle toxic cultural narratives, helping to advance healthier relationship paradigms.

The second antecedent is that of Angelina Tasya (2023), who explores the representation of domestic abuse in *It Ends with Us* through a thesis that highlights Lily's journey as

emblematic of the lived experiences of survivors of intimate partner violence. Tasya argues that Hoover dramatizes the psychological struggles victims face, particularly the complexity of breaking free from abusive relationships due to conflicting emotions of love, fear, and social pressure. This includes the pervasive fear of judgment—what others will say—if women decide to separate from violent partners, an aspect that reflects deeply ingrained cultural expectations about female endurance and loyalty.

From a New Historicist perspective, Tasya's conclusions can be read as evidence of the text's dialogue with contemporary feminist movements and public campaigns such as #MeToo, which have amplified the voices of survivors and demanded accountability for systemic gender violence. By framing Lily's narrative not only as a personal struggle but also as part of a collective experience, Hoover challenges the cultural silences that have historically minimized or dismissed domestic abuse. Tasya's study underscores how the novel transforms an individual's private suffering into a public platform for awareness and reflection.

Importantly, this thesis also demonstrates the potential of fiction to act as a catalyst for social change by encouraging readers to critically evaluate cultural scripts that normalize male dominance and female subservience. In this sense, Hoover's novel functions as both literature and social commentary: it uses the conventions of popular fiction to engage with urgent social debates about women's autonomy, survival, and empowerment. Angelina Tasya's (2023) contribution enriches the academic and cultural discussion by linking Lily's fictional experiences to current conversations about gender-based violence, thereby reinforcing the social awareness objective of the present research. In doing so, it situates *It Ends with Us* as a text that not only narrates abuse but also advocates for recognition, resilience, and the hope that future generations can escape cycles of violence.

The third antecedent, Rundqvist (2020), approaches Hoover's novel through the themes of trauma and gender violence, framing Lily's experiences as part of a broader cultural struggle to articulate women's suffering. The thesis highlights how Hoover breaks the silence surrounding domestic abuse by weaving Lily's trauma into a narrative of empowerment. The perspective of new historicism is particularly relevant here, as it recognizes how the text relates to contemporary social movements that have brought women's rights and mental health to the forefront. Rundqvist

(2020) emphasizes that Hoover's narrative not only describes trauma but also serves an educational purpose, encouraging readers to empathize with survivors and reflect on the social structures that perpetuate abuse. The study highlights the transformative potential of literature as a means of raising awareness in society, which fits perfectly with the aim of this research to situate *It Ends with Us* in the cultural and historical contexts of the discourse on domestic abuse, as it not only emphasizes the victims but also sensitizes the audience to women who have experienced domestic violence. Furthermore, it is essential to acknowledge the profound impact that literature has on many lives.

The contribution of Rundqvist's study aligns seamlessly with the objectives of the present research. By framing Lily's story not only as an individual testimony but also as part of a collective cultural dialogue. It demonstrates how *It Ends with Us* resonates with broader historical and social contexts of domestic abuse. Moreover, this perspective underscores the power of literature to sensitize audiences and inspire social change, highlighting the profound impact that narratives like Hoover's can have on the lives of readers—particularly women who have endured or continue to endure similar forms of violence. In this sense, the novel becomes both a mirror of trauma and a beacon of empowerment, amplifying the voices of survivors and contributing to the urgent project of social awareness.

The fourth and penultimate precedent, Dwiastuti and Yamin (2020) shift attention away from the central narrative toward the secondary characters who shape Lily's experiences. Their analysis demonstrates that people such as Atlas and Lily's mother are not merely secondary figures, but symbolic agents of resistance and support who help dismantle the cycle of abuse. From a neo-historicist perspective, these secondary characters can be interpreted as cultural voices within the text that reflect the evolution of social attitudes toward domestic violence. For example, Atlas embodies alternative models of masculinity based on empathy, which contrasts sharply with Ryle's destructive behavior. Lily can compare two types of men, one aggressive and the other empathetic toward her. This juxtaposition reflects broader cultural tensions between toxic masculinity and progressive conceptions of gender equality. By highlighting how secondary characters embody cultural counter-narratives, Dwiastuti and Yamin (2020) reveal how literature contributes to discursive changes that encourage readers to question normalized patterns of abuse.

Their study extends the analysis beyond the protagonist and demonstrates how narrative layers enrich the novel's commitment to social consciousness. By emphasizing secondary characters, these types of characters often reveal the social and cultural issues that the protagonist fails to address. Their study extends the analysis beyond the protagonist and demonstrates how narrative layers enrich the novel's engagement with social consciousness. By emphasizing secondary characters, who are often not as important. This novel, "*It Ends with Us*," has great relevance in Lily's life.

The fifth and final antecedent, Laya (2024), examines *It Ends with Us* from the perspective of domestic violence, placing the novel in the context of contemporary debates about intimate partner abuse. The study highlights how Colleen Hoover uses Lily Bloom's narrative to dismantle the cycle of violence, portraying the complexities survivors face when love intersects with harm, as many women stay in toxic and violent relationships because of the love that once existed and hope that their partner will change. This is the worst mistake they can make.

New historicism provides a valuable framework for interpreting this work, as it situates Lily's struggles not only as fictional constructs, but as a reflection of broader social conversations about gender power dynamics, victim blaming, and the normalization of abuse, as Lily had her father, who was her mother's abuser, now her ex-partner Ryle is also an abuser in her life; likewise, when Lily's daughter is born, she decides to break the barrier that her mother and she had. By integrating Lily's personal trauma into a historical moment of growing global awareness of domestic abuse, Hoover's novel reflects and contributes to changing cultural discourses.

This aligns with the new historicism assertion that literature is not isolated but part of ongoing cultural negotiations, i.e., current events and new generations. Laya's (2024) analysis highlights how the text functions both as art and social commentary, serving to raise awareness about domestic violence and its widespread impact on many women.

1.4 Justification

This research is academically justified by the relevance of analyzing Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* (2016) from the perspective of New Historicism, with a focus on domestic abuse and social awareness. Literature is not only a means of aesthetic expression but also a reflection

of the historical, cultural, and ideological circumstances in which it is produced. New Historicism emphasizes the relationship between texts and their sociocultural context, allowing for a deeper understanding of how contemporary narratives—such as Hoover’s novel—represent and challenge persistent social problems.

By applying this theoretical lens, the study contributes to literary criticism by showing how fiction engages with pressing social realities. *It Ends with Us* is particularly significant because it situates the protagonist’s experiences of domestic violence within broader discourses on gender inequality, silence, and cultural normalization of abuse. Thus, the research enriches academic discussions by connecting textual analysis with contemporary debates about power, gender roles, and resistance.

This study is also justified socially because Hoover’s novel has had a tangible impact on its readers, particularly women who identified abusive behaviors in their own relationships through the story. Many testimonies highlight that the novel encouraged readers to leave toxic relationships, demonstrating its role in fostering awareness and empowerment. The narrative not only depicts the destructive effects of abuse but also underscores the importance of support systems, such as family and friends, in helping victims overcome traumatic circumstances. By addressing these realities in an accessible and emotionally compelling way, the novel helps to break the silence surrounding domestic violence. It aligns with broader social efforts to promote awareness, dialogue, and prevention.

Finally, this research is culturally justified because *It Ends with Us* has become a widely read and culturally influential text among young and adult audiences. Its popularity demonstrates literature’s ability to shape cultural conversations by raising awareness of cycles of violence and encouraging reflection on how relationships are portrayed in society.

The novel highlights characters who embody different models of violence and resilience, such as Lily’s father and Ryle, helping readers identify warning signs of abuse that might otherwise be normalized in cultural narratives of romance or passion. In this way, Hoover’s work reveals the power of literature to transform cultural scripts, challenge harmful ideals, and inspire healthier relationship models.

1.5 Scope

This study applies a Neo-historicist framework to analyze how Colleen Hoover's novel *It Ends with Us* addresses the reality of domestic abuse and the growing social awareness surrounding this issue. New historicism emphasizes the interrelationship between literature and its historical, cultural, and social contexts (Greenblatt, 1981). In this sense, the novel is examined not only as a personal narrative but also as a cultural artifact that reflects broader conversations about gender, power, and resistance in contemporary society.

The scope of this research includes an exploration of how Hoover's representation of domestic violence reflects historical patterns of silencing and marginalizing women's voices over the years. The study considers how Lily's experiences parallel the generational cycle of abuse faced by many women and how these representations resonate in current debates about feminism and gender justice. By situating the novel in its socio-historical context, the analysis highlights how literature reflects and influences cultural understandings of abuse, with many women identifying with Lily. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 1 in 3 women—approximately 30%—have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by an intimate partner or non-partner sexual violence or both in their lifetime.

The analysis also explores how *It Ends with Us* interacts with contemporary feminist movements and public campaigns against domestic violence. By linking Lily's personal resistance to broader cultural shifts, the novel highlights the interconnection of individual narratives and collective struggles. This perspective demonstrates how literature contributes to cultural transformation by inviting readers to critically reflect on issues of power, agency, and identity.

Finally, this scope acknowledges the study's limitations. The analysis focuses primarily on Feminist and Neo-historicist approaches. Nevertheless, the chosen frameworks provide a solid foundation for understanding the novel's engagement with social realities. Ultimately, this study aims to demonstrate that *It Ends with Us* functions not only as a personal story of survival, but also as a culturally significant text that contributes to the ongoing dialogue about domestic violence and gender equality, analyzing the emphasis on survival, barriers, social awareness,

feminism, and female empowerment for all women who have experienced domestic violence or abuse

Chapter II

Theoretical Framework

This chapter provides the theoretical foundation for the present study. It introduces the critical perspectives and concepts that guide the analysis of the chosen literary text. The discussion begins with Feminist Literary Theory, highlighting its relevance in examining issues of gender, autonomy, and power dynamics. It then explores the themes of autonomy, identity, and resistance, which are central to understanding the characters and their struggles. The section on character analysis offers insight into how individual experiences reflect broader social and cultural issues.

Additionally, the chapter presents New Historicism as a theoretical approach and lens, emphasizing the relationship between literature and its historical context, as well as how cultural forces shape both the text and its interpretation. Together, these frameworks create a solid basis for the critical analysis developed in subsequent chapters. Finally, the literary analysis of the book *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover. This literary analysis includes the plot, background, setting, theme, morale, symbols, motifs, and cinematography.

2.1 Feminist Literary Theory

Feminist literary theory offers a framework for analyzing *It Ends with Us* as a text that exposes gender inequality and domestic violence within patriarchal structures. Literature, from this perspective, functions as a cultural space where power relations, oppression, and resistance are negotiated (Tong, 2009). Through Lily Bloom's relationship with Ryle, the novel reveals how romantic ideals can conceal patterns of control and abuse normalized by society.

Lily's decision to leave her husband represents a central feminist act of autonomy and self-determination. Despite emotional and social pressures associated with marriage and motherhood, she prioritizes safety and dignity over conformity. This choice reflects feminist concerns with women's agency and the rejection of roles that demand female sacrifice in violent relationships.

The novel also highlights how social pressure sustains cycles of abuse by silencing women and privileging family unity over well-being. By centering Lily's resistance, *It Ends with Us* demonstrates how feminist literary theory connects personal trauma with broader social structures, emphasizing autonomy, awareness, and resistance as essential responses to patriarchal violence (Tong, 2009).

2.1.1 Social Pressure

The novel portrays social pressure as a key factor that discourages women from leaving abusive relationships. Cultural expectations often prioritize family unity and endurance over women's well-being, stigmatizing those who choose independence. Lily's internal conflict as a new mother reflects this tension between protecting her child and conforming to societal norms. From a feminist perspective, these pressures contribute to the normalization of abuse and the silencing of women's suffering.

2.1.2 Resistance against Patriarchal Norms

Despite these pressures, Lily embodies resistance by refusing to remain in an abusive relationship. Her decision to separate represents a rejection of patriarchal norms that demand female tolerance of violence for the sake of stability. Feminist literary theory emphasizes women's agency within oppressive systems, and Lily's choice exemplifies this principle. By reclaiming control over her life, she establishes a model of empowerment that challenges gender inequality and interrupts the cycle of abuse (Tong, 2009).

2.1.3 Themes of Autonomy, Identity, and Resistance

Themes are the central ideas a literary work develops to express deeper meanings about human experience and society. In *It Ends with Us*, Colleen Hoover addresses themes related to cultural and personal oppression, particularly in the context of domestic abuse. The themes of **autonomy, identity, and resistance** convey the novel's main feminist message by showing how women confront and challenge patriarchal control. As Showalter (1986) explains, feminist criticism seeks to reveal how literature represents women's lived experiences and their responses to male dominance, a perspective that aligns closely with Hoover's narrative.

The theme of **autonomy** is reflected in Lily Bloom's decision to end the cycle of violence despite the personal sacrifice it requires. By leaving Ryle, she asserts her right to self-determination and protects both herself and her daughter. Feminist criticism emphasizes autonomy as a key aspect of female agency, particularly in contexts where women are socially pressured to remain in abusive relationships. Lily's choice to break the generational cycle of abuse highlights autonomy as both a personal and political act.

The themes of **identity** and **resistance** further reinforce the novel's feminist perspective. Lily refuses to be defined solely as a victim and reconstructs her identity as a survivor, challenging patriarchal narratives that portray women as passive. As Gilbert and Gubar (2000) argue, women-centered narratives allow for the reconstruction of female identity. Additionally, Hoover presents resistance by refusing to romanticize abuse, confronting the cultural silence surrounding domestic violence. Lily's rejection of violence becomes an act of resistance that redefines her story and challenges oppressive social norms.

2.2 New Historicism as a Theoretical Framework

New Historicism is a critical approach that examines literary texts in close relationship with the historical, social, and cultural contexts in which they are produced. Rather than viewing literature as isolated from reality, New Historicism understands literary works as cultural artifacts that both reflect and shape social discourses, power relations, and ideological structures. This perspective emphasizes that literature is embedded within networks of history, politics, and everyday practices (Greenblatt, 1988).

Stephen Greenblatt, one of the principal theorists of New Historicism, argues that literary texts are not passive reflections of historical events, but active participants in the circulation of social meanings. Texts engage with dominant ideologies while also creating spaces for negotiation, resistance, and alternative representations (Greenblatt, 2005). As a result, New Historicism focuses on how literature interacts with non-literary texts, such as social practices, institutional discourses, and cultural beliefs.

This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to the analysis of *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover, as the novel addresses contemporary social issues related to domestic violence, gender inequality, and emotional dependency. Through a New Historicist lens, the narrative can be interpreted not only as a personal story of love and survival, but also as a cultural text that reflects modern discourses on romance, family, trauma, and female identity.

Applying New Historicism allows this research to explore how Lily Bloom's experiences are shaped by cultural expectations surrounding love, forgiveness, and endurance. The novel reveals how ideological narratives about relationships may normalize abusive behavior and silence women's suffering. At the same time, Hoover's text functions as a site of resistance by challenging traditional romantic ideals and emphasizing the necessity of breaking cycles of violence. Therefore, New Historicism provides the principal analytical lens for this study, enabling a critical examination of the connections between literature, power, and social reality. Through this approach, *It Ends with Us* is analyzed as both a literary work and a cultural intervention that contributes to contemporary awareness of domestic abuse.

2.3 Character Analysis

2.3.1 Main characters serve as vehicles for social critique and personal empowerment.

2.3.1.1 *Lily Bloom (protagonist)*.

Physically, Lily is described as a young woman with red hair and fair features, which make her stand out and become part of her unique identity. Her physical presence often reflects both her vulnerability and her inner strength. Psychologically, Lily is resilient, empathetic, and determined. Despite her painful childhood marked by witnessing her father abuse her mother, she develops a strong will to build a different future. Her character embodies the struggle of many women who confront cycles of abuse. The most important point about Lily is her decision to end the relationship with Ryle, which demonstrates her self-determination. She grows into a symbol of empowerment, showing that breaking away from violence, though painful, is possible.

2.3.1.2 Ryle Kincaid (*Lily's ex-partner*).

Physically, Ryle is portrayed as tall, handsome, and successful, working as a skilled neurosurgeon. His charm and attractiveness initially captivated Lily and the people around him. Psychologically, however, he is complex and contradictory. On the surface, he is charismatic, ambitious, and affectionate, but underneath, he struggles with deep-seated anger and controlling behaviors. This duality creates a paradox: he is both the loving partner and the abuser. His unpredictability keeps Lily emotionally conflicted, which reflects the reality many victims face when trying to reconcile love with violence. Ryle's character highlights the hidden danger behind the mask of success and charm.

2.3.1.3 Atlas Corrigan (*Lily's teenage love*).

Atlas is physically presented as a kind and humble young man, first introduced in the story as a homeless teenager whom Lily helps. Later, as an adult, he is a chef and has his own restaurant, and he becomes strong, independent, and reliable. His psychological traits are rooted in empathy, gratitude, and respect. Having experienced hardship himself, Atlas values safety, kindness, and stability. He stands in stark contrast to Ryle by embodying love that nurtures rather than harms. The main point about Atlas is that he represents an alternative model of masculinity, one that does not rely on dominance but on mutual care. His presence reminds Lily of what healthy love can look like and supports her journey toward healing.

2.3.2 Secondary characters represent a strong link between her and her life in terms of resilience, trauma, and support.

2.3.2.1 Jenny Bloom (*Lily's Mother*).

Jenny is physically described as a worn and tired woman, marked by years of enduring her husband's abuse. Psychologically, she carries trauma and silence, but also quiet strength. At first, she appears as someone who has accepted her suffering, but later she surprises Lily with her support. The main point about Jenny is that she embodies both the cycle of generational abuse and the possibility of breaking it, as she encourages Lily to make choices different from her own.

2.3.2.2 Andrew Bloom (Lily's Father).

Physically, Andrew is a strong and imposing man whose presence inspires fear rather than love. Psychologically, he is authoritarian, violent, and emotionally detached. His abusive behavior toward Jenny deeply shapes Lily's childhood, leaving her with a complex view of love and relationships.

2.3.2.3 Alyssa Kincaid (Lily's best friend and her sister-in-law).

Alyssa is portrayed physically as warm, approachable, and stylish. She is friendly and immediately becomes a supportive presence in Lily's life. Psychologically, Alyssa is loyal, honest, and protective. Unlike many around Lily, she does not hide the truth about Ryle's behavior and encourages Lily to see reality clearly. Alyssa's role shows the importance of female friendship and honesty in giving strength to those experiencing abuse.

2.3.2.4 Marshall (Alyssa's husband).

Physically playful and humorous, often bringing lightness into tense situations. Psychologically, he is caring, respectful, and affectionate toward Alyssa. Their marriage provides a striking contrast to Lily and Ryle's relationship. The key point about Marshall is that he shows what healthy love looks like: a partnership based on equality, safety, and joy. His relationship with Alyssa gives Lily a concrete example of the love she deserves.

2.3.2.5 Emerson Kincaid (Lily's and Ryle's daughter).

Affectionately called *Emmy*, is the daughter of Lily Bloom and Ryle Kincaid. Though she is a baby in the novel, her presence carries powerful symbolic and thematic weight. She represents both Lily's greatest fear and her greatest hope: the continuation of a cycle of abuse or the chance to finally break free from it.

2.4 Literary Analysis

2.4.1 Plot

The plot of *It Ends with Us* centers on Lily Bloom's journey of self-discovery, love, and resilience in the face of trauma. At the beginning, Lily attends her father's funeral in Maine, reflecting on her complicated feelings about his abusive behavior toward her mother. After the funeral, she moves to Boston to pursue her dream of opening her own flower shop, symbolizing a new beginning. In Boston, she meets Ryle Kincaid, a successful and confident neurosurgeon. Their attraction quickly develops into a romantic relationship, and at first, Ryle appears to be perfect: intelligent, ambitious, and supportive. However, as the relationship deepens, Ryle's darker side begins to emerge. He is prone to anger, control, and eventually physical abuse. Lily suffers domestic abuse from her husband, Ryle.

Parallel to this relationship is Lily's reconnection with Atlas Corrigan, her teenage love. In her youth, Lily secretly helped Atlas when he was homeless, offering him food, shelter, and kindness. Their bond was profound, though interrupted by life circumstances. When Atlas reappears in Lily's adult life, he represents a reminder of safety, care, and a healthier kind of love, a healthy love.

The story escalates when Lily becomes pregnant with Ryle's child. The conflict becomes more intense as Lily must choose between staying in an abusive marriage or breaking the cycle to protect her daughter. The climax arrives when Lily decides to end her relationship with Ryle, despite his pleas and her lingering love. The resolution comes with the birth of her daughter, Emerson, whom Lily names to represent hope and a new beginning. The ending emphasizes her strength as she tells Ryle, "It ends with us," declaring her commitment to stop the generational cycle of abuse.

2.4.2 Background

2.4.2.1 Social Context

It Ends with Us highlights critical social issues, particularly domestic violence, gender roles, and the societal pressures that often trap victims in abusive relationships. Lily Bloom's experiences reflect the challenges faced by women in contemporary society who are expected to balance love, loyalty, and personal safety. Ryle, a respected neurosurgeon, appears successful and socially admired, demonstrating how abusers can maintain a positive social image while committing acts of violence behind closed doors.

The novel also sheds light on the social stigma surrounding victims of abuse. Many survivors feel ashamed, isolated, or judged, especially when leaving a relationship is viewed as failing to uphold family or societal expectations. Lily's decision to leave Ryle challenges these norms, showing the courage it takes to prioritize safety and personal well-being over societal approval. Additionally, the character of Atlas Corrigan brings attention to social inequality. As a homeless teenager, Atlas represents marginalized populations who often face systemic neglect. Lily's support of Atlas demonstrates the impact of compassion and social responsibility, reinforcing the book's broader social message: empathy, care, and intervention can alter life trajectories.

2.4.2.2 Historical context

Historically, the novel reflects the growing awareness of domestic abuse and women's rights in the 21st century. Published in 2016, *It Ends with Us* emerged during a time when conversations about abuse, gender inequality, and empowerment were increasingly prominent, setting the stage for movements like #MeToo, which began in 2017. Hoover's narrative fits within this historical moment, emphasizing the need to break cycles of violence that have persisted for generations.

2.4.3 Setting

2.4.3.1 Physical Setting

- a) **Boston, Massachusetts:** The majority of the novel takes place in Boston, where Lily moves to
 - a. start a new life after her father's death. Boston represents independence, opportunity, and Lily's attempt to build a life away from the trauma of her childhood. It is an urban environment with professional opportunities, including her dream of running a flower shop.
- b) **Lily's Flower Shop:** This is a central location in Boston. The shop is not only her workplace but also a safe and creative space where she expresses herself and cultivates growth, both literally and metaphorically.
- c) **Ryle's Home and Apartment:** These locations highlight the contrast between Lily's life and the abuse she faces. The domestic spaces are supposed to be safe but become sites of conflict and violence, emphasizing the tension between appearance and reality.
- d) **Maine (Childhood Home):** Flashbacks to Lily's childhood in Maine show her early exposure to domestic violence through her father's abuse toward her mother. This setting symbolizes her past trauma and the generational cycle of abuse she is determined to break.
- e) **Rooftop Garden:** The rooftop where Lily first meets Ryle and spends time dreaming of possibilities represents hope, romance, and a temporary escape from life's pressures. It is a symbolic space for both love and reflection.

2.4.3.2 Emotional Setting

The novel's settings often mirror Lily's internal emotional state:

- a. Boston and the flower shop reflect hope, growth, and independence.
- b. Ryle's apartment and home reflect tension, fear, and the hidden dangers of abuse.
- c. Flashbacks to Maine reflect trauma, fear, and past pain.

This interplay between physical and emotional settings reinforces the themes of resilience, empowerment, and the struggle to break free from cycles of abuse.

2.4.4 Definition of Themes and Examples

A **theme** in literature is a recurring idea or concept that gives meaning to a literary work. It reflects the author's perspective on social realities, human behavior, or emotional experiences. Themes are revealed through the actions of characters, their relationships, and the conflicts they face, allowing readers to interpret the message beyond the surface of the story. By identifying themes, readers can better understand the purpose of the text and the broader issues it addresses.

Examples of themes from the book *Dear Girl* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal in literature are:

- a. **Love (Self-Love):** The book encourages girls to accept themselves and value their emotions and mistakes.
- b. **Empowerment:** It motivates girls to trust their voices and make their own decisions.
- c. **Resilience:** The story shows that difficulties and failures help girls grow stronger.

2.4.5 Definition of Morale and Examples

Morale lessons in literature refer to the ethical values and principles a text communicates through its characters' decisions, conflicts, and outcomes. These lessons guide readers toward reflection on social behavior, personal responsibility, and human dignity. In *It Ends with Us*, Colleen Hoover presents a moral framework centered on courage, self-respect, and ethical responsibility when confronting domestic violence. Lily Bloom's journey illustrates that ending a toxic relationship, even when emotional attachment exists, is not an act of weakness but one of moral strength and empowerment. The novel emphasizes that personal dignity and physical safety must take precedence over social expectations, romantic ideals, or fear of judgment.

A central moral lesson in the novel is that **love should never justify violence**. Hoover challenges the misconception that affection excuses harmful behavior, exposing how emotional bonds can obscure recognition of abuse. Many victims remain in violent relationships due to fear, guilt, or hope for change, a reality the novel addresses with psychological realism. As Hoover (2016) states, "Sometimes, the one who loves you is the

one who hurts you the most” (p. 239), reinforcing the idea that acknowledging abuse is a crucial ethical step toward healing. From a theoretical perspective, this moral lesson reframes leaving an abusive relationship as an act of self-respect rather than shame.

Ultimately, the novel presents the moral imperative of **breaking cycles of violence** as a responsibility that extends beyond the individual. Lily’s decision to leave Ryle is motivated by her desire to protect her daughter and offer her a healthier future. This moral perspective emphasizes that courageous actions in the present can generate long-term social change, fostering hope for future generations. Through Lily’s example, the novel positions resilience and ethical courage as transformative forces capable of challenging entrenched patterns of abuse and inspiring others to pursue lives grounded in respect and dignity.

2.4.6 Definition of Symbols and Examples

In literature, a **symbol** is an object, character, image, or action that represents a deeper meaning beyond its literal sense. Symbols are used by authors to express abstract ideas, emotions, or themes subtly. Through symbols, readers can interpret hidden messages and better understand the underlying meaning of a literary work.

Examples of symbols from the book *Dear Girl* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal in literature are:

- a. Letter / Voice: Symbolizes self-expression and speaking up.
- b. Open arms: Symbolize love, acceptance, and emotional openness.
- c. Movement (running, jumping): Symbolizes freedom and independence.

2.4.7 Definition of Motifs and Examples

In literature, a **motif** is a recurring element, idea, image, or pattern that appears throughout a literary work and helps develop its themes. Motifs reinforce the main messages of a text by repeating certain concepts or symbols, allowing readers to better understand the author’s purpose and the deeper meaning of the story.

Examples of motifs from the book *Dear Girl* by Amy Krouse Rosenthal in literature are:

- a. Kindness: The book repeatedly highlights being kind to oneself and to others.
- b. Growth and learning: Mistakes and learning from them are presented as part of growing up.
- c. Voice and communication: The importance of speaking, listening, and being heard appears frequently.

2.5 Biography of the author

Colleen Hoover is a talented American author who has made a significant mark in the world of contemporary romance novels and young adult fiction. Born on December 11, 1979, in Sulphur Springs, Texas, she spent her childhood in the picturesque town of Saltillo. After studying social work at Texas A&M–Commerce, she worked in various social and educational positions before devoting herself entirely to her passion for writing.

Her career as a novelist began in 2012 with the self-published book *Slammed*, which quickly gained popularity thanks to enthusiastic recommendations from literary bloggers. This initial success earned her a spot on the New York Times bestseller list and opened the door to a publishing contract. Since then, she has published a series of bestselling novels, including *Hopeless* (2012), *Confess* (2015), *November 9* (2015), *It Ends with Us* (2016), and its sequel, *It Starts with Us* (2022). Her stories are known for their emotional depth, tackling themes of resilience and difficult social issues such as domestic abuse, trauma, and forgiveness.

Hoover's writing has earned her widespread recognition. *Confess* won the Goodreads Choice Award for Best Romance Novel in 2015, and *It Ends with Us* took home the same award in 2016. Readers appreciate her ability to connect through first-person narratives and relatable characters, often inspired by real-life challenges. Beyond her writing, Hoover founded The Bookworm Box, a nonprofit subscription service and bookstore that donates its profits to various charitable causes.

Today, Colleen Hoover stands out as one of the most influential voices in contemporary romance literature. Her novels have sold millions of copies worldwide, and she has become a cultural sensation on platforms such as TikTok, where the “BookTok” community has sparked renewed interest in her work. Through *It Ends with Us*, Hoover has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the complexities of domestic abuse, skillfully weaving personal stories with broader social issues.

Chapter III

Methodological Framework

This chapter describes the methodological framework applied in this research, which focuses on the literary analysis of *It Ends with Us*, by Colleen Hoover. The purpose of this section is to explain the methods, approaches, and procedures used to analyze the novel systematically and consistently. It defines the type of research, data collection techniques, and criteria used to interpret the literary elements found in the text and process them to successfully achieve the general objective and the three specific objectives.

The methodological framework is essential because it provides the basis for the study, ensuring that the analysis is reliable, organized, and academically supported. This research follows a qualitative and descriptive approach, as its objective is to interpret the main themes, characters, and symbols that reflect the social and emotional realities within the narrative. Through this approach, the researcher seeks to understand how Colleen Hoover portrays sensitive issues such as domestic violence, love, and personal empowerment in the book, and to examine how literature highlights important real-life issues.

Therefore, this chapter establishes the path that guides the development of the study and explains the theoretical and analytical tools that support the interpretation of the novel for Chapter IV.

3.1 Research Approach

This research follows a qualitative approach, as it seeks to interpret and understand the literary and social dimensions represented in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*. Rather than relying on numerical data, qualitative research focuses on interpreting meanings, symbols, and human experiences (Creswell and Poth, 2018). This method is suitable for literary studies because it emphasizes depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization. The qualitative approach allows the researcher to analyze the emotional, cultural, and ideological aspects that influence Hoover's portrayal of domestic abuse and social consciousness.

The study employs a neo-historicist approach, which considers literature as a product of its time and a reflection of the social and cultural conditions that shape it. According to Greenblatt (1982), one of the founders of New Historicism, literary texts must be studied alongside non-literary texts to uncover the power relations, ideologies, and social practices of their historical moment. Although *It Ends with Us* is a contemporary work, this approach allows us to explore how Hoover's narrative reflects real social problems, such as gender inequality, domestic violence, and female empowerment, which persist in modern societies, including women in this century breaking chains of abuse that have been passed down through known individuals.

3.2 Research Design

This study applies a descriptive research design to analyze Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* from a neo-historicist perspective. The main objective of this design is to describe and interpret how the novel represents domestic abuse, empowerment, and social awareness without manipulating variables or establishing causal relationships. Through a qualitative lens, the study focuses on identifying the literary and emotional elements that reveal the author's social critique. This approach allows for a deep understanding of how the characters, themes, and symbols in the story reflect the realities of abuse and resilience in contemporary society.

The descriptive framework supports a systematic interpretation of the novel's content, providing a clear and comprehensive description of the themes portrayed. By examining *It Ends with Us* as a social text, the research connects literary analysis with real-world contexts, highlighting the novel's contribution to conversations about gender inequality and emotional healing. This design reinforces the study's purpose of promoting awareness and understanding through literature, demonstrating how Hoover's work reflects and challenges cultural norms surrounding domestic violence in the modern era.

3.3 Information Sources

This research is based on qualitative and documentary sources, focusing primarily on literary and academic materials that support the analysis of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*. The main source for this study is the novel itself, which serves as the central text for

interpretation. The story provides the narrative, thematic, and symbolic elements necessary to explore issues such as domestic abuse, social awareness, and empowerment. Parts of the *film It Ends with Us* will also be analyzed as a means of extracting information from it and, of course, from the book.

In addition to the primary source, several secondary sources were consulted to reinforce the theoretical and analytical framework of the study. These include books, academic articles, and critical essays related to new historicism, feminist literary theory, and social studies on gender violence. The works of authors such as Stephen Greenblatt (1982) and Lois Tyson (2015) were crucial for understanding the principles of New Historicism and its application to literature. Supplementary materials from online journals, educational databases, and psychology publications, such as Creswell and Poth (2018), were also consulted for the qualitative research approach.

3.4 Analysis Categories

For this study, several analysis categories were established to organize and interpret the information gathered from the novel *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover. These categories are based on qualitative research, which focuses on interpreting meanings and social experiences, and the **New Historicist approach**, which examines the relationship between literary texts and their historical and social contexts (Greenblatt, 1982). Together, these categories help structure the analysis and highlight key aspects of domestic abuse, empowerment, and social awareness within the narrative.

The first category is **Domestic Abuse as a Social Issue**, defined as a pattern of psychological and physical violence within intimate relationships that reflects broader social and gender inequalities. This category examines how Hoover portrays the psychological and physical dimensions of abuse and their impact on women's lives. It focuses on the representation of violence through the character of Ryle Kincaid and its effects on Lily Bloom's emotional development.

The second category, **Female Empowerment and Resistance**, refers to the process through which women recognize their personal agency, challenge oppressive circumstances, and make autonomous decisions. This category explores Lily's transformation as she breaks the cycle

of abuse and redefines her identity. This theme is central to understanding the author's message of resilience and social consciousness.

The third category is **Social Awareness and Cultural Reflection**, which can be understood as the capacity of literature to encourage readers to reflect on real-world social issues shaped by cultural norms. This category analyzes how the novel addresses gender inequality and the silence surrounding domestic violence. Through a New Historicist lens, it connects fictional events with contemporary discussions about women's rights and emotional well-being.

These categories collectively allow the researcher to interpret the novel as both a literary and social document that promotes awareness and transformation.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

The data collection instruments used in this research were designed to systematically collect, organize, and interpret information from primary and secondary sources. Given that the study follows a qualitative and descriptive design, the main instrument applied was the textual analysis guide, which allowed the researcher to identify and categorize relevant literary and social elements within Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*. The textual analysis guide and comparative tables help to better highlight categories such as characterization, new historicism, situations, experiences, and social contexts. This tool facilitated the extraction of significant evidence from the novel related to domestic abuse, female empowerment, and social awareness. Three tables were used for the instruments, in accordance with the specific objectives of Chapter I.

Table 1 is presented with two similar tables, but the first table in Table 1 presents the main character, experiences of abuse, quotes from the book, and the researcher's analysis, and the second table in Table 1 presents the main character, experiences of resilience, quotes from the book, and the researcher's analysis to analyze the different experiences of the main characters.

Table 2 presents the application of new historicism to the book's social decisions and comments. There are two tables with five columns containing the same columns, except for the

third. The first column of Table 2 contains the situation, historical/contextual decisions, quotes from the book, and the researcher's analysis, and the second column includes the situation, historical/contextual social commentary, quotes from the book, and the researcher's analysis. The purpose of this table is to provide the new historicism approach in different cases from the novel.

Finally, Table 3 evaluates the events that make up the historical context of the book and consists of four columns: historical event, time period, connection to the narrative, and evaluation. The main objective of Table 3 is to evaluate contemporary and modern historical events to explain the social context in which *It Ends with Us* takes place.

These tables provide the perfect scope for analyzing, identifying, and evaluating each specific objective and doing so in a more compelling way to observe the different themes, characteristics, and details seen in the book *It Ends with Us*.

3.5.1 Table 1. Character Development Through Experiences of Abuse and Resilience

The first table analyzes the development of the characters in *It Ends with Us*, examining each character's experiences of abuse and resilience.

In the tables, the first column is the “Main Characters” section, which analyzes the three characters in the book: Lily, Ryle, and Atlas. Next, the second column in both tables discusses the experiences these characters went through. The first table in Table 1 shows the abuse they endure in the book, and the second table shows the resilience they experience. In addition, the third column contains a section of quotes from the book, intending to give examples of the characters' experiences, providing more detail with clear examples from the book itself. Finally, the fourth column provides a summary of what the researcher analyzed, along with experiences and quotes from the book.

Main Character	Experiences of Abuse	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis

Main Character	Experiences of Resilience	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis

The purpose of Table 1 is to analyze the experiences of the main characters and emphasize what these three people went through during the book, showing the audience how literature represents very sensitive issues and allowing readers to empathize with them.

3.5.2 Table 2 Application of New Historicism to Decisions and Social Commentary

The second table presents the application of new historicism to the book *It Ends with Us* decisions and social commentary.

Both tables have five columns. The first column is the section on the situation that will be analyzed in order to apply new historicism to the novel. The second column contains the historical/social context, which describes the factors that influence the situation described in the first column. It refers to the real-life conditions in which a literary work is produced and set. The third column varies in both tables. The first table in section 2 contains the decisions made by the characters of the novel in this regard, and the second table in section 2 contains the section on social commentary that the novel had in different situations. Next, column number four is the column of examples or quotes from the book to support the situation. Finally, column five contains the researcher's analysis of both tables.

Situation	Historical / Social Context	Decisions	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis

Situation	Historical / Social Context	Social Commentary	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis

The purpose of table number two is to provide the New Historicist approach in different parts and cases of the novel so that readers can make a connection between literature, New Historicism, and social situations.

3 3.5. Table 3. Events that shape the historical context of *It Ends with Us*

This third table will evaluate the events that shape the historical context of *It Ends with Us*.

This table, number 3, is composed of 4 columns. The first column is “historical event,” where a real historical event or process that occurs in society (not literary) will be evaluated. The second column will be composed of the “time period,” where the general historical stage in which that event occurs will be listed. In addition, the third column will be the connection to the narrative, where and how that event is reflected in the novel. Finally, the evaluation will explain why that event is important for understanding the novel.

Historical Event	Time Period	Connection to the Narrative	Evaluation

The purpose of Table 3 is to identify and evaluate contemporary and modern historical events to explain the social context in which *It Ends with Us* takes place, and how that context helps to understand the narrative and its main themes.

3.6 Data Analysis

The data analysis process in this research followed a qualitative and interpretive approach, focused on identifying and examining the literary and social elements present in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us*. The analysis was carried out through a detailed reading of the novel, supported by theoretical concepts from new historicism and feminist literary criticism. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative data analysis involves organizing and interpreting information to discover patterns and meanings related to the research objectives. In this study, the data consisted of textual evidence—such as dialogue, descriptions, and symbols—that revealed themes of domestic violence, empowerment, and social awareness.

The analysis began with the coding and categorization of the text, in which passages were grouped according to established analytical categories: domestic violence, female empowerment, social awareness, and symbolic representation. Each category was then interpreted from a Neo-historicist perspective, connecting fictional events to broader social and historical realities. Following Greenblatt's (1982) theoretical framework, the analysis sought to understand how power relations, cultural norms, and social ideologies are reflected and questioned in the novel.

These elements were analyzed to demonstrate how Hoover's narrative not only portrays the emotional consequences of abuse but also encourages readers to reflect on resilience and self-esteem.

The results of this analysis contribute to understanding *It Ends with Us* as a literary work and social commentary that raises awareness about gender-based violence and empowerment. For

all women who have suffered domestic abuse, for women who have a family member or friend who has suffered domestic abuse, or for women who empathize with the reading, this research highlights how literature has a profound impact on many lives.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are essential in every research process to ensure academic integrity, respect for intellectual property, and responsibility in data handling. In this study, all information was collected, analyzed, and presented with complete respect for the principles of ethical research. Since the investigation is documentary and literary, it does not involve human participants, personal data, or direct fieldwork; therefore, the main ethical responsibility focuses on maintaining academic honesty, proper citation of sources, and avoiding any form of plagiarism.

The researcher ensured that every reference and idea drawn from external sources was properly cited, following the American Psychological Association (APA, 7th ed.) guidelines. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), qualitative research requires transparency, credibility, and integrity to guarantee the trustworthiness of the study. All books, journal articles, and digital materials were used exclusively for academic purposes and are duly acknowledged in the references section.

Furthermore, ethical awareness was maintained when analyzing sensitive themes such as domestic abuse and trauma. The analysis was approached with empathy and respect toward the lived realities reflected in the novel, avoiding any language that could minimize or sensationalize such experiences.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis

The book that will be discussed is *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover. The book is about the life of Lily Bloom, as it recounts her childhood experiences of domestic abuse by her father towards her mother. Then Lily's adult life, when she met her boyfriend Ryle, who was an abuser in her life, and Lily went through almost the same experiences as her mother, except that she decided to end the cycle of abuse when her daughter, Emerson, was born. The purpose of analyzing this novel is to help readers to see how literature helps us empathize with literary situations and how society acts, using the New Historicism approach.

In this chapter, readers can find the results obtained through the data collection instruments, which were explained in Chapter III. That said, the results that were in line with the specific objectives will serve to better analyze the novel behind the tables, which are composed of characters, situations, quotes from the book, the researcher's analysis, and more concepts; all the information presented is in the best possible order and analyzed for greater knowledge.

4.1 Approaches to the investigation

A theoretical approach in literary studies refers to a critical perspective used to analyze a text in relation to specific social, cultural, or historical factors. In this research, New Historicism has been selected as the principal approach because it allows the novel to be examined within its broader cultural and ideological context. New Historicism is a critical approach that views literary texts as cultural artifacts shaped by historical, social, and political forces. Rather than treating literature as isolated from reality. This approach emphasizes that texts both reflect and participate in the circulation of social meanings and power relations (Greenblatt, 1988). According to Greenblatt (2005), literary works interact with dominant ideologies while also creating spaces for resistance and alternative perspectives.

This approach is particularly relevant to the analysis of *It Ends with Us* by Colleen Hoover, as the novel addresses contemporary issues such as domestic violence, gender inequality, and emotional dependency. Through a New Historicist lens, the novel can be interpreted not only as a personal story but also as a cultural text that reflects modern discourses on romantic

relationships and female identity. Applying New Historicism allows this study to examine how Lily Bloom’s experiences are influenced by cultural expectations surrounding love and endurance. The novel reveals how certain ideological narratives may normalize abusive behavior, while simultaneously challenging traditional romantic ideals and emphasizing the need to break cycles of violence. Therefore, New Historicism provides the main analytical framework for this research.

4.2 Theories vs literary work

In this section, there will be parts of the literary work that are supported by literary theories, both of which have been analyzed by the researcher.

4.2.1 Table 1 Character’s Development Through Experiences of Abuse and Resilience

Table 1 analyzes the development of the main characters in *It Ends with Us* by examining their experiences of abuse and resilience. It includes Lily, Ryle, and Atlas, supported by quotes from the novel and the researcher’s analysis.

Main Character	Experiences of Abuse	Quote from the book	Researcher’s Analysis
Lily Bloom	Lily experiences physical and sexual violence from Ryle, particularly in moments triggered by jealousy and alcohol consumption. One of the most severe incidents occurs when Ryle tries to rape her and physically assaults her by biting the tattoo that symbolizes her past connection with Atlas. This act is not only	“All I can see when I squeeze my eyes shut is my mother crying in our old living room; my father forcing himself on top of her”	This episode exposes the transmission of trauma, as Lily’s experience mirrors the domestic violence she witnessed during her childhood. The quote demonstrates how memories from the past come to the surface during moments of abuse,

	<p>physical aggression but also symbolic, as it reflects Ryle's desire to control Lily's body and eliminate her emotional history.</p>	<p>(Hoover, 2016, p.266).</p>	<p>reinforcing the psychological impact of violence. Lily's character development is marked by this repetition of trauma, highlighting the complexity of leaving abusive relationships when she loved him, and supporting the goal of examining how experiences of abuse influence her personal life in many areas.</p>
Ryle Kincaid	<p>Ryle's abuse follows a cyclical pattern characterized by aggression and promises of change. After physically hurting Lily, he minimizes his actions by framing them as "mistakes" or "accidents," appealing to the idea that all</p>	<p>"It will never happen again." (Hoover, 2016, p. 191).</p>	<p>Ryle's apology reflects the cycle of domestic violence, in which aggression is followed by remorse and promises of change. His justification of violence as a "mistake" reveals the</p>

	<p>humans are imperfect. However, his repeated behavior reveals that the violence is not accidental, but part of a recurring pattern.</p>		<p>mechanisms of minimization and denial, as he never labels himself as an abuser, even though these are commonly identified in abusive dynamics. This pattern contributes to Lily's emotional confusion and delayed decision-making, demonstrating how manipulation perpetuates the cycle of abuse within relationships.</p>
Atlas Corrigan	<p>Atlas is exposed to domestic violence and neglect during his childhood, through mistreatment by a family member. In addition, he suffers from sexual abuse, which deeply impacts his emotional development. Unlike Ryle,</p>	<p>“I learned how to survive on my own. “(Hoover, 2016, Chapter 11).</p>	<p>Atlas spoke with Lily about what had happened in his family, about the patterns of abuse he had suffered, but thanks to his experiences, Atlas had matured and become a</p>

	<p>however, Atlas does not internalize violence as a model for future relationships. Instead, his traumatic experiences force him to become independent at a young age.</p>		<p>better person. The difference between Ryle and Atlas is that Ryle never spoke to Lily; his sister spoke to Lily, but he never did. In this case, Atlas transforms trauma into motivation and breaks the destructive patterns in his personal life. Through this contrast, the novel suggests that trauma does not determine destiny, but rather that the way people process and cope with their pain is what shapes their character and future actions.</p>
Lily Bloom	<p>Emotional manipulation and fear following violent episodes by Ryle. Lily is afraid of her husband and</p>	<p>“He apologized, and I wanted to believe him.”</p>	<p>The quoted statements reveal the psychological dimension of abuse,</p>

	lives in a state of semi-paralysis and anxiety due to his behavior.	“All humans make mistakes” (Hoover, 2016, p. 192).	particularly emotional manipulation. Lily’s desire to believe Ryle’s apologies demonstrates how victims internalize hope as a coping mechanism. This stage in her development reflects emotional paralysis and anxiety, emphasizing how abuse extends beyond physical violence and deeply affects identity.
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Main Character	Experiences of Resilience	Quote from the book	Researcher’s Analysis
Lily Bloom	Resilience through understanding that Ryle loves her, but not in the way she deserves. Lily continues to love him, but she herself says that love does not have to hurt; it has to be a healthy	Jenny Bloom (Lily’s mother) said, “Lily. I know that you believe he loves you, and I’m sure he does. But he’s not loving you the right way. He doesn’t love you the way you	As Gilbert and Gubar (2000) argue, narratives centered on women allow for the reconstruction of female identity. Through her mother's words, Lily begins to distinguish between love and harmful

	love, something she is not used to with Ryle.	deserve to be loved” (Hoover, 2016, p.366).	attachment. Her recognition that love should not cause pain represents an emotional awakening and a critical awareness of herself. She herself sees what Ryle said, “it was an accident,” and realizes that it was never an accident, but an assault.
Atlas Corrigan	Emotional growth despite past trauma. Instead of becoming stuck in his youth, Atlas strives to better himself and becomes very famous with his restaurant despite the difficulties.	After surviving on his own and making all the effort he did, Atlas built his restaurant in Boston. “The chef. The owner. Sometimes waiter, sometimes dishwasher.”	Atlas’s success as a restaurant owner symbolizes resilience through perseverance and the desire to better oneself. His ability to overcome homelessness and trauma reflects constructive coping strategies. His development contrasts with

		(Hoover, 2016, p.195)	Ryle's destructive responses to past trauma, reinforcing the novel's argument that personal history does not justify abusive behavior.
Lily Bloom	Breaking the cycle of abuse for future generations, the kind of resilience Lily embraces for her daughter and herself means giving them a new start and a new life, free from toxic relationships, free from any cycle of abuse, and certainly free from an experience similar to Lily's childhood.	"It stops here. With me and you. It Ends with Us" (Hoover, 2016, p.361).	The important decision to end her relationship with Ryle represents her empowerment. Lily definitely does not want to continue with her husband, and with her decision to say, "This is where it ends," she immediately breaks a cycle for her future family. Furthermore, in the novel, she wants people to see her as a normal person; the situation and abuse with Ryle do not represent her as a woman, but as a

			woman who left a violent relationship.
Atlas Corrigan	<p>Ability to establish respectful and healthy relationships.</p> <p>When they met Lily, they were able to live the life they had wanted since they were young, becoming better people and being in a healthy relationship.</p>	<p>“You can stop swimming now, Lily. We finally reached the shore” (Hoover, 2016, p.387)</p>	<p>This quote symbolizes emotional stability and healing in Lily’s life. Atlas represents the possibility of a healthy and respectful relationship, contrasting with the abusive dynamics Lily experienced with Ryle. His words suggest that Lily no longer needs to struggle or “swim” against pain and trauma, as she has finally reached a place of safety, support, and emotional peace.</p>

Table 1 illustrates the analysis of the development of the main characters in It Ends with Us based on their experiences of abuse and resilience.

4.2.2 Table 2 Application of New Historicism to Decisions and Social Commentary

Table 2 applies New Historicism to analyze key situations in *It Ends with Us*, focusing on character decisions and social commentary. The table includes five columns: the situation analyzed, the historical or social context, the characters' decisions or the novel's social commentary, supporting quotes from the text, and the researcher's analysis. This structure allows the novel to be examined in relation to its cultural and ideological context.

Situation	Historical / Social Context	Decisions	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis
First incident of violence: Ryle hits Lily in the face after the minor incident in the kitchen.	Normalization of male anger in relationships, after some type of aggression towards the partner.	After the incident in the kitchen, she decided to forgive him. Despite Ryle's anger in the kitchen, he never said it was a blow; he classified it as a "panic attack," but she still didn't bring up the subject again. She decided to forgive him and act as if nothing had happened.	"The realization of what has just happened hurts worse than the actual situation." "he's not like my father. He can't be. He's nothing like that uncaring bastard" (Hoover, 2016, p. 188).	This first act of physical aggression represents the beginning of the cycle of abuse and reflects the social normalization of male anger within intimate relationships. By accepting Ryle's explanation that the incident was a "panic attack" and not an act of violence, Lily internalizes a socially constructed narrative that minimizes male aggression, and she ignores it completely. Her decision to forgive him illustrates how victims

				often reinterpret violence to preserve the emotional bond. From a Neo-historicist perspective, this moment reflects how cultural discourses around masculinity influence personal decisions regarding abuse.
Pregnancy revelation: After Ryle's attempted rape, Lily went to the doctor and told him she was pregnant. Lily had no idea.	Motherhood as a moral responsibility, taking on the task of raising her baby alone.	Lily decides to protect her daughter. She decided, given her situation, to distance herself from Ryle, since he went away to boarding school for months, and she decided to keep it a secret. Only Atlas and she knew about it. She decided not to say	“I would wish upon my child. To grow up in a broken home or an abusive one?” “I won’t let my daughter see this as love” (Hoover, 2016, p.282).	Lily's pregnancy is an important factor in her decision-making. Motherhood becomes a moral and emotional responsibility that redefines her priorities. Influenced by her own experience with domestic violence during her childhood, Lily wonders whether raising a child in

		anything about her pregnancy to protect herself.		an abusive or broken home would be more harmful. Her decision to distance herself from Ryle reflects a growing awareness of the trauma of her daughter experiencing the same thing she did as a child. This situation gives increasing priority to the protection of children and maternal autonomy over the maintenance of the traditional family unit.
Lily files for divorce: In this situation, Lily was in her hospital room after her daughter was	Breaking cycles of abuse with her physically and psychologically abusive husband, breaking all the barriers.	Lily makes the decision to leave Ryle. She loves him, but she won't tolerate a man who hits her, mistreats her, and is violent toward her. She	Ryle didn't understand at the time, but Lily gave him these examples: "Daddy? My boyfriend hit me. Daddy? My	The fact that Lily asks Ryle how he would react if his daughter suffered similar violence forces him to face the reality that she had to go through. This decision symbolizes

<p>born, and she tells Ryle, after months of indecision, that she wants a divorce.</p>		<p>decides to end her marriage for a new future, a new life for herself and her daughter Emerson.</p>	<p>husband pushed me down the stairs. He said it was an accident. “My husband tried to rape me, Daddy” (Hoover, 2016, p. 358).</p> <p>Ryle said, “I would tell her that she is worth so much more. And I would beg her not to go back, no matter how much he loves her.” (Hoover, 2016, p.359)</p>	<p>the active breaking of the generational cycle of abuse. From a Social and Historical perspective, the novel reflects modern discourses that empower women to leave violent marriages and redefine family structures based on safety rather than social expectations. Lily's request for divorce represents the end of an abusive cycle that her mother had to live through, that she had to live through, and that her daughter Emerson, will not have to live through because of Lily's decision.</p>
<p>Co-parenting agreement:</p>	<p>Modern family structure, through</p>	<p>The decision was easy. Lily and Ryle</p>	<p>“I dreamed for her. A home where she</p>	<p>A modern take on family dynamics. Rather than</p>

<p>After divorcing, Ryle and Lily share custody of their daughter, Emerson.</p>	<p>Lily's decision to leave an abusive marriage and raise her daughter in a non-traditional but healthier environment.</p>	<p>decided to share custody, as Lily gave him the choice of either supporting her with their daughter or simply leaving. He chose to be a present father in Emerson's life. They are no longer married, but they will always share their daughter for her well-being.</p>	<p>lives with both parents who can love her together. But I don't want her to live as I lived." He can be a good father, just not my husband" (Hoover, 2016, p. 360).</p>	<p>maintaining a harmful marriage for the sake of stability, Lily chooses a structure that prioritizes emotional and physical well-being, for a life free of cycles of abuse. Her distinction between Ryle as a father and Ryle as a husband demonstrates emotional maturity and the ability to set boundaries. This decision is in line with the contemporary social conception that healthy parenting does not require a romantic relationship, solely for the sake of her daughter. Thus, the novel challenges traditional family ideals and promotes a model based on safety,</p>
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				responsibility, and shared parental commitment.
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Situation	Historical / Social Context	Social Commentary	Quote from the book	Researcher's Analysis
Lily suffers emotional and physical abuse again from her husband. She believes it won't happen again, but the reality is that it happens more often in the novel.	Domestic violence is often treated as a private matter; women are pressured to stay in the marriage, and society believes that "everything is fine", and that they should not be judged.	The novel addresses how domestic violence is often normalized in intimate relationships. Society tends to minimize abuse by considering it a momentary mistake, especially when the abuser expresses remorse. This normalization contributes to violence and discourages victims from seeking help.	"What happened in the kitchen tonight is something I'm confident won't happen again." "All humans make mistakes" (Hoover, 2016, p.192).	The novel critically examines how domestic violence is often normalized in intimate relationships. Society tends to minimize abusive behavior by defending abuse as a mistake, a misunderstanding, an accident... especially when the aggressor expresses remorse or attributes the violence to emotional distress, even though in many

				<p>cases they are manipulators. This cultural normalization pressures women to remain silent and preserve the relationship rather than confront the abuse. Through Lily's repeated forgiveness, the book suggests how emotional attachment, social expectations, and prior beliefs contribute to the continuation of “justified” violence.</p>
Ryle blames alcohol for his behavior when he stalked Lily, bit her, and tried	Substance abuse is often used to justify male aggression, with the excuse that it	The novel criticizes the social tendency to excuse violent behavior when alcohol is involved. By presenting alcohol as a	“His lips meet mine in a frenzy and the taste of scotch makes me want to puke	The novel questions the widespread social tendency to excuse male aggression when alcohol is involved. By

<p>to rape her. He blamed alcohol.</p>	<p>was the alcohol talking and not normal behavior if they were sober.</p>	<p>justification, society reduces the aggressor's responsibility and deflects blame from conscious decision-making. The text challenges this idea by showing that violence is a choice, not an accident.</p>	<p>now. He's still whispering apologies when the room begins to fade out again" (Hoover, 2016, p. 267).</p>	<p>portraying Ryle's violent behavior alongside his drunkenness, the narrative reveals how substance abuse is often used to evade responsibility or excuse the aggressor because he was drinking alcohol. However, the novel makes it clear that alcohol does not cause violence, but rather brings underlying patterns of control and aggression to the surface. Nevertheless, it should never be used as an excuse for any type of aggression or violence. In doing so, the novel criticizes</p>
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				social narratives that separate drunkenness from responsibility, reinforcing the idea that abuse is a conscious choice, not an accident.
Lily remembers the abuse she suffered from by her parents, reflected in her relationship with Ryle.	Violence is repeated throughout generations because, from a young age, children grow up seeing domestic abuse as something normalized in society.	The novel discusses how abusive behaviors can be passed down from generation to generation. When violence is normalized within the family, it becomes part of learned behavior. The text emphasizes the importance of recognizing these patterns to prevent them from repeating.	“My whole life, I knew exactly what I’d do if a man ever treated me the way my father treated my mother. It was simple. I would leave, and it would never happen again. But I didn’t leave” (Hoover, 2016, p. 242).	Through Lily's memories of her parents' abusive relationship, the novel highlights how violence can become normalized across generations. When children grow up witnessing domestic abuse, they can internalize harmful relationship dynamics as inevitable or familiar if their parents remain in that situation or the

				<p>children do not seek professional help. The text suggests that breaking this cycle requires conscious recognition and active resistance. By illustrating Lily's internal conflict between her childhood beliefs and her adult reality, the novel underscores the psychological complexity of escaping generational trauma.</p>
<p>Atlas shows a healthy love for Lily at all times, when they were young, after</p>	<p>Through Atlas, the novel presents an alternative model of masculinity based</p>	<p>Contrast the healthy relationships in Lily's life, despite Atlas suffering abuse and having a dysfunctional</p>	<p>“I feel like my life is good enough for you now, so whenever you’re</p>	<p>Atlas represents an alternative model of masculinity based on empathy, communication, and</p>

<p>Ryle, and after Lily's daughter.</p>	<p>on empathy, respect, and emotional support. This contrasts with dominant social representations of masculinity linked to control and aggression, promoting healthier relationship dynamics.</p>	<p>family, with the treatment of all his traumas to become a better person, in this case with Lily.</p>	<p>ready...” (Hoover, 2016, p.366).</p>	<p>emotional responsibility. In contrast to Ryle's possessive and aggressive behavior, Atlas demonstrates that trauma does not justify harmful conduct. His respectful treatment of Lily challenges dominant social constructs of masculinity that associate power with control. Through this contrast, the novel promotes a redefinition of romantic relationships based on mutual respect and emotional security, rather than domination and fear. Lily felt at peace wherever Atlas was, because of his emotional</p>
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				responsibility towards her.
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*Table 2 illustrates the application of New Historicism to the analysis of *It Ends with Us*, focusing on the characters' decisions and the social commentary of the text.*

4.2.3 Table 3 Events that shape the historical context of *It Ends with Us*

Table 3 evaluates historical events that shape the context of *It Ends with Us*. The table includes four columns: the historical event, the time period in which it occurs, its connection to the narrative, and an evaluation explaining its relevance to understanding the novel.

Historical Event	Time Period	Connection to the Narrative	Evaluation
Recognition of domestic violence as a social and legal problem. Governments began to denounce abuse by partners, promote laws to protect	Contemporary Era: A period marked by strong legal reforms, public policies, and global awareness campaigns that recognize domestic violence as a	Lily's recognition that Ryle's actions are not "accidents" but part of an abusive pattern stemming from his childhood character reflects the kind of awareness promoted	Understanding this context allows readers to interpret Lily's situation as part of a recognized social problem, rather than a failure in a relationship that

<p>victims, and educate society on how to identify patterns of abuse in relationships.</p>	<p>widespread social problem requiring the protection of victims.</p>	<p>in contemporary society, where victims learn to identify warning signs in intimate relationships. Lily tried to see them as “mistakes,” but they never were.</p>	<p>suffered domestic violence. It reinforces the idea that abuse follows identifiable patterns and requires social and legal awareness to be combated and, on a personal level, to break any type of abuse so that no one is affected in the future, in this case, Emerson, Lily, and Ryle's daughter.</p>
<p>The cycle of domestic violence from generation to generation due to aggressive behavior towards one's partner,</p>	<p>Modern Era: The cycle of domestic violence is defined as patterns of family violence that are repeated across</p>	<p>Lily's memories of her father's abuse of her mother constantly influence how she interprets Ryle's behavior and create</p>	<p>Recognizing this cycle explains Lily's psychological struggle and her deep fear of repeating her mother's story, which</p>

<p>which affects everyone around them, because people get used to living like this and do nothing for themselves, out of fear or rejection by society.</p>	<p>generations and negatively influence adult relationships. This situation is normalized, especially among women who have to remain silent when they suffer domestic violence because it is something “common” for them.</p>	<p>an internal conflict between tolerance and fear that history will repeat itself, unfortunately, if it does repeat itself. In several scenes, she sees herself as her mother (the survivor) and Ryle as her father (the abuser). The difference is that she decides to break the cycle of abuse that has become normalized in her family.</p>	<p>adds depth to her decisions and emotional conflict. Perhaps Lily hid things from Ryle so that he wouldn't get upset and become a monster like her father; but that led her to all her bad moments with Ryle, since he always knew the truth (violence is not justifiable in this case). She even repeated several things her mother did, even though she felt she would never be like her.</p>
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<p>Change in the perception of romantic love and toxic relationships. Society began to critically question traditional romantic ideals that describe love as unconditional endurance. Social discourse began to highlight how manipulations are signs of toxic relationships rather than expressions of love.</p>	<p>Contemporary Era:</p> <p>It was contemporary: society questions traditional romantic ideals and promotes psychological awareness of emotional manipulation, jealousy, and control within relationships.</p> <p>In this era, it has become normalized that when a partner is manipulative and jealous, it is labeled as a “joke” toxic relationship when it should never be.</p>	<p>The evolution of Lily and Ryle's relationship, from intense attraction, as it was initially a perfect and healthy relationship, to Lily suffering emotional and physical harm on several occasions, reflects current debates about how toxic behaviors can be confused with passion or love, when in reality they are very different concepts.</p>	<p>This helps readers critically examine how love can be confused with control and suffering, even though love can “supplant” warning signs, it is not the right thing to do, which encourages a reassessment of traditional romantic beliefs that many women have lived with over the years and have normalized with many generations repeating the same patterns, both men and women.</p>
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<p>Social rejection of the idea that marriage must be preserved at all costs. In abusive marriages, if you can love each other but not in the right way, it is better to lose love than to lose your life violently. Society has imposed continuing unwanted marriages, toxic relationships, or some type of violence toward someone. It is the best thing that can happen before violence escalates.</p>	<p>Modern Era: A shift in social values that prioritizes personal well-being and safety over maintaining a marriage due to tradition or social pressure. Many women stay with their partners to make others believe that everything is fine when it is not and to meet social expectations. Many women have remained silent for the same reason and for fear of being criticized or singled out. For this reason, it is always better to empower oneself or</p>	<p>Despite loving Ryle, Lily chooses separation, reflecting modern values that prioritize personal safety and well-being and those of her daughter over preserving her relationship with Ryle and sharing custody with Emerson. This does not mean that because Ryle is not a good husband, he is not a good father, and this happens in many families around the world, always thinking about themselves and whether there are</p>	
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	to be with people who support survivors at all times.	children involved. Separating from an abusive person, no matter how much love there is, is the best thing to do.	
The debate on mental health and childhood trauma intensified, and awareness of the issue grew significantly. Society became more open to discussing trauma, therapy, and the long-term effects of unresolved childhood experiences on the behavior and emotional regulation of children and adults	Contemporary Era: Greater openness to conversations about mental health, therapy, trauma studies, and understanding how childhood experiences affect adult behavior at work, in relationships, or in personal life, and if these types of traumas are not	Ryle's traumatic childhood experience of accidentally killing his brother with a gun when they were children is presented as a factor that determines his emotional instability and anger issues, reflecting the contemporary understanding of how trauma affects adult relationships. Ryle	This context adds complexity to Ryle's character, helping readers understand the roots of his behavior without excusing his actions, since he suffered a great loss but did not seek help after he was unable to control his anger. Ryle is not a bad person, but he cannot continue like this without being

who have not experienced trauma.	treated, they will wreak havoc on your own life.	went to therapy but is still unable to regulate himself after his trauma, which caused many conflicts.	able to control himself. He can seek help, but there is nothing that can fix all the bad things Lily experienced with him.
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Table 3 illustrates the historical events and social processes that shape the context of It Ends with Us and explains how these events are reflected in the novel.

4.3 Themes, Motifs, and Symbols

4.3.1 Table 4 Themes

Literary themes represent the fundamental ideas explored in a text and reveal how broader social, psychological, and cultural structures shape individual experiences. In *It Ends with Us*, Colleen Hoover examines themes that reflect the realities of intimate partner violence and women's emotional resilience.

Themes	Quotes	Researcher's Analysis
Domestic Violence	Lily said, "Fifteen seconds. Fifteen seconds that we'll never get back." Ryle said, "I didn't mean to push you, Lily, I'm sorry." "I don't hear Ryle's voice this time. All I	This quote explains how the cycle of abuse and intergenerational domestic violence works. The repetition of the phrase "it was an accident" is similar to

	<p>hear is my father’s voice. I’m sorry, Jenny. It was an accident. I’m sorry, Lily. It was an accident” (Hoover, 2016, p. 186).</p>	<p>Ryle's justification for Lily's father's past abuse, emphasizing how violence is often minimized through language and remorse. The reference to “fifteen seconds” underscores how a brief moment of aggression can permanently alter emotional security and relational trust. In 15 seconds, situations or people can change forever, something that can never be erased. The book illustrates how abusive behavior is normalized through apology, reinforcing the psychological sustainability of violence in many situations.</p>
<p>Love and Its Complexities</p>	<p>Jenny Bloom said, “Every incident chips away at your limit. Every time you choose to stay, it makes the next time</p>	<p>Jenny's advice reframes love as a gradual reduction of emotional boundaries. She also emphasizes how</p>

	<p>that much harder to leave. Don't be like me, Lily. Be that girl, Lily. Brave and bold" (Hoover, 2016, p. 336).</p>	<p>tolerance for abuse increases incrementally, making separation increasingly difficult due to the bond of empathy. Through Jenny's warning, Hoover exposes the emotional complexity of loving someone who causes harm, while advocating for courage and self-preservation, because in the novel, Lily clung to the love she felt for Ryle on several occasions, and that blinded her to his mistreatment of her. The passage challenges romantic ideals that glorify endurance and instead promotes courage as an act of self-love rather than love for others.</p>
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<p>Women's Empowerment</p>	<p>“What kind of mother would I be if a small part of me doesn't have concern regarding your temper? The way you lose control? (Hoover, 2016. p. 346).</p>	<p>Lily's empowerment and growing awareness of the danger in her relationship with Ryle. By questioning his inability to control his temper, she prioritizes the safety and well-being of her child, showing a shift from tolerance to self-protection and maternal responsibility. The passage highlights how Lily begins to challenge the abuse and recognize the need to break the cycle of violence.</p>
<p>Breaking Generational Cycles</p>	<p>“I know 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” (Hoover, 2016, p. 358).</p>	<p>This quote highlights Lily's decision to break the generational cycle of abuse by prioritizing her daughter's well-being over her relationship with Ryle. Her choice reflects emotional maturity and maternal responsibility, showing that</p>

		protecting her child from violence is more important than maintaining the marriage. The passage emphasizes the theme of resilience and conscious change for future generations.
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Table 4 presents the main literary themes explored in It Ends with Us and explains how they reflect the social, psychological, and cultural structures that shape the characters' experiences.

4.3.2 Table 5 Motifs

In literary studies, motifs are recurring elements such as phrases, objects, images, or situations that reinforce a text's central themes and deepen its symbolic structure. Unlike symbols, which often carry broader abstract meanings, motifs gain significance through repetition and accumulation throughout the narrative.

Motifs	Quotes	Researcher's Analysis
The phrase Atlas said was, "Just keep swimming."	We watched Finding Nemo, and when that part came up where Marlin was looking for Nemo, and he was feeling defeated, Dory said to him,	This phrase serves as a source of perseverance and emotional survival. Originally from Finding Nemo, it symbolizes hope in difficult

	<p>“When life gets you down, do you know what you´re gotta do? Just keep swimming. Just keep swimming” (Hoover, 2016, p. 141).</p>	<p>times that one day you will find what you currently lack. Atlas uses it to remind Lily that she must keep going despite the pain and emotional exhaustion. The repetition emphasizes resilience and contrasts with the toxic cycles of her relationship with Ryle. It represents strength, endurance, and the possibility of a better future that will one day be found.</p>
<p>The city (Boston)</p>	<p>“Well, it won´t be too hard to find me. I smiled, “Where everything is better. He smiled back, “In Boston”. “I opened the bag and pulled out the best present I´d ever</p>	<p>The city of Boston serves as a symbolic motif of new beginnings and hope, where it is a better place. It represents security, opportunity, and emotional growth, as it did</p>

	<p>received. It was a magnet that said “Boston” on the top. At the bottom is a tiny letter, it said “Where everything is better” (Hoover, 2016, p. 214,215).</p>	<p>with Atlas, who established a beautiful home and a very famous restaurant. For Lily, Boston is associated with Atlas and a healthier love. The phrase, “Where everything is better,” reinforces the idea that this place can symbolize escape from trauma and the possibility of rebuilding one's life without any cycle of abuse.</p>
<p>The phrase Ryle said was, “We´re all just people who sometimes do bad things” (Hoover, 2016, p. 17).</p>	<p>“Lily, there are no such things as bad people. We´re all just people who sometimes do bad things” (Hoover, 2016, p. 17).</p>	<p>This motif reflects Ryle's justification of harmful behavior and introduces his belief that actions do not define identity. Although the statement may seem philosophical and even compassionate at first, it later</p>

		<p>becomes disturbing as it is used to excuse abuse. The repetition of this idea throughout the novel highlights the theme of responsibility versus rationalization. From a New Historicism perspective, this phrase can also be interpreted within a broader social context in which society often minimizes or normalizes domestic violence by separating the perpetrator from the abusive act, reinforcing cultural narratives that complicate responsibility and justice.</p>
<p>Repetition of apologies.</p>	<p>“Sorry. I’m sorry, I’m sorry, I’m... Lily, I love you. I’m so sorry. He knows what he’s done. He’s Ryle again, and he knows what he’s just done to</p>	<p>Repeated apologies form a motif that represents the cycle of abuse. Excessive repetition shows desperation and remorse, but also</p>

	<p>me. To us. To our future” (Hoover, 2016, p. 266).</p>	<p>manipulation, since the victim will take an apology to mean that it will not happen again. It reflects the emotional pattern that is often present in abusive relationships: harm, apology, promise, and repetition. This motif reinforces the novel's exploration of toxic love and the difficulty of breaking harmful cycles by a person who excuses themselves with apologies, even if they were intentional.</p>
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Table 5 illustrates the principal motifs developed throughout It Ends with Us and analyzes how these recurring elements contribute to the construction of meaning within the narrative.

4.3.3 Table 6 Symbols

In literary analysis, symbols are objects, characters, colors, or actions that represent abstract ideas beyond their literal meaning. Through symbolism, authors convey emotional, psychological, and thematic depth, allowing readers to interpret complex human experiences indirectly.

Symbols	Quotes	Researcher's Analysis
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<p>Letters for Ellen, they were ways to let off steam.</p>	<p>“I wrote letters to her regularly until I turned sixteen, but I wrote them like one would write entries in a diary”. “Dear Ellen, I’m writing this letter because I don’t really have anyone else to talk to” (Hoover,2016, p. 29).</p>	<p>The letters to Ellen symbolize Lily's emotional refuge and psychological survival. They function as a diary, allowing her to express feelings she cannot openly share, such as her father's abuse of her mother, her relationship with Atlas, and her last diary was all about her experiences with Ryle. This symbol highlights her loneliness and lack of emotional support during adolescence. Through writing, Lily gains a sense of control over her narrative, which later contrasts with the loss of control she experiences in her abusive relationship. The letters represent self-reflection, innocence, and a small refuge.</p>
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The Garden	<p>“For loving my plants, the right way. Plants reward you based on the amount of love you show them. If you’re cruel to them or neglect them, they give you nothing. But if you care for them and love them the right way, they reward you with gifts in the form of flowers” (Hoover, 2016, p. 105).</p>	<p>The garden symbolizes the nature of relationships and emotional care. The metaphor suggests that love must be nurturing and respectful to flourish. If neglected or mistreated, it produces nothing. This directly parallels Lily's romantic relationship, emphasizing that love cannot survive in a cruel environment. The garden also represents growth, healing, and the idea that healthy love requires patience and responsibility, in the right way.</p>
The color purple	<p>“What, if instead of showcasing the sweet side of flowers, we showcased the villainous side? Instead of pink accents, we use darker colors, like a deep purple or</p>	<p>The color purple symbolizes complexity, transformation, and emotional depth. By choosing darker shades instead of traditional romantic colors like pink, Lily</p>

	<p>even black. And instead of just spring and life, we also celebrate winter and death” (Hoover, 2016, p.46).</p>	<p>challenges idealized notions of love. Purple reflects the duality of beauty and pain present in the novel. It suggests maturity and realism, reinforcing the theme that love is not always gentle or perfect, but sometimes dark and complicated, and that it is okay to experience times of light and darkness.</p>
<p>Alyssa Kincaid (Lily’s best friend and her sister-in-law)</p>	<p>“As his sister, I wish more than anything that you could find a way to forgive him. But as your best friend, I have to tell you that if you take him back, I will never speak to you again” (Hoover, 2016, p. 315).</p>	<p>Alyssa symbolizes moral conflict, loyalty, and female solidarity. She embodies the tension between family loyalty and ethical responsibility. By choosing to prioritize Lily's safety over blind loyalty to her brother, Alyssa represents the responsibility and support she has for Lily and her experience of domestic abuse.</p>

		<p>Her role reinforces the importance of having strong support systems for women in abusive relationships and highlights the theme of empowerment through friendship, which sometimes offers more than romantic love.</p>
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Table 6 illustrates the key symbols developed throughout the novel and analyzes how they convey psychological and thematic meanings beyond their literal function.

Chapter V

Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Purpose of the Conclusion

This chapter aims to summarize the main findings of the research and determine whether the general and specific objectives have been successfully achieved. This section evaluates how analyzing *It Ends with Us* from a New Historicist perspective contributes to understanding domestic violence as both a literary and social problem. In addition, it reflects on the relevance of the research question and presents recommendations for future academic studies and social applications.

5.2 Conclusions

This research analyzed the representation of domestic abuse and its cultural implications in *It Ends with Us* through the theoretical framework of New Historicism, complemented by feminist literary theory. From the introductory framework to the analysis of the data, the study sought to demonstrate that literature is not an isolated artistic product, but rather a cultural artifact shaped by historical, social, and ideological forces. By situating the novel within contemporary debates on gender inequality, intimate partner violence, and female empowerment, the research confirmed that Colleen Hoover's narrative functions both as a personal story of survival and as a socially engaged, empathetic text for audiences who have not experienced these situations.

Using a qualitative, descriptive methodological approach, the research examined the development of the main characters, the ideological tensions implicit in their decisions, and the historical context surrounding the narrative. The use of analytical categories such as “Domestic violence as a social problem,” “Female empowerment and resistance,” and “Social awareness and cultural reflection” provided a structured framework for interpreting the novel.

The results revealed that domestic violence in the text is presented as a complex phenomenon, influenced by psychological manipulation, romantic idealization, generational trauma, and social pressure. This confirms that abuse is not just an individual problem, but a reflection of broader cultural patterns. Furthermore, the integration of feminist literary theory reinforced the analysis by connecting individual experiences with patriarchal structures. Lily's decision to prioritize her daughter's safety over social expectations challenges the ideology that women must endure suffering to preserve relationships. Thus, the novel illustrates how personal decisions can have political and cultural significance.

Finally, this research confirms that *It Ends with Us* transcends the boundaries of contemporary fiction. It functions as a socially relevant text that fosters empathy, awareness, and critical reflection. Also, combining literary analysis with cultural interpretation, the study demonstrates that literature can shed light on the complexities of domestic abuse, while encouraging readers to question normalized patterns of violence and see what is right or wrong in a relationship like that of Ryle and Atlas. Ultimately, the findings affirm that literary works have

the capacity not only to reflect society but also to influence it, contributing to ongoing dialogues about gender equality, resilience, and social change.

5.2.1 To examine the development of key characters in relation to experiences of abuse and resilience

The first objective was successfully achieved by analyzing the development of Lily Bloom, Ryle Kincaid, and Atlas Corrigan in relation to abuse and resilience. The results demonstrate that the characters' growth is directly influenced by their exposure to violence, trauma, and cultural expectations surrounding love and resilience. The novel presents abuse not as an isolated act, but as a cyclical pattern due to generational experiences and emotional conditioning.

Lily Bloom represents the clearest example of transformation. Having grown up witnessing domestic violence, she initially struggles to recognize Ryle's behavior as abuse and attempts to justify his actions after the first violent incident. However, her evolution becomes evident when she decides to leave Ryle after the birth of their daughter, Emerson. Lily consciously refuses to allow her daughter to grow up in an environment of violence as she did, which is clear evidence of resilience and the breaking of the generational cycle of abuse, starting with the birth of her daughter.

On the other hand, Ryle embodies the contradiction between professional success and private aggression, illustrating how unresolved trauma can manifest itself in violent and harmful behavior towards others. Atlas represents emotional stability and healthy masculinity, demonstrating that trauma does not inevitably lead to violence. Together, these characters reinforce the novel's central message: although abuse may be influenced by past experiences and cultural norms, resilience is achieved through self-awareness, personal growth, and the courageous decision to break destructive cycles. Even when there is a bond of love or family, it is always necessary to break any aggressive behavior.

5.2.2 To apply New Historicist concepts to interpret the decisions and social commentary in the novel

The second objective was successfully achieved by applying concepts from New Historicism to interpret the ideological tensions and cultural messages implicit in *It Ends with Us*. From this perspective, the novel was also analyzed in terms of contemporary social discourses surrounding gender roles, romantic ideals, and domestic violence. The results confirm that the characters' decisions are influenced by broader social expectations, particularly those that normalize female resistance and romanticize male domination.

For example, Lily initially feels pressured to preserve her marriage despite the abuse, reflecting cultural narratives that prioritize family unity and forgiveness over personal safety and feeling secure. Her internal conflict demonstrates how dominant ideologies can shape individual behavior. However, when she finally decides to leave Ryle, the novel challenges these traditional discourses. This decision serves as proof that the text actively questions the normalization of toxic relationships in many relationships.

Therefore, from a Neo-Historicist perspective, the novel reflects and challenges contemporary cultural norms. It exposes how ideology operates within intimate relationships while offering a narrative of empowerment and resistance. In this way, *It Ends with Us* participates in broader cultural conversations about gender equality and women's autonomy.

5.2.3 To evaluate the historical events that contextualize the narrative of *It Ends with Us*

The third objective was achieved by evaluating the contemporary historical context in which the novel is set. *It Ends with Us* emerges in a period characterized by greater global awareness of domestic violence, feminist activism, and public campaigns in defense of women's rights. The study showed that the novel reflects this historical moment by addressing issues such as victim blaming, emotional manipulation, and generational trauma.

For example, Lily's decision to end the cycle of abuse aligns with modern social movements that encourage women to prioritize their safety and well-being over staying with an abusive partner. The narrative reflects real-world statistics and ongoing debates about intimate partner violence, reinforcing the idea that literature is connected to historical and social realities. The generational pattern of abuse portrayed in Lily's family also reflects the patriarchal structures that contemporary society is actively challenging.

Ultimately, the analysis confirms that the novel does not exist in isolation from its era. Rather, it is part of a broader cultural shift toward awareness, empowerment, and resistance. By placing the narrative in its historical context, the study validates New Historicism's claim that literature reflects and contributes to social transformation.

5.3 Restatement of the Research Question

This research sought to answer the following question: To what extent does the neo-historicist approach allow us to understand the power structures present in the abusive relationships depicted in *It Ends with Us*? The results demonstrate that the neo-historicist perspective provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing how broader cultural and ideological forces determine the abusive relationship between Lily and Ryle. The power imbalance described in the novel reflects patriarchal norms, romanticized ideas about male dominance, and social expectations that pressure women to tolerate harmful behaviors in the name of love and family unity.

Through this approach, the novel is understood not only as a personal story of domestic violence but as a cultural commentary on the systemic power structures that normalize control and emotional manipulation toward a victim. Ultimately, the study confirms that new historicism enhances the interpretation of the text by revealing how literature reflects and challenges the power dynamics of society, positioning *It Ends with Us* as a work that exposes and questions the ideological foundations of abusive relationships.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the results of this research, several recommendations can be proposed for future academic studies and social applications. First, future researchers are encouraged to expand the analysis of *It Ends with Us* by incorporating additional theoretical frameworks, such as trauma theory, reader response theory, or psychological criticism. These perspectives could provide deeper insight into the novel's emotional impact on readers and the psychological dimensions of abusive relationships. It is also recommended that different approaches to analysis be adopted, such as the psychoanalytic approach, which analyzes trauma and behavior and studies violence in greater depth, focusing more on the violent person and less on the victim, who would be Ryle.

The book *It Ends with Us* is suggested to future researchers as a different approach to analyzing it than this thesis, focusing more on real-life experiences. It's recommended to compare the book with the film *It Ends with Us* and apply a different approach that reflects both the book and the film. It's also recommended to further analyze the character of Atlas Corrigan, focusing on his experiences in adolescence and how past traumas shaped him into a successful man.

Future researchers must maintain an objective and analytical tone. While novels often evoke strong emotional reactions, academic studies should prioritize textual evidence and theoretical support over personal opinions and personal thoughts, as allowing personal bias to influence the analysis undermines its credibility with the audience. This approach ensures credibility and academic rigor.

For prospective students who want to analyze the novel *It Ends with Us*, it is recommended to read the book several times. Reading it in physical form is especially helpful for understanding key words and gaining a deeper comprehension, as a physical book allows for note-taking, highlighting, and other activities. Students need to analyze each chapter of the book thoroughly, and this can be aided by rereading it. If using social media, follow the algorithm related to the book you are studying to learn more.

Finally, future researchers are advised to choose a book they enjoy on a specific topic about which they have knowledge and evidence. This analysis will be easier with some enjoyment and enthusiasm, leading to a more successful analysis one da

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