



Narratives of Trauma: Rejection and Psychological Disintegration in Elif Shafak's *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71145/rjsp.v4i1.559>

Abstract

This study explores the psychological impact of interpersonal rejection on identity formation in *10 Minutes 8 Seconds in This Strange World*. The study also analyzes how familial and interpersonal rejection influences the psychological development of the protagonist in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. The study used qualitative research methodology in which data collection was conducted using the primary text of *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. A purposive selection of narrative episodes in which familial neglect, abuse, interpersonal rejection, and relationships were selected for analysis. The study is also grounded in Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory, which is used in explaining the impact of interpersonal rejection on identity formation. The findings indicate that rejection plays an imperative role in an individual's life, commencing with parental rejection in early life and progressing through social and structural rejection, which finally manifests itself in emotional instability, inner shame, and fragmented identity. The analysis also indicates that rejection is not an individual experience but is closely linked with patriarchal and socio-cultural structures, which further emphasizes rejection in various stages of an individual's life. Although alternative communities provide some emotional support, it is not an adequate solution to alleviate the effects of early rejection. This research contributes to an emerging body of interdisciplinary scholarship through its integration of psychology and literary analysis, which provides an in-depth understanding of the role of fictional works in depicting inner psychological processes and also emphasizes the importance of IPARTheory in analyzing themes of trauma, marginalization, and humanity.

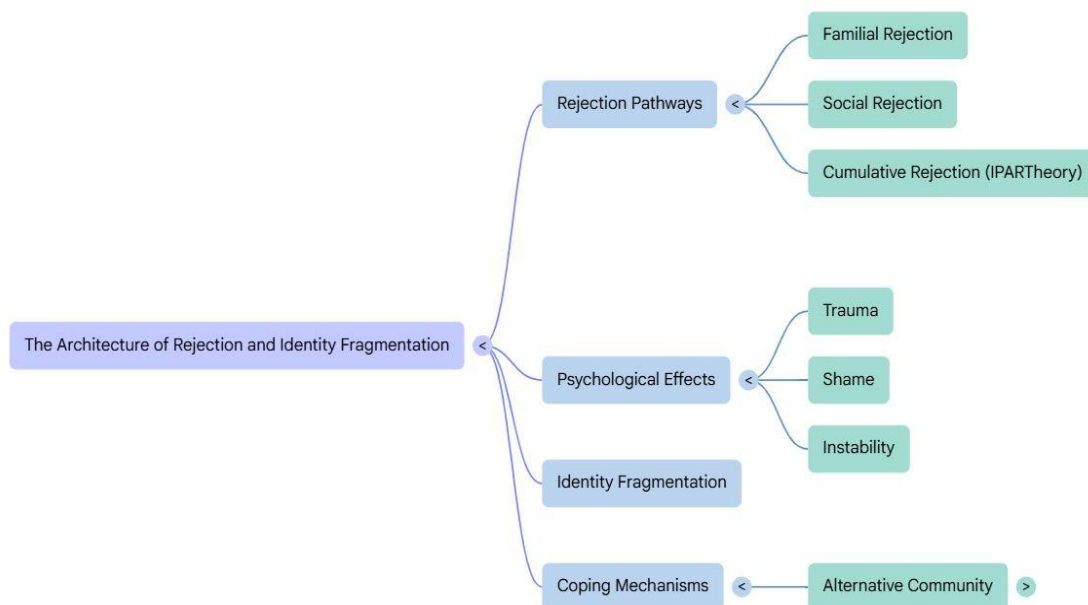
Keywords: Interpersonal Rejection; Identity Fragmentation; Psychological Trauma; Marginalization; Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory; Literary Analysis; *10 Minutes 38 Seconds In This Strange World*

Introduction

Interpersonal relationships are an integral part of human existence and play an important role in psychological development, emotional stability, and social identity. While being part of familial and social structures is associated with feelings of belonging and security, being rejected by society often has severe psychological implications for an individual. The notion of rejection is increasingly being viewed as a gradual and cumulative phenomenon in psychological and literary discourse, rather than an isolated घटना, and its implications for personality development and behavioral patterns are significant. This phenomenon is vividly portrayed in Elif Shafak's novel *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* (2019), which

revolves around the life story of Leila, who is an outcast in society and whose life is marked by familial and social rejections and abuses. The life story is presented in fragmented form as she dies and seeks to narrate her life story, emphasizing the various rejections she faces at different levels and in different capacities (Ijaz & Rabi, 2022). Despite the increasing scholarly attention devoted to *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, existing studies have largely concentrated on themes such as feminism, gender-based violence, otherness, and socio-political critique. While these approaches provide valuable insights into the novel's broader thematic concerns, they tend to overlook the psychological dimensions of rejection and its cumulative effects on character formation. Furthermore, there is a noticeable lack of theoretically grounded analyses that employ structured psychological frameworks to interpret the protagonist's experiences. In particular, the application of Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) remains significantly underexplored in literary studies of this text. This gap limits a comprehensive understanding of how rejection operates not only as a thematic construct but also as a psychological mechanism that shapes identity, behavior, and social positioning. Therefore, the present study addresses this limitation by offering an argument-driven, theory-based analysis that foregrounds the psychological consequences of rejection. The primary aim of this study is to explore the psychological effect of interpersonal rejection on the protagonist's identity formation in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. More specifically, the study aims to explore how familial and interpersonal rejection affects Leila's psychological development, as well as how rejection affects identity formation in terms of fragmentation and marginalization. More specifically, in relation to the above aims, the study is informed by the following two research questions: How does interpersonal rejection affect the psychological development of the protagonist? How does rejection affect identity formation in terms of fragmentation and marginalization in the socio-cultural context of the novel?

This study is informed by the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory), which was developed by Ronald P. Rohner. This theory offers a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of perceived acceptance and rejection throughout the lifespan. According to IPARTheory, people who are subjected to rejection, especially at the hands of their attachment figures, are more likely to experience psychological maladjustments. IPARTheory is founded on the assumption that the effects of perceived rejection are universal and transcultural; they affect the emotional and behavioral patterns of people regardless of their socio-cultural background. Additionally, the theory is founded on the assumption that the effects of rejection are cumulative and enduring; early rejection influences the personalities of people in their later lives. With regard to the study, IPARTheory is used as an analytical tool to understand the rejection experienced by the protagonist, which offers insights into the relationship between personal trauma and social structures (Javed Ashiq, Usman, Rabi, & Uzma, 2024). This study is important both theoretically and practically, as it contributes to the body of interdisciplinary scholarship through the integration of psychological theory and literary criticism. This study is important because, through the lens of IPARTheory and its exploration of the psychological themes in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, the reader is able to gain a more nuanced understanding of the concept of rejection, which is essential in the existing body of literary criticism surrounding the text. Additionally, the study is important because it expands the critical lens beyond the socio-political themes that are so commonly discussed in literary analyses of the text and instead engages with the psychological themes experienced by the protagonist, providing a more well-rounded understanding of the character development and thematic depth of the text. Finally, the study is important because it is relevant to the real-world implications of interpersonal rejection, emphasizing the need for acceptance and support in the development of the individual.



Literature Review

Rejection of individuals in interpersonal relationships has also received significant attention in the realm of psychological studies as an essential factor in determining the behavior of individuals and their formation of identity. The initial studies in the area of rejection have defined it as a multi-dimensional construct that involves family rejection, peer rejection, and relational rejection, which have significant and lasting effects on the mental state of individuals (Leary, 2003; Leary, 2010). Studies in the area of rejection have also revealed that rejection affects the brain in the same way as physical pain, which further emphasizes the significance of the effect of rejection (MacDonald & Leary, 2005). Moreover, individuals who face rejection in their lives also exhibit adverse behaviors such as aggression, withdrawal, and low self-esteem (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Rohner, 2015), which further emphasizes the lasting effect of rejection on the mental state of individuals. However, despite the significant attention given to the area of rejection in the realm of psychological studies, its application in the area of literary studies is still in its initial stages, which is creating a significant gap in the area of interdisciplinary studies of rejection in the context of literary works (Nawaz, Khan, & Rabi, 2024). Literary themes of marginalization and exclusion have been studied extensively within the framework of various literary theories, such as feminism, postcolonial theory, and theory of otherness. Studies on *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, by Elif Shafak, have commonly highlighted the socio-political aspects of exclusion, particularly with reference to gender subordination and cultural marginalization. For example, in their analysis of *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, Al-Sammarraie (2019) discusses how Shafak's work represents "otherness," in which marginalized groups are systematically excluded from the larger social framework. Similarly, in their analysis of the work, Salami and Taheri (2022) used feminist theory to discuss the exploitation of female bodies by patriarchal structures, in which the protagonist is portrayed as a victim of structural violence. Although such analyses offer interesting insights into the socio-cultural context of the novel, they have, in most cases, neglected to discuss the internal psychological effects of rejection, which is an integral aspect of the protagonist's development (Latif et al., 2026). A significant number of criticisms have also examined the themes of trauma, violence, and socio-economic inequality in the novel, thus further emphasizing its relevance to contemporary global issues. For instance, Mahdi et al. (2021) highlight that the text reveals themes of systemic gender discrimination and the exploitation of women in patriarchal societies. Similarly, Rehejeh (2021) reveals that the themes of marginalization persist beyond death, suggesting that social marginalization is akin to

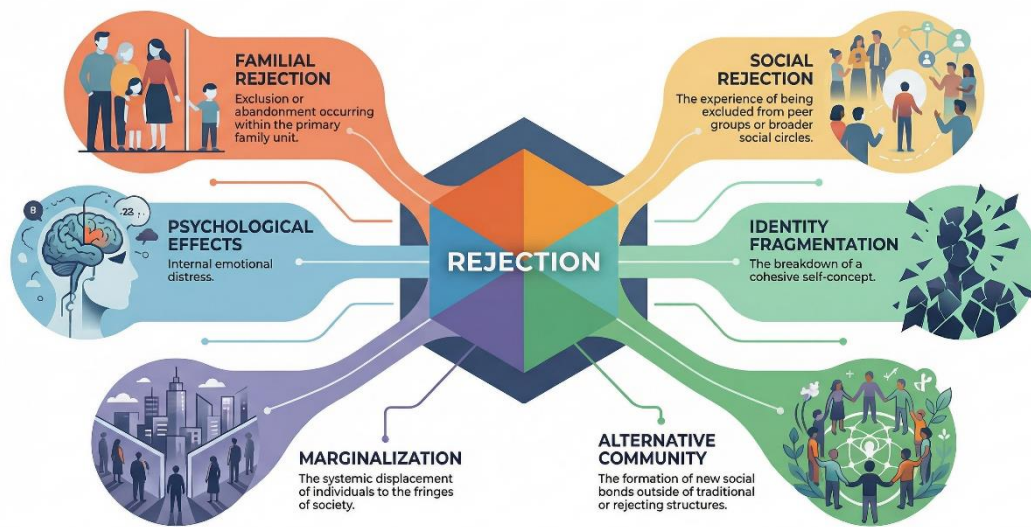
symbolic death and that it continues to deny people recognition and dignity. Reviews published in platforms like The New York Times and World Literature Today also highlight themes of social invisibility and the marginal existence of communities in the novel (Phillips, 2019; Semon, 2019; Ullah, Rabi, Khan, & Ahmad, 2025). However, it is observed that most of the existing literature is descriptive in nature and focuses on thematic identification rather than in-depth analysis. Moreover, it is also observed that most literature focuses on themes and ignores the psychological effects of marginalization, thus limiting the comprehensive understanding of the internal fragmentation that results from external marginalization (Rabi, Hussain, Ahmad, & Rabi, 2026). Moreover, Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory), which was proposed by Ronald P. Rohner, presents a powerful theoretical foundation to address these limitations by exploring the ubiquitous effects of perceived rejection during the entire lifespan of an individual.

According to IPARTheory, individuals who experience rejection, especially from their caregivers, are more likely to develop psychological maladjustments such as anxiety, hostility, emotional instability, and self-concept problems (Rohner, 2015; Rohner et al., 2019). The theory is supported by significant cross-cultural studies that demonstrated the ubiquitous effects of rejection in different socio-cultural settings (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002; Rohner & Britner, 2002). However, it is noteworthy that IPARTheory views rejection as a cumulative process in which the experience of rejection results in further feelings of marginalization and distress in an individual's life. The application of IPARTheory in different settings, including family and adolescent developmental stages, revealed that perceived rejection is highly correlated with psychological maladjustments and social withdrawal (Putnick et al., 2015; Ali et al., 2016; Rabi, Zahir, Aziz, Mukhtiar, & Bibi, 2025). However, the application of IPARTheory in the field of literary studies is still in its nascent stages, indicating tremendous opportunities for interdisciplinarity in the future (Khan et al., 2026).

With the recent adoption of interdisciplinary approaches, there has been some exploration of the relationship between psychology and literature, with emphasis on the importance of theoretical frameworks in the interpretation of literary texts. Literature has been seen not just as a reflection of the social realities around the characters but also as a source of understanding the psychological realities of the characters, especially those who are at the periphery of society (Burke, 2010; Hogan, 2011). With the inclusion of psychological theories such as IPARTheory, there is the opportunity to gain a more profound understanding of the characters' development, going beyond the thematic interpretation of the text. However, there is still the need to utilize this perspective in the interpretation of contemporary literature, which is largely dominated by socio-political analyses (Ahmad, Rabi, Sardar, Khan, & Begum, 2025).

In this context, this study aims to bridge the gap between psychology and literature through the application of IPARTheory in examining the theme of rejection in *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*. The study, through the exploration of the protagonist's experiences of rejection, aims to look into the effect of rejection on the psychological disintegration and fragmentation of the individual. Unlike previous studies that focused on thematic and ideological analysis, this study follows an argument-driven approach that situates rejection as a narrative device and a psychological construct (Hussain, Danish, Rabi, & Rabi, n.d.). In this manner, this study contributes to interdisciplinary studies by showing the applicability of psychology in literary analysis and a more holistic approach to the analysis of rejection as a lived and internalized experience.

The Architecture of Rejection: A Thematic Map



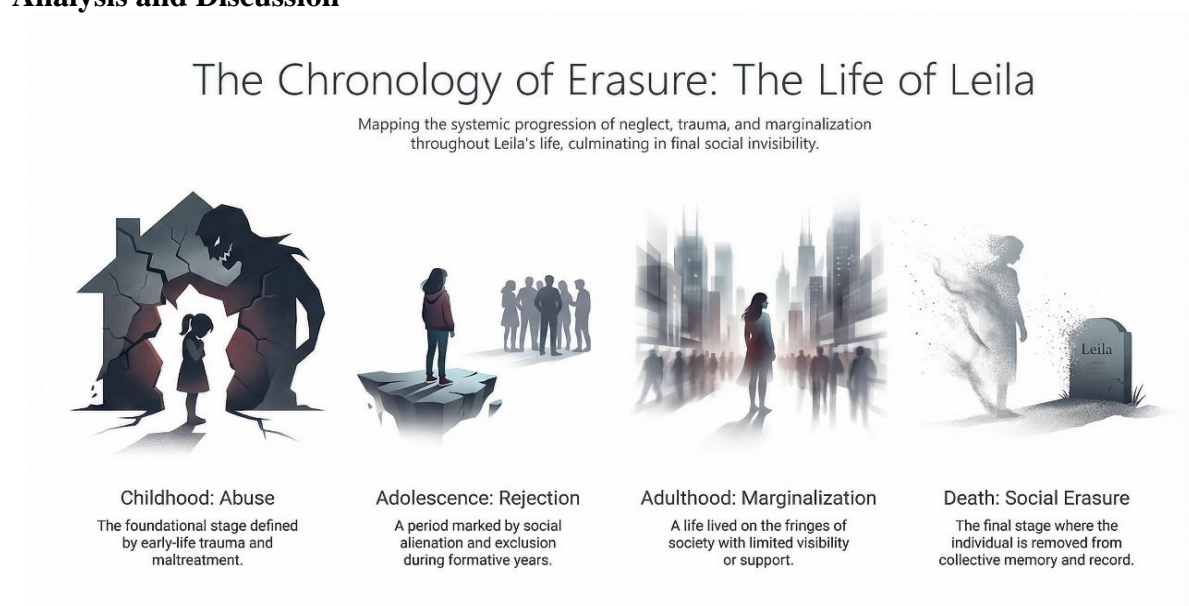
Methodology

The current study follows a qualitative research approach, which is based on textual analysis to investigate the psychological aspects of interpersonal rejection in literature. The qualitative research approach is appropriate for the study of literature because it allows for the in-depth analysis of the narrative structures, character development, and thematic depth in literature. The qualitative research approach, which is used in the current study, is interpretive and analytical, with an emphasis on understanding the construction, experience, and internalization of rejection in the text. Unlike quantitative research, which relies on numerical data, the qualitative approach in the current study relies on the interpretive analysis of the text to understand the underlying psychological processes that influence the construction of the protagonist's personality. This is appropriate for the study because it allows for an in-depth analysis of both the textual features of the novel and the psychological analysis, thus making it suitable for the purpose of the study. The main text for the study was chosen to be *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* by Elif Shafak. The main text was chosen for this study because of the rich thematic content on the issues of marginalization, trauma, and rejection by fellow humans. It was also chosen because of its international acclaim in contemporary literary theory. The narrative of the story, which is told through the memories of the protagonist in the moments following her death, offers an interesting lens through which to study the effects of rejection in various stages of life. Moreover, there are various instances of rejection by fellow humans in the story, which make it an interesting subject for analysis from a psychological theory perspective. The selection of the main text for the study can thus be described as purposeful, considering its suitability to the research objectives. The basis of this study is rooted in the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory), which was conceptualized by Ronald P. Rohner. This theory offers an all-encompassing perspective in the analysis of the effects of perceived rejection. According to this theory, individuals who experience rejection, particularly from primary caregivers, are more likely to develop emotional and behavioral maladjustments. The theory also offers the perspective that the effects of rejection are universal and cumulative. In the context of this study, the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory offers a conceptual perspective in the analysis of the experiences of the protagonist. The framework offers the advantage of conducting an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the effects of rejection in the development of the emotional and behavioral aspects of the protagonist. The framework offers the advantage of conducting an in-depth and rigorous analysis of the effects of rejection in the development of the emotional and behavioral aspects of the protagonist.

It is noteworthy that the study utilizes a thematic and interpretive method of analysis. The significant events in the narrative are pinpointed and analyzed based on their association with the phenomenon of interpersonal rejection, including instances of familial neglect, social rejection, and emotional distress. The events are further analyzed in accordance with the fundamental constructs of IPARTheory, which include perceived rejection, psychological maladjustment, and identity fragmentation. The method of analysis is systematic and follows three steps: first, pinpointing the patterns of rejection in the narrative; second, classifying the patterns of rejection based on their sources and manifestations; and finally, interpreting their psychological implications in accordance with the theoretical constructs of IPARTheory. Such an approach ensures the thematic and logical consistency of the narrative and the theoretical constructs with the themes of rejection in the narrative.

Since the present study is based on the examination of a published literary text, it is not related to human subjects and therefore does not fall under the category of requiring ethical clearance. However, ethical practices are maintained by giving due credit to sources, presenting the text in an accurate manner, and adhering to the principles of academic integrity. All the theoretical frameworks and critical approaches are appropriately credited to the original authors in order to maintain academic integrity and avoid plagiarism in scholarly activities. Moreover, the examination of the text is done in an ethical manner by not ignoring the themes of trauma, abuse, and marginalization နှင်ပိတ်မှု in the narrative. However, despite the contributions made in the study, it has some inherent limitations. First and foremost, the study is based on the analysis of one literary text. This might limit the generalization of the study in the context of the whole of literature. Furthermore, the qualitative and interpretive approach that the researcher has adopted might add some degree of subjectivity to the study. Though the adoption of an already established theory like IPARTheory might minimize this limitation to some extent, the researcher might not be able to remain perfectly objective. The researcher's focus on the psychological aspects of the phenomenon might minimize the scope of the researcher addressing the other important aspects of the phenomenon.

Analysis and Discussion



Familial Rejection and the Origins of Psychological Trauma

In *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, Elif Shafak portrays familial rejection as the central axis on which the disintegration of the protagonist Leila's psyche is portrayed. Through the interpretive lens of Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPAR Theory) developed by Ronald P. Rohner, this study contends that Leila's experience of early

emotional neglect and parental invalidation represents a process of cumulative trauma that shapes Leila's personality, emotions, and decisions. IPAR Theory contends that perceived rejection, particularly from significant caregivers, generates enduring psychological maladjustment, including anxiety, hostility, dependency, and self-esteem (Rohner, 2004). Leila's childhood experience vividly illustrates this theory with striking clarity. Already at the outset, there is subtle but significant marginalization in Leila's domestic setting. The unwillingness of her cousins to share space with Leila is seemingly trivial. However, in the context of IPAR theory, it is recognized that emotional non-acceptance is signified at an early stage. Such non-acceptance is what children internalize in relation to their own worth. Such early marginalization is catastrophic in conjunction with the sexual abuse by her uncle. The abuse is obviously highly traumatic. However, what adds to its psychological impact is the lack of familial protection and the presence of moral condemnation. Rather than acknowledging Leila's victimization, there is reframing of behavior in terms of deviance, which transforms the victim into an accused. This flip in moral accountability is of significant importance in understanding Leila's psychological breakdown. Her father's verbal aggression, as well as his moralizing, represents the hostility and rejection that IPAR Theory identifies as having a greater damaging effect on children than physical punishment. Her father's scolding, which calls into question Leila's morality and identity, represents not only punishment but also an act of identity imposition. According to Rohner's personality sub-theory, children who experience rejection from their parents are likely to develop a negative self-representation, viewing themselves as unlovable and flawed from an intrinsic sense. Leila's gradual development of shame, in which she believes she carries filth within herself, represents this process of psychological inscription. Furthermore, the father's unwavering loyalty to the abusive uncle is an egregious dereliction of parental duty that serves to further alienate Leila emotionally. According to IPARTheory, parental support is crucial for healthy psychological development; thus, its absence not only affects emotional stability but also leads to loss of faith in human relationships. Leila's understanding that her father will always be against her is a moment of psychological disconnection. This is because it silences her, not due to a lack of voice, but in anticipation of being dismissed. This is an expression of learned helplessness, as described by contemporary trauma theorists like Herman (1992), whereby people who have been invalidated in the past will disengage from seeking help. The extension of rejection into the spiritual realm adds further complexity to Leila's psychological state. When Leila's father enforces a rigid, punitive notion of divine justice, Leila's worldview is filtered through a theological notion of condemnation. She begins to believe that she is even rejected by God, which eliminates any possibility of transcendent solace. This spiritual rejection is in line with IPARTheory's sociocultural sub-theory, which acknowledges that cultural or spiritual constructs may act as a filter in relation to feelings of acceptance or rejection. However, in Leila's life, religion is not used in a redemptive manner but rather as an extension of patriarchal control. Thus, the culmination of all these different facets of rejection—family, moral, and spiritual, leads to the exile of Leila. The leaving of her home is not an act of liberation but is forced upon her by the cumulative effect of her rejection. The attempt of her family to resolve the crisis through forced marriage is an example of the systemic nature of rejection, in which individual pain is subjugated to the larger cause of family honor. This is the essence of the gender role in rejection, in which the agency of Leila is negated in favor of patriarchal order. Thus, her exodus to Istanbul is not an escape from trauma but an extension of it, which proves the assertion of IPARTheory that early rejection is crucial in determining later life outcomes.

Social Rejection and the Reinforcement of Marginality

Although familial rejection is the catalyst for Leila's psychological fragmentation, the larger social environment in Istanbul perpetuates Leila's marginalization. The novel depicts society as not just a place but a structural system that maintains marginalization, especially for those

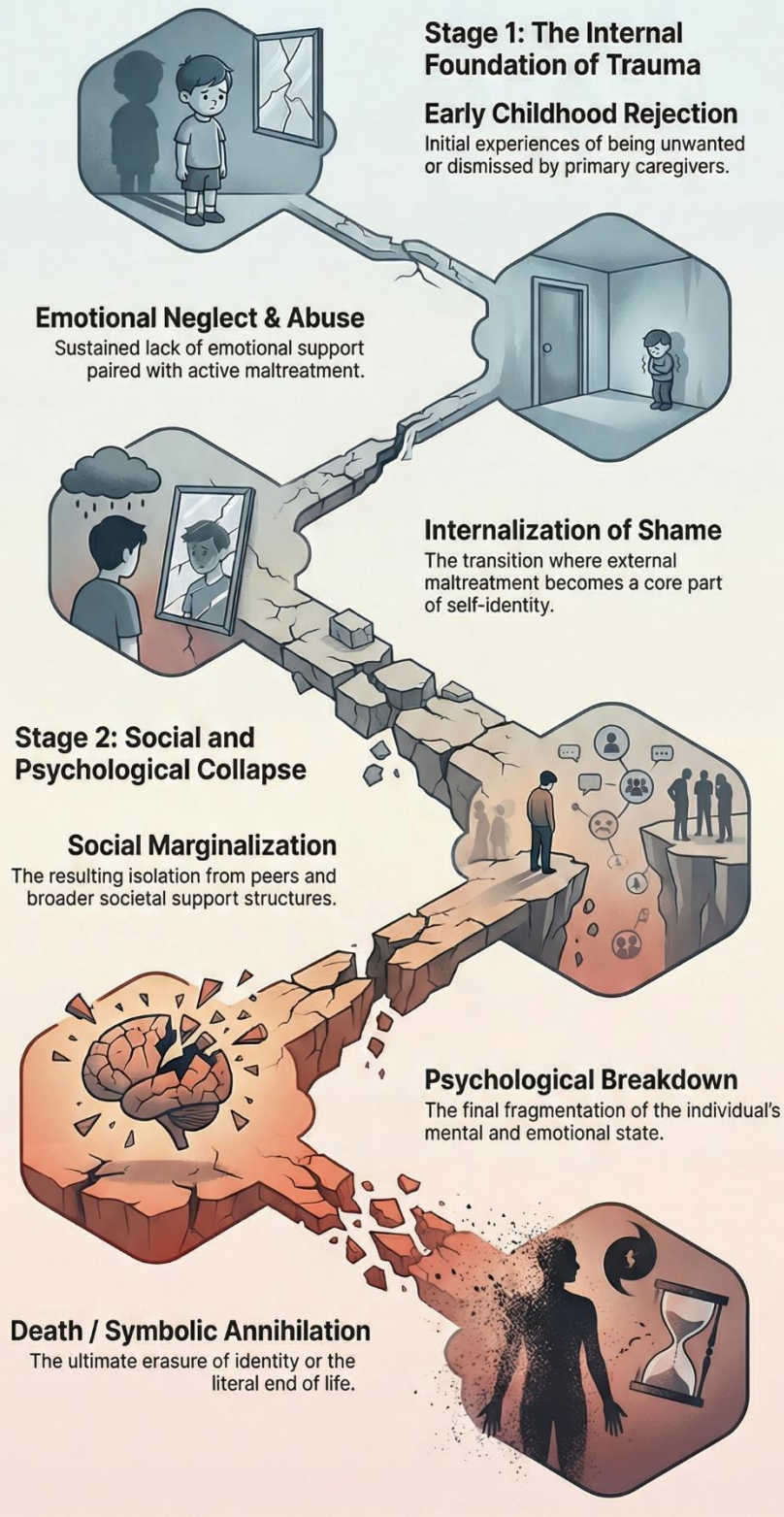
who are most susceptible to it. From an IPAR Theory standpoint, this is an extension of rejection beyond the primary individual to the larger sociocultural environment, where unacceptance continues in various forms. Leila's journey into prostitution is representative of this structural marginalization. Rather than being indicative of moral failings, Leila's circumstances are revealed as a direct result of her vulnerability stemming from previous rejections. Without familial and social support structures, she is rendered vulnerable to exploitation and thus demonstrates the nature in which rejection acts as a causal chain rather than an isolated event. This is in accordance with Rohner's claims that early rejections increase the chances of experiencing further rejections in adulthood, especially in socialized settings. The way in which the novel describes the death of Leila and the aftermath of it serves to further reinforce this criticism of exclusion in society.

The way in which her body is discarded in the garbage bin represents the ultimate lack of respect for human dignity. This is reminiscent of the concept of symbolic annihilation, in which the individual is excluded from society and made invisible and discardable. The failure of her family to claim her body after death further extends this exclusion beyond the confines of the living. The fact that she is placed in the Cemetery of the Companionless represents the extent to which she was socially unclaimed and existed in an existential vacuum. Significantly, the experience of Leila is not unique but is also reflected in the lives of other characters in different manifestations. Nalan, Jameelah, and Humeyra are characters who reflect different facets of social rejection, and their experiences are similar in their commonality of social marginality. Nalan's rejection is based on her gender nonconformity, as society is not willing to accommodate gender identities that do not conform to traditional notions of gender classification. Jameelah's narrative is based on familial neglect and cultural alienation, and Humeyra's pain is based on the हिंसात्मक nature of patriarchal marriage relationships.

However, all the characters show similar manifestations of displacement and alienation, which strengthens the argument of IPAR Theory in relation to the commonality of the effect of rejection. By these cross-cutting narratives, the novel presents the reader with the idea of rejection as a systemic process that is deeply ingrained in the culture and the family. It also contests the idea that marginalization is caused by personal failure and instead emphasizes the role that the social system plays in the process. In this regard, the novel is in line with the general critical perspective that presents marginality as socially constructed rather than personally deficient.

| Type of Rejection | Source | Effects | Example in Text |
|-------------------|---------|---------------|---------------------|
| Familial | Parents | Shame, trauma | Childhood |
| Social | Society | Marginality | Prostitution |
| Structural | Culture | Exclusion | Burial ¹ |

The Descent: The Process of Psychological Disintegration



Psychological Disintegration and the Internalization of Rejection

The cumulative effects of sustained rejection are most evident in Leila's psychological disintegration, in which external rejection is internalized as self-rejection. According to IPAR Theory's coping sub-theory, people differ in their capacity to deal with rejection;

nevertheless, sustained rejection with multiple layers can overwhelm an individual's coping capacity, leading to adverse psychological outcomes. Leila's case illustrates this process in which she loses the capacity to fight back against the negative identities that are imposed on her. Her inner life is permeated by feelings of shame, guilt, and self-blame, which demonstrate the depth of internalization of rejection. Rather than viewing her pain as a result of external *ظلم*, she understands it as a reflection of her intrinsic *दोषपूर्ण* character. This move from external blame to internal *दोष* represents an important phase in the process of psychological collapse, in which individuals accept the *मूल्यांकन* of their oppressors. Several trauma theorists have pointed to the process of internalization leading to split identity formation, in which the individual feels both *दोष* and innocence (Herman, 1992). Moreover, Leila's inability to express what had occurred or seek assistance is also an example of the silencing effect of rejection. Having been rejected on numerous occasions where she had sought assistance, Leila had become desensitized to seeking further assistance, which is evident in her withdrawal. This state is also in line with what is described in IPARTheory, which states that individuals often withdraw from further interactions in order to avoid further psychological pain. The ultimate destiny of such an individual, characterized by violence, death, and social oblivion, represents the *अंतिम* result of such a psychological process. Lack of recognition even in death is indicative of *पूर्ण* internalization of rejection, where the individual's existence is denied both externally and internally. Leila's life is an example of how rejection can lead to total psychological and social annihilation.

Formation of Alternative Community: Acceptance as Resistance

Under the overarching theme of rejection, the creation of an alternative community is presented as a counter-narrative of acceptance and *المقاومة*. The "water family," comprised of marginalized social actors who have been rejected by their biological families, symbolizes a space of emotional validation and care. The nature of these relationships within the context of IPARTheory is that they serve as a form of compensatory attachment that helps to reduce the *آثار*. The relationships that Leila establishes with Nalan, Jameelah, Zaynab, and others are marked by empathy and unconditional acceptance. These relationships are lacking in the family setting. The relationships that these characters have with each other are not *случайны* but are the result of the common experience of exclusion. The symbolic acts of care that these characters extend to one another are the means by which they seek to reinvent a sense of belonging.

However, this alternative community is not depicted in the novel as a *समाधान*. Although it provides emotional security, it does not compensate for the psychological damage caused by early rejection. The presence of trauma in this community implies that acceptance is effective up to a point. This underlines the central idea of IPARTheory that early relational experiences leave an indelible mark on psychological development that cannot be reversed by later relationships. Nonetheless, the idea of the "water family" has profound theoretical implications. Firstly, the concept of the "water family" refutes the deterministic interpretation of rejection through the capacity of the individual to create another structure of belonging. However, the concept also points to the uniqueness of the original acceptance, indicating that though the "water family" may reduce the pain of rejection, it cannot remove it altogether. Therefore, the novel portrays a complex understanding of acceptance that is not intended to cure but to fight against the effects of rejection.

Conclusion

This study has critically analyzed the overarching theme of rejection in the text *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World* through the theoretical perspective of Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) developed by Ronald P. Rohner. This critical

discourse has clearly established the significance of rejection as a key structural and psychological factor in the lives of the marginalized characters, especially Leila, through the process of social and institutional rejection, which has led to the manifestation of psychological outcomes of rejection, including fragmented identity, shame, and emotional detachment. This critical discourse has clearly established the significance of parental rejection, which is the key concept of the personality sub-theory of IPARTheory, in determining the course of adulthood, thereby establishing the universality of the theory in the literary context. Moreover, the research also shows that rejection in the novel is not an isolated or individual event, but rather a systemic event embedded in sociocultural and patriarchal structures. The stories of Leila, as well as other characters such as Nalan, Jameelah, and Humeyra, demonstrate the way in which rejection extends beyond individual interactions to become institutionalized through societal, gender, and moral constructs. Nonetheless, the creation of an alternative “water family” also underscores the human capacity for seeking acceptance and creating new belonging in the face of rejection. Nonetheless, the research argues that such alternative relationships, though beneficial, cannot negate the enduring effects of early rejection, thus underscoring the long-lasting effects of rejection as proposed by IPARTheory.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that future research in the field of literary studies investigate further the use of psychological frameworks, such as IPARTheory, in literary analyses, especially those that deal with the themes of trauma, marginalization, and identity formation. Using an interdisciplinary approach, which combines literary criticism with psychological, sociological, and gender studies, would provide more profound insights into the ways in which literary narratives reflect and comment on real-life human experiences. Further research could also be done in comparing different literary texts to check the validity of the findings in relation to the themes of rejection and acceptance.

Additionally, this study suggests that there should be more critical analysis of marginalized groups in literature, especially in relation to gender-based violence, social exclusion, and emotional neglect. Literary works, such as *10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World*, should be incorporated into the academic curriculum to raise awareness of the psychological and social effects of rejection. This, in turn, may encourage empathetic responses from readers and help create a wider debate on human rights, social justice, and mental well-being. Finally, this study suggests that future researchers should extend this area of study to look at resilience, resistance, and healing mechanisms within literary characters, moving away from the analysis of trauma and toward a more holistic approach to the study of human nature.

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