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The Nexus of Smell, Taste and Memories in Shafak's *10 Mins and 38 Seconds in this Strange World*

Dr. Fariha Chaudhary¹, Farheen Akhtar Qadri²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

²PhD Research Student, Department of English, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan

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Corresponding Author:

Dr. Fariha Chaudhary

Email:

drfarihach@bzu.edu.pk

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ABSTRACT

The nexus of smell, taste and memories creates a powerful inter-connection that effectively allows for self-identification through transcending the boundaries of time and place, as the present research hopes to demonstrate. The chosen narrative commences as Leila, a prostitute, breathes her last, being stabbed to death. During the 10 minutes and 38 seconds following her death, Leila's mind recalls certain memories which are interestingly associated with certain fragrances and aromas. These, in turn, conjure certain spaces through which the details of her life are unfolded. The present research aims to demonstrate this interplay through exploring the intricacies and nexus of memory, smell and space, which not only meshes the division of time and space but enables an individual to travel through the memory lanes and construct a self-map. Soja's (1996) theory of space detailing the three kinds of spaces allows this research the much-needed theoretical thrust for this qualitative inquiry. The research significantly indicates the importance of smell memories and their connection to not only certain spaces and places but also lived experiences, which, in turn, play a vital role in connecting and locating a person individually as well as collectively.



Introduction

The senses of smell and taste are often relegated to the peripheries of literary analysis, yet they play a significant role in human perception and spatial belonging. These are two powerful senses that possess the evocative power to conjure the memories of the past as well as certain spaces associated with those memories. It is often debated that certain aromas, fragrances and tastes recall certain memories, thereby strongly placing human identity in its specific culture and environment. Specifically, the senses of smell and taste seem to possess “a unique emotional power” in recalling memories due to their “closer proximity to the amygdala, the key site to processing emotions” (Straczuk, 2020, p. 109). Sutton (as cited in Straczuk, 2020) also stresses the conjunction of taste and smell as “belonging to the most ephemeral but also emotive and nostalgic feelings”. He further explains how the interplay of sensations with social and cultural contexts makes them, “virtual archetypal symbols” (ibid., p. 110). Rachel Herz points out that the odor-evoked memories are not only unique in nature but also have the ability to “bring our past back to us more viscerally and transportatively than any other type of memory experience” (Herz, 2016). Herz, thus, stresses the need to use the relationship between the, “olfaction and the neural substrates of emotion to induce emotional and physiological responses for the improvement of human health and well-being” (ibid., p. 1).

Based on these premises, the present research critically analyses Elif Shafak’s novel, *10 Minutes and 38 Seconds in the Strange World*, to see how memories can recall certain smells, tastes, as well as spaces and places in a nexus that enables the individual to transcend the boundaries of time and place. The plot of the story is about the memories of a dying prostitute, Leila, who is stabbed on the road. As she dies, the post-mortem 10 minutes and 38 Seconds enable her mind to recall certain memories of smells which are related to incidents, people, places and experiences of her life. It is at the nexus of the smell memories and places that Leila is able to locate herself. In other words, as her dying mind relapses into nothingness, the image of herself manifests hugely in the form of a web of smell memories, places and experiences. The ‘strange world’ to which the title alludes is the very nexus where smell memories display their tendency to recall certain places, people, emotions and experiences, both happy and painful, that define a person.

The sensual journey of Tequila Leila, the protagonist of the novel, is based in Istanbul, where Leila, along with her five socially outcast friends, creates a surrogate family as their own families fail to protect them. Being the daughter of her father’s second wife, Leila leaves eastern Turkey, her birthplace, after experiencing molestation, gender discrimination, male dominance, voicelessness and subjugation. Her escape to Istanbul introduces the young Leila to a world of different yet equally grave challenges. Her short life brutally ends as she is murdered and dumped in a bin. As she slips into death, her mind throws back at her certain glimpses from her life. These images of people, places, spaces, emotions and experiences are deeply interlinked with certain smells and aromas. Amidst a major, social, cultural and political background to the narrative, lies this subtle yet pervasive idea, as this research will demonstrate, of how memory, space and smells can combine to assert themselves in overwhelmingly powerful ways in connecting an individual to their life, environment, past places and experiences that otherwise seem impossible to recall.

The article argues that Shafak constructs a world of consciousness for her protagonist, after her physical body perishes, in such a way that smell and taste work as triggers to what Edward Soja

(Soja, 1996) described as the Thirdspace, which is a lived dynamic space where the real and the imagined meet. Using Soja's ideas as its theoretical underpinnings, the article examines how Leila's sensory flashbacks transform her physical, spatial, and emotional experiences into memory, thus reconstructing her sense of self and personal identity. The study will contribute to the existing scholarship by challenging the heavily visual-centric literary and cultural theory. It will also highlight how the senses of smell and taste help reconstruct the past and reimagine the self in a spatial sense.

Literature Review

According to Beer (2007), "Space is always filled with smells produced by the components of the environment, influenced by climate and human actions" (p. 188). Xiao et al (2020) assert that smells work to connect people emotionally, even though smells lack physical presence, yet "smell scapes are spatially structured from materials which construct space" (p. 1). Furthermore, reactions to smells are learned in early childhood and do not tend to change later in life, which indicates the role of culture on the perception of smells.

The human ability to recall tastes and smells is a complex cognitive process that has fascinated scholars in many disciplines. Many areas of scientific, anthropological, cultural, and literary studies have recognized the importance of olfactory and gustatory stimuli in evoking memories of the past and other spatial recollections. Classen et al. (1994) similarly argue that the sensory hierarchy in Western culture privileges sight and sound over smell and taste. It has historically ignored these senses in its dominant discourse. To counter that lack, contemporary sensory scholarship has sought to restore the centrality of olfaction and gustation in understanding embodied experience and spatial perception (Drobnick, 2006; Low, 2017).

Smell and taste are intricately linked to spatial memory, suggesting that our chemosensory experiences are often contextualized by the environments in which they occur (Dahmani et al., 2018; Schwarz, & Hamburger 2023). Herz (2016) asserts that the direct connection of the olfactory system to the amygdala and hippocampus is the main cause of the intensity and clarity of odor-evoked memories, which are 'emotionally potent, durable, and deeply personal' (p. 2). This neurological link is reminiscent of Marcel Proust's famous metaphor of the *petite madeleine*, a small cake that triggered a flood of sudden, powerful childhood memories. This is an example of involuntary memory in which taste evokes the totality of lived experience (Delacour, 2001). Anthropological studies have illustrated that smells are culturally coded experiences and have their social significance. As Beer (2007) observes, 'space is always filled with smells produced by the components of the environment, influenced by climate and human actions' (p.188). This highlights the symbolic importance of the sense of smell, through which individual and even collective identities are negotiated.

Xiao et al (2020) assert that smells work to connect people emotionally, even though smells lack physical presence, yet "smellscapes are spatially structured from materials which construct space" (p. 1), highlighting how sensory atmospheres contribute to the creation of place and affective belonging. Furthermore, reactions to smells are learned in early childhood and do not tend to change later in life, which indicates the role of culture in the perception of smells. Abbassy, El-Husseiny, and Shaker (2025) conceptualize smell as a cognitive mapping tool that enhances 'spatial awareness and emotional attachment within urban environments' (p. 5). These

olfactory and gustatory cues contribute significantly to the formation of cognitive maps and the broader construction of a "sense of place" within urban environments and architectural designs. These ideas challenge what Spence (2020) calls the traditional "ocular centrism" of such fields. This integration acknowledges the multisensory nature of human perception, moving beyond a sole reliance on visual input to consider how scent and flavor can actively shape spatial understanding and emotional connections to specific locations (Spence, 2020).

The study of senses also extends into psychological realm, showing that odor-evoked memories have vividness and a power to bring to the fore emotional connections due to their neural encoding. Chu and Downes (2000) found that olfactory cues can trigger older and emotionally positive memories than those evoked by verbal or visual stimuli. Sutton (2001) and Seremetakis (1994) extend this argument to the realm of cultural memory. They argue that sensory memories function as a performative act through which individual memory intersects with collective history. Recent spatial studies have also found a link between sense of smell and our perception of spaces. Dahmani et al. (2018) demonstrate that the brain's olfactory pathways and human navigational processes are closely connected and that smell helps our mind in the formation of cognitive mapping of our surroundings. Schwarz and Hamburger (2024) similarly observed that 'memory effects of visual and olfactory landmark information in human wayfinding,' hence asserting the interdependence of smell, space, and orientation (p. 37). These studies have now expanded to postcolonial and feminist frameworks and explore ways in which our sense of smell and space help us in identity formation and belonging. Scholars such as Drozdowski et. al. (2016) and Ahmed (2014) emphasize that sensory memory plays a vital role in articulating displacement and belonging, particularly in contexts of migration and marginalization. The politics of smell is associated with class, gender, and ethnicity and becomes a vehicle for understanding how memory and identity are spatially inscribed and contested.

Theoretical framework

Soja (1996) linked the notion of geography with the Marxist conception of geography. He states that changes in geography and physical surroundings change their inhabitants. Soja proposed the concept of Thirdspace, which, according to him, is a space that acts as a 'fully lived space'. Soja described the concept of three spaces by giving them the names 'First Space', 'Second Space' and 'Third Space'. The First Space is called real space, and can be understood as urban space. The term refers to the physical aspects of the buildings, encompassing the spaces that can be physically touched and visually observed. On the contrary, the second space deals with the 'imagined' space and those that are representational. The word representational can be used for the way space is seen, perceived and understood. This denotes the conceived or imagined dimension of spatial experience, encompassing the mental and symbolic representations through which individuals interpret, idealize, or conceptualize their surroundings. Linking the phenomena with the real and the urban spaces, Soja came forward with the notion of third space. According to him, the combination of real and imagined spaces is the third space, and it includes the binary space of both and is usually social in nature. This space gives room to a way of interpreting. Soja also emphasizes a deliberate "reappropriation" (p. 53) to produce a concept of wide critical scope and spatial possibilities. Third space is:

The space where all spaces are, *Everything* comes together in Thirdspace: subjectivity and objectivity, the abstract and the concrete, the

real and the imagined, the knowable and the unimaginable, the repetitive and the differential, structure and agency, mind and body, consciousness and the unconscious, the disciplined and the transdisciplinary, everyday life and unending history (Soja, 1996, p. 56-57).

From this description, it can be inferred that the Thirdspace incorporates the idea of being the real space, including the experiences of what is lived, as well as the imagined space, which the mind conceives. Similarly, Thirdspace gives the idea of the virtual world also. As Soja explains, the experiences that a person goes through while being in a first space are transported to the Thirdspace by the mediation that happens in the second space.

Memory is related to the concept of space, as it helps in remembering things, and spatiality it is related to the process of interpreting and mediating and all that happens through the psychological processing of memory. As proposed by Craik and Lockhart (1990), memories just don't reside in the brain; rather, there are two levels which are involved in maintaining and bringing the flashbacks to mind. Those two levels are processing and rehearsal of memories. Linking this model with Soja's theory, whatever is felt and lived in the First space is integrated through the memory storehouse to the Thirdspace, passing through the storehouses in the second space as well. Spatial memory inside the brain stores and retrieves the information. The retrieval of objects as well as the places that happen within the living organisms, can be credited to the role of spatial memory.

Spatial memory and fragrances are related to one another. As far as the role of spatial memory is concerned, all five senses are linked with one another and thus are operated by the memory. Research on spatial memory and the sense of smell has shown that both are closely linked in how the brain processes information about place and experience. According to studies in neuroscience, the olfactory system is directly connected with the hippocampus, the part of the brain that stores spatial memory. When we smell something, the odor not only signals the kind of environment we are in but also recalls the event that happened there. The Scientist (2019) and ScienceDaily (2018) both report that individuals who are better at identifying smells also tend to have stronger spatial memory. This shows that navigation and smell are connected through the same neural pathways. Further research confirms this connection. Experiments on rats and humans alike demonstrate that the brain can associate particular odors with locations, helping us navigate and remember where certain events occurred (Schwarz et al., 2023). Similarly, Masaoka et al. (2021) and Woo et al. (2023) show that odors can activate the brain's memory centres, including the hippocampus and orbitofrontal cortex, and even improve memory performance through repeated exposure. Henceforth, with Soja's theory of space and later on linking it with the spatial memory, the link between space, fragrance and memory can be retrieved.

This concept of *Third Space* helps analyze Shafak's novel because the novel deals with the protagonist's posthumous memories of material location and the psychological interiors of her personal experiences. This space is neither wholly physical nor entirely mental; rather, it is a liminal realm where memory and sensation converge to reconstitute identity.

Analysis

The novel provides us with instances in which the memories are associated with specific kinds of fragrance that complement and bring back all kinds of pleasant memories, followed by the adverse incidents of her life. In literature, memories play an important role as they inform the audience regarding the journey of the characters and, most importantly, the ugly and pleasant experiences of the protagonist as well. Similarly, memories play a role in exploring the kinds of relationships that several characters have with one another. Memory plays a central role in describing a character and the dimensions of its personal identity. Shafak has associated the memories and fragrance with the life story of Leila after her death, and the first part of the novel revolves around the flashbacks of her life. There are 10 minutes and 38 seconds, which are attributed to the reliving of Leila's whole life in her mind's eye. Her brain is in the liminal space between life and death and this is where her memories resurface, presenting a picture of her identity. Shafak has described the scene after she died in the following words,

“In her mind she kept replaying the last moments of her life, asking herself where things had gone wrong People thought you changed into a corpse the instant you exhaled your last breath. But things were not clear-cut like that. Just as there were countless shades between jet black and brilliant white, so there were multiple stages of this thing called ‘eternal rest’.”
(Shafak, 2019, p. 1)

The writer gives the readers a hint that now, as Leila's heart has stopped, her body still remembers what tribulations it has passed through, and all those flashbacks will bring the story together. The first thing she remembers is the night before her death, as “she had left her fingerprints on a whisky glass, and a trace of her perfume” (Shafak, 2019, 1). That sensory awakening is associated with an awareness of her spatial surroundings, the sensation of her bed, her scarf, and the sight of the full moon in the sky. At the final moments of her mental existence, her brain enters into a heightened consciousness. At this moment, her sense of temporality changes as memory takes hold, past and present become one.

Although her heart had stopped beating, her brain was resisting, a fighter till the end. Her memory surged forth, eager and diligent, collecting pieces of a life that was speeding to a close Time became fluid, a fast flow of recollections seeping into one another, the past and the present inseparable.
(Shafak, 2019, 19)

Leila's story is centered on two spaces: one is her father's house, in which she spent her childhood and a few of her teenage years. The second is the urban space in Istanbul, its brothels and busy lanes. The city is apparently in stark contrast to her childhood home. However, Leila's transition from a child to a prostitute is the natural progression of the traumas of her childhood. She lost the sense of security that a family should provide. Her anxieties and anger at being abused shape her temperament.

To begin with, Leila's mind recollected the memories of her birth, and the very first taste that her tongue felt was that of salt. Locker (2021) wrote an article regarding the connection between taste and memory; tastes are associated with the memories where something good or bad has happened. The memory and fragrance of salt is associated with the birth of Leila, and she

remembers everything that has happened on that occasion. The midwife rubs salt onto the infant Leila's body to bring her to life, as she was not crying when she was born. Moreover, salt was the first thing that she tasted; therefore, the very first smell as well as the taste that she tasted was associated with that of salt. With this smell, she remembers the place where she was born, her father's authoritarian nature, and her mother's helplessness at Leila being given to her father's first wife as a gift. The atmosphere of a middle-class, rigid-minded man's house is introduced, where women are secondary to men. The smell of salt also locates her in the geography of a body and gives her a corporeal existence. She relives the ritual of birth and remembers her first human touch.

As soon as her mind is processing several tastes, Leila remembers the amalgamation of several tastes altogether. She remembers quite contrasting tastes the second time. This time, Leila's mind remembers the taste of Lemon and Sugar. As proposed by Soja (1996) Third space is the place where people exist and make contact. As far as this memory of Leila is concerned, it is related to the presence in the third space as she remembers the day when she smelled lemon and sugar and the taste reminded her of traditional sweets, as well as the crowd of several ladies all gathered for waxing. Soja (1996) has described the third space as the place where intellectual as well as empirical journey happens. All the fragrances that Leila remembers are related to the real experiences that she has witnessed, and now her mind is returning all those experiences back to her conscious mind once again.

Shafak describes the taste of lemon and sugar as contrasting, because Leila was discovering the bittersweet life of being a woman in a Turkish household. Women were confined to the house, but they found moments of joy in their mutual camaraderie, this specific taste being associated with the regular ritual of waxing, when women from the neighborhood gathered and roamed around the house freely in skimpy clothes, discussing private matters without embarrassment that Leila's immature mind found hard to digest. As she was growing up, she found increasing restrictions being placed on her mobility. By the end of this particular reminiscence, she discovers that her biological mother is the half insane woman whom she calls her aunt Binnaz. Binnaz's mental health deteriorated after Leila's birth, and it is only now that she discloses her true relationship to Leila. To her young mind, this brings the realization of secrets being held from her in her father's house. She begins living in a state of dread and discomfort.

The third taste that Leila's mind remembers is that of cardamom coffee, and it is associated with the bad experiences she suffered in the streets of Istanbul. This part of memory may be taken into test in the latter times, but as Shafak has written that,

“But human memory resembles a late-night traveler who has had a few too many drinks: hard as it tries, it just cannot follow a straight line. It staggers through a maze of inversions, often moving in dizzying zigzags, immune to reason and liable to collapse altogether” (Shafak, 2019, 28)

As maintained by Lefebvre, there are two phenomena, “representation of space and spaces of representation”. The term ‘conceptualized spaces’ deals with the spaces where the poets and travelers travel as well as where they live. While the other deals with what is felt, received and perceived as a result. The place where Leila exists and lives is the form of space that represents the second category.

Human memory, through the process of several flashbacks trigger the ego and thus the unpleasant memories, as a result of that triggering, become available and visible to the conscious mind of a person. This memory of taste, as well as the fragrance of coffee in the mind of Leila, could be related to Soja's theory and his first space as he proposed that physically built environment that can be mapped and is quantifiable is the first space. Moreover, through the presence of the first space, people experience the urban changes that happen over the period of time. This memory, space and taste is related to the first space where she has some flash forward of the real memories and experiences that she has suffered and from there Leila moved forward with her own recollection of memories into the second space.

With this smell, Shafak places Leila in a broader cultural and national context. Firstly, the brothel is introduced as being one of the oldest in Turkey.

“There was an Armenian school nearby, a Greek church, a Sephardic synagogue, a Sufi lodge, a Russian Orthodox chapel – remnants of a past no longer remembered. The district, once a thriving commercial waterfront and home to prosperous Levantine and Jewish communities, and then the hub of Ottoman banking and shipping industries, nowadays witnessed transactions of a very different kind.” (Shafak, 2019, 4)

The existence of the remnants of the synagogue and church makes the multicultural past of Turkey apparent, at the same time highlighting the shift towards a more urban geography. Shafak draws a short sketch of the seaside area in which the brothel is located.

The Fourth taste that she remembers is that of watermelon, and the memory associated with that is of the context of the Korean War. From here, Leila moves into the second space as explained by Soja, and this is because, according to him, “Second space is conceptual space—how that space is conceived in the minds of the people who inhabit it. It is a product of marketing strategies, (re)imaging and social norms that determine how people might act or behave in that space” (Soja, 1996, p. 61).

From the portion of the theory mentioned above, the war scenario, as well as the war that happened inside Leila, as she was molested by her uncle. As explained by Ferencziz (1901) that repressed and unpleasant memories result in hysterical outcomes. Leila was stuck in that chain of never-ending pain, and since her memory recollected all those unpleasant scenes, the second space started. It is the space where the person remembers what he has actually suffered and gone through. Moreover, as far as social norms are a big part of that space, they determine how a person may feel and act as a result of a certain experience that he has gone through. Leila's memory is entangled with the thought of war as well as the experience of suffering. Joiner (2021) has written a research article and has talked about the way child sexual abuse has been represented in the literature. He states that childhood trauma has usually been portrayed in the literature in terms of language rather than the body parts. Very similarly, the way Leila had felt over the molestation by her uncle is quite similar to the analysis done by Joiner (2021).

The fifth fragrance that Leila remembers is the aroma of “spiced goat stew – cumin, fennel seeds, cloves, onions, tomatoes, tail fat and goat's meat,” (Shafak, 2019, p. 8) associated with the birth of her brother. The second space of Soja again intrudes here, and Leila remembers the mixed feelings she has about her brother's birth because she did not want this “unwanted intruder” to

invade her right to sole love and affection. However, the moment she sets eyes on him, she falls in love with the baby. But her feelings of love are masked by her apprehension and anxiety when her uncle arrives. This third space of Leila manifested itself in the form of both the real and the imaginary spaces that she has ever felt and gone through, as well as the imaginary spaces within her memory and life. The way she feels herself being alone and isolated in the world when she cannot express her consternation and fear around her uncle is similar to the deer she saw standing alone. Later, when it is discovered that her brother has Down syndrome and will die before reaching adulthood, her father becomes increasingly rigid and fundamental in his beliefs. He removes all forms of pleasure and entertainment for his daughter and pins all his hopes and frustrations on her. This adds more restrictions to the already troubled mind of Leila.

The sixth fragrance is related to the wedding of her cousin, the uncle's son. the death of her brother. It is of a wood-burning stove that is used to cook the wedding meal. It is the first time we see her showing signs of defiance, though barely perceptible, in the face of her uncle's brutality. Her behaviour is interpreted as rude by her father, and she realizes that her father would never stand up for her or understand her. Later, when her father is instructing her in matters of religion, he introduces her to sin and its punishment in hell. Leila, who is already aware that she has sinned, though unwillingly, is taught that sinners will suffer eternal damnation in hell. She resents her father's unbending version of religion and refuses to comply with it. This increases her guilt of being a disappointment to her father. The wood-burning stove is then her rising defiance and persistent feeling of guilt.

The last thing she remembers is "the taste of soil – dry, chalky, bitter" (Shafak, 2019, chapter 10). Her rebellious nature had caused her father to pull her out of school. She swallows soil from her garden, which, she later discovers from her mother, is a sign of pregnancy. She reveals to her mother how her uncle had been molesting her. As she miscarries a few days later, the women of the family are relieved. Leila realizes that although her family believed her, they would never utter a word to anyone because her father would not want his relations with his brother soured. When asked, her uncle blames it on Leila's young friend from school, Sinan. They dismiss the matter, saying that Leila is confused and cannot tell what happened to her. This is the final straw, and her trust in her father as a bond of security completely vanishes. She runs away from the house when they force her to get engaged to a much younger cousin.

The last fragrances of Leila were related to brothels, severity and ultimately tequila, which she had before her Death. From the apparent security of her home, she is thrown into the brutal metropolitan world of Istanbul. "So unsuspecting and uninformed was she back then, she thought she could handle Istanbul, beat the megalopolis at its own game. There was no one praying for her to succeed, no one she could turn to if she didn't," (Shafak, 2019, p. 11). Gradually, she is completely engulfed in the new city, and she has nowhere else to go. Here, she is sold into sex work by an elderly woman. Leila had been a victim of exploitation at several levels in the brothel where she was abused and beaten many times. This leads to the next smell, which is of sulphuric acid. A rogue, drunk client throws sulphuric acid on her. Thus, her brain smelled all those unpleasant memories. Again, the tenth memory of Leila had been related to all the fragrances of childhood and memories of the past that she loved. As Soja has explained: "As he explains the Third space as an-Other way of understanding and acting to change the spatiality of human life, a distinct mode of critical spatial awareness that is appropriate to the new scope and significance being brought about in the rebalanced trialectics of spatiality–historicality–sociality."

The next taste is of chocolate bonbons, associated with the thought of D/Ali, an artist who later married her. This is a relatively peaceful and happy period in her life, broken up by D/Ali's death in a protest. This leads to the next flavour she remembers, that of Turkish street food "deep-fried mussels – flour, egg yolks, bicarbonate of soda, pepper, salt, and mussels fresh from the Black Sea" (Shafak, 2019, p. 14). The last twenty seconds of her memory are occupied by the smell of her wedding cake, sweet saccharine. This is followed by the smell of malt whisky she had on the night of her death, and home-made strawberry cake from her childhood birthday.

All the 10 minutes of Leila and her recollection of memory are related to several historical elements and the elements of time and space are related to each other. The third stage of Soja is related to the conscious and unconscious thoughts of the mind and the processes. The third space is related to changing the spatiality of human life, and thus, Leila and all the memories associated with it change the spatial order once or twice. Henceforth, there is transportation in the time lapse and change.

Conclusion

10 Minutes 38 Seconds in This Strange World starts with the pulsating moments after the protagonist has been murdered and left in a dumpster outside Istanbul; Tequila Leila enters a state of heightened awareness. Her heart has stopped beating, but her brain is still active for 10 minutes and 38 seconds. Tequila Leila's memories bring us back to her childhood in the provinces, a highly oppressive milieu with religion and traditions, shaped by a polygamous family with two mothers and an increasingly authoritarian father. Escaping to Istanbul, Leila makes her way into the sordid industry of sex trafficking. This is a dark, violent world, but Leila is tough and open to beauty, light, and the essential bonds of friendship.

As Oldenberg (1999) has come forward with the concept of place and space, he states that place seems to be a leveler in terms of nature and often at times. Three kinds of spaces and places are observed: those that are productive, domestic and thirdly, the space that exists between home and work. Most of the domestic space of Leila is alienating, and she feels left out. Leila tries and struggles to find a space for herself both in terms of physicality and in terms of emotional bonding. Yet due to some reason, she fails to have that connection with herself as she was molested by her uncle, where her parents fail to understand what Leila has to tell them, and she started feeling alienated.

On the other hand, if she considered the third space, the real and the imagined, she found herself alienated on emotional grounds because the world did not understand what she had to say on the emotional level. The societal norms, i.e., accepting the self and not transgressing against the levels of society, along with the fact that the way women, who are exploited in brothels, are alienated her to a greater degree of alienation.

It could be concluded that there is a continuous shift in the spaces related to memory, one after the other and nearly all the spaces are equally explored with reference to the sense of taste and smell. All the memories of her are related to the famous experiences she had in her life. Leila remembers both kinds of memories, the good ones as well as the bad ones. The real as well as the imaginary spaces are observed by her. Similarly, all three spaces are equally shared and shifted one after the other. So, the story of Leila forms a very deep connection between the role that memory, as well as fragrances, have with the associations of the mind. Even the end that

Leila has shown casts the rejection and complete alienation by the world and her family, as she is not accepted by her, rejected to be buried near her husband, which shows that the third space she was dwelling in was a complete place of anonymity where neither on emotional nor on physical grounds did she have any connection.

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