# THE REFLECTION OF REJECTION AS SEEN IN HELEN'S CHARACTER OF *BESIDE MYSELF* BY ANN MORGAN

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## ABSTRACT

Rejection issue is one of the realities in society that can be reflected in literary work. It happens when one individual does not accept other individual and not showing any kindness such as loving and caring. Someone that was rejected by other people usually being excluded and ignored by others. Meanwhile in social life, people need to be accepted and acknowledged by others so they will feel appreciated. Rejection unconciously happened in our society. One of the literary works that represent rejection issue is a novel by Ann Morgan entitled *Beside Myself*. The rejection issue in that novel can be analyzed through Helen's character. This research belonged to qualitative research with content analysis as its data analysis technique. This research focused on rejection issue that appeared in Helen's character through the narrations and dialogues of the characters in the novel. This research used IPARTheory from Ronald P.Rohner as the reference in analyzing Helen's character. The result of this research showed that Helen received all the rejection acts from the people around her, especially her mother. Helen has eight out of nine rejection effects as the result of being rejected by people around her.

**Keywords:** Acceptance, Rejection, IPARTheory, *Beside Myself* novel

## *ABSTRAK*

*Isu penolakan merupakan salah satu kenyataan di masyarakat yang dapat direfleksikan dalam karya sastra. Isu ini terjadi bila seseorang tidak menerima seorang yang lainnya dan tidak menunjukkan keramahan terhadap orang tersebut, seperti rasa cinta dan kepedulian. Seseorang yang ditolak oleh orang lainnya biasanya dikucilkan dan diabaikan oleh orang lain. Sementara, dalam kehidupan bermasyarakat, manusia butuh untuk diterima dan diakui oleh manusia lainnya sehingga mereka akan merasa dihargai. Isu penolakan ini secara tidak sadar telah terjadi di kehidupan masyarakat kita. Salah satu karya sastra yang merepresentasikan mengenai isu penolakan adalah novel karya Ann Morgan berjudul Beside Myself. Isu penolakan tersebut dapat di analisis melalui karakter Helen. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian kualitatif dengan menganalisis isi novel sebagai teknik analisanya. Penelitian ini fokus pada isu penolakan yang muncul dalam karakter Helen yang dapat diketahui melalui narasi dan percakapan para tokoh di dalam novel. Penelitian ini menggunakan IPARTheory dari Ronald P.Rohner sebagai acuan dalam menganalisa karakter Helen. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa Helen menerima semua tindakan penolakan dari orang-orang di sekitarnya, terutama ibunya. Helen memiliki delapan dari sembilan efek penolakan sebagai hasil penolakan dari orang-orang disekitarnya.*

***Kata Kunci****: Penerimaan, Penolakan, IPARTheory, novel Beside Myself*

## A. INTRODUCTION

Literature is the result of writers' imagination in selecting, ordering, and interpreting life experience (Taylor 1). It means that there are literary works that truly happened in real life. Although the writers put their imagination into them, it does not change the fact that reality in the society can be reflected in literary work. One of the issues that can be reflected in literary works is rejection which discusses about the treatment that characters get from other and vice versa. Rejection happens when one individual was not accepted by people around them while it is known that people need to be accepted by society so that they have prestige in their life. There are so many rejection issues in society yet people do not realize that their actions belong to rejection act. Not all people are brave enough to show their experience in being rejected or even their experience when they are in their lowest state because of rejection. Someone who wants to show up their experience yet afraid with other's judgment prefers to write what they feel when they experience the rejection.

There are many literary works which talk about psychological and rejection issues. The researcher has discovered several books which decribe about human's mind and how someone's psychological state affects his character. Researcher has found one novel entitled *Beside Myself* which delineated about rejection issue and its effects towards main character. The novel was written by Ann Morgan which was first published in Britain. The story revolved around Helen and Ellie who decided to swap their identities to fool people around them which they did it successfully. However, Ellie refused to swap their identity back so Ellie would be Helen forever. Helen did not accept it because she was the superior one between the twins. Helen tried to tell her mother she was the true born Helen, but her mother did not believe her and treated her worse than her sister.

Rejection from parents and society makes Helen becomes someone who thinks uncontrollable despite her need to be loved and accepted by society. The idea then inspired the researcher to do the research about rejection and its effects towards Helen's character. Because of the different treatment that Helen received compare to Ellie, she grew up as a failure while her sister became a successful woman. This side of Helen's life makes the researcher curious about Helen's life after she got rejection from people around her through the theory that was introduced by Rohner called Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory). Therefore, it intrigued the researcher to do the analysis about rejection acts that were received by Helen and also the effects of rejection that were appeared as the sequences of those rejection acts. This research is expected to provide the knowledge about rejection and its effects towards someone's character and also the researcher also hopes that this research is not only useful for literary works but also in real life so that people can identify the rejection that happen in life and cope with the feeling. For people who have experienced rejection, they also can write their story in the form of literary works so that other people could increase their awareness toward the rejection phenomenon in society.

## B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the background and research questions mentioned above, the researcher used Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory or known as IPARTheory from Ronald P.Rohner as the reference of this research.

### 1.     IPARTheory by Ronald P.Rohner

In IPARTheory, there is a point called The Warmth of Interpersonal Relationship where we could know about the acceptance and rejection in interpersonal relationship as stated by Rohner (2016) "this is a dimension or continuum on which all humans can be placed because everyone experiences more or less love at the hands of the people most important to them". This dimension focuses on the relationship between one people to another. To someone who has been accepted by others, it refers to warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love that one individual experiences to or experienced from another individual. On the contrary, for someone who was rejected by others, it refers to the absence of these positive feelings from acceptance and sometimes it could be hurtful for those who received the acts (Rohner 2016).

According to Rohner in IPARTheory, there are four basic principal expressions that could be shown related to rejection which are cold versus warm and unaffectionate versus affectionate, hostile and aggression, indifferent and neglecting, and undifferentiated rejecting.

### a.     Cold vs Warm and Unaffectionate Vs Affectionate

As has been explained by IPARTheory, cold vs. warm is something that feels inside individual's which the emotion he feels inside. According to Rohner  (2005), cold/coldness refers to the lack of emotional that shown by the attachment figure to the rejected person and it happens vice versa for the warm act. Also comes from Rohner, he defines affectionate as the behavior that was produced by the warm feeling from attachment figure; it can be physically or verbally. It is an act that one individual shows to others; for example, when a mother kisses and hugs her baby girl to show her affection and warmness. It happened vice versa to unaffectionate and cold behavior.

### b.     Hostile and Aggression

It refers to behavior that is produced by the act before: cold vs. warm and unaffectionate vs. affectionate. It can be in form of kicking, cursing, sarcasm, etc. As stated in IPARTheory, aggression is an act where one individual has the intention to hurt someone, something, or oneself (Rohner 2016); for example when a sister curses her brother when they are playing together.

### c.     Indifferent/Neglect

Attachment figures usually do not really care about the rejected children.They remain unresponsive toward the children both physically and psychologically,the example is when a child got hurt from playing too hard and having a cut, the mother does not care and ignore the child. Basically, this          act comes from others to person who was rejected.

### d.     Undifferentiated Rejection

It happens when individuals feel themselves as someone that cannot be loved and think that they do not deserve to be loved by others. Later, this delivers individuals feel unloved and unappreciated to whatever they do. As the result, they think that others do not care to them. This is the act that is felt by someone who was rejected by attachment figure. To make it easier, we could understand it by looking at figure 1,
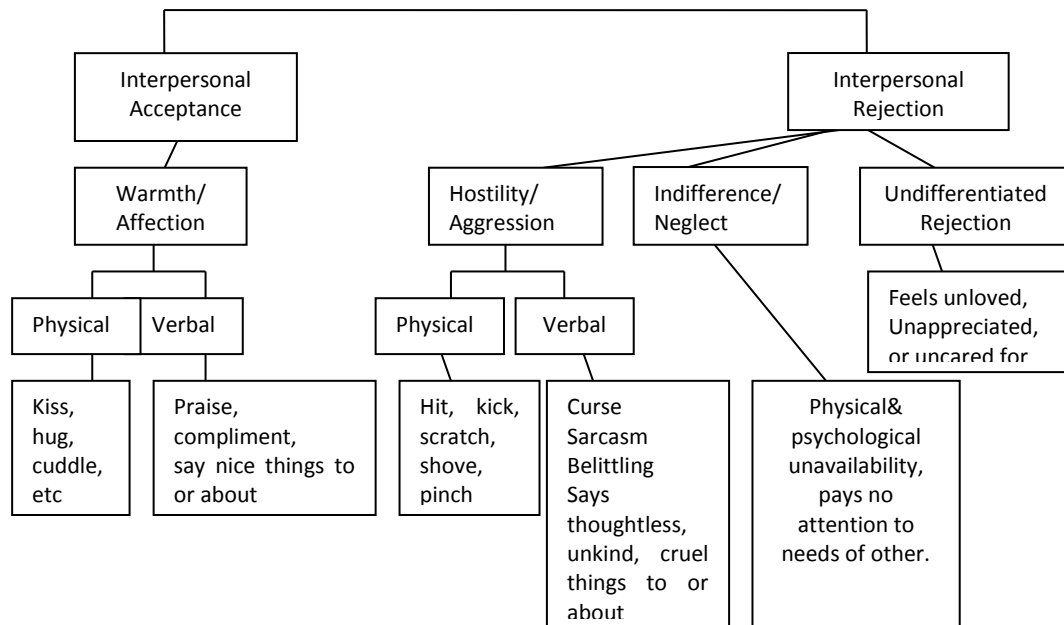
*Fig. 1. The warmth dimension of interpersonal relationship, photograph from Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, "Introduction to Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) and Evidence" (Web;2016)*

IPARTheory have three subtheories, which one of them was used to conduct this research. Those three sub theories are:

## 1)  Personality Sub Theory

This theory focuses to endeavor and analyze the personality or psychological of individuals in sensing interpersonal acceptance-rejection. People who feel rejected are usually eager for attention from the attachment figures (parents and others who have interpersonal relation with the rejected individual). Therefore, the rejected people often increase their tender for positive responds from attachment figures. In conform to the subtheory, individuals who feel rejected usually are anxious and insecure (Rohner 2016). According to this theory, someone's behavior is activated by external and internal factors. Besides being anxious and insecure, someone who got rejected also possibly deal with hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems with the management of hostility and aggression; emotional unresponsiveness; immature dependence or defensive independence; impaired self-esteem; impaired self-adequacy; emotional instability; and negative worldview.

To sum up, individuals who are rejected usually have some problems in controlling their anger, resentment, impaired in self-esteem, impaired in self-adequacy, and have destructive emotions. Also, individuals who experience the bad behavior above could be possible dealing with stress. And this subtheory was the one that is used in this research as the reference

**Table 1:** The effects of rejection based on personality sub theory

| NO | Personal subtheory-rejection effects- |
|---|---|
| 1 | Anxious |
| 2 | Insecure |
| 3 | Hostility/aggression |
| 4 | Negative Worldview |
| 5 | Emotional Instability |
| 6 | Impaired Self-esteem |
| 7 | Immature Dependence or Defensive Independence |
| 8 | Impaired Self-adequacy |
| 9 | Emotional Unresponsiveness |

**2)    Coping Sub Theory**

This sub theory focuses on how individuals cope with interpersonal acceptance-rejection. According to this theory, there are two types of people in coping with rejection which are affective copers vs. instrumental copers (Rohner 2016). Affective copers are related to individuals who still have good emotions and mental-health despite being raised in rejecting family. Meanwhile, instrumental copers are related to individuals who have been rejected in their lives but still doing well in school, occupations, and other activities, but unfortunately they are weak in emotions and mental-health compared to affective copers.

**3)    Sociocultural System Model and Sub Theory**

Expressive system and behavior were first created and not originally come from ourselves. According to Sociocultural System Model Subtheory, expressive system and behavior were created by humans, but it could turn out to form individuals' beliefs and behavior. These expressive behaviors and beliefs emerge as the product of social, emotional, and social-cognitive effects (Rohner 2016). In short, environment indirectly influences someone's behavior and beliefs whether it is our behavior to us or others.

**C.    RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is qualitative research since the researcher only analyzed the data through the words instead of number. This research uses content analysis as the approach of this research because the researcher gathered the data and categorized them into some classifications (Hancook 17). The researcher gathered the data through the text that has the correlation with rejection issues which appear in Helen's character as it is the main topic of this research. The data source for this research is the novel by Ann Morgan entitled *Beside Myself*. The secondary data for this research came from review from previous researcher that analyzed the same topic; rejection, and also the journals from the experts. These secondary data mainly discussed about rejection and its effects.The researcher as the research instrument for this research, collect the data through some steps, the *first* step was the researcher read the primary data which is *Beside Myself* and focused on the issue of rejection which was affected Helen's behavior. The second step was to divide the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences from the main character dialogues, other characters' dialogues, and narrations that were relevant with the issue of rejection and its effects towards Helen's behavior. The third step was the researcher read additional previous researches which discussed the same topic, and also journals from the experts which talked about rejection, especially IPARTheory. After the researcher got the data, then she analyzed those data using

Fraenkel and Wallen as the technique, from this technique, the researcher made code to each data so that it could be easier for the researcher to do the analysis.

## D.   FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 1.   Rejection Act toward Helen's Character

Rejection acts toward Helen's character is based on four basic principal expressions from Ronald P. Rohner were found in *Beside Myself* novel that was written by Ann Morgan. The four basic expressions are 1) Hostility and aggression, 2) Indifferent and Neglect, 3) Cold and Unaffectionate, and 4) Undifferentiated Rejection. Those four basic expressions are the basic expressions which researcher used to do the research about rejection toward Helen's character.

### a.   Hostility/ aggression

There are twenty nine hostility/aggression acts that received by Helen and also divided into two classifications, which are physical and verbal. The data below were shown physical hostility/aggression acts that were received by Helen:

'Oh Ellie!**' shouts Mother, reaching down and snatching my hand**. You couldn't manage to keep things nice for even one day, could you?
**She drags me out** from behind the hedge to where Akela is waiting, holding two cuddly tigers. (HOAG01, Morgan 23)

The narration above happened when Helen's mother got angry with her, because her mother assumed that she was the one who threw up in the amusement park. The situation became worse when her twin sister told their mother about Helen's mistake which was not hers. The mother expressed her anger toward Helen by snatching and dragging Helen's hand. Rohner divided hostility/aggression into two forms which are physical and verbal. Snatching and dragging are included in physical hostility/aggression as Rohner epitomized hitting, kicking, scratching, shoving, and pinching. Researcher believes that snatching and dragging are also part of physical hostility/aggression act because the acts are done physically by grabbing Helen's hand without her concern. Therefore, this event shows rejection act from Helen's mother towards Helen.

### b.   Indifference/Neglect

**You don't hear anything from home**. The others get letters and phone calls sometimes, although visitors are rare (having relatives who are both mad and bad seems to be more than most people can take face to face), but **there's never anything for you, not even on your birthday**. Especially not then. (IDNG04, Morgan 171)

The event above happened when Helen was in secure unit where it was like a prison to her. She envied other kids who got letters and news from home, while she didn't get any news or letters from home. It was like she had been discarded from her own family. The narration above shows how Helen's family does not pay attention of her need as a child who has family.

### c.   Cold vs Warm and Affectionate vs Unaffectionate

'Can I have colour on my nails too?'she said.
Mother smiled and patted her head even though Ellie wasn't minding her       Ps and Qs.

'Maybe when you're a bit older, sweetheart,' she said.

'Can I?' I said so that I could be a sweetheart too.

**Mother shot me a sharp look. 'For God's sake, Ellie,' she said. 'Didn't I just say no?'** (COUA02, Morgan 42)

The dialogues above happened when Ellie, Helen, her mother, and Horace went to amusement park. At the amusement park Ellie spotted a nail bar. When Ellie said she wanted her nails done, her mother answered with warm expression and she even patted her head motherly. Strange things happened when Helen said she wanted her nails done too. Instead of answered her like she did to Ellie, Helen's mother gave her cold answer and she even gave her sharp look. There are no patting on the head and warm smile. The researcher believes that Helen's mother act is Cold and Unaffectionate as stated by Rohner.

### d.      Undifferentiated Rejection

Undifferentiated rejection is the state where the children beliefs that their parents do not care about them, want them, or love them (Rohner 2005). The data below were shown those undifferentiated rejection acts that were received by Helen:

Narration from speaker of the novel:

As the car pulls away, you look back at the house. Mother is standing there on the doorstep her chin raised, staring out into the gathering dusk. **You try to find her eyes, but the light from the hall behind makes it impossible, turning her into a flat, black silhoutte.** (UDRJ01, Morgan 164)

The narration above was taken when Helen was taken forcefully by police to secure unit because of an incident. That day, Helen injured Ellie and mother who was angry decided to call the police so that they could arrest Helen and brought her to secure unit. When the police car started to go from her house, she tried to find her mother's eyes so that she could find some help from her. However, Helen could not find her eyes and from that day Helen felt betrayed by her own family. The researcher believes this event is included in undifferentiated rejection which is the state where someone who got rejected feels unloved, uncared for, and unappreciated. Helen felt uncared for by her mother because her mother didn't do anything to stop the police from dragging her into the car.

### 2.      The Effects of Rejection Appeared in Helen's Character

### 1.      Anxious

'It's fine,' she said loudly, through the **anxiety starting to rise up around her like mist from the grass.**

'Why are you being cross,' said Heloise, sidling up. (RE0107, Morgan 129)

That event happened when Nick asked Helen whether she took her medicine or not. She said yes but in fact she did not even open it. Nick kept asking her if she was feeling better. Feeling so much pressure from Nick made her started to feel anxious and answered Nick with a loud voice. In the narration after the dialogue, the author directly tells the reader about Helen that started to feel anxious and the researcher believes it was one of the findings related to anxious.

### 2.       Insecure

Based on Rohner (2005), insecure is the stated where one individual fells the uneasiness and anxious triggered by the threatened of his relationship with the attachment

figure (e.g. children and their parent). The researcher found some insecurity in Helen's character as explained below:

> The illogic of this makes you worry. **You're afraid paranoia is readying        itself to overwhelm your mind once more and hurl you into chaos.** (RE0212, Morgan 287)

The narration above happened when Helen started her new life with her new partner named Gareth. Helen used the new identity to start her new life and for that she was afraid that her old voices would come again. Helen felt the uneasiness of her paranoia that could affect her relationship with her new partner. She knew that once that voice came, she would be a mess and horrible. Her insecurity bubbles up as she wanted to start her new life and it made her a little bit afraid of what would come next. Helen's fear towards her relationship with her partner made the researcher believes that this data includes in insecure as Helen felt the uneasiness when she wanted to overcome her new life and she was afraid that her old self would make her relationship with Gareth did not work as she wanted it.

### 3.     Hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems with the management of hostility and aggression

> ...**You want to hit, to hurt, to kill.** You want to take what is going on        inside you and smash in and spread it all over the world... (RE0321, Morgan 126)

The event above happens when Helen confessed to her mother that she was raped when she was child. Instead of calming her, her mother swore and did not believe her. Her mother even called Helen a monster and she did not want her had a monster as daughter. Helen felt lonely as her own mother did not believe her again. The researcher believes that Helen's confession in her narration is included in aggression because she has desire **to hit, to hurt, and to kill.**

### 4.     Negative Worldview

> Mother, Akela, the unit working everything from behind the scenes. **They      are all in on it, you realise, all trying to lure you into a trap, with Richard as bait**. They have sent him here to spy on you and report back. (RE0427, Morgan 215)

The event above happened when Helen started her new life, far from the people who knew her and free from the unit because she escaped from them. Unfortunately, Helen saw her step brother named Richard. Instead of greeting each other, Helen preferred to run from Richard because she had a thought that Richard was a bait to arrest her and brought her back to the secure unit. Helen's thought about Richard clearly showed some negativity in her mind. Therefore, the researcher believes it as negative worldview.

### 5.      Emotional Instability

> 'Shhh'! she hissed. 'Sorry. I didn't mean to be nasty. **I'm just not very good  at controlling myself sometimes.'** (RE0530, Morgan 105)

From the data above, Helen proved herself that she had the problem in controlling herself. The sentence **I'm just not very good at controlling myself sometimes** makes the researcher believes it as evidence to Helen as a person with emotional instability within herself as the result of rejection.

### 6.     Impaired Self-Esteem

Mother had a point: **she was broken, she was ruined, she was poisonous**. She should leave now before she infected him and warped his way of seeing. She should let herself out of their lives for good. (RE0531, Morgan 174)

The event above happened when Helen had her time alone after Nick found her in a shameful state. Helen realized that she started to like Nick, her sister's husband and tried to get him as Helen still had the thought that everything Ellie had right now was meant to be hers. Helen started to wear Ellie's clothes and pretend to be her, until she remembered what her mother used to say toward her. She was broke, ruined, and poisonous. Those words made Helen felt inferior and thought that she did not deserve a better life like Ellie had. When Helen said that she should leave Nick's family for their good sake, it made the researcher believes that this data as the evidence of Helen being inferior which is included in impaired self-esteem.

### 7. Defensive Independence

After read the novel and the theory of rejection, the researcher found one data about defensive independence as followed:

You weren't invited, of course – why would you be? You'd just screw it up – have everyone backing away nervously from your idea of fun. Fuck them anyway. **You don't need them**. They're boring. They're children. They don't know life like you do (RE0733, Morgan 121)

The event above happened when Helen in her room alone after she got into an accident. She mentioned about not getting invited to Ellie's gang activity. Then she said that she did not need them either. The researcher believes that the fact Helen said she did not need Ellie and her friend is included in defensive independence which leads to counter rejection.

### 8. Emotional Unresponsiveness

The researcher found the data about emotional unresponsiveness in Helen's character as shown by the data below:

"He paused to fumble for a tactful way of describing her dishevelled state. **She didn't wait to hear his solution**. Spinning round, she sped off up the road, painful feet forgotten, panic pumping in her ears. ' Wait,' called Nick behind her. 'Ellie! Please! I just want to talk to you! Ellie!' ...'Please, Ellie,'he shouted again, his words exploding close to the back of her neck. 'You owe her that much at least! Please!' She owed nothing; she was no one, she wanted to shout, but her lungs were aching and there was a plug of pain in her throat. (RE0834, Morgan 49)

That event above happened when Ellie's husband visited Helen after Ellie got involved in car accident. Ellie's husband begged Helen to come visit Ellie in the hospital, but instead of hearing Nick's request, Helen decided to ignore his plea. The sentence "**She didn't wait to hear his solution**" indicates that Helen did not want to get involved in any relation with Ellie and everything about her. She did not want to come back to her family and meet them again after what they done to her in the past.

After determining the findings mentioned above, the researcher discusses some points from the findings above. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, this research answers two questions mentioned in the chapter one. First question is about the rejection acts that are shown by the other character toward Helen. Through the findings above, there are some people who show their rejection acts toward Helen. Those rejection acts were mostly showed by her family, especially from her mother. Helen's mother shows various acts that mentioned by Rohner (2016), such as hostility/aggression, act cold and unaffectionate,

indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection. All of those rejection acts appeared in this novel.

From nine effects that mentioned by Rohner, Helen has eight effects in her personality. The effects that appear are insecure; anxious; hostility/aggression; negative worldview; emotional instability; impaired self-esteem; defensive independence; and emotional unresponsiveness. The rest of effect that did not appear is impaired self – adequacy. Based on Rohner (2005), impaired self-adequacy is the state where someone who got rejected feels incompetence and feels the inability to meet day to day demands. As in this novel, Helen still tried her best to live her life despite of her being rejected by people around her. For the example when she had succesfully display her works during her life time in secure unit and when she tried to start her new life the new identity as another woman named Trudy.

In spite of being rejected all her life, Helen maintained to do well in her occupation when she grew up far away from her family that was rejected her. She lived her new life, get a good friends, good partner, and even started to have a good life. She even doing well in her activities once she was in secure unit, her drawing got the chance to be displayed in an exhibition. It is related to another Rohner's sub theories called Coping sub theory. According to Rohner (2016), there are two types of people in coping the experience of being rejected; there are affective copers and instrumental copers. Affective copers are related to people who still have good emotions and mental health despite being raised in rejecting family, meanwhile instrumental copers related to people who are rejected from their family but still doing well in school, occupations, and other activities, but unfortunately they are weak in emotion and mental health. As in Helen's case, the researcher conclude that Helen is included in instrumental copers, as in the result of this research Helen has eight out of nine effects of being rejected. Those eight rejection effects are the proof that Helen has the weak emotion and mental health as the result of being rejected by people around her.

Based on characterization devices mentioned by Reaske (1966), rejection acts and rejection effects that appeared in Helen character are found in the dialogues and narration; from the speaker of the novel and from Helen. Rejection acts that appeared are mostly came from mother's dialogues. Meanwhile, rejection effects that appeared in Helen character mostly came from narration and Helen's soliloquies in the novel.

## D. CONCLUSION

According to the findings and discussion in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that Helen received all of the rejection acts from other characters. Those acts are cold and unaffectionate, hostile and aggressive, indifferent and neglecting, and undifferentiated rejecting. Among those rejection acts, most of them come from Helen's mother. Besides Helen's mother, the acts also come from Helen's sister –Ellie, and the rest of the acts come from Helen's fellow worker and also the people she met.

As the result of rejection acts that were received by Helen, according to findings and discussion in the previous chapter, Helen shows eight out of nine rejection effects in her character in *Beside Myself* novel. Those eight effects that appeared in Helen's character are anxious; insecure; hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems with the management of hostility and aggression; negative worldview; emotional instability; impaired self-esteem; immature dependence or defensive independence; and emotional unresponsiveness. Meanwhile, impaired self-adequacy was not found in Helen's character since the researcher did not find any correlative evidence to prove the act. From those effects

that appear in Helen's character, hostility/aggression is the most dominant in her character since the researcher found lot of data in hostility/aggression rather than other effects.

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