

## AN ANALYSIS OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER (DID) EXPERIENCED BY KEVIN IN THE MOVIE “SPLIT”

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Meilina and Sutrisno, B. (2020). An analysis of dissociative identity disorder (DID) experienced by Kevin in the movie “SPLIT”. *Journal of English Language and literature*, 5(2), 49-56. doi: 10.37110/jell.v5i02.104

Received: 11-07-2020

Accepted: 20-08-2020

Published: 01-09-2020

**Abstract:** This study is under psychology umbrella. The aim of this study is to analyze Dissociative Identity Disorder experience by Kevin, the main character in the movie Split. This study has two objectives: (1) to find out what are the symptoms or signs of DID on Kevin in the movie *Split*; (2) to find out how does Dissociative Identity Disorder effect the main character's life. This study employed a qualitative method since it describing the phenomena of DID. Moreover, the findings were presented in narrative or textual description. Some steps in analyzing the data were : watch the movie, taking notes, sorting the data, classifying the data, coding the data, interpretation, and the last drawing conclusion. This study reveals two findings, first, all of four classification symptoms in Kevin. Second, three effects of this disorder has coming up to main charcater live (Kevin) were : depersonalization or derealization, amnesia, identity confusion or identity alteration.

**Keywords :** *Psychology, Psychological Disorder, Mental Illness, Dissociative Identity Disorder*

### INTRODUCTION

People as human beings who live in the world will have a life process that started since we are in our mother's womb, born, live, and ends with a death. During the process, many feelings will be happening like happy, sad, love. In every taste of feeling has advantages and disadvantages which give contribution to people characteristics. Many experiences in people life also give bad or good impact to people life future.

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is a mental disorder characterized by at least two distinct and relatively enduring identities or dissociated personality states. These states alternately show in person's behavior, accompanied by memory impairment for important information not explained by ordinary forgetfulness. The cause of DID is

unknown and widely debated, with debate occurring between supporters of different hypotheses. The expert Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyder (2010) explained about dissociative identity disorder also known as a multiple personality, is basically a condition that causes a person to display multiple personalities that are each distinct and that behave differently in the environment. As the name suggests, someone with dissociative identity disorder displays very different personalities that take over at different times, and that each personality does not typically remember what the other personality did while “in control”.

Currently DID is defined as “the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states that recurrently take control of the individual's behavior, accompanied by an inability to recall important personal

information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness the disorder characterized by identity fragmentation rather than a proliferation of separate personalities”. The identity of the dominant, or “host personality,” breaks off sub categorically, and identities begin to develop with Dissociative Identity Disorder 4 separate and distinct sets of memories, behavioral patterns, historical and familial backgrounds, differing physiological characteristics, and cognitive function, refers to the separate and distinct personalities of the individual as “sub personalities or alternate personalities”. This disease is definitely going to change someone’s character in their life. The main character in this movie is Mr. Mc Avoy as a Kevin, a regular guy who due to a series of traumatic childhood events (we’re told he was left by his father and mistreated by his mother) has created a string of alternative personalities, most of which are mentally stronger than he was initially (Dissociative Identity Disorder). The beginning of this movie, Kevin brings the girls Marcia (Jessica Sula), Claire (Haley Lu Richardson), Casey (Anya Taylor Joy) into a windowless room in an unknown location. The girls continue to try and find a way out. They look through a crack in the door and see what appears to be a woman talking to their captor, Claire and Marcia call to the woman to help, she approaches the door but it just Kevin wearing a kilt and high heels. This alter is known as Patricia, a polite British woman. In this story Kevin has a therapist, Dr Karen Fletcher (Betty Buckley) she mentions that Kevin has 23 distinct identities. Karen mentions a 24th identity, new identity Kevin calls “The Beast” and Kevin says it is indeed real. In this movie we meet the core personalities are Dennis, Patricia, Hedwig and Barry. Dennis (a solemn, muscular perfect), Patricia (a strict, pious British woman), Hedwig (an energetic 9 years old boy), Barry (a designer and has a cool character).

The movie “Split” is taken as a unit of analysis of psychological conflict of DID’s patient named Kevin, the main character in this movie. The writer needs to find out why this patient has many characters in his life and try to explore more why his story with his family could be given the bad impact for his mental.

Based on the background mentioned, the writers focus on (1) the symptoms or signs of DID on Kevin in the movie *Split*; and (2) How

the Dissociative Identity Disorder affects the main character’s life.

### **Psychological Disorders**

A psychological disorder or abnormal behavior is psychological dysfunction that is associated with distress or impairment in function and response that is not typically or culturally expected (Durand & Barlow, 2016). Kaplan and Sadock (1994) said that psychological disorder also called it as mental illness is as any significant deviation from any ideal state of positive mental health. Some mental health experts define a psychological disorder as behaviors and cognitive and psychological conditions experienced by an individual as disabling or distressing (Blackwekk, 317).

It can be concluded that psychological disorder is mental or behavior health illness that causes either self or other significant distress.

### **Types of Psychological Disorders**

There are many different conditions that are recognized as mental illnesses. The more common types include (Goldberg): (a) Stress response syndromes which occur when a person develops emotional or behavioral symptoms in response to a stressful event or situation. The stressors may include natural disasters, such as an earthquake or tornado; events or crises, such as a car accident or the diagnosis of a major illness; or interpersonal problems, such as a divorce, death of a loved one, loss of a job, or a problem with substance abuse; (b) Dissociative disorders. People with these disorders suffer severe disturbances or changes in memory, consciousness, identity, and general awareness of themselves and their surroundings. These disorders usually are associated with overwhelming stress, which may be the result of traumatic events, accidents, or disasters that may be experienced or witnessed by the individual; (c) Factitious disorders. Factitious disorders are conditions in which a person knowingly and intentionally creates or complains of physical and/or emotional symptoms in order to place the individual in the role of a patient or a person in need of help; (d) Sexual and gender disorders. These include disorders that affect sexual desire, performance, and behavior. Sexual dysfunction, gender identity disorder, and the paraphilias are examples of sexual and gender disorders; (e) Somatic symptom disorders. A

person with a somatic symptom disorder, formerly known as a psychosomatic disorder or somatoform disorder, experiences physical symptoms of an illness or of pain with an excessive and disproportionate level of distress, regardless of whether or not a doctor can find a medical cause for the symptoms; and (f) Tic disorder. People with tic disorders make sounds or display nonpurposeful body movements that are repeated, quick, sudden, and/or uncontrollable. (Sounds that are made involuntarily are called vocal tics.)

### **Dissociative Identity Disorder**

Dissociative Identity Disorder (or Multiple Personality Disorder) is characterized by the presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states that recurrently take control of the individual's behaviour, accompanied by an inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness. It is a disorder characterized by identity fragmentation, rather than proliferation of separate personalities (Ringrose, 2012).

Dissociative identity disorder, formerly called multiple personality disorder, is a type of dissociative disorder characterized by more than two personality states (also called alters, self-states, or identities) that alternate. The disorder includes inability to recall everyday events, important personal information, and/or traumatic or stressful events, all of which would not typically be lost with ordinary forgetting. The cause is almost invariably overwhelming childhood trauma. Diagnosis is based on history, sometimes with hypnosis or drug-facilitated interviews. Treatment is long-term psychotherapy, sometimes with drug therapy for comorbid depression and/or anxiety.

Austrian (2005) said that Dissociative identity disorder is chronic dissociative disorder whose cause is most often traumatic event, usually abuse. It involves a series of at least two alternating identities, each of which claims to be autonomous and determines behavior, appearance and attitude when it is the "dominant" personality. These "alters" may be unaware of the traumatic experience or they may remember it.

From those definitions above, it can be summarized that Dissociative Identity

Disorder is a person have more than two personalities and can changes from one identity to the other identity in separate time which is this person feel losing time and memories.

### **Causes of Dissociative Identity Disorder**

Causes of Dissociative Identity Disorder are linked to recent formulations about psychobiology of the human trauma response and the protective activation of altered states of consciousness as a reaction to psychological trauma. It is thought that overwhelming traumatic experiences induce an altered state in which the memories and affects relating to the trauma are encoded. In addition, the person frequently has little conscious awareness that certain basic assumptions about the self, relationships, other people, and the nature of the world have been altered by the trauma (Lichtenberg, 1992).

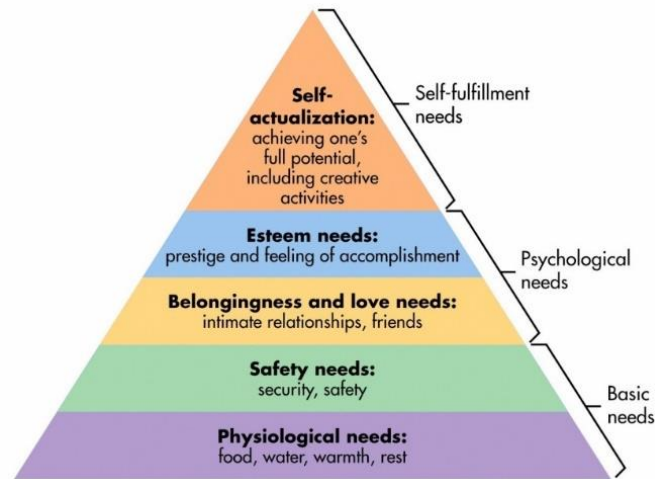
### **Symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder**

Dissociative identity disorder is characterized by the presence of two or more distinct or split identities or personality states that continually have power over the person's behavior. With dissociative identity disorder, there's also an inability to recall key personal information that is too far-reaching to be explained as mere forgetfulness. With dissociative identity disorder, there are also highly distinct memory variations, which fluctuate with the person's split personality. Along with the dissociation and multiple or split personalities, people with dissociative disorders may experience a number of other psychiatric problems, including symptoms (Gunarsson, 2010):

- a. Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.
- b. Mood swings are rapid and often extreme, fluctuations in one's emotional state, involving alternating between feelings of happiness and well-being and feelings of anger, irritability or depression.
- c. Psychotic-like symptoms (including auditory and visual hallucinations) is an abnormal condition of the mind that results in difficulties telling what is

real or not. Symptoms may include false beliefs and seeing or hearing things that others do not see or hear.

d. Maslow Theory (1943, 1954) in McLeod (2017)



Based on Maslow's theory psychological needs (line five from the top) is meaning a people need love for another people. Wherever people received much love from friends, family, work. In this movie split, the main character Kevin didn't get love from his parents, since his parents go away from his life. By this accident give the bad impact from Kevin's life, he felt alone and then trying to build another character to protect and give his love, the character is only on Kevin mind not in real life.

### **Diagnose of Dissociative Identity Disorder**

The person with DID essentially lives with various simultaneously active and subjectively autonomous strands of experience that are rigidly and profoundly separated from each other in important ways such as in memory, characteristic effects, behavior, self-image, body image and thinking style. The current diagnostic criteria of dissociative identity disorder (Howell, 2011): (a) The presence of two or more distinct identities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self); (b) At least two of these identities or personality states currently take control of the person's behavior; (c) Inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness; (d) The disturbance

is not due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e.g., blackouts or chaotic behavior during alcohol intoxication) or general medical condition (e.g., complex partial seizures)

### **Effects of Dissociative Identity Disorder**

Adah Sachs and Greme Galton (2011) stated that there are several main ways in which the psychological processes of dissociative identity disorder change the way a person experiences living, including the following:

- a. Depersonalization or derealization. This is a sense of being detached from one's body and is often referred to as an "out-of-body" experience. Depersonalization or derealization disorder occurs when you persistently or repeatedly have the feeling that you're observing yourself from outside your body or you have a sense that things around you aren't real or both. Feelings of depersonalization or derealization can be very disturbing and may feel like you're living in a dream.
- b. Amnesia. This is the failure to recall significant personal information that is so extensive it cannot be blamed on ordinary forgetfulness. There can also be micro-amnesias where the discussion engaged in is not remembered, or the content of a meaningful conversation is forgotten from one second to the next.

- c. Identity confusion or identity alteration. Both of these involve a sense of confusion about who a person is. An example of identity confusion is when a person has trouble defining the things that interest them in life, or their political or religious or social viewpoints, or their sexual orientation, or their professional ambitions. In addition to these apparent alterations, the person may experience distortions in time, place, and situation.

### Psychological Approach

Psychological approach is the view that some psychological relation is both necessary and sufficient for one to survive (Olson, 1997).

Psychological approach is a perspective (i.e., view) that involves certain assumptions (i.e., beliefs) about human behavior: the way they function, which aspects of them are worthy of study and what research methods are appropriate for undertaking this study (Sternberg).

Jex and Britt stated that psychological approach is target the “software”, learned faulty behaviors and habits, along with damaging words, thoughts, interpretations, and feedback that direct strategies for daily living.

From these definitions above, the writer conclude that psychological approach is certain assumptions about human behavior and habits in daily life and try to understand it.

### Types of Theoretical Approaches to Psychology

There are kinds of theoretical approaches of psychology has helped us understand human behavior, thought, and feeling (Jarvis, 2000): (a) The behavioural approach is learned, thus all behavior can be unlearned and new behaviors learned in its place. is concerned primarily with the observable and measurable aspects of human behavior; (b) the psychodynamic approach includes all the theories in psychology that see human functioning based upon the interaction of drives and forces within the person, particularly unconscious, and between the different structures of the personality; (c) The humanistic approach is probably interested in all aspects of Majorie’s life, past and present. Humanistic, humanism and humanist are terms in psychology relating to an approach which studies the whole person, and the uniqueness of each individual. Essentially, these terms refer

the same approach in psychology; (d) The cognitive approach (including the cognitive-developmental approach) is try to build up cognitive models of the information processing that goes on inside people’s minds, including perception, attention, language, memory, thinking, and consciousness; (e) The social approach is about understanding individual behavior in a social context. Social psychologists therefore deal with the factors that lead us to behave in a given way in the presence of others, and look at the conditions under which certain behavior/actions and feelings occur. Social psychology is to do with the way these feelings, thoughts, beliefs, intentions and goals are constructed and how such psychological factors, in turn, influence our interactions with others; and (f) The biological approach is actually includes areas of study as diverse as the psychology of brain, the influences of evolution on human behavior and the influence of genes on people’s individual characteristic.

### METHOD

Qualitative research methods are used to examine questions that can best be answered by verbally describing how participants in a study perceive and interpret various aspects of their environment. Meanwhile quantitative research method are used to examine questions that can be answered by collecting and statistically analyzing data that are in numerical form.

Both of them have characteristics to support the researchers to make their research easily running. The writer use the qualitative approach method, because this thesis analysis about psychological conflict on the film which just can be answered and described verbally. Qualitative research involves an in depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern human behavior and this characteristic relevant to this research.

Collecting data is the important thing in this study. The primary Source, the script and scenes of the movie “Split” are used; and the secondary source, several articles and books of Psychology and DID are used to gather more information to this study.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 1. The symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder on Kevin

In order to diagnose DID, it is important to know the symptoms. Based on Logi Gunarsson, the people with DID require have the symptoms that usually occur.

The writer found that Kevin experiences Dissociative Identity Disorder because the causes and the symptoms are appropriate with what happened with Kevin. Therefore, by analyzing DID portrayed in the movie "*Split*", the writer found the symptoms and the problems of DID phenomena.

(1). Depression (major depressive disorder) is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. Fortunately, it is also treatable. Depression causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed.

(2) Mood Swings Symptoms. Mood swings are rapid and often extreme, fluctuations in one's emotional state, involving alternating between feelings of happiness and well-being and feelings of anger, irritability or depression.

(3) Psychotic-like symptoms (including auditory and visual hallucinations) is an abnormal condition of the mind that results in difficulties telling what is real or not.

Symptoms may include false beliefs and seeing or hearing things that others don't see or hear.

(4) Based on Maslow's theory. Maslow's theory about psychological need telling about the person need love from another people.

Kevin didn't get affection from his family, so he try to build another character as his family to get love and protection. Kevin want to feel safe and full of love and also don't feel alone in his life for the future.

## **2. The effects of DID to Kevin**

In order to diagnose DID, it is important to know the effects. Based on Adah Sachs and Greme Galton, the people with DID require have the effects not only for him self but also for the people around him. Therefore, by analyzing DID portrayed in the movie "*Split*", the writer found the effects of DID phenomena.

1. Depersonalization or derealization is a sense of being detached from one's body and is often referred to as an "out-of-body"

experience, this feeling that the world is not real or looking foggy or far away. In this scene, Kevin have change to the last identity and they called it "the beast". Kevin crawling on the wall like a lizard and his body also changed like what he knows and described about the beast. (1:33:02, 1:27:58)

2. Amnesia is the failure to recall significant personal information that is so extensive it cannot be blamed on ordinary forgetfulness. There can also be micro-amnesias where the discussion engaged in is not remembered, or the content of a meaningful conversation is forgotten from one second to the next. The proof is by this conversation between Casey and Kevin.
3. Identity confusion or identity alteration. Both of these involve a sense of confusion about who a person is. An example of identity confusion is when a person has trouble defining the things that interest them in life, or their political or religious or social viewpoints, or their sexual orientation, or their professional ambitions. In addition to these apparent alterations, the person may experience distortions in time, place, and situation.

## **Discussion**

### **1. The symptoms or signs of DID on Kevin in the movie *Split***

According to Logi Gunarsson, the symptoms of DID are depression, mood swings, Psychotic-like symptoms (including auditory and visual hallucinations), and family figures especially parents how their teach and treat his child.

- a. Depression. In this movie Kevin had this symptom because her father left him when he is a child on a train. Since that accident Kevin feel so alone without his father and his mother also treat him with hardness. This is what causes it Kevin build the other characteristic in his life, a child character (Hedwig, 9 years old) because he still thinks of himself as a child left by his father.
- b. Mood swings. In this movie show us many scene proof that Kevin always changes his mood in separate time. The changes is not only talk about emotion and mood but also the

characters, Kevin told that Patricia and Dennis take control of all them. This movie also show us the changes is so significance, when Kevin as Patricia he is totally shift, example he is wearing long skirt, neckless, heels, style and tone of his speech.

- c. Psychotic-like symptoms (including auditory and visual hallucinations). Based on this movie, the other chracters said that Kevin is very weak so they are must protect him and keep him save. By that reason Kevin try to build a new character need a person bigger, tall and very muscular.
- d. Family figures. Based on Maslow's theory. Maslow told that humans have many needs in their life include belongingness, love needs, and safety needs. This movie proof that Kevin didn't get it in his life, he has been left by his parents since a child so he didn't get the much love from them. Based on this movie Kevin build another character like Patricia ( a british woman), Dennis(a cool man), Hedwig (a boy, 9 years old) with the aim of completing his own daily life.

## **2. How Dissociative Identitiy Disorder effect the main character's life**

According to Adah Sachs and Greme Galton, DID give impact for the patient life and and the lifestyle too. This changes is also significant, not only in main family but also in sitiasion work or study, friend zone, and the patient carier for the future. The main impact the patient should face is feeling excluded even considered crazy.

- a. Depersonalization or derealization. In this movie proof that Kevin get this effect to his life. Kevin "hallucinations" about new identity or 24th character in his life. Kevin sure about this character can take care and save Kevin's life more than the other identity (Patricia, Dennis, Hedwig, etc). Even his psychiatirst told him about this new character is not real, it is just in Kevin mind and this character is so dangerous but Kevin make sure in many times to Dr. Fletcher that the new character is real and he is on the way to coming up to Kevin life.

- b. Amnesia. In this movie also proof this effect to Kevin life. When Kevin come to be another identity, his forget about what he did. In Indonesian, have a real patient with DID, her name is Anastasia Wella from Medan, she is have nine chracters in her life. The character not only like a woman, but also to be a man. The man character name is Andreas (a man who likes violence). Wella proof this effects about amnesia, she told when she is in another identity, she forget about what she did (Iffah, 2017).
- c. Identity confusion or identity alteration. In this movie many times show us how Kevin feel confused him self. In seperate times Kevin as Patricia told to the Casey about Dennis will explain something for you, and after that immediately change his look like Dennis and sure told to Casey what happened to them. Mostly this chracter change in when the patient feels scared, so he need another character to keep his save interference. For example, in this movie when Kevin as Hedwig (a boy 9 years old) and somebody try to affect his mind, Hedwig feel disturbed and need a figure that is more mature than him so Hedwig change to be Denis (a cool and muscular man).

## **CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the result of the both findings and discussions, the conclusions of the research can be drawn as the following: (1) Related to the symptoms, Kevin experience all of the 4 symptoms as according to to Logi Gunarsson. The most symptoms show in this movie is family figures as according to Maslow's theory about belongingness and love need. Kevin didn't get love form his parents because his father left him on train when he is child, his mother also always being bad and talking to him in angry and highest tone. Maslow's theory about belongingness and love need is the important factors that human need, if this factors not fulfilled with good condition can cause a variety psychological disorder or even lead to criminal acts. (2) Meet all effects of DID as according to Adah Sachs and Greme Galton. Kevin feel depression, because he only life alone since he is child till he grow up to be

a man, and always build a communication with his psychiatrist Dr. Fletcher. For Kevin, Dr. Fletcher is someone who cares about him and accept him with psychological disorder. Amnesia, when Kevin change to another identity and come back to real Kevin, he

always told that he did it or told what activity he did when he is in Kevin real. Identity confusion, Kevin always change his identity in separate times, complete with his clothes and language and intonation.

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