

## **DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER OF THE MAIN CHARACTER IN THE SECRET WINDOW MOVIE**

MUHAMMAD FAHRI JAYA SUDDING<sup>1\*</sup>, FAUZAN HARI SUDDING SALLY<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*English Literature Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar*

<sup>2</sup>*English Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Makassar*

\*Corresponding Email: [mfahrijs@gmail.com](mailto:mfahrijs@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

The objectives of the research were to find out the main cause of Dissociative Identity Disorder of the main character in a movie called *The Secret Window*, the symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder of the main character, and the effects of Dissociative Identity Disorder on the main character. The data were taken from the main character in the *Secret Window* movie, characterization, dialogue, plot, and the movie itself. The method used by the researchers in this research was the descriptive qualitative method. The results of this research showed that: 1) the cause of the Dissociative Identity Disorder of the main character, Morton Rainey, was when he found his wife was cheating on him, 2) there were two symptoms that appeared in Morton Rainey's disorder: heard voices and amnesia, 3) the effects of Dissociative Identity Disorder on Morton Rainey was he murdered his wife, Amy Morton and Amy's affair, Ted Milner.

**Keywords:** Dissociative identity disorder, main character, movie, ego defense mechanism

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the modern era, movie has been growing to be interesting place for people who want to express their creativity, talent, skill, and thought. The person involved in moviemaking is called cineaste. Movie is reflection of the cineaste's ideas, thought, and feeling. Most of cineastes consider movie as a media to contribute their ideas and thought about some incidents in the real world and see it as promising business since most people like to spend their time to watch movie.

In making their movie, cineaste considers some disciplines to make the movie interesting. For example, cineaste puts psychological aspect to his movie, especially in his main character to attract the audience. The psychological aspects that cineaste usually used are psychopath, amnesia, or dissociative disorder. In this research, the psychological aspect, the dissociative disorder, was the focus in the further analysis.

Psychological dissociative disorder is a pattern of behavioral or psychological symptoms that impact multiple life areas and create distress for the person experiencing these symptoms. According to Davidson et al., (2000), there are four kinds of dissociative disorder: amnesia dissociative, fugue dissociative, depersonalization, and dissociative identity disorder. The researchers analyzed the character in the movie who suffers dissociative identity disorder. A person who suffers from this disorder will have another personality.

The elements of movie were similar with elements in literary work. For example, plot, theme, setting, and character. Among them, the most give effect in movie is character. A character can be categorized into main character and supporting character. The main character has an important role in a movie. The main character will bring the story to whether happy ending or sad ending (Dola, 2014).

A novel, nowadays, is one of the most interesting literary works to be converted into a movie. A movie is a story that is recorded by camera as a set of moving image and shown in television. One of the novels that had been converted into a movie is *The Secret Window*. *The Secret Window* is an American movie with psychological-thriller genre. *The Secret Window* was released in 2004 and written by Davie Koepp, best on novella *Secret Window*, *Secret Garden* by Stephen King. The main character is Morton Rainey that was played by Johnny Deep. In this research, the researchers took Morton Rainey, the main character in *The Secret Window* movie, as the object to be analyzed.

The researchers analyzed the main character, Morton Rainey, because he had psychological aspect which is very interesting to be analyzed. The psychological aspect in Morton Rainey is psychological dissociative identity disorder. Like mentioned before, this disorder is one of dissociative disorders that the patient will have two or more personalities (Davidson et al., 2000). Dissociative identity disorder is a complex, chronic, posttraumatic, and characterized by disturbance of memory and identity (Kluft, 1996). It is distinguished from other mental psychological disorder by the ongoing coexistence of relatively consistent but separate identities, memory disruption, and amnesia.

The movie was told that the main character "Morton Rainey" had posttraumatic. Posttraumatic is a mental disorder that can develop after a person is exposed by trauma event, such as sexual, assault, and other threats on a person life. And also posttraumatic is one of the symptoms of dissociative identity disorder (Spiegel et al., 2011). The posttraumatic that happened by the main character is trauma event sexual and other problems that could threat him. Another reason why the researchers is interested in analyzing the main character Morton Rainey is because dissociative identity disorder is a rare disorder and difficult to identify. So, the researchers felt to be challenged to analyze the psychological dissociative identity disorder in Morton Rainey as the main character in 'The Secret Window' movie.

Based on the background above, the researchers formulated three research questions as follows:

1. What is the main cause of psychological dissociative identity disorder of the main character Morton Rainey in *The Secret Window* movie?
2. What are the symptoms of psychological dissociative identity disorder of the main character Morton Rainey in *The Secret Window* movie?
3. How are the effects of psychological dissociative identity disorder on the main character Morton Rainey in *The Secret Window* movie?

## **Review of Literature**

### **Movie**

A movie is a recorded series of images from a film or video that are moved quickly enough on a screen to provide the impression of motion and continuity. A movie is produced by recording images from using animation techniques or special effects. There are many genres of movies: action, adventure, comedy, drama, horror, musical-dance, and etc.

### **Literary Elements**

There are four elements of literary work; they are plot, character, theme, setting, and point of view (Klarer, 2004). Plot is a sequence of events that happen in the story. Plot is also known as the serial arrangement of incident, ideas, or events that happen in literary work. The plot will help the reader into the character's lives and makes the reader understand about what is in the story. Character can be identified as any person, animal, or even represents human personality in the literary work.

Theme refers to the main idea in the story that the author tries to give to the readers. In fiction, theme is central idea that explored in the story. There are two types of themes; they are major and minor theme. Major theme is an idea of the author that he repeats in his literary work, making it the most significant idea in the story. Minor theme refers to the idea that appears in a story briefly. Setting is the time and place when and where the story takes place. The term of point of view refers to who is telling the story and who is narrating it.

## ***Psychology***

Psychology is the scientific study of mind and behavior. The word 'psychology' is dividing into two words; psyche and logos. The word psycho comes from Greek 'psyche' meaning 'breath, soul, and spirit.' And then, the word 'logos,' also comes from Greek word 'logia' meaning 'explanation' (Stangor, 2012). According to Medilexicon's medical dictionary, psychology is the profession, scholarly discipline, and science concerned with the behavior and mind of human and animals and related with mental and psychological processes (Nordqvist, 2015).

Psychologists do work in forensic fields, and they do provide counseling and therapy for people in distress. Most of psychologists work in research laboratories, hospitals, and other field settings where they study the behavior of human and animals. Other psychologist study topics as alcohol, drug addiction, memory, emotion, hypnosis, love, what makes people aggressive, prejudice, culture, and religion; also working in schools and businesses so they used variety of methods, observation, questioner, and interviews to help them understand behavior. A major goal of psychology is to predict behavior by understanding its cause (Stangor, 2012).

## ***Psychological Dissociative Disorder***

Psychological dissociative disorder is one way the mind copes with too much stress, such as during a traumatic event. Dissociative disorder is disorder that related with anxiety (Davidson et al., 2000). In dissociative identity disorder, the person undergoes disorder consciousness memory, and identity. In general, this disorder will happen to people with over stress.

The dissociative term is concerned to the mechanism of dissociation that became main cause (Davidson et al., 2000). The basic idea of dissociative disorder is the conscious is a part of experience, emotion, and motivation. In the behavioral view, dissociative disorder is concerned with response to avoid and save him from any dangerous or event full of stress and bad memories.

Person who suffers dissociative disorder would be difficult to remember any important event or a few moments, he forgot his identity. There are four dissociative disorder, they are amnesia dissociative disorder, fugue dissociative disorder, depersonalization disorder, and dissociative identity disorder (Davidson et al., 2000).

## ***Dissociative Identity Disorder***

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) is a severe condition in which two or more distinct identities or personality is presented and alternately take control of an individual, and the person also experienced memory loss (Green, 1991).

When one of the personalities takes control of one identity, the person is usually unable to remember of the events that occurred. The different identities are referred to as 'alter.' Alter may have experienced a distinct history, self-image, identity and even including a separate name and age (Heffner, 2001). At least two of these personalities recurrently take control of the person's behavior.

Dissociative identity disorder is one of dissociative disorder characterized by identity fragmentation rather than a proliferation of separate personalities. The disturbance is not due to the direct psychological effects of a substance or of a general medical condition; dissociative identity disorder was called multiple personality disorder until 1995. Each personality, in dissociative identity disorder, has a separate and consistent pattern of perceiving their environment, themselves, and others. Each multiple has a specific way they see the inside of their mind, where the alter lives when they are not in the control body (Heffner, 2001).

Person who suffers dissociative disorder may find it difficult to remember any important event in his life. He may even forget his identity. There are four dissociative disorder, they are amnesia dissociative disorder, fugue dissociative disorder, depersonalization disorder, and dissociative identity disorder (Davidson et al., 2000).

### **1. Amnesia Dissociative**

The person who suffers amnesia dissociative disorder would not remember any important information, usually after moment with full of stress. That information is not loss permanently, but just difficult to remember when amnesia occurred.

During the period of amnesia, the patient just felt normal, except the loss memory make him go everywhere without destination. The period of amnesia will occur for a few hours or even years. The patient who suffers amnesia dissociative disorder will lose his memory about his family, friends, but still has the ability to speak, write, and also his knowledge.

### **2. Fugue Dissociative Disorder**

The word fugue was derived from Latin 'fugere' mean 'escaping.' The patient will lose his memory bigger than amnesia dissociative disorder. The person who suffered it not only suffered amnesia, but also left his house accidentally and made new identity. Sometimes, he will have new name, new house, new job, and also new personality. Fugue dissociative disorder occurred to someone after he experience moment with full of stress, for example quarrel between husband and wife, financial problem, job, or even natural disaster.

### **3. Depersonalization Disorder**

Depersonalization disorder occurs after someone suffered moment with full of stress. The patients will loss his identity accidentally. He suffered unusual sensory, for example; size of his hands and feet looked different and his voice will strange in his ears. He felt outside from their body and stared at himself from distance. Sometimes, he felt like a machine, robot, or moved in different dimension.

### **4. Dissociative Identity Disorder**

Dissociative identity disorder (DID) is a severe condition in which two or more distinct identities or personality that is presented in alternately take control of an individual and the person also experienced memory loss (Green, 1991). When one of the personalities takes control of one identity, the person is usually unable to remember of the events that occurred. The different identities are referred to as 'alter.' Alter may have experienced a distinct history, self-image, identity and even including a separate name and age (Heffner, 2001). At least two of these personalities recurrently take control of the person's behavior.

Heffner (2001), On the other hand, classified dissociative identity disorder into four main symptoms. They are voice, physical differences, handwriting differences, and depression.

#### 1. Voice

Approximately one third of patients complain of auditory visual hallucination; they hear voices in their head but are merely the personalities within, communicating with one another. Often times, the therapist is misdiagnosed the dissociative identity disorder as a schizophrenic due to 'hearing a voice,' but it is different. Dissociative identity disorder heard voice inside their head while schizophrenic heard voice from the outside of themselves.

## 2. Physical differences

Each alter within a multiple has their own history. The personalities like body movements, facial expression, communication, voice tone, and pitch will different every one personalities take control the identity or alter. For example, a man with 40 ages, he incurs dissociative identity disorder; talks like old man, walks like old man, but when another personalities takes control, he changes like a young man.

## 3. Handwriting differences

In the symptoms of dissociative identity disorder, the therapist indicates it the patient with differences handwriting style.

## 4. Depression

Depression is the central of dissociative disorder, especially dissociative identity disorder. The person with dissociative identity disorder has a great variety of symptoms, namely; suicidal, nightmares, anxiety, amnesia, difficult paying attention, and hallucination.

## ***Psychoanalysis***

Sigmund Freud divided psychoanalysis into three parts; they are id, ego, and superego (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008). Id is component of primitive personality, trying to fulfill what instinct wants. Id already existed since birth. Id works based on pleasure principle; concerned with achievement of satisfaction. The ego is manager of personality to decide which instincts to satisfy and how. Ego works based on reality principle; ego guided by reality principle that what id wants should be accepted in reality. Superego is component of moral personality which is related with norm in society; whether good or bad. Superego works to push anything that unacceptable from id.

In psychoanalysis, there is something called the dynamics of personality. Dynamics of personality is related with process to satisfy the instinct and how the personality changes or develops by the use of psychic energy. Also, in dynamics of personality, there is something called defense mechanism.

Defense mechanism is a mental process to decrease anxiety and could do in two characteristics, namely; unconscious and reject the reality. Defense mechanism is also called as reactions of unconscious to protect the individual from emotion or hurt feeling like anxiety and guilty (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008). Ego used this mechanism to control the memory so the identity will repress memory or anxiety. If, the repression is failed, then ego will cooperate with other kinds of defense mechanism.

There are six types of ego defense mechanism; they are repression, projection, reaction formation, displacement, regression, and rationalization (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008). Repression is the process to repress impulse to unconscious because could threat the ego. Repression is also known as process 'funeral' memory, bad experience, or anxiety to unconscious. Projection is a form of defense mechanism in which unwanted feelings are displaced onto another person. A common form of projection occurs when an individual, threatened by his own angry feelings, accuses another of harboring hostile thoughts.

Reaction formation, on the other hand, is a replacement of attitude and behavior with the opposite attitude. By using reaction formation, the id is satisfied while keeping the ego in ignorance of the true motives. Conscious feelings are the opposite of the unconscious, for example; love-hate, shame-disgust, etc. A sample case, someone hated his friend, but he worried he will lose his friend. To hide his feeling, he changed it into love.

Displacement is a process to divert feeling, emotion, or anxiety to other object. For example; when someone gets angry by his boss, and he gets home, he will slam the door or hurt someone. Regression is repetition of behavior to face with his stress. When we are troubled or frightened, our behavior often changed more childish. The purpose of the regression is to get help to face trauma or anxiety. Rationalization is the substitution of a safe and reasonable explanation for the true cause of behavior. For example; a student got bad score in his school, then he did rationalization by assumed he got bad score because he did not study.

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

The method of this research was descriptive qualitative that intended to describe the psychological disorder, the dissociative identity disorder in Morton Rainey as the main character in *The Secret Window* movie.

### **Source of Data**

The researchers took Morton Rainey as the main character in *The Secret Window*, the dialogue, plot, setting, characterization, the script and the movie itself.

### **Procedures**

In collecting data, some procedures were done:

1. The researchers watched the movie twelve times and carefully. It aimed to identify the behavior of the main character in the movie.
2. The researchers read the script of the movie; gave the mark in the script such phrase or sentences that related with psychological dissociative identity disorder
3. The researchers captured the picture of the movie that contains psychological dissociative identity disorder.

### **Data analysis**

The researchers used psychoanalysis, ego defense mechanism by Sigmund Freud, that intended to answer the research questions above. The researchers believed that psychoanalysis could explain about psychological dissociative identity disorder.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. The Main Cause of Psychological Dissociative Identity Disorder in the Main Character Morton Rainey.**

Dissociative identity disorder can be caused by many things to someone, namely; trauma of childhood, over stress, and bad experiences (Davidson et al., 2000). Dissociative identity disorder is rare dissociative disorder in which a person exhibits two or even more distinct and alternating personalities, formerly called as multiple personality disorder (Myers, 1998).

The process started when Morton got hallucination. The hallucination is a kind of symptoms of dissociative identity disorder. Morton suffered hallucination after he got his wife was having affair with another man, Ted Milner. In some scene of the movie, Morton always got flash memory about his wife and Ted. That made Morton very uncomfortable. Finally, every time Morton remembered that memory, Morton always did repression.

Until he repressed his memory and intention to kill Amy and Ted, Shooter appeared as the second personality to kill both of them.



Figure 1. Morton Rainey found his wife cheating on him

The figure 1 showed Morton Rainey found his wife was cheating on him in the motel with a man, Ted Milner. Morton was very stress until he screamed loud to his wife and the man. The incident made Morton jealous and triggered to do something about the incident. He did not believe with what his wife had done to him. So, Morton had the intention to revenge his wife and her affair. According to psychoanalysis in the theory of personality, there is something called the use of psychic energy. The use of psychic energy is the dynamics of change that can change one's personality (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008). Moreover, the use of psychic energy in the movie is on ego defense mechanism.

Sigmund Freud proposed a set of ego defense mechanism that focused on how the ego defended itself against bad memories, bad experiences, over stress, and impulses that were regarded by the ego as unacceptable (Baumeister, Dale, & Sommer, 1998). In this research, the ego defense mechanism was repression.

Repression is the process to repress impulse to unconscious because it could threat the ego. Repression is also known as process 'funeral' memory, bad experience, or anxiety to unconscious. Repression is the central of defense mechanism that occurred when memory, mind, or even feeling made anxiety (Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008). The ego repressed the anxiety to unconscious mind because if the individual did what id wanted, the result is guilty. Based on the explanation above, the main cause of dissociative identity disorder in Morton Rainey is when he found his wife cheating on him.

## **2. The Symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder of the Main Character Morton Rainey in The Secret Window movie.**

### ***a. The main character, Morton Rainey, heard voice that talked to him.***

Heffner (2001) states that the symptoms of dissociative identity disorder were the patient heard a voice talked to him, physical differences, handwriting differences, and depression. The movie started where Morton heard a voice that talked to him. Morton was in his car while he heard that voice. As though there is a man who was talking to him. But in reality, Morton was just alone, and the voice did not really exist.

Unknown Voice : "You are not handling this. What you are doing is wrong. You have no idea what you have doing. You have been eating potatoes chips this way for 30 years. For 30 years."

Morton : (Confused)

Unknown Voice : "Sister found out about the broken window. The school had to be withdrawn from the competition. Sister found out the broken window. Then she got up from the table. We didn't talk for the rest of the night."

The dialogue above is the proof that Morton heard a voice that talked to him. Morton just heard the voice inside his head. He was just confused with the voice. Morton did not know whose voice it that and where the voice came from. A person heard an unclear voice indicated as one of the symptoms of dissociative identity disorder.

**b. The main character, Morton Rainey, was amnesia.**

The second symptom indicated that someone suffers from dissociative identity disorder is amnesia. People with dissociative identity disorder suffer a wide variety of symptoms. They are depression, suicidal behavior, insomnia, amnesia, sexual dysfunction, and hear voice (Alloy et al., 1996). Amnesia is part of the pattern of dissociative identity disorder. At least one of the personalities will be amnesic for the experiences (Alloy et al., 1996). The individual could not remember with what happen after other personalities take control of the individual. This happened to Morton; he did not remember what he had done when his multiple personality took control.



Figure 2. Morton came to his burned house

In figure 2, Morton came to his house and found that the house already burned by someone. He got the news from his wife. At that time, Morton, Amy, and Ted came to see the house. In the movie, the fire chief, Wickersham told them that they were victim of arson; someone burned down the house. But the fact is, the person who burned down the house is Morton himself.

**3. The Effects of Dissociative Identity Disorder to Morton Rainey**

The main effects of dissociative identity disorder that occurred in Morton was that he murdered Amy and Ted. After Morton found his wife cheating on him, his id wanted to revenge. Morton's id wanted to kill Amy and Ted.

Morton : By the way, I want you to know that none of this was my idea. It was Mr. Rainey all along.  
Amy : You are Mort Rainey.  
Morton : I got a place for you.

The dialogue above occurred when Morton was going to kill Amy. Shooter in Morton's body admitted in front of Amy that killing her is Morton's idea. So Shooter just did something that Morton wanted.

And then, because of the bad experiences of trauma sexual, Morton repressed his intention to kill Amy and Ted. Unconsciously, Id's desire is bigger than Morton's ego and superego. John Shooter appeared to do what id's wanted. Here is the dialogue where Shooter admitted that he was invented by Morton itself.

Morton : You don't exist.  
Shooter : Me? I exist, Mr. Rainey. I exist because you made me. You thought me up. Gave me my name. Told me everything you wanted me to do (Flashback Morton burned down Amy's house). I did them thing so you



wouldn't have to (Flashback Morton murdered Ken and Tom). Didn't have the stomach to do it yourself, but you knew I did. Are we done yet? We got things all cleaned up around here? What's the real reason I come for?

Morton :Fix the story.

Shooter :That is right.

Shooter admitted that he was from Morton himself. Shooter said, "I exist because you made me." So Shooter appeared because of Morton's repression and Morton's id. Shooter will do anything that Morton cannot do by himself. Shooter said, "I did them things so you wouldn't have to. Didn't have the stomach to do it yourself, but you knew I did." In accordance with what Shooter said, he did it because Morton himself didn't have the courage.



Figure 3. Shooter murdered Ted Milner



Figure 4. Morton murdered Amy Rainer

The figure 3 shows the scene where Morton which is already taken by Shooter murdered Ted Milner while the figure 4 shows the scene where Morton murdered his wife, Amy Rainey. So, after Morton Rainey murdered Amy and Ted, he was satisfied. Murdering Amy and Ted is a sign of the resolution of the movie.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this research, the researchers concluded that Morton Rainey suffers Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). Behind the disorder he suffered, there was a main cause that caused him to suffer DID. Morton suffered DID because his wife doing an affair with Ted. His love was so great to his wife, but his wife replied him with affair. Ultimately, his disappointment made him wanted to revenge Amy and Ted by killing them. But he was so afraid to do that. Until he repressed his intention, so multiple personality appeared. The figure of John Shooter came as a substitute figure of Morton Rainey to do what Morton's id wanted.

The researcher also found symptoms that indicated Morton suffered from Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID). They are heard voices and amnesia. He always hears a voice that talked to him, he talked with Shooter when in reality Shooter did not exist. Morton also always forgot some moments. Ultimately, his disorder made effects. Unconsciously he murdered Amy and Ted. Finally, Morton's id is satisfied. Now Morton lives without burden.

## REFERENCES

## Journal of English Literature and Linguistic Studies

Vol 2 (3) 2023

E-ISSN: 2548-4575

- Alloy, L. B. A., Bootzin, J., Richard R. (1996). *Abnormal Psychology*. the United States: International Edition.
- Baumeister, R. F., Dale, K., & Sommer, K. L. (1998). Freudian defense mechanisms and empirical findings in modern social psychology: Reaction formation, projection, displacement, undoing, isolation, sublimation, and denial. *Journal of Personality*, 66(6), 1081-1124.
- Davidson, G. C., Neale, J. M., & Kring, A. M. (2000). *Abnormal Psychology*. The United States: Wiley.
- Dola, A. (2014). *Dasar-Dasar Teori Sastra Indonesia*. Makassar: CAMAR.
- Heffner, C. (2001). *Dissociative Identity Disorder*. Retrieved 3 September, 2023, from <https://allpsych.com/journal/did/>
- Klarer, M. (2004). *An Introduction to Literary Studies*
- Kluft, R. P. (1996). *Dissociative identity disorder Handbook of dissociation (pp. 337-366)*: Springer.
- Myers, D. G. (1998). *Psychology*. New York: Worth Publishers.
- Nordqvist, C. (2015). *What is psychology?*. Retrieved 31 October, 2023, from <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/154874.php>
- Spiegel, D., Loewenstein, J. R., Lewis-Fernandez, R., Sar, V., Simeon, D., Vermetten, E., . . . Dell, F. P. (2011). *Dissociative Identity Disorder in DSM-5*.
- Stangor, C. (2012). *Introduction to Psychology* Retrieved from [https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/9/9.00SC/MIT9\\_00SCF11\\_text.pdf](https://ocw.mit.edu/ans7870/9/9.00SC/MIT9_00SCF11_text.pdf)
- Yusuf, S., & Nurihsan, J. (2008). *Teori Kepribadian*. Bandung: Rosda.