

# Comparing Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) Portrayed in Sidney Sheldon's Tell Me Your Dreams and Alice Jamieson's Today I Am Alice Nine Personalities, One Tortured Mind

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**Abstract.** This article attempts to compare two literary works from two different nations with similar motifs, which is Dissociative Identity Disorder. Through a comparison, this study attempts to find out the portrayal of Dissociative Identity Disorder to the main characters and the similarities or differences regarding the issue of Dissociative Identity Disorder that the main characters are suffering from Mental Disorders (DSM-V). The results of the analysis show similarities and differences regarding Dissociative Identity Disorder that is experienced by the two main characters of both literary works, Ashley has 3 of the 6 symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder while Alice experiences all six.

**Keywords:** *Alice Jamieson, comparative literature, dissociative identity disorder*

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## 1 Introduction

Revolution 4.0, also known as the era of technology revolutionary and innovations, mostly considered as the triumph of human achievement for creating such sophisticated inventions in technology. Every element of society doesn't want to miss the opportunity to utilize the ease that is generated by the technology, start from the toddler until the elderly. The inventions of course help human in many ways that probably beyond their expectations, such as fridge which contains camera that can be tracked through smartphones, so when the user forgets what to buy at the grocery, he can easily take a look at the fridge at home. [1] claims that discourse and technology are related to the use of new technologies for web page design software, internet, instant messaging, and digital image retrieval and transfer for the purpose of speed and access in a globalized world, whereas discourse is a discursive practice that is inherently multilingual, not a mono-language.

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The rapid change of technology in life reflects the very essence of human life. People become more consumptive and self-centered. The two factors often lead human to the invisible quicksand that drown them alive. Many people justifies any ways only to get what they want. One of the painful instances of this is the suicide of a Korean actress, after being abused sexually by her management. She was promised for fame if she wanted to serve her managers' sexual desires. In the end, when she couldn't cope with the pain anymore, she chose to end her life by committing suicide.

A. As technological systems are invented by humans and reflect the very essence of a population's needs and culture, human societies/civilizations and their technology have become inseparable from one another. The cyclical nature of society and technologies is one where each factor greatly affects the other, starting with human societies and resulting in the development of different technologies to meet the needs of the society.

This article attracts to Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) since it reflects real life situation. Until the end of 2000s, psychiatrists were split into two parts, the ones who believe that this is real and the ones who don't. This personality disorder is very difficult to be proved because it often comorbid with other personality disorder such Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), that often leads psychiatrist to misdiagnose the patient.

This study is framed on Dissociative identity disorder's theory or known as DID. It is as multiple personality disorder (MPD) or a mental illness characterized by at least two distinct and relatively enduring personality states. This is accompanied by memory gaps beyond what would be explained by ordinary forgetfulness. Dissociative Identity Disorders are characterized by a disruption of and / or discontinuity in the normal integration of consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, perception, body representation, motor control, and behavior. The dissociative disorders are frequently found in the aftermath of trauma, and many of the symptoms, including embarrassment and confusion about the symptoms or a desire to hide them, are influenced by the proximity to trauma [2].

By highlighting DID as identified by American Psychiatric Association, the researcher demonstrates how it fits for this study in analyzing two literary works that have been chosen as the object of the study due to the revealing DID found in both literary works. In *Tell Me Your Dreams* and *Today I am Alice: Nine Personalities, One Tortured Mind*, the authors do mention DID acts more explicitly. So, by reading these both of literary works, we can learn about DID. So, the problem of this study is stated as "How DID is portrayed in *Tell Me Your Dreams* and *Today I am Alice: Nine Personalities, One Tortured Mind*?"

A study has been focusing on similar research, taken from Safira Sari's *Dissociative Identity Disorder Of Ashley Patterson As The Main Character In Sidney Sheldon's Tell Me Your Dreams*. Here, the researcher does not really portray DID explicitly. Therefore, this study fills the gap of the lack of significances of the previous studies of DID.

## 2 Research Method

To analyze this study, the writer used qualitative method because the writer considers explanation and description are the most important things in analyzing this study. The reason to use qualitative method is because in literary study the data is described. The data will be taken in sentences, statements and ideas forms. [3] said that qualitative descriptive is a kind of research method focuses on descriptions and interpretations, concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena.

To find the data as the reference of writing this thesis, the writer uses library research and internet research. The writer collects the data from some books, internet and many other resources that can be related to the subject matter that is being analyzed. The writer did the steps following [4]: collecting, selecting, analyzing the data, interpreting them and finally drawing the conclusion to write the thesis for achieving the most effective study result

## 3 Results and Discussion

Literature reflects factual experiences in the world and these experiences can be seen through different literary genres. Literary critics analyze literature to seek for truths about the world. In this analysis, based on DID theory that the researcher has elaborated on the previous chapter, some DID symptoms are found in the characters in the two literary works. After having analyzed the data, the presence of two distinct identities or personality states such as memory loss (amnesia), a sense of being detached from surroundings and a blurred sense of identity can be examined in the two novels. The personality in the characters faced stress or problems in important areas of life and mental health comorbidities. The multiple personality can be highlighted through the parts or quotations from both literary works in order to answer the problems of this study.

It should be noted that the occurrences of six listed elements can demonstrate the similarities and differences symptoms of DID found in both novels. 1) The presence of two or more distinct identities or personality characterised in *Tell Me Your Dreams* is realized by 'two alters, meanwhile *Today I am Alice: Nine Personalities, One Tortured Mind* is realized by 'eight alters'. 2) The occurrence of symptom of loss of memory (amnesia) can be identified in both characters in the two literary works. They constantly have amnesia or memory lost from time to time. 3) A sense of being detached from surroundings is also involved therein the literary works. Exhausted of feeling constantly being stalked by a villain. Tired of being considered a freak by her surroundings. 4) A blurred sense of . no information about this symptom in this novel. Alice can feel there's something strange inside her, moving her body. She also often confused by her own actions. 5) Significant stress or problems in important areas of life are observable here. It proves to be perceived that the character Ashley feels some kind of stress at work because she is tired of the feeling of being stalked by someone. Alice has difficulties in making

or keeping friends due to her regular memory lost, she also unable to develop any kind of romantic with any men, especially when it comes to sexual intimacies. Her medications also cause her to be addicted to them, and if she forgets to take them, her body will start to react in unpleasant ways such as violent trembling. 6) Mental health comorbidities is identified in one of Ashley alter, Allele suffers from manic-depressive. But there's no formal diagnosis from psychiatrist. Beside suffering from DID, Alice also suffers from OCD and Anorexia. She has been diagnosed with those comorbidities since she was a teenager.

The comparison between both literary works has shown that that DID is portrayed differently. In Sidney Sheldon's *Tell Me Your Dreams*, the researcher only find three of six symptoms of DID, while in Alice Jamieson's *Today I Am Alice: Nine Personalities One Tortured Mind*, the researcher finds six of the six symptoms of DID. Based on this fact, it shows that the second literary work, Alice Jamieson's *Today I Am Alice: Nine Personalities One Tortured Mind*, portrays DID more clearly than the first one. It can be interpreted that as a social fact of society, it is also a product of society so it involves life of the people and the community in which they live.

Every form of literary works is the reflection of human life through the medium of language. The characters, setting, and conflict within 'Tell Me Your Dreams' and 'Today I Am Alice Nine Personalities, One Tortured Mind' are imaginary, but the authors' portrayal about them are based on true events in the society. They pictured a fictional imaginary, it can also be a medium of knowledge, to give information to the readers. As in this novel, the author, Sidney Sheldon, has introduced his readers to DID, which existence was being doubted and questioned at that time. Through his work, especially this one, Sheldon gives information to his readers that this mental illness is really exist. The findings of this study would motivate interested researchers to further enrich other views of both outstanding literary works.

#### **4 Conclusion**

As far as this study is concerned, the necessary conclusion can be made that the difference of the amount of DID symptoms in the both literary works is caused by several factors. The first one is, they both are different form of literary works, *Tell Me Your Dreams* is a thriller novel while *Today I Am Alice: Nine Personalities One Tortured Mind* is an autobiography. Based on that fact, it is crystal clear that they must have different characteristics which lead to the differences in portraying DID. Fiction, or in this case the novel, was created to entertain the reader, and it is fiction, which means it doesn't really happen in real life. But, not all fiction are imaginary which make the whole elements of it are untrue.

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