

**SYMPTOMS OF DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER (DID)
SUFFERED BY GRACE MARKS IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S ALIAS GRACE**

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Abstract

The research discussed the symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) suffered by Grace Marks in Margaret Atwood's Alias Grace. As it focused on personality study, a psychoanalysis approach was used. To identify the symptoms of DID suffered by Grace Marks, Haddock's DID theory was employed. The results showed that there were two types of symptoms i.e. physical and emotional suffered by Grace Marks. The physical symptoms were panic attack and appearance differences, while the emotional symptoms include nightmare, depression, loss of time, body memory, and switching behavior.

Keywords: DID, psychoanalysis approach, symptoms of DID

INTRODUCTION

Novel is written based on human experiences. One of interesting issues depicted in a novel is mental health. Normally, people who are in a good state of mental health show consistent personality identity throughout their lifespan. They have one name, several consistent traits, habits, and hobbies. However, people who suffer from DID show inconsistency of personality identities. A person with Dissociative Identity Disorder shows the presence of two or more distinct identities or personalities. Gabbard, in his book entitled Gabbard's Treatments of Psychiatric Disorders, from American Psychiatric Association states that "dissociative identity disorder (DID) is described as a disruption of identity characterized by two or more distinct personality states or an experience of possession" (496). Furthermore, DID can make the sufferer dissociates her/himself from a situation or condition that is too violent, traumatic, or painful. Schmidt in Integrative Research Paper: Dissociative Identity Disorder believes that "the dissociation from one's true self is essentially a coping mechanism to protect the individual from fearful emotions or situations" (4).

Patients who suffer from DID might experience several symptoms. The symptoms can be categorized into some criteria:

Physical Symptoms

Symptoms that belong to this category are panic attack, eating disorder, chemical dependency, handwriting differences, and appearance differences. Physical symptoms are characteristics of DID which can be seen from the way the sufferer acts and behaves.

Panic attack is a fear reaction of threatening situation. As stated in Baker's Understanding Panick Attacks and Overcoming Fear, "although panic attack is exactly the same as the fear reaction, there is no obvious trigger or stimulus, such as a snarling dog or an attacker, to set off the strong feelings" (40). Panick attack usually involves the sensation such as fast heartbeat, increased breathing, sweating, trembling, dry mouth, tingling hands and feet, and so on.

Meanwhile, eating disorder is defined as an abnormal eating habits that negatively affect someone's physical or mental health. A person with eating disorder eats with larger amounts of food than usual, however; there is also a person who urges of eating less and those happen out of individual's control (2). In DID, eating disorder can be a way of harming the self or of expressing one's internal self-loathing to the outside world. It can be seen as a passive suicide or even as protective coping mechanism (Haddock 67).

The next physical symptom is handwriting difference. It is more observable in the elements of style. In DID, when the sufferer begins to write her/his problem, she/he may apply different hand writing to prevent the identities becoming overwhelmed (Ringrose 9). The different hand writing comes from the other identity that takes control of the main identity. As stated in Ringrose "the alter may use different language, font size, colours, and styles; their handwriting often varies, and where the clients draw pictures, these may be drawn in different styles or by using different drawing implements" (Ringrose 9). In other words, not only handwriting that is different, but also drawing style can be different when a DID sufferer is asked to draw a picture.

Other than that, DID sufferer sometimes present different appearances. As stated in Ringrose's Understanding and Treating Dissociative Identity Disorder (or Multiple Personality Disorder), "...sometimes alter dress very differently, wearing their hair in a very different style where they may go from short dark hair, to getting hair extensions, or a colour, or prem. Similarly, the alter's mannerism preffered posture and tastes vary" (10). In DID, appearance differences refer to either physical appearance such as, the way someone looks and dresses or personality states such as, she/he as someone else based on age, sex, or race (Roberts & Greene 369). In those ways, DID suffer presents herself/himself as another identity that holds different values, believes, and different memories.

Emotional Symptoms

Emotional symptoms of DID refer to the way sufferer feels, thoughts, wishes, and dreams that cause emotions and affect her/his mental health. These emotional symptoms are inner voice, nightmare, depression, loss of time, body memory, and switching behavior.

In DID, a sufferer recognizes inner voice as a part of herself/himself. As stated in Haddock's The Dissociative Identity Dissorder Sourcebook, "dissociators

tend to hear inner voices that they perceive to be part of themselves" (8). Moreover, she also states that "the typical DID client talks about hearing voices in her head since childhood. Initially, she assumes that such voices are common to everyone. The voices may comment on her behavior or may even appear to be controlling her" (13). In other words, inner voice may comment on someone's behavior or may command someone to do something.

Next, according to Agargun, Kara, et al in their journal entitled "Clinical Importance of Nightmare Disorder in Patients with Dissociative Disorders", "the association of dream disturbances with flashbacks related to the trauma suggests that nightmares appear to be an effective coping mechanism in trauma victims" (575). The nightmare usually appears in a form of events that the DID sufferer has ever experienced in the past, for example; accidents that make the person trauma.

Meanwhile, depression occurs when somebody keeps emotions such as loneliness, anger, sadness, and fear all by herself/himself. Furthermore, she/he does not talk about those feelings to anyone and does not try to solve problems that she/he has. As stated in Roy's book entitled Depression, "some people keep emotions like loneliness, anger, sadness, and fear inside. They do not discuss their feelings and do not try to solve the problems causing these emotions.

Moreover, according to Spring in her article entitled What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Dissociative Identity Disorder, the DID sufferer may have sense of losing time or incoherence about who she/he is and what she/he has been doing (1). In other words, the sufferer may feel temporary forget about her/his identity and surroundings. Thus, when she/he is asked to recall the information that happened in the past, she/he simply says that she/he does not remember.

The next emotional symptom is body memory. It is a remembrance of traumatic events in the past that cause pain, discomfort, tension, and arousal. Body memory causes a person becomes protective of herself/himself from traumatic events. It happens when someone repeatedly experience the same traumatic condition towards the body, for example; when someone is sexually abused (Hastings 164). Although a person may forget a painful event, her/his body will automatically prevent it to happen if it is threatening or disturbing.

The next symptom is switching behavior, the characteristics of switching can be seen from the change in physical appearance, tone of voice, and mood. As stated in Haddock's The Dissociative Identity Disorder Sourcebook, switching is "changing from one personality state to the other. Sometimes accompanied by changes in physical appearance, vocal patterns, mood, or level of cognitive functioning" (7). Switching behavior is also followed by severe headaches (Haddock 7). When a DID sufferer switches, she/he can act and talk in different manner to how she/he usually does.

Alias Grace is a novel which talks about DID issue. Atwood's novel Alias Grace was published in 1996 and was published in London by Virago Press. Alias Grace contained only a little conversation. It tells the narration of the main character's life which was told by Grace Marks. It tells about an Irish servant named Grace Marks who recalls her interview with a doctor named Simon Jordan. The interview talks about Grace's life story who was convicted of murdering her employer, Thomas Kinnear, Esq. and his housekeeper Nancy Montgomery together with her fellow-servant James McDermott. In the interview also, Grace defines herself as a young girl who often experiences emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, child maltreatment or neglect. Furthermore, she repeatedly often faces the same traumatic situations such as witnessing the deaths of her mother and her best friend, Mary Whitney. Those traumatic experiences make her suffered from DID. She sometimes presents different identity and personality due to her traumatic experiences in the past. She presents her different identity and personalities as Mary Whitney. She adapts Mary's identity and personalities because she considers that Mary has become part of her.

This article focuses on Grace Marks, a character in the novel who suffers from DID. It analyzed the symptoms of DID suffered by Grace Marks.

METHOD

The research used psychoanalysis approach by Sigmund Freud since the topic is related to personality study. Psychoanalysis is one of literary approaches that is introduced by Sigmund Freud. In his book entitled A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis, he states that "psychoanalysis is a method of treating nervous patients medically" (9). Psychoanalysis is one of literary approaches that is related to personality study and can be used in analyzing and interpreting literary works by using a method of classifying, analyzing, and explaining character's actions, behaviors, motives, and thoughts through a literary work such as novel. Specifically, to identify the symptoms of DID, Haddock's The Dissociative Identity Disorder Sourcebook was used. In his book, Haddock lists several characteristics of DID that can be experienced by DID patients such as inner voice, nightmares, panic attacks, depression, eating disorder, chemical dependency, loss of time, handwriting differences, differences in appearance, body memories, and severe headaches that are often associated with the switching behavior (8).

DISCUSSION

Physical Symptoms of DID suffered by Grace Marks

Panic attack

In Atwood's Alias Grace, the first proof of Grace Marks's panic attack appears when she sees a doctor who came to examine her. The doctor has scary appearance that frightens her. It is because she has ever had the same experience with the same doctor before "it comes out glinting, and I know I have seen a hand like that before; and then I lift my head and stare him straight in the

eye, and my heart clenches and kicks out inside me, and then I begin to scream” (Atwood 32). Grace shows her fear reaction by telling her fast heartbeat that is continuing by screaming. It is because she has a bad experience with the same doctor. Moreover, it reminds her to the moment when she accompanies Mary Whitney to do abortion. She still feels that the presence of a doctor is disturbing. Moreover, it also reminds her of the head measurement by the previous doctor that makes her screams and does a tantrum. Thus, the fear appears again when she first meet Dr. Jordan. It can be proved when she said, “I say, Then I suppose you are here to measure my head” (Atwood 42).

Grace’s panick attack can also be seen when one of the penitentiary keepers told the Governor’s wife about the hysterics and tantrum that she does in the penitentiary. It can be seen in the quotation below.

it’s the only way with the hysterics, you may be sure Ma’am, said the Matron, we have had a great deal of experience with that kind of fit, this one used to be prone to them but we never indulged her, we worked to correct it and we thought she had given it up, it might be her old trouble coming back, for despite what they said about it up there in Toronto ... (Atwood 33).

The quotation above shows that Grace often behaves hysteric and tantrum when she is reminded by her past experience about the asylum. It can be concluded that Grace’s panic attack can come to existence if she experiences frightening situations.

Appearance Differences

In Atwood’s *Alias Grace*, Grace Marks presents both of her clothing style and manner differently. It can be seen from how she dresses and talks. Previously, Grace has no proper clothes due to the family condition who live in poverty. However, after the murder of Mr. Kinnear and Nancy, her appearance begins to change. She begins to dress decently and better than before. Therefore, the newspaper men define her as a decently dressed woman. It can be proved when she states “...that I am well and decently dressed...” (Atwood 25). In addition, her different appearance can also be seen when she has interview with Dr. Jordan. At that moment, Dr. Jordan tries to remind her about her condition after the murder. He reminds her that Jamie Walsh sees her in a different appearance. It can be proved when he states “he said you were well, and good in spirits. He said you were better dressed than usual, and were wearing white stockings. He implied they were Nancy’s” (Atwood 372). Grace wears Nancy’s dress and white stockings. She presents different appearance although she can not remember it.

The next proof of her different appearance can be seen when she runs away with James McDermott after the murder. She wears Nancy’s dress to cover her true appearance. She wears the dress that Nancy wore on the first day she

arrived at Kinner's house. It is proved when she states "the last thing I did was take off the clothes I'd been wearing that day; and I put on one of Nancy's dresses, the pale one with white ground and small floral print, which was the same one she had on the first day I came to Mr. Kinnear's" (Atwood 388).

Not only the different style of clothing, Grace also shows her different manner. Previously, she is known as a good girl with polite manner. Therefore, the newspaper men define her as a good girl with pliable nature. However, when she is hypnotized by Jerume DuPont, her manner of talking changes. She talks rudely to people especially to the Governor's family. It is proved when she states "whether I did what you'd like to do with that little slut who's got hold of your hand?" (Atwood 465). From her statement, it can be seen that she dares to insult Miss Lydia, the Governor's daughter by calling her 'little slut' which she never calls her with that words before. She also talks rudely by keep insulting Miss Lydia using rude words. This time she calls her 'a little mouse'. It can be proved when she states "... You are such a curious man! Curiosity killed the cat, you know, Doctor. You should watch out for that little mouse beside you; and her little furry mousehole too!" (Atwood 465). The conversation above explains that after Grace insults Miss Lydia, she makes the Governor's wife angry.

Emotional Symptoms

The emotional symptoms of DID refer to Grace's feeling, thoughts, wishes and dreams that cause emotions and affect to her mental health. They are inner voice, nightmare, depression, loss of time, body memory, and switching behavior.

Inner Voice

In Atwood's *Alias Grace*, Grace Marks has inner voices that command her to do bad things. It can be seen when she was in the dock with her younger brothers and younger sisters. At that moment, Grace stood by the back of them. Then, her inner voice began to command her to push one or two of them over. It can be proved from her statement "I will confess to having a wicked thought, when I had the young ones all lined up on the dock, with their little bare legs dangling down. I thought, I might just push one or two of them over, and then there would not be so many to feed, nor so many clothes to wash" (Atwood 124). Grace's inner voice commands her to push one or two of her younger brothers and younger sisters over. It is because all this time she feels burdened for washing their clothes by herself. Moreover, she has to share foods with them. However, she does not do that because she realizes that it is a wicked thing. From the quotation also, it shows that Grace's inner voice has appeared since childhood when she was thirteen years old. She said that at that age, she was still trying to please her father. Therefore, she ignores what her inner voice commands her.

Grace's other inner voice can be seen when she brings a heavy iron cooking pot and was seeing her father sleeping. At that moment, her inner voice commands her to kill her father. It is because she feels burdened for having a father who had a bad habit of drinking. Moreover, her father is irresponsible for

his family. He is unable to feed his children, unable to provide proper clothes, and unable to provide proper house for his family. As a result, Grace keeps her anger toward her father since a long time. She wants to kill her father by dropping the heavy cooking pot down to his head. It can be proved in the quotation below.

I had begun to have thoughts about the iron cooking pot, and how heavy it was; and if it should happen to drop on him while he was asleep, it could smash his skull open, and kill him dead, and I would say it was an accident; and I did not want to be led into a grave sin of that kind, though I was afraid that the fiery red anger that was in my heart againts him would drive me to it (Atwood 149).

From the quotation above, Grace also ignores the inner voice that commands her to kill her father. It shows that no matter Grace hates him, she will not let herself to have a grave sin from killing her own father and lying about his death. However, she feels afraid that someday she might do that because of the repressed anger inside herself.

Nightmare

Nightmare refers to a frightening dream that can make a person suddenly wakes up from sleep. The dream is usually in a form of events that the DID sufferer has ever experienced in the past. In Atwood's Alias Grace, Grace Marks's nightmare appears when she has a dream about Mary Whitney. At that time, Mary comes in her dream to ask the window to be opened. However, Grace is too late to do that. Then, she wakes up and feels guilty for not doing it faster. The quotation below tells about that.

her face was very pale, but she looked at me and smiled; and then she took her hand from the top of the glass, and the firefly came out and darted about the room; and I knew that this was her soul, and it was trying to find its way out, but the window was shut; then I could not see where it was gone. Then I woke up, with the tears of sadness running down my face, because Mary was lost to me once more (Atwood 364).

From the quotation above, Grace's dream represents the guilty feeling she had for not opening the window soon. Therefore, she has nightmare about Mary when she sleeps.

Depression

Grace Marks has depression when she is asked by Dr. Jordan about her hope to be set free. In the conversation, she tells that she receives death sentence from the murder case of Thomas Kinnear and Nancy Montgomery. However, the death sentence changes into a life sentence because many people would like to examine that case. Although the sentence has changed, Grace still feels pessimistic and hopeless for her future. Below is the conversation between Grace and Dr. Jordan that shows her depression.

'I have already been judged, Sir. Whatever you may think of me, it's all the same.'

'Judge rightly, Grace?' He could not resist asking.

'Rightly or wrongly does not matter,' she said. 'People want a guilty person. If there has been a crime, they want to know who did it. They don't like not knowing.'

'Then you have given up hope?'

'Hope of what, Sir?' she asked mildly.

Simon felt foolish, as if he'd committed a breach of etiquette.

'Well – hope of being set free.' (104)

From the conversation above, Grace shows the feeling of pessimistic and hopeless to Dr. Jordan. She thinks that she has lost her reputation and only hopes to have a better breakfast tomorrow than what she has today. The depression from the death sentence has negatively affected the way she feels, thinks, and acts toward her future.

The other depression also appears when Grace was asked by Dr. Jordan about what pattern of a quilt she wanted to make in her life. She feels pessimistic and does not want to tell her will. It can be proved from the following quotation.

I did not give him a straight answer, because saying what you really want out loud brings bad luck, and then the good thing will never happen. It might not happen anyway, but just to make sure, you should be careful about saying what you want or even wanting anything, as you may be punished for it (Atwood 113).

From the quotation above, Grace shows her pessimism that saying what she wants out loud would bring bad luck, moreover; it will never happen and will only lead to a punishment. She believes so because of the bad experience that happened to Mary Whitney. At that time, Mary says her wish of her future husband criteria out loud. However, she ends up marrying no one because she dies after doing the abortion.

Loss of time

In Atwood's *Alias Grace*, Grace Marks shows behaviors that indicate to loss of time. The evidence can be seen when she wakes up from fainting after feeling shocked because of Mary's death. At that moment, she does not remember what happened. Moreover, she thinks herself as Mary. The quotation below tells about Grace's loss of time.

... when I did wake up I did not seem to know where I was, or what had happened; and I kept asking where Grace had gone. And when they told me that I myself was Grace, I would not believe them, but cried, and

tried to run out of the house, because I said that Grace was lost, and had gone into the lake, and I needed to search for her (Atwood 208). From the quotation above, it shows that Grace temporarily loses her memory and identity. She thinks herself as Mary and thinks that Grace is lost. It is because she heard Mary's voice before, right after she finds out that Mary is dead. The voice asks Grace to let it soul in to her body. Furthermore, she does not open the window quickly to let it out. Therefore, she believes that Mary's soul has trapped in the room. Then, when she wakes up from fainting, she acts like she is possessed by Mary's soul. Although the other servants tell her that she is Grace, she insists to search for her.

Body Memory

In Atwood's Alias Grace, Grace Marks has a body memory related to the head measurement that the doctors do to her when she is examined. Thus, she feels anxious and uncomfortable when she finds out that she is going to have the head measurement again. It is proved from the quotation that shows her body memory "where there's a doctor it's always a bad sign. Even when they are not doing the killing themselves. It means a death is close, and in that way they are like ravens or crows. But this doctor will not hurt me, the Governor's wife promised it. All he wants is to measure my head" (Atwood 31). Based on the quotation, Grace considers that doctors are bad signs. It is because she previously has ever had a traumatic experience with doctor. Moreover, doctors also remind her to Mary's and McDermott's deaths. Mary died after coming to a doctor to do an abortion, meanwhile; McDermott died after the hanging punishment that soon followed by the doctors that cut his body into pieces. Therefore, it makes Grace feels uncomfortable whenever she is going to have the head measurement by a doctor again.

Body memory also appears when the first time Grace met Dr. Jordan. At that time, she assumes that Dr. Jordan will measure her head just like the previous doctors. However, he only wanted to have an interview with her. It can be proved from the following quotation.

Good morning, Grace, he says. I understand that you are afraid of doctors. I must tell you right away that I myself am a doctor. My name is Dr. Jordan, Dr. Simon Jordan.
I look at him quickly, then look down. I say, Is the other doctor coming back?
The one that frightened you? he says. No, he is not.
I say, Then I suppose you are here to measure my head.
I would not dream of it, he says, smiling; but still, he glances at my head with a measuring look (Atwood 42).

Based on the quotation above, it can be seen that Grace has a remembrance of the head measurements she experienced before. Head measurement procedure always makes her panic. Thus, she becomes more aware toward doctors that

come to her. Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that Grace Marks has a body memory symptom.

Switching Behavior

In Atwood's Alias Grace, Grace Marks shows her switching behavior when she is reminded by past events that are related to the murder case of Nancy Montgomery and Thomas Kinnear.

Grace's switching behavior can be seen from the change of her mood. When she is brought by the penitentiary keepers to the Governor's house to have an interview with Dr. Jordan, her mood changes because the keepers make a joke about the murder case that involved her. As a result, she presents her cruel way of speaking to the keepers. The following quotation proves the above explanation.

I try to think of what Marry Whitney would say, and sometimes I can say it. If you really thought that of me you should hold your dirty tongues, I said to them, or one dark night I'll have them out of your mouths roots and all, I won't need a knife, I'll just take hold with my teeth and pull, and not only that I'll thank you to keep your filthy screw's hands to yourself (Atwood 72).

From the quotation above, it can be concluded that Grace has a mood switching after the keepers insult her. As a result, her way of speaking to the keepers represents what Mary Whitney will say. In other words, her identity changes to be like Mary who is bold in speaking. Therefore, she dares to say cruel words to the keepers.

Switching behavior can also be seen from the change of Grace's tone of voice. Her tone of voice changes as if she is possessed by Mary's soul. It occurs when she is asked about her relation with James McDermott during the hypnotism. The following conversation shows the change of tone of voice of Grace.

DuPont repeats the question to Grace in a level voice. There is a pause; then Grace laughs. Or someone laughs; it doesn't sound like Grace. 'Relation, Doctor? What do you mean?' The voice is thin, wavering, watery; but fully present, fully alert. 'Really, Doctor, you are such a hypocrite! You want to know if I kissed him, if I slept with him. If I was his paramour! Is that it?' (Atwood 464).

The conversation above shows that Grace's switching behavior is followed by the change of a voice which does not sound like her. The voice speaks in different tone and manner. It is because the question about her relation with McDermott makes her offended. As a result, her mood changes and she dares to insult Dr. Jordan by calling him a hypocrite.

CONCLUSION

There are two types of DID symptoms suffered by Grace Marks i.e. physical and emotional symptoms. The physical symptoms that Grace suffers are panic attack and appearance differences. Meanwhile, for the emotional symptoms, she suffers from inner voice, nightmare, depression, loss of time, body memory, and switching behavior. Those symptoms appear when she faces the same traumatic, frightening, and disturbing situations that mostly happened in the past. The dissociation from Grace Marks' true self is essentially a coping mechanism to protect her from fearful emotions or situations.

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