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Dissociative identity disorder (did) of marc Spector in marvel cinematic universe's show 'moon knight': a psycholinguistic analysis

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ABSTRACT

This study examines a psychological disorder called dissociative identity disorder (DID) in the Marvel Cinematic Universe's show Moon Knight, which premiered on March 30, 2022, and ran for six episodes. The aim of this study is to analyze the dissociative identity disorder (DID) that is being experienced by Marc Spector, the main character of Marvel Cinematic Universe's show, Moon Knight. This study has three objectives, (1) To find out what are the causes of dissociative identity disorder on Marc Spector in Marvel Cinematic Universe's show Moon Knight. (2) To find out clinical features of dissociative identity disorder on Marc Spector in Marvel Cinematic Universe's show Moon Knight. (3) To find out how dissociative identity disorder affects the way Marc Spector communicates. The method used in this study were qualitative method. The data of this study were obtained from a Marvel Cinematic Universe's show Moon Knight. The techniques for collecting data were by watching every episode of the show, taking notes, classifying the data, doing interpretation, and drawing conclusion. The result of the analysis reveals Marc Spector is able to talk different accent and different language when he shifted to his alter ego.



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Introduction

Every individual has their own unique life cycle, which begins in the womb of their mother and concludes when they pass away. People are bound to err at some point during their development, which is to be expected given that nobody is flawless. These errors could originate from either our actions or our minds, either consciously or subconsciously. Things, such as our actions, our feelings, or even who a person is, can easily slip our minds at times.

The theory of association, which held that memories are brought to consciousness by way of the association of ideas, is where the concept of dissociation as a concept in psychiatry and as a descriptor of phenomena observed in mental disorders originated (Baddeley, 2019; Ebbinghaus, 2013; Husserl, 2019). As a result, memories that are not available to be associated are referred to as "dissociated," and this is where the term "dissociation" originates. Today, we understand the term "dissociation" to refer to the act of separating an idea or train of thought from one's primary stream of consciousness (Braun, 1988 in Ross, 2014).

A person is said to have dissociative identity disorder, also known as DID, if they have what is known as a "alter ego," a personality, or even multiple personalities, that they developed in order to shield themselves from negative experiences (Schimmenti & Caretti, 2016). The alter ego is in no way comparable to bipolar disorder. An alter-ego is an alternative personality that is deliberately constructed by an individual (Evans & Lentz, 2017), whereas a bipolar personality is one that is deliberately constructed by a person who has been diagnosed with the condition (Berk et al., 2014).

Usually, the alter-ego was built because of the fear and the trauma a person has been through and having hard times to get through it, so the coping mechanism the person chose is build a new personality to cope with the fear, the pain or the trauma (Brothers, 2013).

Dissociation is today a powerful concept for looking at human coping mechanisms. The overriding influence of "repression" has dwindled, and no longer stands in the way of scientific investigators' taking a new look at dissociation (Braun, 1988 in Kalsched, 2014).

Originally, the anger was created in the main personality by the abuse heaped upon it, with which it could not cope. Accordingly, it repressed that anger and pain into a dissociated secondary state that was created for that purpose. Once having accomplished this maneuver, the main personality becomes free of the pain and anger (Watkins & Watkins 1988 in Frederick & McNeal, 2013).

Dissociative Identity Disorder previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder (MPD) is a mental disorder characterized by having another personality and identity. Dissociative Identity Disorder's cause itself still widely debated in psychiatry world (Boysen & VanBergen, 2014; Kerna et al., 2021; Ringrose, 2018).

There is a robust correlation between dissociative symptoms and exposure to trauma, particularly early childhood trauma and disruptions in attachment and caregiving. Dissociation can be defined as disconnections between thoughts, feelings, behaviors, sensations, and other mental processes that would normally be connected. It is a human phenomenon, experienced by all to varying degrees on a continuum ranging from benign to problematic. On one end of the continuum are experiences of daydreaming, "highway hypnosis," or absorption and flow wherein the individual's mental energy is focused on a particular task while other thoughts or perceptions fade into the background.

These dissociative experiences are often benign and under the individual's control (Boyer et al., 2022). Even though Dissociative Identity Disorder happens in one body, it has different mind, thoughts, memories, and different characterizations. This disorder absolutely become a threat to their life, and could change their precious life.

The same exact case happens to Marc Spector, the main character of Marvel Cinematic Universe's show, Moon Knight. Marc Spector (played by Oscar Isaac), Marc Spector working as a mercenary who enjoys to slaughter people when needed, and he has another personality named Steven Grant, an ordinary British guy working in a giftshop. Marc Spector is diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder, he often forgot why he was on some places, why he found things that aren't his, and so on.

Psychological approach

Psycholinguistics is an integration of two disciplines; psychology and linguistics. Psychology is the study of mind and behavior; linguistics is the study of language. So, in general, psycholinguistics can be defined as the study of mind and language. It is concerned with the relationship between the human mind and the language as it examines the processes that occur in brain while producing and perceiving language (Purba, 2018). In this study, Dissociative Identity Disorder, also known as Did, will be analyzed using Psycholinguistic Analysis.

Psychology can be used to explore and explain things and phenomena of human life by applying the principle of psychology in the literary work. For some conscious artist, psychology may have tightened their sense of reality, sharpened their powers of observation or allowed them to fall into hitherto undiscovered patterns. However, in itself, psychology is only preparatory to the act of creation, and in the work itself, psychological truth is an artistic value only if it enhances coherence complexity, in short; it is art (Wellek & Warren, 1977 in Malan, 2016).

Method

Descriptive qualitative method was used in order to help the researcher to examine the two objectives of this analysis. Qualitative research is descriptive which the data is collected in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers (Lichtman, 2012). Data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes, and interviews or excerpts from videotapes, audiotapes, or electronic communications are used to present the findings of the study.

Creswell & Poth (2016) states that a qualitative research is a study to investigate and understand the meaning individuals or groups assume to be a social or a human problem. It is used to find out and know why and how a social phenomenon happens. The final written report of this study consists of introduction, literature and theory, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. The researcher used descriptive qualitative research design because this research did not need treatment to gain the data in experimental research.

The data of this study were obtained from Marvel Cinematic Universe's show, Moon Knight. The techniques of analyzing data were: (1) Watching every episodes of Marvel Cinematic Universe's show, Moon Knight, (2) Taking notes, (3) Classifying the data, (4) Interpretation, and (4) Drawing conclusion. The script, and the scenes in Marvel Cinematic Universe's show "Moon Knight" are used; several articles, and books of psychology and Dissociative Identity Disorder are used in order to complete the information of this study.

Results and Discussions

The Cause of Dissociative Identity Disorder on Marc Spector

Krüger & Fletcher (2019) demonstrated that self-reported emotional neglect by biological parents or siblings in childhood was the strongest individual predictor of an adult diagnosis of a dissociative disorder (including DID) in psychiatric patients (out of all other combinations of abuse type and abuser- abused relational ties). It is showed on Moon Knight's fifth episode, Little Marc got accused by his mother of his little brother's (Roro) death. (18:20-18:35).

After that accident, Little Marc Spector always got ignored by his mom, as seen in the fifth episode, Marc was having his first birthday celebration without his little brother, he blown out the candle by himself and his father, because his mom didn't want to join them (18:55-19:15). On his twelfth birthday, Little Marc, his father, and his mother going to celebrate it. But his mom could not stop to keep accusing him of his little brother's death, and said that Marc was always jealous of Roro. Little Marc got disappointed, he thrown the candles and ran to his room (19:38-20:15).

Still on the fifth episode, Marc's mom starts aggressively knocking on his door (29:56). Little Marc got scared he kept saying "It's not my mom" multiple times, and he created Steven Grant as his alter ego as he blinked. He acted like nothing just happened a few seconds ago (30:21). Marc's mom didn't notice the difference on his son, she really mads at him and abused him verbally and physically by spanked him using a belt and told him that he is a disgusting human. (31:13)

After Steven Grant knows the truth that he is the alter-ego Marc created, and not the real one, in (31:35) Marc explained to Steven that he made up Steven in order he got to live a happy, simple, normal life. Marc don't want Steven to remember the truth that he had a mother that beats him, hated him, and made his life a living hell. But Marc wanted Steven to live thinking that she loved Steven, she was kind, and she's still alive.

These evidences showed that the main reason why Steven Grant was created because little Marc was fear and scared, lack attention from his mother, traumatized because of his mother abused him physically and verbally.

The Clinical Features of Dissociative Identity Disorder on Marc Spector

Boyer et al., states that Dissociative identity disorder (DID), the most severe dissociative disorder, includes both persistent depersonalization/derealization and dissociative amnesia as well as the presence of distinct self-states with unique attributes or experiences.

Depersonalization / Derealization

Depersonalization is characterized by persistent feelings of detachment from one's body or experiences. In other words, depersonalization is seen to be a person feels disconnected from their own body and thoughts, meanwhile derealization is the condition where a person feeling as though things are unreal or a dream. It is showed in the first episode of Moon Knight.

(11:07) Steven Grant woke up in to an unfamiliar place with his jaw broken. He had no idea but feel confused and scared. Every people that armed is after him, and found out that he has the Scarab that the people were desperately looking for. He wanted to give them the Scarab but he had no idea why his body didn't move as he wanted it to move, instead, his body made him ran away from the people, Steven feels scared, he blink, he saw the people was after him are knocked out, and the Scarab is still in his covered-with-blood hand (17:45).

(18:23) He got into a Cupcake van, drive to escape the people. But unfortunately it didn't stop there, the people that armed is ran after him and start shooting at him. Steven feels scared, he blink and found the guy

was shooting at him is dead with a bullet on his head. Steven found he hold a gun on his hand and got shocked.

On the third episode of Moon Knight, (08:41), Marc Spector was in the middle of a market in Cairo, Egypt. He catch one of Harrow's slave. Unpredictably, there was a mirror next to Harrow's servant, Marc saw Steven figure on it, and the second after, another Harrow's servant punched the back of Marc's head, it caused him to shifted, and suddenly he's on top of the hill, killed Harrow's servants. Neither Steven nor Marc admit that they killed the men.

On the fourth episode, Steven Grant kissed Layla. A moment after Layla went down to the cave, in (11:58) Marc Spector took control the body to punch Steven so that he will feel pain. Still on the fourth episode, in (45:36). Steven and Marc had an unpredictable meeting. They looked surprised and hugged each other. They themselves had no idea how this is possible.

These evidences above, showed that Depersonalization in Marc Spector and Steven Grant or vice versa, they feel disconnected from their body and their thoughts as they shifted. (21:17) Steven Grant woke up in the morning, in his bed with his right foot still tied up to his bed, assuming everything he has been through was just a dream. In fact, it was a reality of his real body, Marc Spector.

Looking back to where Steven Grant was waking up to an unfamiliar place with his broken jaw, he saw a man named Harrow, a man with a cane and long slicked back hair. He was one of the men that desperately want the Scarab Steven has. But Steven assumed it was just a dream, until in (32:49) Steven was just off the bus, then he locked eyes with Harrow that is standing inside the bus, and Steven said "Oh my God. He's real."

On the fourth episode of Moon Knight, in (35:00) Marc got shot two times in his chest by Harrow, it caused him to drown in to the water, under the tomb of Alexander The Great. He then woke up, find himself in Putnam Medical Facility, in Chicago, Illinois. Marc is sitting on a wheelchair and trying to summon Steven. In (40:14) Dr. Harrow trying to understand what is Marc going through by saying "I know that you are having a great deal of difficulty being able to differentiate between what is real and what is in your head." This is the biggest evidence the researcher have as Marc Spector having a Derealization.

These evidences above, showed that Derealization in Marc Spector as he shifted to Steven Grant, both has no idea to tell which one is real and which one is just a dream.

Dissociative Amnesia

Dissociative amnesia is characterized by gaps in autobiographical memory beyond normal forgetting, that may range from one experience to several years. Still in the first episode of Moon Knight, on Thursday, (06:07) Steven and Dylan planning to go on a date tomorrow on Friday night at 7:00PM.

But the accident happened (Steven Grant woke up in to an unfamiliar place with his jaw broken. He had no idea but feel confused and scared. Every people that armed is after him, and found out that he has the Scarab that the people were desperately looking for. He wanted to give them the Scarab but he had no idea why his body didn't move as he wanted it to move, instead, his body made him ran away from the people, Steven feels scared, he blink, he saw the people was after him are knocked out, and the scarab is still in his hand, covered-with-blood. He got into a Cupcake van, drive to escape the people. But unfortunately it didn't stop there, the people that armed is ran after him and start shooting at him. Steven feels scared, he blink and found the guy was shooting at him is dead with a bullet on his head. Steven found he hold a gun on his hand and got shocked). He disremembered as Steven Grant shifted himself to Marc Spector. Losing track of time, Steven went to the restaurant, called Dylan for steak time, but instead he found that night is Sunday night. He was late for about two days.

On the second episode of Moon Knight, Steven Grant met Layla, Marc Spector's wife. But Steven does not remember he is married to Layla. Still on the second episode of Moon Knight, In (19:06), he told Layla that he is not Marc Spector. He is Steven Grant, working—used to—work in a giftshop. He does not remember they were looking for Scarab, their adventures, and their life together.

On the fifth episode, in (12:36) Steven and Marc entered a room full of dead bodies. As Marc Spector, he does remember all of the dead bodies inside the room because he is the one who killed them. As Steven Grant, he doesn't know any of these dead bodies.

Still on the fifth episode, in (29:45) Steven and Marc entered their childhood memory. Marc remembers anything that happened that day. Except for Steven, he only remember that they are in their room but not with what happened before Marc created Steven.

On the fifth episode, Marc wanted Steven to live thinking that their mother loved Steven, she was kind, and she's still alive. And it made Steven shocked because all his life, he knows that his mom is still alive. But the fact in (35:00) Dr. Harrow made him remember that his mother is dead.

Still on the fifth episode, in (36:10) Marc Spector was sobbing, crying to his mother's death. But a few seconds later he blink, grunted, then shifted to Steven Grant like nothing has happened to him, and he doesn't even know where he is right now. He called his mom, talking to her like she's still alive.

Dissociative Identity Disorder Affects The Way Marc Spector Communicates

According to Le, Catherine et al., 2009. Individuals with dissociative identity disorder (DID) have been known to show varied skills and talents as they change from one dissociative state to another. For example, case reports have described people who have changed their handedness or have spoken foreign languages during their dissociative states.

In this study, the researcher will show that as Marc Spector shifting as Steven Grant or Jack Lockley, they speak different language and different accent. As seen in every episodes of Marvel Cinematic Universe's show Moon Knight, Steven Grant speaks English in British accent, he is a soft spoken. For Marc Spector, he talks in English but with American accent. Meanwhile for Jack Lockley, the newest alter-ego Marc Spector has created, and is officially introduced by Khonshu the God of Moon (in the credit scene of the sixth episode in 39:26), he speaks to everyone in Spanish.

Conclusions

Based on these findings, the conclusion of this study that can be drawn by researchers is that Marc Spector faced childhood trauma that caused dissociative identity disorder, according to Krüger and Fletcher. This is most evident in Episode 5 of the show Moon Knight. Marc Spector was physically and verbally abused by his mother, and as a result, he met all of the clinical criteria for dissociative identity disorder, according to Boyer et al. Depersonalization, derealization, and dissociative amnesia So Marc Spector spoke in a different accent and language when he turned to his alters (Steven Grant and Jack Lockley), and it is the same as the case reports in Le Catherine et al.

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