

Fiction and reality: the consequences of villainising mental health.

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According to chloe, the host of the dissociadid's system, 'Dissociative Identity Disorder is a coping mechanism. DID is a disorder that develops during childhood in order to protect that child from repeated childhood trauma.' (What Is Dissociative Identity Disorder? | DID AWARENESS DAY, 2019)

Dissociative identity disorder (DID), previously known as multiple personality disorder, is a psychiatric disorder in which complex post-traumatic stress disorder and dissociative disorders intersect. Conflicting with the notion of neurodiversity as a consequence of chemical instability in the brain, or a genetic malfunction, or an intermixture of factors including the aforementioned; DID is a direct result of severe and recurrent abuse in early childhood. According to the diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders, fifth edition (DSM-5), 'dissociative 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. Dissociative symptoms can potentially disrupt every area of psychological functioning.' (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders : DSM-5. Fifth ed. 2013)

Developed and published by Onaemo studio in 2018, Who am I: The tale of Dorothy is a virtual novel and the first videogame with dissociative identity disorder at the core of its narrative. As opposed to The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, which was authored by Robert Louis Stevenson during the late 18th century, Who am I's protagonist (the system host named Dorothy) is a young teenager and the audience is invited to be a part of her life as a counsellor in her dreams.

'Dorothy is a 14-year-old girl who has scars and pains as a child. Her trauma caused Dorothy to develop dissociative identity disorder, which split her into several personalities. Hold counselling sessions in Dorothy's dreams, and bring back all the personalities into one.' (Who Am I: The tale of Dorothy | Onaemo Studio) /

In recent years, subsequent to the rise and fall of the inhumane mental health treatments of the 20th century, neurodiversity has garnered global intrigue among psychological scholars, and concurrently among the general public due to the ease of access to information via personal computers introduced during the digital age. Regrettably, ease of access to information also allows ease of access to misinformation, and as such; the internet has allowed a hivemind of ignorance to multiply and challenge the well informed, as observed when anonymous users challenge the experience of individuals living with Dissociative Identity Disorder for expressing their grievances with the movie Split, in which the aforementioned is villainized.

'Living with dissociative identity disorder is nothing like how it's portrayed in 'split,' according to people who have it,' (Dodgson, 2019.) Statements regarding works of fiction such as horror movies and realism,

or lack thereof, may seem pointless to most, but there is a percentage of the population that seemingly can't differentiate between reality and fiction; and they have perceived M. Night Shyamalan's psychological horror as factuality.

'Jennifer believes she started dissociating at around age 3 to try and escape the volatile temper and abuse of her mentally unstable mother. For this, she sees her alters as her saviours.' (Dodgson, 2019.)

Legion alike Split features a predominant semi-superhero narrative centred around an individual with DID, unlike the latter, David Haller is neither a hero nor a villain; Legion neither glorifies or villainizes Haller or the disorder and invites the audience to experience the world from the protagonist's standpoint.

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