

FIGHT CLUB AND DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER: CAUSES, SYMPTOMS AND TREATMENTS

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Dissociative identity disorder or multiple personality disorder, acronymically DID, is a severe disorder in which two or more distinct identities take control of an individual alternately. DID also restricts the ability to function properly in daily life. Psychological disorders such as DID are portrayed both in movies and in novels a lot. DID is one of the disorders mentioned in the novel "Fight Club", besides, borderline personality disorder, insomnia, and substance addiction. In this essay, known causes, symptoms, and treatments of DID will be discussed. Then, the quotes that lead readers to think of DID will be explained.

The first experiment about DID was conducted in 1883. The subject had three different personalities and none of the personalities was accepting that she was the same person as the first. After Leonie, the subject of the experiment, psychologists started to work on dissociative personality disorder more deeply. Nonetheless, they couldn't find the leading cause of this disorder. Although main causes of DID are still unknown, there are some assumptions about the causes of this disorder. These causes include neglect, the death of a parent and severe trauma during early childhood such as usually extreme, repetitive physical, sexual, or emotional abuse. According to the findings of a research done by Suzette Boon and Nel Draijer, there may be a possible link between severe early child abuse, dissociative pathology, and eating problems. Some of the theories state that DID may be caused by altered sleep and wrong psychotherapeutic therapy techniques. Some believe that this disorder is caused by malfunction of chemicals in the brain that help control moods. Thus, it is also said that DID may be caused by genetic factors and it may be inherited. However, as mentioned before, it is still unknown if there are specific causes.

Although there are lots reasons that trigger this disorder, DID is a psychological disease which is difficult to diagnose. Its symptoms are similar to almost all the mental disorders. These symptoms include high levels of suicidal ideation, self-destructive behavior, dependence, passivity, anxiety, and guilt. This psychological disorder also produces a lack of memories, feelings, and most importantly sense of identity. The symptoms can be too general to diagnose, but different characteristics of alter personalities differ a lot. For instance, the primary identity is usually passive, dependent, guilty and depressed, whereas the other identity tends to be more active, hostile and aggressive. In most of the time, these identities are unaware of each other and this ends up in a chaotic life.

There is a lack of consensus both in diagnosis and in treatments. Besides this, there are some treatment methods that are being applied for years. These methods include mix of psychotherapy techniques; eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) that uses eye movements to assist trauma victims; dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) that is believed to treat mood disorders that cause self-harm, suicidal ideation, and substance abuse; hypnotherapy and cognitive behavioral therapy. Unfortunately, it is uncertain that the patient will come around completely. However, these treatments can reduce the number of alter personalities who are associated with illegal and violent activities. The treatments usually take years to accomplish, but the duration of the treatment depends on the patient's goals.

Both in movies and novels, dissociative identity disorder is quite popular. Many novels such as *The Three Faces of Eve*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Fight Club* depict DID. For instance in *Fight Club*, there are many symbols and quotes that lead us to this serious psychological disorder. In the novel, Narrator meets Tyler Durden and learns he works as a projectionist. His job symbolizes the relationship between Tyler and Narrator. Tyler reflects Narrator's repressed passion and violence in a way that Narrator cannot. Tyler Durden is portrayed as aggressive and violent whereas Narrator is described as a single young man who works in a job he hates and who has lack of self confidence. The scenes in which Tyler and Narrator fight represents self harm and self punishment. In the following chapters, Narrator says that he admires Tyler and wants to be like him. This quote shows that Tyler has Narrator's repressed emotions. Besides this, he constantly repeats that he knows because Tyler knows this. This quote foreshadows that Tyler and Narrator are the same person. At the beginning of the novel, Narrator suffers from insomnia and he sees a physician. He says that he woke up in strange places and he had no idea how he got there. This is also related to the symptoms of DID such as memory loss and insomnia.

What makes this serious psychological disorder so popular is probably its mystery. Real causes of DID are still unknown. However, there are some studies that relate DID to sexual and emotional abuse during childhood. The symptoms of DID can vary from insomnia to lack of self confidence, from self-harm to suicidal thoughts. Various treatment methods are applied all over the world. Because the causes of DID are still unknown, none of these treatment methods are specified. Besides having unknown causes, symptoms and treatments, DID is a rare disease whose prevalence is between 0.1% and 2.0%. Because of its mysterious nature and rare prevalence, DID is depicted more than any other diseases. *Fight Club* is one of these artworks which portrays DID. In the novel, there are lots of quotes and symbols that suggest that Tyler Durden represents the alter personality of Narrator.

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