

Dissociative Identity Disorder IN FILM

Anya Lossman



Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is a major **mental health condition** referring to a person with 2 or more identities.

It is more commonly referred to as **Multiple or Split Personality Disorder**.

Dissociative Identity Disorder



Symptoms

Variety of mental, emotional, and physical effects.



Reach

DID affects approximately **115 million** people worldwide.



Diagnosis

35% of DID patients were diagnosed with Schizophrenia.

“Film portrayals that are incorrect and stigmatizing can contribute to the public’s unfavorable opinion of mentally ill individuals.”

– Valerie Sampson

ACADEMIC CONVERSATION

**"The Butler(s) DID It -
Dissociative Identity
Disorder in Cinema"**

Peter Byrne

**Kent Institute of Medical and
Health Sciences**

**"DID on Kevin Wendell
Crumb Characters in Split
Movie"**

C. Nuraeni and T. Silaban

**Universitas Bina Sarana
Informatika**

GAP IN THE RESEARCH

Current research covers...

- Individual films
- Treatment
- Root causes

No work has been done
comparatively or **historically**.



Research Question

How accurate are the portrayals of Dissociative Identity Disorder in films released between 1950 and 2022 as compared to relative and historical knowledge of the associated symptoms?

Hypothesis

The portrayals of Dissociative Identity Disorder will focus primarily on the existence of multiple identities and fail to represent other symptoms.

Films from early decades (50s, 60s, and 70s), would be less accurate to clinical knowledge.

METHODOLOGY

**16 films released between 1950 and 2022
analyzed for portrayals of DID symptoms
and compared to case studies.**

CREATION OF METHODS

“Dementia in the Movies: The Clinical Picture”

- Debby Gerritsen

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of symptomatic portrayals





PREPARATIONS

01

Foundational research and
creation of documents

TIME PERIOD SELECTION

GOLDEN AGE OF HOLLYWOOD

1915 - 1960s

Experimentation to enhance
film.

MENTAL HEALTH STIGMATIZATION

Portrayal of mental health
problems in film.

FILM SELECTION PROCESS

01

RESEARCH

Searches on IMDb to find all films tagged with DID.

02

NARROWING

Selection by availability, classification, and features.

03

ORGANIZATION

Ordering films by decade and earnings.

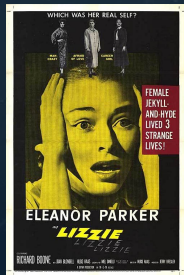
04

FINAL SELECTION

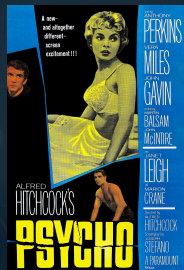
Selecting final films and creating watch order.



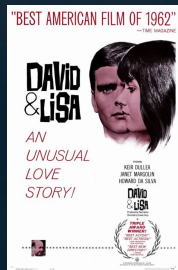
**The Three
Faces of Eve
(1957)**



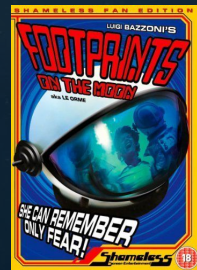
**Lizzie
(1957)**



**Psycho
(1960)**



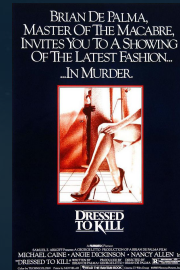
**David and
Lisa (1962)**



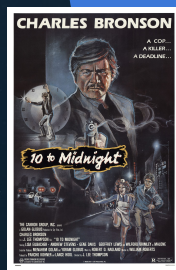
**Footprints on
the Moon
(1975)**



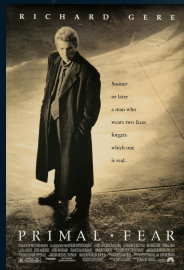
**Sybil
(1976)**



**Dressed to
Kill (1980)**



**10 to
Midnight
(1983)**



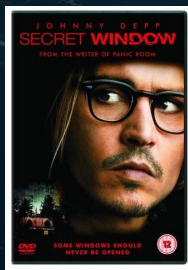
**Primal Fear
(1996)**



**Fight Club
(1999)**



**Me, Myself &
Irene
(2000)**



**Secret
Window
(2004)**



**Shutter
Island
(2010)**



**Split
(2016)**



**Spider-Man:
No Way Home
(2021)**



**Moon
Knight
(2022)**

COMPLETE SYMPTOM LIST

Dissociative Identity Disorder Master Symptom List

Mental and Emotional Symptoms

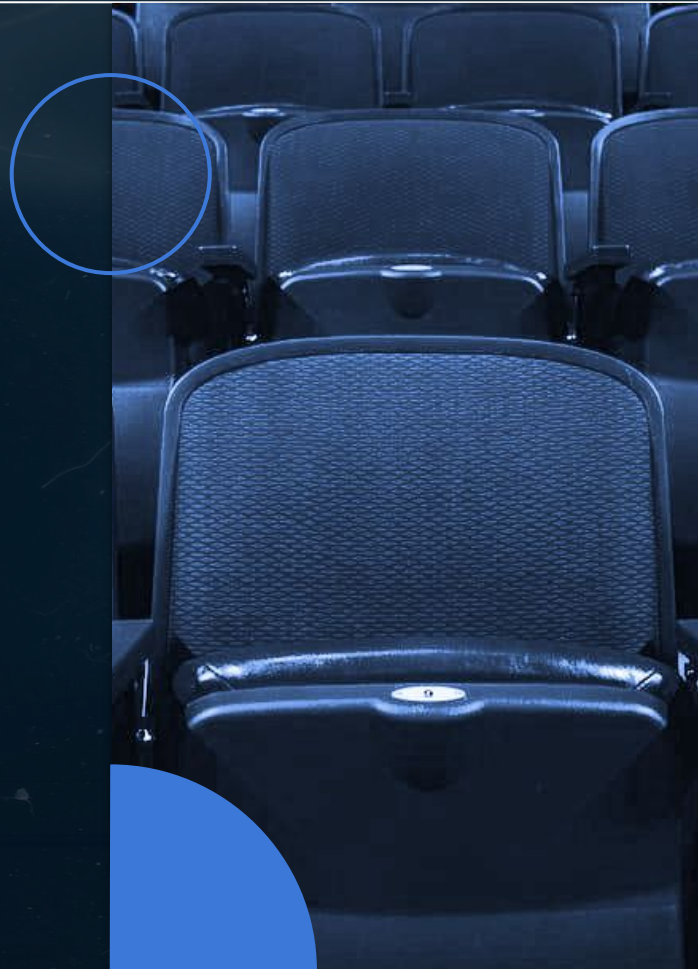
1. Memory loss of important people, events, or trauma (especially of childhood)
2. Disorientation of people and things
3. Delusions
4. Blurred sense of identity
5. Existence of two or more distinct identities
 - a. Changes in behavior, memory, thoughts, handwriting, or preferences
 - b. Feel as though there are voices trying to control one's head
6. Flashbacks or sudden return of memories
7. Sense of detachment of self and emotions
8. Significant stress or problems in social and professional life, or other
9. Inability to cope with emotional and professional stress
10. Out-of-body experiences
 - a. Loss of control
 - b. Feel as though they are an observer of themselves
 - c. Change in feel of body (small child, opposite gender, change in figure)
11. Behavioral or functional variation (hyper-efficiency to sloth or incompetence)
12. Hallucinations
 - a. Hearing voices
 - b. Sensory experiences
13. Mental health problems
 - a. Depression
 - i. Feeling of sadness, tearfulness, emptiness, or hopelessness
 - ii. Angry outbursts, irritability, or frustration
 - iii. Loss of interest in one's normal activities
 - iv. Tiredness or lack of energy
 - v. Changes in appetite or weight
 - vi. Slowed thinking, speaking, or body movements
 - vii. Feelings of worthlessness or guilt (fixation on failures, self-blame)
 - viii. Trouble thinking, concentrating, making decisions, or with memory
 - b. Anxiety, panic attacks, phobias

- i. Nervous, restless, or tense
- ii. Sense of impending danger, panic, or doom
- iii. Increased heart rate
- iv. Hyperventilation
- v. Sweating
- vi. Trembling
- vii. Feeling weak or tired
- viii. Trouble concentrating or thinking
- ix. Gastrointestinal (GI) problems
- x. Difficulty controlling worry
- xi. Urge to avoid anxiety-triggering activities, places, interactions, etc.
- xii. Hot flashes or chills
- xiii. Choking sensation
- xiv. Pain or tightness in chest
- xv. Sensation of butterflies in stomach
- xvi. Nausea
- xvii. Feeling faint
- xviii. Numbness or pins and needles
- xix. Dry mouth
- xx. Need to go to the restroom
- xxi. Ringing in ears
- xxii. Confusion or disorientation
- c. Suicidal thoughts or self harm
 - i. A person talks about any of the following:
 1. Killing themselves
 2. Hopelessness
 3. Having no reason to live
 4. Being a burden
 5. Feeling trapped
 6. Unbearable pain
 - ii. Looking for ways to end their lives

- iii. Withdrawing from activities
- iv. Isolation from family or friends
- v. Visiting or calling people to say goodbye
- vi. Giving away prized possessions
- vii. Aggression or fatigue

Physical Symptoms

14. Drug and alcohol abuse or misuse
15. Development of eating disorders
16. Sudden or severe headaches and body pains
17. Sleep disturbances
 - a. Insomnia
 - b. Sleep walking
 - c. Irregular sleep patterns



ANALYSIS

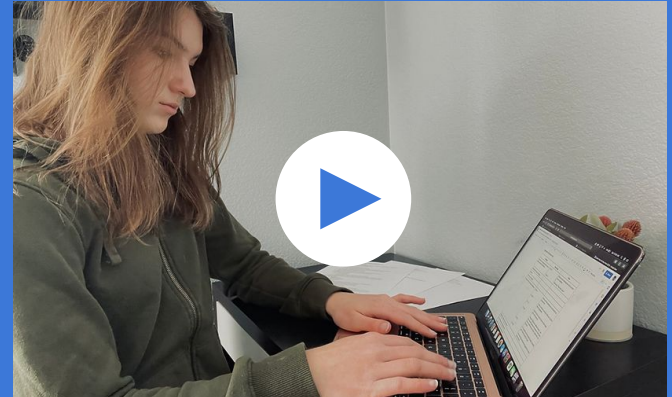
02

Film viewing and data collection

DOCUMENTATION AND ANALYSIS

David and Lisa (1962)

Symptom	Time Stamp	Notes
Memory loss of important people, events, or trauma (especially of childhood)		
Disorientation of people and things		
Delusions		
Blurred sense of identity		
Existence of two or more distinct identities		
Flashbacks or sudden return of memories		
Sense of detachment of self and emotions		
Significant stress or problems in social and professional life, or other		
Inability to cope with emotional and professional stress		
Out-of-body experiences		
Behavioral or functional variation (hyper-efficiency to sloth or incompetence)		
Hallucinations		
Mental health problems		
Drug and alcohol abuse or misuse		
Development of eating disorders		
Sudden or severe headaches and body pains		
Sleep disturbances		



David and Lisa (1962)

Symptom	Time Stamp	Notes
Memory loss of important people, events, or trauma (especially of childhood)	00:33:00	Muriel tries to touch David even though Lisa was told not explicitly not to.
	00:37:56	Lisa insists there is ice and snow outside, even though the staff member says she looked out the window earlier and there was neither.
	00:55:25	Lisa forgets her last name and its spelling.
Disorientation of people and things		
Delusions		
Blurred sense of identity	00:44:58	Lisa begins her interaction with David by asking who he sees, referring to herself.
Existence of two or more distinct identities	00:10:18	Lisa sits down and falls quiet immediately after her erratic behavior.
	00:15:00	Lisa experiences dissociation. Her personality shifts from loud and child-like to quiet and artistic. The staff member then refers to her as Muriel.
	00:31:32	Lisa is yelling and rhyming when she suddenly goes quiet. Muriel tries to touch David even though he told Lisa distinctly not to.
	01:22:27	She signs a piece of artwork with Muriel and Lisa, demonstrated a connection between the names, then signed Me.
Flashbacks or sudden return of memories		
Sense of detachment of self and emotions		
Significant stress or problems in social and professional life, or other	01:26:58	Lisa tries to take a newspaper without paying and gets violently upset when the seller tried to take it back.
Inability to cope with emotional and professional stress	01:17:28	Lisa is unsure of talking to David if he doesn't rhyme. His regular speaking upset her.
	01:27:44	Lisa runs to the museum and tries to break through the doors to get to the statue, but fails, and sleeps on the front steps.
Out-of-body experiences		
Behavioral or functional variation (hyper-efficiency to sloth or incompetence)	00:58:53	Lisa sits quietly, then has a violent outburst.
Hallucinations		
Mental health problems		
Drug and alcohol abuse or misuse		
Development of eating disorders		
Sudden or severe headaches and body pains		
Sleep disturbances	00:45:49	Lisa lies awake at night and stares at her own hand before caressing her head and neck.

DATA COLLECTION

MEMORY LOSS: 3

BLURRED SENSE OF IDENTITY: 1

EXISTENCE OF 2+ IDENTITIES: 4

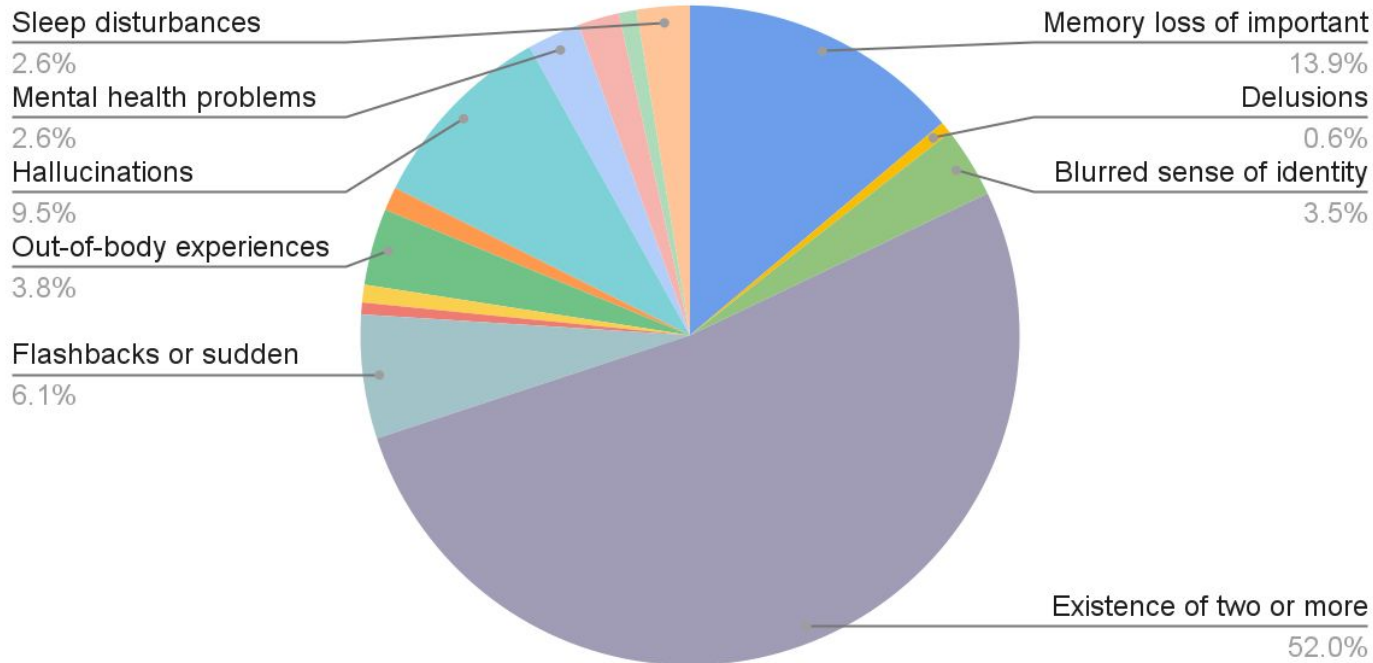
SIGNIFICANT STRESS: 1

INABILITY TO COPE WITH STRESS: 2

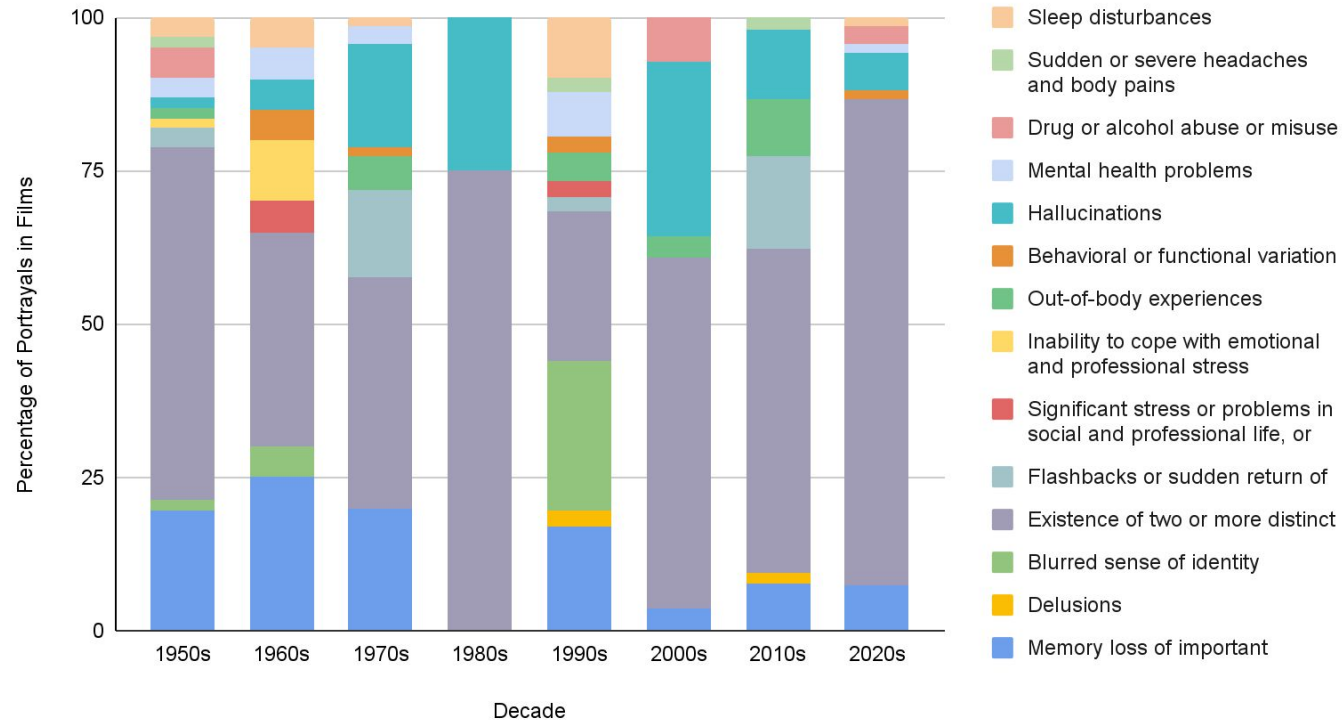
SLEEP DISTURBANCES: 1

Symptoms	Final Averages
Memory loss of important people, events, or trauma (especially of childhood)	48
Disorientation of people and things	0
Delusions	2
Blurred sense of identity	12
Existence of two or more distinct identities	180
Flashbacks or sudden return of memories	21
Sense of detachment of self and emotions	0
Significant stress or problems in social and professional life, or other	2
Inability to cope with emotional and professional stress	3
Out-of-body experiences	13
Behavioral or functional variation	4
Hallucinations	33
Mental health problems	9
Drug or alcohol abuse or misuse	7
Development of eating disorders	0
Sudden or severe headaches and body pains	3
Sleep disturbances	9
Symptoms in Film	346

Symptoms as Percentages of Total Portrayals through Film Analysis



Distribution of Portrayals by Symptoms of Each Decade





COMPARISON

03

Film analysis data compared to
real case findings

CASE STUDIES

01

RESEARCH

Searches on medical databases.

02

SELECTION

Selection by top results.

03

ORGANIZATION

Symptoms written in chart by decade.

04

COMPARISON

Comparing data from analysis and case studies.

PROCESS

A CASE STUDY OF A MULTIPLE PERSONALITY

V. K. ALEXANDER

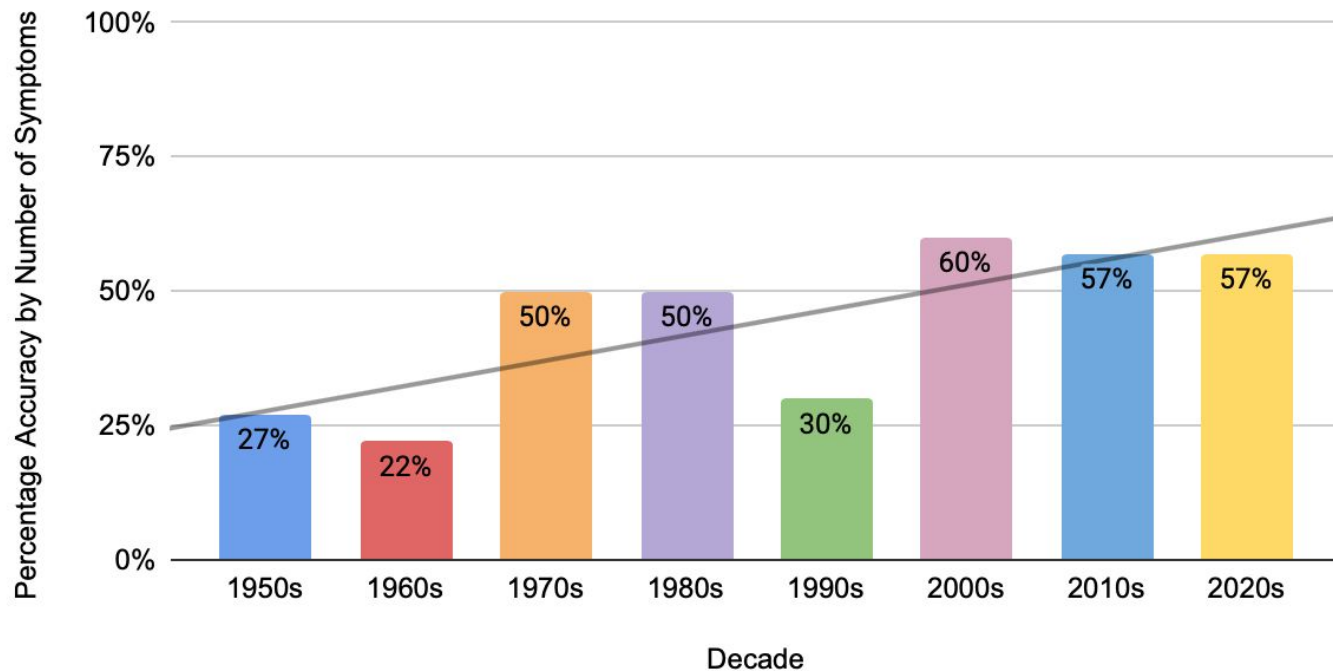
Union Christian College, Alwaye, South India¹

SOOSAN, a young Indian girl, aged 15 years, was brought to me by her father in May, 1952, with the complaint that Soosan would go away from home without any warning and that she was possessed with two evil spirits. One of the evil spirits was that of a young man who had committed suicide in her neighborhood, whose name was Kotchu. His suicide happened when Soosan was three years old. The other spirit was that of a grand aunt of hers, who died years before the birth of Soosan. Soosan had complete amnesia for her running away from home and for her secondary personalities. The change of personality would occur once or twice a week. The secondary personalities were so well-developed and complete in themselves, that

when Soosan was two and one-half years old. Soosan was usually calm and quiet. She took regular part in household duties except when her personalities changed. Then she would become mischievous and use abusive language. Her father comes from a middle class family.

The method of therapy to help Soosan was twofold. First, Goddard's study (4) gave me a working hypothesis. Later I became familiar with the work of Prince (5). I wanted to know which part of Soosan's personality was dissociated. The best method, I thought, was to study the nature and behavior of the secondary personalities which were well-developed. Second, since she had a strong amnesia for these secondary personalities, I felt that it would be wise to help her build the dissociated

Percentage Accuracy of Cinematic Portrayals Compared to Case Studies



CONCLUSIONS



Hypothesis

The existence of multiple identities would be portrayed disproportionately higher than other symptoms

52%

Of all portrayals were the existence of multiple identities



Supported

The findings support my hypothesis, as this symptom was portrayed disproportionately to that of others.

LIMITATIONS

Human Bias

and potential to
misinterpret



Alternatives

due to inaccurate labeling



Scope

of time constraints and
available research



IMPLICATIONS

RESEARCH

FURTHER STUDIES

UNDERSTANDING

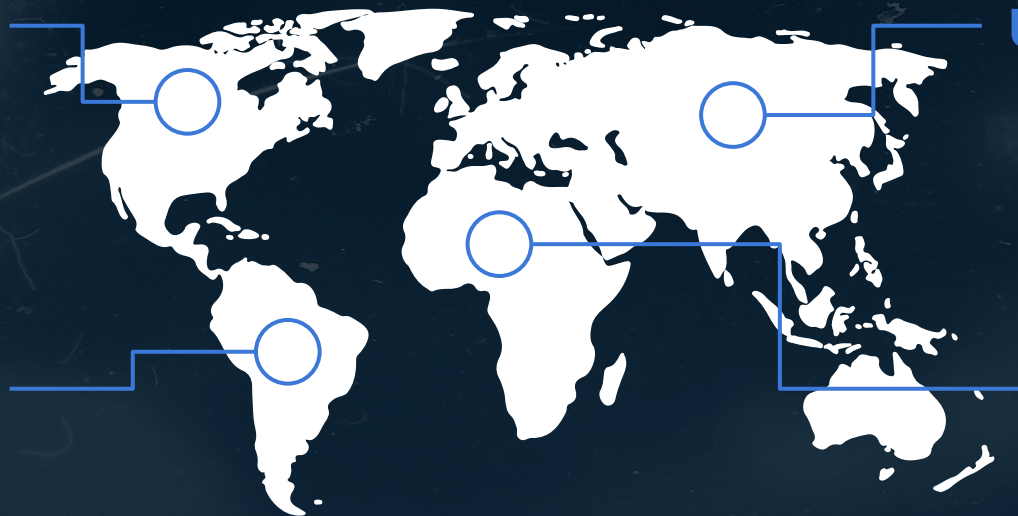
MENTAL ILLNESS

SEPARATION

OF FACT AND
NARRATIVE

STANDARDS

IN THE FILM
INDUSTRY



\$42.5 BILLION

The Hollywood Reporter, 2019

CITATIONS

Alexander, V.K. "A Case Study of a Multiple Personality." 1956. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/13306446/>.

Boulerice, Marybeth et al. "An Outside Perspective: Dissociative Identity Disorder." *New College of Florida*, 6 Dec. 2019, <https://dss.ncf.edu/HUMN3100/?p=64>

Byrne, Peter. "The Butler(s) DID It – Dissociative Identity Disorder in Cinema." *The Journal of Medical Ethics and Medical Humanities, British Medical Journals*, 2001, <https://mh.bmj.com/content/27/1/26>

"Dissociative Identity Disorder (Multiple Personality Disorder)." *The Cleveland Clinic*, 25 May. 2021, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/9792-dissociative-identity-disorder-multiple-personality-disorder>

Dodier, Olivier., Otgaar, Henry., Lynn, Steven Jay. "A Critical Analysis of Myths About Dissociative Identity Disorder." *Annales Médico-Psychologiques, Revue Psychiatrique*. 22 Oct. 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0003448721003395>

Heckman, Chris. "When Was the Golden Age of Hollywood – And Why Did It End?" *Studio Binder*, 19 Dec. 2021, <https://www.studiobinder.com/blog/when-was-the-golden-age-of-hollywood/>

CITATIONS

"History of Dissociative Identity Disorder." *Dissociative Identity Disorder Research*, 30 Jan. 2016, <https://did-research.org/did/history/>

"Latest Posters." *IMDb*, IMDb.com, <https://www.imdb.com/gallery/rq1624939264>.

McClintock, P. (2020, January 12). *2019 global box office revenue hit record \$42.5B despite 4 percent dip in U.S.* The Hollywood Reporter.

Retrieved March 26, 2023, from

<https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/general-news/2019-global-box-office-hit-record-425b-4-percent-plunge-us-1268600/>

NAMI. "Dissociative Disorders." *National Alliance on Mental Illness*, 2023,

<https://www.nami.org/About-Mental-Illness/Mental-Health-Conditions/Dissociative-Disorders>.

Nuraeni, Cicih & Silaban, Trosahlan. "DID on Kevin Wendell Crumb Characters in *Split* Movie." *Progressive Journal of Linguistics, Literature, and Teaching*, 2 Sept. 2018, <http://ejournal.nusamandiri.ac.id/index.php/progressive/article/view/528/464>

Sampson, Valerie. "The Portrayal of Dissociative Identity Disorder in Films." *Elon Journal of Undergraduate Research in Communications*, 2020, https://eloncdn.blob.core.windows.net/eu3/sites/153/2020/12/08-Sampson_ejfinal.pdf



THANK YOU. QUESTIONS?

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), including icons by [Flaticon](#), infographics and images by [Freepik](#).

