From:

HEIKE SCHWARZ
Beware of the Other Side(s)
Multiple Personality Disorder and Dissociative Identity Disorder in American Fiction


This interdisciplinary study examines the still vivid phenomenon of the most controversial psychiatric diagnosis in the United States: multiple personality disorder, now called dissociative identity disorder. This syndrome comprehends the occurrence of two or more distinct identities that take control of a person’s behavior paired with an inexplicable memory loss. Synthesizing the fields of psychiatry and the dynamics of the disorder with its influential representation in American fiction, the study researches how psychiatry and fiction mutually shaped a mysterious syndrome and how this reciprocal process created a genre fiction of its own that persists until today in a very distinct self-referential mode.

Heike Schwarz (Dr. phil.) teaches American studies at the University of Augsburg, Germany.

For further information: 
www.transcript-verlag.de/ts2488/ts2488.php

© 2013 transcript Verlag, Bielefeld
Contents

Acknowledgments  |  9

Preface  |  11

Introduction  |  15

PART I: HISTORY AND THEORY

1 Personalities or Personality States?
The Definition of MPD/DID in Medical Terms  |  25

2 The Split of Personality:
The Diagnosis MPD/DID versus Schizophrenia  |  41

3 Of Demons and Dissociation:
The Origins and Early Science of the Other Side  |  49
  3.1 Demon and Possession  |  50
  3.2 Magnetism and Mesmerism  |  51
  3.3 Dipsychism and Polypsychism  |  52
  3.4 Hypnosis and Hysteria  |  56
  3.5 Pierre Janet: The Concept of Dissociation  |  59
  3.6 William James: “Mutations of the Self”  |  62
  3.7 Morton Prince: The Co-consciousness  |  68

4 Shock and Trauma:
Renaissance of the Dissociation Concept  |  73
  4.1 Memory and Identity: The Illusion of the Unitary Self  |  73
  4.2 Trauma  |  81
  4.3 Contemporary Theories of Dissociation  |  85

5 The Other Side(s):
Famous Cases of Double Consciousness and Multiple Personality  |  89
  5.1 The “umgetauschte Persönlichkeit”: Gmelin’s Case (1791)  |  90
5.2 Mary Porter and Estelle (1836) | 91
5.3 The Old State and the New State: The Case of Mary Reynolds (1816) | 92
5.4 The Two Identities of A.B.: The Case of Ansel Bourne (1890) | 95
5.5 A Case of Personality Clusters: Miss Beauchamp (1906) | 98
5.6 The Three Selves of Eve: Thigpen and Cleckley (1957) | 107
5.7 Fact or Fiction? The Sixteen Persons of “Sybil” (1973) | 111

6 Voices of Doubt:
The Validity of Multiple Personality | 129

PART II: THE CULTURE-EMBEDDED SYNDROME – MULTIPLE PERSONALITY AND DISSOCIATION IN AMERICAN FICTION

7 Brand Identity and “Culture-embedded Syndrome”:
Multiple Personality in American Culture | 141

8 Creating a Public Consciousness:
The Role of the Mass Media | 159

9 Fractured Minds:
Personal Narratives of Multiple Personality | 171
9.1 Truddi Chase: When Rabbit Howls (1987) | 173
9.2 Joan Frances Casey: The Flock (1991) | 179
9.3 Cameron West: First Person Plural (1999) | 185

10 “Man’s Dual Nature” – Classical Literary Texts of Dissociation:
Wakefield, William Wilson, Dr. Jekyll, and the Other Side | 199
10.1 Doppelgänger, Double, and Alter Ego | 201
10.2 Nathaniel Hawthorne: “Wakefield” (1835) | 205
10.3 Edgar Allan Poe: “William Wilson” (1840) | 209
10.4 Robert Louis Stevenson: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886) | 213

11 Beyond Control:
Multiple Personality in the American Novel of the 1950s | 229
11.1 Shirley Jackson: The Bird’s Nest (1954) | 231
11.2 Margaret Millar: Beast in View (1955) | 238
11.3 Robert Bloch: Psycho (1959) | 244
11.4 Richard Condon: The Manchurian Candidate (1959) | 251

12 Further Divisions:
Subgenres of Multiple Personality and Dissociation Fiction since the 1970s | 259
12.1 The “Devil Inside” – Dissociation as Demonic Possession | 260
12.2 The “Spy Inside”: Dissociation in Spy Thrillers | 271
12.3 The “Killer Inside”: Dissociation as Serial Killer Story | 276
12.4 The “Protector Inside”: Dissociation as Coping Mechanism | 280

13 “What is your name?”:
Dissociation and Psychogenic Fugues in American Film
from the 1950s to the Present | 287

PART III: CONTEMPORARY VARIATIONS IN SELECTED NOVELS

14 “This is what Mary would have said...”:
Margaret Atwood Alias Grace (1996) | 301

15 “I know this because Tyler Durden knows this...”:
Chuck Palahniuk’s Fight Club (1996) | 317

16 “ – textbook MPD”:
Matt Ruff Set this House in Order (2003) | 335

17 “Three! Three personalities in one...”:
Ted Dekker’s Thr3e (2003) | 351

18 “Recall what had been lost...”:
Gabrielle Pina Chasing Sophea (2006) | 363

19 “It’s almost like there are two of me...”:
Jess Walter The Zero (2007) | 375

20 “It’s all staged...”:
Siri Hustvedt Sorrows of an American (2008) | 391

21 Voices of Imagination:
Valid Cases of Fiction Fugues and Storytelling Selves | 409

Conclusion | 415

Works Cited | 423
Primary Literature | 423
Secondary Literature | 425

Filmography | 449
Preface

One should never underestimate the power of books.

Paul Auster The Brooklyn Follies 2005: 302

In her short story “Isolated Incidents” (1985), writer Bharati Mukherjee describes several separate occasions which eventually add up to a clear recognizable tendency and self-perception of alienation of immigrants within Canadian society. Similar to such isolated incidents, the decision to face a project like this – namely to challenge the subject of multiple personality and dissociative identity within American fiction and especially focus on a defined so-called mental disorder – was preceded by various situations when I discovered that the topic of multiple personality disorder or MPD was still alive despite the fact that MPD was intentionally renamed into dissociative identity disorder or DID, suggesting a slightly different concept. In my search for a certain actor in the year 2003, I looked for a film called Identity, a movie about a serial killer that reflected the idea of an internally split murderer and whose alter personalities are represented by various actors. Ignorant of the film’s real content and its twist ending revealing the killer’s psychological disturbance, I was surprised to learn that this dubious mental disorder of multiple personality still occurred. It was in the late mid-1990s, in the United States the disorder was already object of controversies, when in Germany a friend of mine, then a student of psychology and child care, was interested in a newly defined yet never really established and mysterious mental disorder called MPS (Multiples Persönlichkeitssyndrom). This was a psychiatric model of a psyche fragmented into several distinct personalities or persons, a concept which was belatedly imported from the United States to Europe. The concept, which sometimes referred to a core self with various alter selves situated around it, or no such core self at all with alter selves taking its place, was never as successful in Germany as it was in the United States. It was this enthusiastic friend, highly fascinated and disturbed by MPS, who first introduced me to this psychological trauma and memory theory. Since then, I have been rather skeptical about the seriousness of the disorder as the sensationalism and extreme explanatory model of the concept remained so irritating: the cause seemed to be severe childhood trauma or even childhood sexual abuse (CSA), and it appeared to be not necessary to remember the trauma, as the psyche was said to have dissociated the memory entirely and restore this traumatic memory in the psyche of alter personalities. How could such an inner fragmentation into several personalities, perceived as whole entities or persons of
their own possibly work? Such an idea of an uncanny Other inside, or rather Others, is precisely the most fascinating aspect when considering uncontrollable forces or autonomous personalities. Some theories offered the explanation that the core self never existed at all and that the body thus was possessed by complex personalities who shared this one body. Watching the film Identity led to another film, which by then had turned into a cult movie: Fight Club. After consulting Robert Louis Stevenson’s novella of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, an imaginative relationship between all these fictional works and the diagnosis was obvious. When eventually having discovered the novel Set this House in Order (2003) by Matt Ruff, whose title in the German version literally translates “I and the Others”, it was clear to challenge the topic of a possible proliferation of multiple personality disorder until today and to document the establishment of a genre of its own which works either with or in opposition to psychiatric models (which themselves were often debatable) as this genre and even its subgenres became evident.

Several critical books on psychological concepts of multiple personality and dissociation confirmed what was suspected: the disorder is the most controversial psychological disorder in the United States, and it was diagnosed almost exclusively there. The change of the term into dissociative identity disorder was also due to such now well-known controversy. The mechanism of the mind to split off or “dissociate” certain mental processes, which by themselves could be perceived as another personality or even myriads of entire persons inside one body, served as the central theory – a theory that has literally become a culture of its own. Later the inner fragmentation was more important than the proliferation of distinct persons within one body, the idea of the Other within the self was still a striking one, the possibility of alterity a fascination and a cultural habit. The notion of such an inner fragmentation could also point to a more than familiar self-perception within a “post-post-modern” society of overstimulation and mass media overkill. The demand of a contemporary lifestyle to develop a social and mental flexibility and adaptability may meet the criteria of postmodern or contemporary identity fragmentation and inner diversity, whether conceived as a positive force or a negative one. The plurality of mind resists the demand of only one possible existence within a multicultural, multiple-choice pick’n’mix society. Our contemporary Western culture may overwhelm us in its fragmentation and its demands of splitting our lifetime into working selves, family selves and at the same time meet all societal obligations and create a perfection of an ideal ego with an ideal body. Yet despite this comprehensible symptoms, DID still counts as “mental disorder”.

The overuse of multiple personality especially within Hollywood film productions may point to a totally different tendency. The fascination with a mysterious internal split into various independently and uncontrollably acting persons in the mind within these hollywoodizations or hyperboles of the phenomenon still persists today. Nothing psychiatric science may attempt – giving the concept another name, trying to tone the disorder's manifestation down to a possible covert mechanism – will stop works of fiction from using the phenomenon in a very subjective and exaggerated form with, for example, the device of an unreliable narration in order to confuse the audience. Finding also voices that comment critically on the phenomenon, which has always been part of our popular culture, seemed difficult at first, yet there are various
experts who underline the skeptical view when it comes to question the very reality or reliability of such a mental disorder. Multiple personality seemed to be dependent on performativity, an interrelationship with a watching audience despite its very personal aspects. These ideas are confirmed in this study and both popular culture and sophisticated novels are clearly still fascinated by America’s most controversial psychiatric diagnosis which started with the non-fiction book *Sybil* in the 1970s – a single bogus (!) case that at the same time hit a nerve with the general public and, as Ian Hacking has pointed out in *Rewriting the Soul*, fell on fertile soil of a citizen’s movement and women’s liberation. A traumatized woman needed to be acknowledged. Sybil’s case may however not be entirely a piece of female emancipation but rather a case of patient exploitation and re-traumatization within a psychiatric power system even though the therapist was female and voiced feminist views. The fifth edition of the new *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* has confirmed the culture of MPD/DID within American society (and Western or other societies in this globalized world to a certain extent share this, too, although the German culture is not so much influenced by the Sybil phenomenon of multiple personality).

Delving into the historical and fictional worlds of multiple personality and the fictional representation of the fragmented psyche is an enormously absorbing task. The texts provide the myth of the alter ego, the strength of imagination and creativity, and the ability to prove that fictional works contain a force that nobody can resist. Facing the challenge of this study not only meant embarking on an exhaustive examination of innumerable texts and films, but also addressing an utterly interesting and highly controversial subject. Contemporary multiples often insist on their self-perception within a narrative of MPD, the stronger and more literal version of DID. It became clear that the persistence of a mysterious syndrome, the strength of dissociated memories within fictional narratives, the ongoing debates about the validity or reality of DID (still perceived as MPD) as well as the culture, cultivation and cult around multiple personality, that all these stances showed the necessity to evolve an interdisciplinary study in contrast to studies looking only at psychiatric ever changing definitions and validations, opinions and theories (which are still highly contested!) or consider an analysis of the literary history of the Other, the alter ego or doppelgänger with an overly romanticizing approach of counterculture.

All in all, the reality of the disorder is not questioned, it is there and all too strong, causing consequences for the lives of many. The isolated incidents of finding various works of fiction thus resulted in the aspiration of providing a scientific text that shows the clear tendency of the concept of multiple personality to be as vital as ever, its controversy included. Moreover, this concept is now a fixed part of popular culture with a genre and subgenres of its own in a self-referential mode presenting the trope of multiple personality as a vivid metaphor of not only individual trauma or (patho)subjectivity but of the contemporary subject within a fragmented society.
Introduction

That man is not truly one, but truly two. I say two, because the state of my own knowledge does not pass beyond that point. Others will follow, others will outstrip me on the same lines; and I hazard the guess that man will be ultimately known for a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous and independent denizens.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE 1886: 52

Widespread publicity for the concept makes it uncertain whether any case can now arise without being promoted by suggestion or prior preparation.

HAROLD MERSKEY 1995: 3

The most controversial diagnosis of a mental disorder in the United States is that of multiple personality disorder (MPD), now renamed dissociative identity disorder (DID) (cf. Holmes 2008: 271). The widespread popular knowledge of the phenomenon, which understands the occurrence of two or more distinct personality states that take control of the body and appear as if they are independent persons of their own, is mainly connected to the field of fiction. It retells the psychological mechanism of dissociation, a form of amnesia defined as a mental mechanism to dissociate or “forget” traumatic events. Prior to the most influential case of the 20th century, the case of Sybil, less than 200 cases had been reported in the United States. After the publication of the novel-like book of Sybil’s psychiatric case in 1973, hundreds of thousands of cases suddenly occurred. The diagnosis of MPD had soon become the most popular in American psychiatric history.

In contrast to the success of the disorder during the 1970s and 1980s, the decline of MPD was connected to several disastrous scandals and cases of overdiagnosis of mental patients during the 1990s. Despite the renaming of the disorder to stress the inner subtle psychological mechanism of dissociation and hence refer solely to dissociative identity disorder (DID) and consequently lessen the extent to which the disorder was displayed, the general notion of the disorder still stuck to the exaggerated and more observable form of MPD.
However, the mysterious inner fragmentation into separate identities has been exceedingly used in fictional works such as novels or films with a hyperbolical performativity or a typical hollywoodization. Although the American Psychiatric Association (APA) changed the name of MPD to DID in order to stress the inner fragmentation than rather emphasize the proliferation of innumerous distinct entities, the disorder continues to be perceived, both in popular culture and in fictional works, as the existence of two or more persons within one body.

During the 1980s, the heyday of MPD, even academic research, such as the philosophical study by Kathleen V. Wilkes called *Real People* (1988), picked up the idea of the self that is separated into several personalities that can be defined as real persons. Later, however, following the controversy of the 1990s questioning the actual existence of MPD or DID, a rather more skeptical view of multiple personality and dissociation was formulated by analyzing its historical roots of hysteria and hypnosis and by acknowledging the “disorder” as overdiagnosis and fancy diagnosis that caused more harm than good. Apart from individual cases and taking societal forces into account, careful examinations of the phenomenon were presented by a number of distinguished scientists: Canadian philosopher Ian Hacking in *Rewriting the Soul: Multiple Personality and the Science of Memory* (1995); American psychologist Nicolas P. Spanos in *Multiple Identities and False Memories: A Sociocognitive Perspective* (1996); psychiatrist August Piper in *Hoax and Reality: The Bizarre World of Multiple Personality Disorder* (1997); literary critic Elaine Showalter in *Hystories: Hysterical Epidemics and Modern Media* (1997); and journalist and author Joan Acocella in *Creating Hysteria: Women and Multiple Personality Disorder* (1999).

Since the turn of the millennium, the validity of multiple personality and dissociation has also been questioned by the movement of False Memory Syndrome (FMSM). Members of the FMSM opposed the idea of multiple personality and dissociation of repressing traumatic memory as demonstrated by Charles J. Brainerd and Valerie F. Reyna in *The Science of False Memory* (2005). The concept of dissociation consequently was subject of the so-called ‘memory wars’, which evolved around the concept of traumatic events being dissociated and thus “safely locked away” or not (Piper 1997: xii), albeit these dissociated memories were causing considerable psychological and somatic distress.

In recent psychological studies and books, the phenomenon of multiple personality and dissociation is still being discussed. Some examples include psychiatrist Brant Wenegrat in *Theater of Disorder: Patients, Doctors, and the Construction of Illness* (2001), who calls the epidemic of MPD or DID one of the “mass sociogenic illnesses” (Wenegrat 2001: 130); professor of psychology Robert Rieber in *The Bifurcation of the Self: The History and Theory of Dissociation and Its Disorders* (2006); professors of psychology Scott O. Lilienfeld and William T. O’Donohue in *The Great Ideas of Clinical Science* (2007), who consider the disorder as a “partially social construction” (Lilienfeld and O’Donohue 2007: 347); and psychiatrist Paul R. McHugh in *Try to Remember* (2008), in which he declares that MPD and DID are based on “behavioral artifacts built on psychological assumptions” (McHugh 2008: 122).

The attempt to reorganize the concept of multiple personality and dissociation within the psychiatric field is presented in a very recent publication on dissociative disorders and their placement within the fifth edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical
Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V), which was eventually published in May 2013. In Dissociation and the Dissociative Disorders, trauma and dissociation expert Paul F. Dell records quite a number of suggestions for another name for MPD or DID: ‘complex dissociative disorder’, ‘complex posttraumatic dissociative disorder’, ‘chronic complex dissociative disorder’, ‘alter disorder’ and so on (Dell 2009a: 392). The purpose is to stress even more the inner mental mechanism of the “disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception” (APA 2000: 519).

Besides these efforts of the psychiatric field to get rid of the remains of multiple personality as MPD, the fictional interpretations of the disorder contributed to the survival of the outdated definition. This study therefore accepts the challenge of analyzing the concept of multiple personality and dissociation with an interdisciplinary look into both psychological dynamics of the definition of MPD and DID and the force of literary texts and film versions, which combine in creating the popular notion of the disorder. Consequently this study develops the theory of MPD and DID as a “culture-embedded syndrome”. Not only psychiatric cases alone contribute to pop psychology. But it seems fairly clear that fictional characters such as Norman Bates in Psycho (1959), Tyler Durden in Fight Club (1996), and Andy Gage in Set this House in Order (2003) also have a considerable impact on how a disorder is generally perceived and further developed. The prototype of the multiple in the 20th century is undoubtedly Sybil (1973) her case now counts as a proven hoax or mere fad in order to establish an exaggerated version of dissociation and multiplicity caused by trauma (although the DID community still perceives her case as bedrock of trauma theory and dissociation).

The inner fragmentation of fictional characters and their disintegration was already shown in literary studies such as Jeremy Hawthorn’s analysis in Multiple Personality and the Disintegration of Literary Character (1983). It presented not only the theory of multiple personality and dissociation but also the equivalent of internally split protagonists within literary texts such as Charlotte Brontë’s Villette or Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman. This study again developed during a period when MPD was not questioned, and it even offered a fascinating model of how the traumatized mind allegedly works.

The manifold plurality of modern or postmodern literary characters was also analyzed in a recent German study by Jens Mergenthaler in Sollbruchstellen der Seele: Die Multiple Persönlichkeit als Metapher im Literaturdiskurs (2008). While this study collects quite a number of diverse texts with mentally divided characters representing the typical plural mind of modernism or postmodernism, and additionally adding the film version of Chuck Palahniuk’s novel Fight Club (1996), which differ significantly, the focus does not lie entirely on the dynamics of the psychological diagnosis and its representation within fictional works. Thus, it understands multiple personality merely as a modern form of existence similar to James M. Glass in Shattered Selves: Multiple Personality in a Postmodern World (1993). Glass, however, also considers MPD not an entirely valid metaphor for postmodern existence but also as a severe posttraumatic disorder causing distress and despair. Such a metaphorical meaning of the mental disorder of MPD or DID is therefore not considered precisely adequate.
Accepting every modern or postmodern text that delves into a fictional character with a plural inner world or postmodern existence does not meet the criteria of this study. Rather, it analyzes the impact of American fictional texts of MPD and DID on the popular notion of the disorder. This means that each text needed to explicitly mention the disorder and not merely include a notion of alterity, fragmentation or inner dividedness in the plotline.

Another very recent study by philosopher Logi Gunnarsson, Philosophy of Personal Identity and Multiple Personality (2010), explores the idea of multiple personality still conceived as several entities thus touching on the outdated concept of MPD and the academic musings of the 1980s. It is interesting to note that such ideas of philosophically examining the possible existence of more than one entity within one body are still alive even within academic research. Gunnarsson also analyzes Chuck Palahniuk’s novel Fight Club within the literary theory of Astrid Schmid’s Fear of the Other: Approaches to English Studies of the Double (Schmid 1996 cited in Gunnarsson 2010: 181) and understands it as a translation of his theory into a literary text.

Contrary to studies on the doppelgänger and alter ego theme, such as Carl F. Keppler’s The Literature of the Second Self (1972), who states that his concept of the second self means that “what each of them lacks is exactly what the other possesses” (Keppler 1972: 9), or as Astrid Schmid’s The Fear of the Other (1996), which both concentrate on several literary texts varying the topic of the internally split character, this study focuses particularly on American literary texts, which, as already stated, explicitly mention the diagnosis of MPD or DID. Thus, corresponding to the theory developed here of the “culture-embedded syndrome” influenced also by fictional representations of the disorder, such texts are understood as contributing to the general notion of multiple personality and disorder in a very powerful way. This general notion again contributed to official psychiatric definitions. Therefore, this study also attempts to synthesize both fields of psychiatry and the dynamics of the disorder with literature and its presentation of the disorder. The reciprocal influences of both fiction and the psychiatric science are apparent.

By means of close reading, it is therefore interesting to see how the various psychiatric diagnoses as well as the literary texts treat the concept of multiple personality and dissociation. A main focus of the analysis of the fictional text lies on an understanding of how the here presented American authors varied the inner split of their protagonists. Gérard Genette’s theory of the narrator in terms of “who speaks” may be helpful (cf. Genette 1980: 186). If, as this book proposes, the authors do indeed either stick to the outdated diagnosis of MPD or else re-develop newer concepts of inner fragmentation in terms of DID, the texts might reflect this. As Rom Harré and Grant Gillett stated in the philosophical and psychological study The Discursive Mind (1994), the pronoun system used in fictional texts may indicate such different usages of dissociation in terms of multiplying the “I’s” and egos, personalities or persons presented but it may also accentuate the inner fragmentation of the self. While the former definition of MPD may stress different pronoun systems, an inner fragmentation may be presented with the “I” as a still-perceived center or core.

Moreover, even if authors still stick to the exaggerated version of MPD, what functions do these secondary selves have? Do they offer “a second life outside offi-
cialdom” as literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin expressed in *Rabelais and His World* with which he coined the theory of the ‘carnival’ (cf. Bakhtin 1968: 6)? The secondary, somewhat carnival and comical selves may indeed follow Bakhtin’s statement:

“The carnival-grotesque form exercises the same function: to consecrate inventive freedom, to permit the combination of a variety of different elements and their rapprochement, to liberate from the prevailing point of view of the world, from conventions and established truths, from clichés, from all that is humdrum and universally accepted. This carnival spirit offers the change to have a new outlook on the world, to realize the relative nature of all that exists, and to enter a completely new order of the things.” (Bakhtin 1968: 34)

Despite difficulties with pressing a mental disorder or illness in general into a metaphorical level, as Susan Sontag indeed correctly stressed in her book *Illness as Metaphor* (1978), that disorders resemble what she claimed to be “the nighttime of life” (Sontag 2002 [1978]: 3), American authors used MPD and DID to enhance the inner dividedness of their protagonists and their disconnectedness from themselves and their environment.

Thus, besides Bakhtin’s concept of the carnival that opposes dominant forces, assuming that secondary selves or identities oppose such dominant forces, the literary theory of Hubert Zapf, which underlines the notion of “literature as cultural ecology” (Zapf 2002 and 2006) with a triadic model, can also be applied to multiple personality and dissociation in fictional texts and film versions. Accordingly, literature functions as an ecological force within a larger system of culture itself. Literary texts hence can formulate and enhance whatever may be suppressed and excluded in dominant narratives. Moreover, Zapf’s tripartite model may apply even to the very function of multiple personality and dissociation itself – may this function be applied to psychiatric dissociation models of trauma or to the function of counternarratives. By offering an opposition to the primary self in distress in terms of dissociation or secondary selves, the multiple mind attempts to adapt to traumatic experiences. A healing can only be achieved, according to the therapeutic concepts concerning MPD or DID, if the dissociated elements are reintegrated again into the personality. Hubert Zapf developed his tripartite concept of ‘cultural-critical metadiscourse’ with a death-in-life situation where certain features are suppressed by a dominant system, an ‘imaginative counter-discourse’ here resembling an alternative world or self within the conception of secondary selves, and the ‘reintegrative interdiscourse’ to overcome the dichotomies or reintegration of secondary selves into the primary personality – the term of reintegration even exists in certain trauma or MPD/DID therapies (cf. the novel *Set this House in Order* by Matt Ruff).

Yet despite an acknowledged counternarrative, which might be applied to the narrative of the secondary personalities, romanticizing the second selves seems rather one-sided. Literally there is another side to the story of MPD/DID in general. Here it is clear that the concept could be classified as what Ian Hacking called the “interactive categories” in contrast to “indifferent categories” (cf. Hacking 1986). The interactive categories develop, according to Hacking, certain looping effects “in which
one person’s conceptions shape another’s behavior, which in turn feeds back to shape the first person’s conceptions, and so on” (Lilienfeld and Berg). In this study, the theory of a cultural embedment of the syndrome is developed – the “culture-embedded syndrome” indicating the aspects of MPD/DID as official psychiatric diagnoses that were influenced by works of fiction in a very profound way.

In order to offer a satisfactory and sufficient overview of the subject of multiple personality and dissociation in the United States and to be able to place each work of literature into the context of how fictional works display multiple characters, it is first necessary to consider the psychological theory and the corresponding history of inner dividedness in terms of demon possession, hysteria, double or multiple personality, MPD, and later DID before proceeding to explain the concept of the “culture-embedded syndrome” as part of the popular culture. Such an examination of each of the definitions and explanatory systems shows how relevant the prevailing cultural system was. After these considerations, an analysis of fictional texts is provided. Here it is of interest in how far these texts, mainly novels, include the controversy around MPD/DID.

This study is therefore presented in three parts. The first part introduces the historical and theoretical background of multiple personality and dissociation and its predecessors within hysteria. Chapter 1 clarifies the definition of the various and changing psychiatric terms that include also cultural factors; chapter 2 demarcates MPD and DID from the often misunderstood concept of split personality as schizophrenia; chapter 3 presents the origins and early science of dissociation. In chapter 4, the renaissance of the concept of dissociation within the scientific field is mentioned when memory, trauma, and dissociation were newly interpreted. Within chapter 5, the historical cases of double and multiple personality discussed gradually shift to fictional texts such as Flora Rheta Schreiber’s book *Sybil* (1973), which served as the template for cases of MPD in the late 20th century and the popular awareness of the phenomenon even in the 21st century. As a complex study on MPD in the United States should not avoid the controversy around the disorder, chapter 6 introduces various critical approaches to the theory of multiple personality and MPD.

The second part of this study continues with the concept of the “culture-embedded syndrome” in chapter 7, which indicates that the general notion of multiple personality and dissociation cannot be understood without its representation within popular culture and thus popular fictional works. Here MPD remains the core concept whatever name the disorder may obtain in the future, as it functions also as a strong *brand* that continues to be recognizable. The therefore relevant role of the mass media is explored in chapter 8. Having thus recapitulated the available popular culture of multiple personality and dissociation, chapter 9 is dedicated to the analysis of prevalent and influential autobiographical texts or autopathographies of MPD and DID. Chapter 10, finally, offers a look into the classic texts of “man’s dual nature” such as Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and others. With an account of the use of multiple personality and dissociation within fictional texts in the United States, chapter 11 offers an analysis of four important novels published during the 1950s, which experienced the newly discovered phenomenon of the multiple mind and which are influenced by stereotypical models of
MPD even though the diagnosis was only accepted in 1980 by the official psychiatric association.

During the research it became evident that various subgenres exist. The development of these subgenres of multiple personality and dissociation fiction is explored in chapter 12, with the internal split coming in a variety of different names: the devil inside, the spy inside, the killer inside, and the protector inside. Chapter 13 presents the most common forms of visualization of MPD and DID in film versions.

Finally, having thus established the fictional history of multiple personality and dissociation, it is of interest to explore contemporary novels and their representation of MPD or DID. The third part of this study therefore offers an analysis of seven novels, partly sophisticated and complex works such as Margaret Atwood’s Alias Grace (1996) as well as seemingly more simplified mainstream texts such as Ted Dekker’s thriller Thr3e (2003), Matt Ruff’s exploration of MPD in the humorous novel Set this House in Order (2003), or the personal distress of Gabrielle Pina’s Chasing Sophea (2006) dealing with a traumatized African-American woman. Multiple personality and dissociation can also be used as a metaphor within societal structures – as the connection of the disorder to culture already implies. Chuck Palahniuk’s now legendary novel Fight Club (1996) perfectly demonstrates this idea. How dissociation in terms of an identity disorder may be translated into a more contemporary scientific model of the traumatized psyche and the inner disintegration of DID can be seen in the novels The Zero (2006) by Jess Walter, a post nine-eleven narrative of trauma and fragmentation, and the highly multileveled narration of Sorrows of an American (2008) by Siri Hustvedt. The last chapter of this study, “Voices of Imagination”, addresses the question whether a fraud diagnosis can be used as a metaphor in postcolonial narratives.

This study also pays attention to the reciprocal and mutually influential intertextuality within multiple personality and dissociation fiction. In contrast to neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer’s disease or a biological concept of schizophrenia, both diseases may have a typical progression and are also perceived and interpreted in a certain way by most people, a template for MPD/DID was clearly given with fictional works as a kind of imperative or instruction for the patients. In this sense, fiction told them how to behave, how to perform, how to feel. The references to the classic cases of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Psycho and especially Sybil are striking. All these texts referred to psychological concepts of the fragmented human mind and translated them into fictional works. Thus, this study is an interdisciplinary approach attempting to synchronize psychological dynamics of multiple personality and dissociation as dissociative identity disorder with presentations of it within fictional adaptations.

MPD/DID – this spelling means that both concepts apply although they are understood as slightly differing – as cultural phenomenon might have been examined in terms of psychiatry or psychology; it might have been examined in terms of a literature of the doppelgänger or the alter ego. This study holds that there exists to date no careful and complex summary of multiple personality and dissociation in fictional works plus the examination of the dynamics of the psychiatric definition, which now includes cultural references, in order to understand it as a cultural phenomenon. Hence, the challenge is to establish an overview of the American fiction of the multi-
ple mind in order to demonstrate the vitality of a concept that regards the singularity of the human mind as outdated and emphasizes an internal plurality. It is no exaggeration that the metaphor of dissociation in terms of multiple personality still evokes the warning: Beware of the other side(s)!