

Billy Milligan and the Future of the Children of Wars

On October 11, 1977, Chief John Kleberg from the Ohio State University police department stepped up an investigation and arrested William Milligan with the suspicion of robbery and rape of two women. And after a long period of interrogation, it was found that Billy was actually put to sleep during the robbery and rape. Ragen, a man from Yugoslavia, planned only to rob the victims in order to pay some bills, and it was Adalana the lesbian who took over and raped the victims. No, we are not talking about three different people, we are talking about a person suffering from Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID).

“The Minds of Billy Milligan” is a book depicting a true-story of Billy Milligan – who committed crimes such as robbery and rape – found to have not two, not three, but 24 personalities. Inside Billy Milligan’s minds there were Arthur with the ability to write and read Arabic, Ragen Vadascovinich the Yugoslavian, Allen the only right-handed personality, Tommy the “Houdini”, Danny, David and Christine who were all young children, Christopher who was Christine’s older brother, Adalana who was lesbian, and 14 other personalities with different skills, looks, sex, sexual orientations and origins. What is the reason for Milligan’s DID? Billy Milligan suffered sexual, physical and psychological trauma in his childhood.

According to psychologytoday.com, Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or formerly known as Multiple Personality Disorder is a condition where a person’s identity is fragmented into two or more distinct personalities, and that sufferers of this rare condition are usually victims of severe abuse. While reading this book and literatures about the disorder and its causes and symptoms, I suddenly realized about the reality of the world we live in today. I am not talking about abusive families, although that fact itself is already concerning. There are wars happening in many places as we speak, and as cruel as wars are to every adult, it is ever crueler when the victims are children.

Many DID sufferers are reported to have severe psychological, physical and sexual abuse, especially in their childhoods. Earlier they may have suffered from chronic Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) like nightmares, flashbacks, amnesia, and startle responses. UNICEF wrote that “...after the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, Dr. Albert Nambaje, a clinical psychologist at the National Trauma Recovery Centre, reported: “Among the symptoms manifested by children are nightmares...The UN Commission on Human Rights’ Special Rapporteur on former Yugoslavia similarly reports on interviews with children: “Memories of the event remain with them... causing extreme nightmares, daily intrusive flashbacks of the traumatic events, fear, insecurity, and bitterness.””(Unicef.org, Children in War, 1996)

UNHCR stated that around 65,3 million people worldwide have been forced from home, with 21,3 million of them being refugees. And over half of them, are children under the age of 18. We are talking about a scarily high number of children, with traumatic experiences that even most adults have no power to overcome. A lot of them are potential for becoming the next Billy Milligan. Or worse, as it has been recorded that a DID sufferer might have as much as 100 different personalities.

Intentional or not, what is happening right now is the systemized-trauma-feeding act to our children, the people of the future, those who we have our hopes on. We can predict what will probably happen to those children when human blood and screams and the sounds of explosion or even sexual abuse become parts their daily lives. Even if we try to be calm and try to address this matter in a “professional” way and look at the statistics, then, are we ready to treat these children before they develop PTSD, DID or other dangerous disorders? Do we have an adequate number of psychologists or psychiatrists to treat these children? Or once the disorder surfaces, are we capable of curing them?

What will happen to the future of the countries that are now at war? What will happen to the children whose existence are denied and had to find another place to go, often by dangerous means? Are we prepared to anticipate all the risks? Have we informed ourselves regarding this matter before we strike? Are we ready to face at least 35 million potential personality disorder sufferers? When we think about them, really, we are thinking about ourselves, about our own children. This is not just about them, children some of us we might never meet. This is about us, our future. This is about humanity.

If today we are bracing ourselves to fight terrorism as chanted worldwide, in the near future, perhaps in ten or twenty years from now, we might have to brace ourselves to face so many people with troubled

past, who would -without warning- commit crimes. Are they to blame? I would disagree.