



History Department

650 Laurelwood Drive, Waterloo Ontario, N2V 2V1
Telephone: (519) 880-9979 Fax: (519) 880-9718

Website: <http://sjam.wrdsb.on.ca>

Dear Parents/Guardians,

As part of your son or daughter's work in HSP 3UI: Introduction to Anthropology, Psychology and Sociology, we examine several theories and case studies in order to obtain a deeper understanding of the social sciences. I am writing this letter to ask permission for your son or daughter to engage in a specific case study about Shirley Mason, better known to the world as "Sybil," by reading the novel, watching the film and completing an assignment (attached.)

Shirley Mason was a bright, post-secondary Art student who suffered from baffling and terrifying blackouts during her twenties and early thirties. Through in-depth psychoanalysis over a period of several years, it was ultimately discovered that she was the victim of severe and sadistic sexual and physical abuse perpetuated by her mother during her childhood. Mason repressed these painful memories, which later manifested themselves as sixteen distinct personalities, according to her psychologist. If true, this would make her a true "multiple personality." In a recent survey, 80% of psychologists said they believe in this disorder, which is now known as "Dissociative Identity Disorder."

The case study meets a number of curriculum objectives, including:

- a detailed demonstration of psychoanalysis
- an accurate portrayal of what most psychologists believe is a rare but true affliction, Dissociative Identity Disorder
- a detailed demonstration of the terrible and long-lasting effects of child abuse

Because of the graphic nature of this case, I believe it is the right of the student to opt-out of this assignment if you or your son or daughter feel uncomfortable about it in any way. Rather, an alternative novel and assignment may be completed, based on a true case that meets any curricular requirements of the course (your son or daughter can suggest a case, or see me for ideas.) We also have an alternative assignment for a novel about the Chinese Cultural Revolution, as well as copies of the book. Of course, no marks would be lost by choosing this option.

Thank you for filling out the bottom portion of this letter and returning it to me via your son or daughter. If you would like further details or to discuss this further, please feel free to call me at the school anytime at 880-9979 or e-mail me at Jeff_Chard@wrdsb.on.ca.

Thank you,

Jeff Chard
Head of Social Sciences
SJAM

Student: _____

____ Yes, my son or daughter has permission to read Sybil, watch the film and complete the assignment on the book and Dissociative Identity Disorder

____ No, my son or daughter does not have permission to read Sybil, watch the film and complete the assignment on the book and Dissociative Identity Disorder

Date: _____ Signature: _____

