

Action potentials: a love story against romanticizing mental disorders

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“ Flirting with madness was one thing; when madness started flirting back, it was time to call the whole thing off.” -Rohinton Mistry, A Fine Balance Your brain is a mesh of complication- it's a mess of information forming microscopic three staged structures that fold in a specific way to form long, weaving bodies that don't really ever touch each other, but still send electrical signals that control your every movement, breath and thought.

It's a tangle of electrical signals called action potentials that send either a positive or negative sign and are controlled by little channels in the brain made by a selective sieve who decides whether or not microscopic structures have the red light to pass through. It's a chaotic swirl of these action potentials who then, with their positive or negative signal, float as little puzzle pieces across the gap between the bodies and latch on to their matching puzzle piece on the other end which then releases another action potential, another puzzle piece, another latch on and once again, another action potential. Your brain is a mesh of complication and with a complication as big as this one; it is inevitable that mistakes – sometimes vital ones- occur. In these mistakes lies the basis of mental disorders; perhaps too little puzzle pieces cross the gap, perhaps there are incorrect positive or negative signals, perhaps the channels don't open up as they are supposed to. Mental disorders occur in the moments of disruption in the chaotic logic our mesh of bodies follows.

This summer, I studied our mesh of bodies and the irregularities that come with it in the Abnormal Psychology class in Stanford University. I learnt about when and why and where the channels open and close, I learnt about the different puzzle pieces: GABA and dopamine and serotonin and how they <https://assignbuster.com/action-potentials-a-love-story-against-romanticizing-mental-disorders/>

affect the brain, I learnt about puzzle pieces that are waiting to be latched on to, I fell in love with action potentials- intricate, essential and all happening as I press my fingers against the keys to type this now. Falling in love has its drawbacks. Falling in love with action potentials helped me realize that some brains fall short of reaching their potentials because of dysfunctional parts that stop their action. Mental disorders such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and depression simply lack the right actions to fill their potential, and as medicine advances, drugs that complete that potential can be formed.

However, drugs can't ever complete the potential, society must advance too. In recent years we have seen a great advancement in the education about mental disorders and lessening the stigma around these disorders. While talking about disorders and allowing those with mental disorders to feel as equal to others as they are is aiding in the control of these disorders, there is a flip side to the spectrum that modern society is delving into.

Romanticizing, or regarding mental disorders as an ideal, is a situation in our modern society. Mental disorders are romanticized in social media sites, music, art and writing pieces when in truth there is nothing desirable in making your life harder than it is.

Depression is the most abundant mental disorder in modern society.

Depression or clinically, Major Depressive Disorder (MDD) has a lifetime prevalence rate of around 20 percent - 1 out of every 5 people will have to deal with a depressive episode of two weeks or more at some point in their lifetime. The United States of America loses \$192 million due to loss of jobs

because of depression. Depression is not poetic. Depression is sleepless nights and slept-through days.

Depression is not having the energy to get out bed and make a bowl of cereal in the morning. Depression is repetitive thoughts that one is less than, inadequate, unloved, not good in enough for life. Depression is the million people that die of suicide each year. 93 percent of people born to a parent with bipolar disorder will also get the disorder. Bipolar disorder is not exciting.

Bipolar disorder is thoughts buzzing through your brain so fast you get a headache, it's logically impractical, dangerous ideas you come up with because you are a GENIUS and that you believe could fully work, it's driving down a straight road and ending up in the middle of a forest, it's almost breaking the car door when you get out in the forest, it's shrieks in anger, pain, frustration because you have no idea what is going on, it is an incredible high and a destructible fall. It takes over an hour for those with severe OCD to even leave their house. OCD is not adorable. OCD is knowing that tapping the wall twice is a silly idea, but also believing that if you don't do it the world will crash around you, OCD is washing and re-washing your hands until you bleed, OCD is waking up at 4 am every morning just to be able to get to your job on time, OCD is losing your job because you are always late and you just can't help it. Schizophrenia is not trippy.

Schizophrenia is depending on another person for the rest of your life because you are always at danger to yourself, it is voices, mean, demanding screaming behind your ears telling you to do things that are ridiculous, see

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things that don't exist, believe in things that are untrue without you knowing it. Schizophrenia is the homeless people shouting on the streets at one a. m. because they have no one to help rid them of the voices. Substance abuse is not cool. Alcoholics and druggies are not dope.

Substance abuse is needing a chemical to survive, substance abuse is going to extreme lengths to get more of the substance, substance abuse is making the substance more important than the people around you, substance abuse is the shaking, the need for a constant high, the idea that you can't live without it. Substance abuse is the reason there are more people with mental disorders in prisons than in hospitals. Mental disorders are not cool or trippy or adorable or poetic. Mental disorders are a pain to live with, a pain to control and a constant reminder that your actions can never fill in your potentials. Mental disorders should not be glossed over, made pretty, but they should be acknowledged, should be talked about, should be diagnosed. Mental disorders should be treated like a disease or a broken leg.

When you realize you broke your leg, you go to a doctor. When you realize your mesh of complication isn't working all that well, you go to a doctor. You don't say " She's being so bipolar lately" because you wouldn't say " Oh my god, you're being such an Ebola today."