

## Film Guide

### *CASE STUDY OF A MULTIPLE PERSONALITY*

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

30 minutes, color, film, 1957

Many of us have been fascinated by hearing of multiple personalities, such as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. However, fewer than 150 cases of multiple personality have been reported in the psychological literature. A multiple personality is a person with two or more distinct and alternating personalities, each with its own personality characteristics. The personalities often are polar extremes: one is carefree, fun-loving, and happy; the other is quiet, reserved, and inhibited.

This film is a record of the widely publicized case of Eve White, a 25 year old woman who sought treatment for blinding headaches followed by blackouts. She had been having severe marital problems and was separated from her husband. Her 4 year old daughter was living with Eve's parents. Eve White was conscientious, inhibited, and dignified. During therapy a second personality, Eve Black, appeared. Eve Black was seductive, adventuresome, uninhibited, and carefree. Eve Black was co-conscious of Eve White in that she was aware of Eve White's actions and had existed as an alternate personality since childhood. After eight months of therapy a third personality emerged. Jane was more than the sum of the other two. Jane had an awareness of what both Eves thought and did, but had incomplete access to their stores of knowledge and memories prior to her emergence upon the scene. Jane later decided to call herself Evelyn. From the sources I read, I am not sure if Evelyn is a fourth face of Eve or just a new name for Jane.

The film begins with scenes which give background information about the case. The next scenes are actual interview scenes in which the psychiatrist elicits each of the three separate personalities. Because these are actual scenes, in a few instances the conversation may be difficult to understand. Hypnosis was rarely used in the treatment but was used near the end of the film to bring out the deeper emotional aspects of Eve White.

The film concludes with views of Evelyn and a discussion by the psychiatrist on the causes and resolution of the disorder. Here are his comments: (1) Mrs. White's unhappy marriage ended in divorce. (2) Her difficulty in holding a job because of Eve Black's irresponsibility intensified her financial problems. (3) Jane fell in love but felt she should not marry unless the disorder was relieved. (4) The passage of time with the influence of intrinsic biologic tendencies toward repair and growth may have played an important part. (5) The persistent attempt by the therapist to offer understanding and a painstaking review of the patient's past life perhaps played another part. The resolution came suddenly when Jane vividly and dramatically recalled that she had been forced to kiss her grandmother's corpse farewell. This was her first memory of personal experience prior to the time she emerged as a separate personality in the physician's office. It appears that this unhappy event at age five triggered processes which led to the development of the two personalities, Eve White and Eve Black.

Evelyn remarried and according to the film has established a stable marriage.

**Description of Eve White (pp. 1-50):** She did not at first appear to be an unusual or a particularly interesting patient. This neat, colorless young woman was.. .twenty-five years of age.. .Demure and poised, she sat with her feet close together, speaking clearly but in soft, low tones. This superlatively calm, utterly self-controlled little figure of propriety showed no suggestion of anything that the layman might think of as **nervousness**. Her hands lay still on the arms of her chair as she spoke.. .She was not undernourished, but seemed somehow very delicate, the reticent, meticulous manner suggesting a physical fragility.. .Her personal problems were complicated and serious, but by no means extraordinary.

**Description of Eve White suddenly changed to Eve Black (pp. 20-22):** The brooding look in her eyes became almost a stare. Eve seemed momentarily dazed. Suddenly her posture began to change. Her body slowly stiffened until she sat rigidly erect. An alien, inexplicable expression then came over her face. This was suddenly erased into utter blankness. The lines of her countenance seemed to shift in a barely visible, slow, rippling transformation.. .Closing her eyes, she winced as she put her hands to her temples, pressed hard, and twisted them as if to combat sudden pain.. .Then the hands lightly dropped.. .A pair of blue eyes popped open.. .**There** was a quick reckless smile. In a bright unfamiliar voice that sparkled, the woman said, "Hi there, Doc! "

With a soft and surprisingly intimate syllable of laughter, she crossed her legs, carelessly swirling her skirts in the process. She unhurriedly smoothed the hem down over her knees in a manner that was playful and somehow just a little provocative . . .The demure and constrained posture of Eve White had melted into buoyant repose.

He handed her a cigarette, and then lighting it, said, "Who is `she'?" "

"Why, Eve White, of course. Your long-suffering, saintly, little patient. "

"But aren't you Eve White?" he asked.

"That' s for laughs, " she claimed, a ripple of mirth in her tone. She tossed her head slightly again. "Why, you ought to know better than that, Doc! "

"Well, who are you?" he asked incredulously.

"Why, I'm Eve Black," she said (giving Mrs. White's maiden name).

**Description of Jane (pp. 139-141):** Sometime after the returning of the headaches and blackouts, with Eve White's maladjustment still growing worse generally, a very early recollection was being discussed with her. The incident focused about a painful injury she had sustained when scalded by water from a washpot. As she spoke, her eyes closed sleepily.. . After remaining in this sleep, or trance, for perhaps two minutes, her eyes opened.. .**Slowly**, with an unknown but curiously impressive voice and with immeasurable poise, she said, "Who are you?"

From the first moment it was vividly apparent that this was neither Eve White nor Eve

Black.. .This new woman showed herself ever more plainly and in all respect to be another entity.. . She showed no evidence of Eve Black's obvious faults and inadequacies.. . She also impressed us as being far more mature, more vivid, more boldly capable and more interesting than Eve White. . .

This third personality called herself Jane, for no particular reason she could give. . . In her, early appeared the potential or the promise of something far more of woman and of life than might be expected from the two Eves with their faults and weaknesses eliminated and all assets combined.

SOURCE: Quoted from Thigpen and Cleckley The Three Faces of Eve (1957).

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Compare and contrast the three different personalities of Eve.
2. Describe your reaction to the film.

## SOURCES

1. The case history portrayed in the film.
  - a. Thigpen, C., and Cleckley, H. The Three Faces of Eve; New York: McGraw-Hill; 1957, RC555.T5.
  - b. Thigpen, C. and Cleckley , H., "A Case of Multiple Personality," in Wrenn, R. (Ed.) Basic Contributions to Psychology, pages 261-27 1; on reserve.
  - c. Three Faces of Eve - audiotape, RC514.T57.
  - d. Lancaster, E. and Poling, J., The Final Face of Eve; New York: McGraw-Hill; 1958.
  - e. Sizemore, Chris Costner & Pittilo, Elen, I'm Eve; New York: Doubleday, 1977.
2. Other famous case studies.

Prince, Morton; The Disassociation of a Personality, 1905.  
Schreiber , Flora; Sybil; 1973, RC555.537.
3. Examples from great literature.

Rabkin, L., Psychopathology and Literature, 1966.  
Shirley Jackson's "The Bird's Nest, " pages 3 1 to 39.  
Fyodor Dostoevsky's "The Double," pages 40-54.