

Psychology: Abnormality - Notes for 26/09/03

Scenario – Eve and MPD

- The eldest daughter with two younger twin sisters;
- As a young child she lived in the southern states of America in an extended family with grandparents;
- She regularly saw the grandma faint and the subsequent rushing around that ensued;
- Later on in life, Eve saved up for months for a wristwatch. Her mother told her she needed the money for food but bought watches for the twins.

Explanation

- Using Bandura's notion of vicarious reinforcement in acquisition stage of social learning. She sees Grandma being rewarded for what she perceives to be acting out a role – she thinks Grandma is faking it – cognitive processes are therefore important in the acquisition of behaviour.
- She grows up having been denied the attention she needs. Gradually she internalises different roles to gain attention. Family and friends would have seen her suffer mood swings.
- As she grew older, her anxiety increased as the people she met reacted to this timid woman doing anything for attention. Eve found her behaviour was reinforced if someone paid her attention.
- When she was married, she had a daughter – the husband started paying more attention to the daughter than her.
- This resulted in frequent complaints of backache and headaches and the mood swings increased.
- When the daughter was three years old, the husband forced Eve to see doctors to sort out the headaches.
- Going to the doctors gave her the attention she sought.
- As a result, the husband paid Eve more attention because she was sick.
- He became deeply worried because the doctor could find no cause – this gave great reinforcement to Eve.
- Further reinforcement came when she was referred to therapists, and then Thigpen and Cleckly recorded the first case of MPD.