

Pay No Attention to the Man Behind the Screen! Why Freud Abandoned Hypnosis – The Rhymes and Reasons of “Othering” (Inconvenient) Realities, Then and Now

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Presenter: Richard P Kluft, MD, PhD

Presenter Biography: Richard P. Kluft, M.D., Ph.D., Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Temple University School of Medicine, practices in Bala Cynwyd, PA. He teaches at the Psychoanalytic Center of Philadelphia, where he is a Waiver Training Analyst, and at the China American Psychoanalytic Alliance. He has authored over 270 scientific papers, book chapters, and reviews, most concerning trauma, dissociative disorders, hypnosis, and psychoanalysis. *Shelter from the Storm*, exploring a compassionate approach to the abreaction of trauma, won the ISST&D’s 2013 Written Media Award. His edited books include *Childhood Antecedents of Multiple Personality* and *Incest-Related Syndromes of Adult Psychopathology*. He and Catherine G. Fine, Ph.D., co-edited *Clinical Perspectives on Multiple Personality Disorder*. Dr. Kluft was Editor-in-Chief of the journal *DISSOCIATION* for ten years. Currently, he is Clinical Forum Editor of the *International Journal of Clinical & Experimental Hypnosis*, and Advisory Editor of the *American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis*. He was a co-founder and the second President of the ISST&D. He has been President of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis and the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, and 1997 International Conference Chair of the International Society of Hypnosis. He has received numerous awards for his published research, clinical contributions, and teaching here and abroad. He has a second career as a novelist. He has published three novels, *Good Shrink/Bad Shrink* (2014), *An Obituary to Die For* (2016) and *A Sinister Subtraction* (2019); and a novella, *How Fievel Stole the Moon: A Tale for Sweet Children and Sour Scholars* (2014).

Content Level: Intermediate

Potential to Distress: No

Abstract: One hundred and twenty-five years ago Sigmund Freud repudiated the use of therapeutic hypnosis. While this has been celebrated, retroactively, as a great leap forward, understood as Freud’s moving beyond a problematic paradigm to make way for his new and enlightened psycho-analysis, ample historical evidence allows an alternative line of explanation; i.e., that sensational and celebrated events, long forgotten although they seized the world’s attention at the time, may have motivated Freud’s decision. This argument is rendered more plausible because Freud’s increasingly negative stance toward hypnosis and his characterizing it as controlling and demanding submission of its subjects was first articulated ten years later after his decision, and that his still more depreciating assessments of hypnosis were derived from sensational sources in the contemporary lay media rather than from scholarship and/or the forms of therapeutic hypnosis Freud had been taught, had observed, and had practiced. The primary gains associated with the development of psycho-analysis were accompanied by secondary losses, including the marginalization of therapeutic hypnosis. This occurred even though Freud built many aspects of hypnosis into his psycho-analysis. This marginalization of powerful and legitimate therapeutic modalities primarily by the powerful impact of lay media sources was replicated during the “memory wars” of the 1990s. Once again, hypnosis was demonized. Findings from series describing its use in effective treatments was disregarded. The study of these events from another era and an assessment of their deleterious consequences for the quality of the treatment of traumatized and dissociative patients may offer helpful insights for the assessment of current paradigms in the dissociative disorders field, and to encourage sensitive concerns regarding the potential secondary losses incurred by their adoption. Clinicians of today are well-positioned to heal the longstanding rift between hypnosis and psycho-analysis caused by Freud’s decision, and to restore many of the therapeutic interventions and approaches usually associated with hypnosis and lost to general usage for over a century to the mainstream of non-hypnotic psychotherapies.

Why review this today? Because treatments facilitated by hypnosis have been the most successful therapies for major dissociative disorders, and when hypnosis was once again represented in the lay media as a

dangerous creator of false memories and a destroyer of families, it was marginalized. Subsequent treatment outcome series have not matched the success of hypnosis-facilitated treatments. It is timely to remediate the gaps in understanding that have effectively sidelined helpful treatment strategies, and once again put them to use for the benefit of those suffering dissociative disorders.

Objectives

Upon Completion of this webinar, participants will be able to:

- Appraise a paradigm for its inclusions or exclusions of the core phenomena of conditions understood through that paradigm
- Discuss hypnotic elements found in Freud's instructions to patients beginning analysis
- List twelve ways to bring techniques derived from hypnotic interventions into psychodynamic psychotherapy

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References

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