

Foreword

This year and next, hypnosis celebrates its sesquicentennial—or, at least, the sesquicentennial of its naming by James Braid. Since that time, and especially over the past quarter-century, hypnosis has matured as both a fascinating topic for scientific research and an effective technique for clinical application. How fitting, then, that Erika Fromm and Michael Nash should have produced this volume—essentially the third in a series collecting authoritative summaries of research and theory in the field of hypnosis.

The first volume in the series appeared in 1972 (*Hypnosis: Research Developments and Perspectives*), under the editorship of Erika Fromm and Ronald Shor, and quickly found a place on the bookshelf of everyone interested in hypnosis. Together with Ernest Hilgard's classic *Hypnotic Susceptibility* (1965), its chapters provided a summary of where the field was: the most important empirical and theoretical developments since the revival of hypnosis research in the mid-1950s. Already in 1972, there was a wealth of literature to review: research on imagination and creativity, psychoanalytic and psychophysiological research, the task-motivational and real-simulator paradigms, conditioning, sleep, and much, much more. But that was just the beginning.

The second volume, published in 1979 (*Hypnosis: Developments in Research and New Perspectives*, also edited by Fromm and Shor), overlapped considerably with the first: pretty much the same chapters by pretty much the same authors. But against the background of updating, some new developments were visible: a statement of Hilgard's neodissociation theory, a view of hypnosis based on psychoanalytic ego psychology, and an approach that emphasized the phenomenology of the hypnotic experience as opposed to the description and analysis of hypnotic behavior. It is hard to imagine more essential reading for the scientist or practitioner interested in hypnosis—not just for their constituent chapters, but also for the comprehensive, meticulously verified reference lists found at their backs.

This new volume is not merely a third edition. Almost everything

about the book is different. Only a few chapters are carried over from the earlier volumes, and most of these are by new authors, reflecting new approaches to their subject matter. The ego-psychological and neodissociative approaches outlined in 1979 have now generated a large corpus of literature, both supportive and critical. The new technology of home videotape has given us a new vehicle for exploring the phenomenology of hypnosis. Advances in cognitive psychology give us new perspectives on hypnosis, imagery, and creativity. This is all represented here.

More interesting, however, is the simple fact that the majority of chapters are entirely new. We have come a very long way in 20 years. There are three chapters on hypnotizability and its correlates, collectively providing a kind of update of Hilgard's work, but also opening up problems, and hypotheses, that were not imagined 27 years ago. There is a chapter on self-hypnosis, reflecting developments in that area. And the blending of theoretical and practical concerns, the laboratory and the consulting room, which makes hypnosis research so exciting, is represented by three chapters on applied issues in psychopathology, clinical psychology, and forensic uses of hypnosis. The wide range of conceptual approaches to hypnosis is exemplified by two chapters, one approaching hypnosis from the standpoint of social psychology and sociology, the other from the perspective of neuropsychology and psychophysiology. But perhaps the most exciting thing to note, the biggest difference between the present volume and its predecessors, is the pluralism characteristic of these chapters. Most authors move easily between the experimental and the clinical, the social, the cognitive, and the psychodynamic; there seems to be less concern with defending preconceived theoretical positions, and more interest in exploring the peculiar blend of interpersonal influence and altered consciousness that is hypnosis as we know it today.

Like its predecessors, this volume stands as a monumental summary of where hypnosis has been, where it stands today, and where it is heading tomorrow. My own copies of the earlier books were handled so much, by myself and others, they lost their wrappers early in life and their bindings have been terribly stressed (though neither has given way). Even my dictionary has not suffered that fate! What better tribute to the utility of a book?

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CONTEMPORARY HYPNOSIS RESEARCH

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