

## The History of Hypnosis

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### ABSTRACT

Hypnosis presents itself as a free and expanded state of consciousness, through which the use of suggestion and focused attention based on a therapeutic relationship, allows the individual to modify perception/emotion/behavior. Known since the dawn of humanity, it has been a common practice throughout history, having undergone changes in the way it was envisaged and applied. It is currently a therapeutic tool that allows individuals to restore internal balance, harmony and well-being.

**Keywords:** Erickson, Hypnosis, History.

### INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of time, researchers, scientists, philosophers and religious people have sought to understand the extraordinary complexity of emotions and thoughts, that is, the human mind. Getting to know the different phenomena of hypnosis and its trance states is a means of approaching more deeply the mystery of our thoughts, contributing to the best possible state of personal balance. Using bibliographical research, the following objectives were defined: to reflect on the evolution of hypnosis / to know the bases of Milton's modern hypnosis / to reflect on the applications of modern hypnosis in a health context.

### DISCUSSION

Considered the 4th state of consciousness, hypnosis presents itself as a free and expanded state of consciousness, through which, the use of suggestion and focused attention, allows a therapeutic relationship, triggering changes in the individual at the level of perception, emotion and behavior [1].

Hypnosis has always been associated with mystery and superstition, with its practitioners associated with instruments of the demonic or the divine, and its cures seen as miracles...

Being considered a technique as old as humanity itself, we can recognize our ancestors as hypnologists, being a fact those civilizations such as the Mayans, Persians and Aztecs, and used hypnosis as a healing process. Priests, sorcerers, witches, shamans and others provoked a state of "magic sleep", by resorting to rituals with chants and dances with monotonous rhythms, which triggered states of hypnotic trance.

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In Ancient Egypt, priests used hypnotic power to treat wounded warriors, pilgrims and patients with various ailments, with hypnotic induction resorting to prayers with therapeutic suggestions. This description is alluded to in the Papyrus Ebers manuscript, which reveals a case of trepanation, in which anesthesia was performed using a hypnotic induction. This theory is also proven by archaeological works such as ceramic vases, where figures of doctors performing surgical interventions appear.

In Greece there were the classic “Temples of Sleep or Temples of Dreams”, places where priests used hypnotic power to treat believers, through their sermons, making them fall asleep gently through magic words and awakening them already healed.

The decline appears with the spread of Christianity, which associates hypnosis with witchcraft. In the eyes of the church, the use of practices or cures that involved something beyond human understanding was considered heresy. However, in 1770 and ironically, it was a priest, Joseph Gassner, who revived hypnosis with his exorcist sessions. For Gassner, fevers, convulsions, pains and other illnesses were caused by evil spirits, and these demonic possessions could be expurgated by hypnosis, restoring the state of health to the patients. Using words and phrases in Latin, he prayed, gestured, shouted orders, pointed to metal crucifixes, leading the patient to states of agitation and later calm, being considered cured [1].

At the same time, the doctor Franz Mesmer developed mesmerism, a theory by which he defended the influence of the stars in the appearance and cure of diseases. According to Mesmer, just as the Moon influenced the Earth and the sea, it would also influence the body fluids, considering on this basis that through animal magnetism with metals, which would propagate magnetic waves, one man could influence another, causing imbalances. When the “magnetic harmony” was restored, the illnesses would disappear.

Descriptions of successful cases attributed to Mesmer are reported, such as the example of a young woman with convulsions, spasms, vomiting, intestinal inflammation, hallucinations, temporary blindness, feeling of suffocation, paralysis, pain in the teeth and ears. Mesmer, believing that she had a “hysterical fever caused by magnetic imbalance”, made the patient drink a solution of water with iron, and then placed a magnet on her body. Later he abandoned the idea of magnetism for metals and placed emphasis on the power of the hands.

If, on the one hand, Mesmer was discredited by the scientific community at the time, he was also supported by Puysegur, who removed the importance of metals, but associated the power of the word with magnetic influence [1]. Hypnosis advances greatly with James Braid (1842). By stating that the mesmeric phenomenon was nothing more than the state resulting from muscle fatigue and sensory fatigue, he removes the influence of animal magnetism and assumes it as a consequence of the power of suggestion. Arguing that the hypnotic state resulted from eye muscle fatigue, caused by fixing the gaze on a point and with direct suggestion, an induction of relaxation and a kind of artificial sleep would appear. He thus introduces the word hypnosis, in allusion to the sleep god Hypnos. Later, and after recognizing that this state of artificial sleep or trance would be different from the state of biological sleep, Braid tries to change the name of hypnosis, proposing the renaming with Monodeism, which would mean concentration on one idea to the detriment of others. This turned out to be too late, since the term hypnosis was already rooted [1].

In the 19th century, surgeon James Esdaile performed surgeries and organ extractions, with the aid of hypnosis, cataloging his procedures for the scientific community. The advance of pharmacology in the field of chemical anesthetics has caused this practice to begin to wane.

Years later, two schools of thought emerged in France, based on different theories: Salpêtrière and Nancy.

With the Salpêtrière school led by the neurologist Charcot, hypnosis is associated with a pathological state of dissociation, comparing the state of trance to hysteria and abnormalities of the nervous system. Also based on the influence of animal magnetism, his sessions presented patients in a trance after violent convulsive crises.

With the Nancy school, led by Liébeaut and Benheim, Braid's followers, the idea grew that all hypnotic phenomena were of subjective and essentially psychological origin, valuing suggestion and concentration as important actions in hypnotic induction.

It is with Sigmund Freud, an enthusiast of Charcot, that the use of hypnosis for the treatment of patients with hysteria was developed, obtaining satisfactory results, which proved at the time that hysteria was a problem of psychological and not somatic causes. Likewise, good results have been obtained in trauma patients. However, the realization of the difficulty in inducing hypnosis in some patients, caused by the resistance they offered to the method, led to the decline

of hypnosis, in favor of the growth of psychoanalysis, free association of ideas and psychotherapy.

It was during the 1st World War (1914-1918) that interest in hypnosis reappeared, perhaps influenced by the growing need for treatment of the existing neuroses at the time [3].

In the 1900s, Milton Erickson, father of modern hypnosis, appears, who, when developing the Milton Model, presents a line that concentrates the ability to hypnotize an individual, based on a conversation: "conversational trance", working unique mechanisms and language patterns, using metaphors, verbal and non-verbal cues, inducing a hypnotic state. For Milton Erickson, the hypnotic trance is triggered by natural processes and the intervention of a facilitator, who produces the state of trance through a simple and apparently informal conversation. The process is based on a temporary state of modified attention, accompanied by an indirect, heightened suggestibility and sensory changes, inherently allowing a state of progressive relaxation. By developing an exclusive and innovative method, by which he hypnotized patients through a simple conversation, the conversational trance, he renewed all the theories and techniques described above. Its great innovation consisted in using everything that the patient brought to the consultation, as a way of initiating and provoking the trance state, the principle of use, as well as the guidelines that are given and that may or may not be assumed by the patient. , which rarely causes resistance [2].

Later, authors linked to neurolinguistic programming recognized the power of Eriksonian or naturalistic hypnosis and its language, often called the "Structure of magic". Based on the perspective that the hypnotherapist is a facilitator, who together with the patient builds cooperation, with the ultimate goal of inducing a state of well-being in the person, this approach considers the characteristics, particularities and subjectivities of each one.

The main objective of the hypnotic trance is, through the use of the unconscious, to produce changes. In this way, resorting to non-verbal language and sensations, fantasies and imagination, areas of the brain such as the right hemisphere, responsible for our unconscious, are worked on, without, however, neglecting the left hemisphere, which corresponds to our conscious mind.

Considered by many as an unconventional therapy, it focuses on an approach focused on solving the patient's problems, being a useful tool to access the person's deepest mind, allowing their problems to surface, where they can be filtered and freed from a negative charge, with a transformation into

positive focuses and perspectives [2].

By eliciting a hypnotic state, a mental condition is created in which the brain has increased psychic activity. By increasing cerebral irrigation, the supply of blood flow originates important reactions, increasing the amount of chemical substances that inhibit pain and produce states of well-being, such as serotonin, dopamine and beta endorphins, this being the summary explanation of the phenomenon on which hypnosis is based [3].

Since then, its use in areas such as medicine, psychology and other health-related professions has been varied and growing, being recognized by the scientific community. Dental situations, pain relief, treatment of dermatological and gastrointestinal pathologies, treatment of phobias, anxiety and post-traumatic stress, conflict management, supporting treatments for depression, pathological mourning and others, have obtained very satisfactory results, bringing a great contribution to today's world [1].

With the maxim that hypnosis is not everything, but the beginning of everything, it turns out that there have always been many surnames to talk about hypnosis. However, a common denominator persists, and that is the fact that all theories and models seek access to the unconscious, through filtering the defenses of the conscious [2].

In fact, each time the individual concentrates on something throughout the day, in some way natural hypnosis is occurring, since attention is oriented towards a focus, funneled, which causes inattention to other peripheral stimuli. In hypnosis, the crossing of the level of the conscious mind to the unconscious mind takes place, and this occurs when there is confusion in the mental, logical and analytical mechanisms of the conscious mind, with a narrowing of attention and concentration, which are diverted to a thought, a sensation or a feeling and all this based on the individual's permission, when inducing hypnosis. When an individual is so focused on something that he forgets everything around him, it corresponds to a state, a process of hyperfocus, hyperconcentration, focused concentration, that is, a state of hypnosis...

The most applied phases or stages of the modern hypnosis model, structure the path to follow, in order to induce a state of trance in the beneficiary. They are: the pre-talk, the absorption, the ratification, the enticement, the dissociation and the awakening phase.

The pre-talk or sowing phase corresponds to the moment in which the subject's interest and curiosity for hypnosis

is created and developed, unconsciously preparing the subject for change. In the absorption phase, the objective is to provide the subject with a state of calm and tranquility, suggesting attention in a focus. By narrowing the attention, the dissociation of the state of wakefulness and attention to a state of trance and relaxation is promoted.

The next phase corresponds to ratification, that is, the hypnotherapist recognizes in the individual the occurrence of changes in terms of breathing, muscle tone and physiognomy. By demonstrating these changes to her, you are naturally deepening her trance state.

It is in the enticement phase that the key moment occurs, whereby the subject feels in himself that changes are taking place. In the next phase, dissociation, the conscious mind assumes an external position of objective observer, allowing suggestions and creation of safe spaces for the unconscious mind. Then, in the intervention phase, the hypnotherapist is able to work with the subject in a trance, eliminating, for example, causes of symptoms, phobias, fears and anxieties.

Finally, in the awakening phase, reorientation to the present occurs. It corresponds to the end of the intervention and the end of the trance state, preceding awakening. When leading to the here and now, to reality, metaphors can be used that simulate transformation and positive suggestions of well-being, balance and serenity.

Concluding that, if all kinds of suggestions that the facilitator/hypnotherapist gives to the unconscious mind are accepted by him and eligible by him, it is clear that in a hypnosis induction process, conditions must be met, such as the existence of a facilitator who masters the language of hypnotic patterns and a subject who is receptive and available to concentrate on a point, idea, sensation, focus or feeling, that is, available to enter a trance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Known as a current practice throughout history, the evolution of hypnosis has allowed it to move from myth to clinical practice. Assuming itself as a natural methodology, it allows forms of therapeutic and complementary intervention, contributing for the individual to reach physical/emotional/personal balance. Since hypnosis is the science and art of perceiving and developing effective psychological states, through therapeutic methods/processes/resources, its importance is perceived in current reality and in health contexts.

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