

ASC 1 Hypnosis

Date: Friday 28 June 2013

Location: BPS Offices Tabernacle Street, London

Speakers, Titles and Abstracts:

Etzel Cardeña: *An introduction to scientific and clinical hypnosis; what is it and what is it good for?*

There are few scientific topics that are generally so fraught with misunderstandings as hypnosis, from opinions that it is just some kind of fraud or nonsense to, in the other extreme, that it is some kind of technique in which a hypnotist with special powers can take over the will of weak-willed subjects. The domain of hypnosis is far less dramatic yet also far more interesting than these misconceptions. In this presentation I will briefly discuss the history of hypnosis, including related phenomena such as mesmerism, and define it as both a set of techniques and the experiential, physiological, and behavioral phenomena that they can give rise to. After discussing some basic research on hypnosis (e.g., is hypnotic ability related to other abilities, does brain activity change as a product of hypnotic suggestions), I will discuss various medical and psychological conditions for which hypnosis has shown to be an empirically supported treatment technique.

Peter Naish: *Hypnosis and Psychosis - How close are the parallels?*

There are a number of curious parallels between conditions such as schizophrenia and the phenomenon of hypnosis; for example, hallucinations may be experienced with both. This invites two questions: are the links more than coincidental, and if so should we look for a common aetiology? The talk will touch on the topic of child abuse, which some listeners may find disturbing. The presentation will end with a group hypnosis session, in which those who wish may try to experience the phenomenon for themselves.

Devin Terhune: *The instrumental use of hypnosis for the study of synaesthesia*

Hypnosis is a valuable method for inducing and modulating a variety of psychological and neurological conditions that are otherwise difficult to investigate in a controlled environment. In this presentation I will review recent experimental studies that have used hypnosis to induce and manipulate synaesthesia. Experimental studies have

shown that posthypnotic suggestion can be used to induce synaesthesia, including its different phenomenological subtypes, in highly suggestible non-synaesthetes and to modify or disrupt synaesthesia in highly suggestible congenital synaesthetes. This research sheds light on the mechanisms and characteristics of synaesthesia as well as the viability of producing an experimental analogue of synaesthesia.