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ACHIEVEMENT AND CHALLENGE

As I assume the Presidency of ISH I feel honored indeed, and grateful for the confidence you have placed in me.

The Society can look back on its record to date with pride, and on its most recent International Congress of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine in Melbourne as deserving of the highest praise. The meeting was outstanding from both the scientific and social aspects, and we owe a debt of gratitude for a splendid event to Drs. Graham Burrows and Lorraine Dennerstein, Chairman and Secretary of the Congress, and their very able committee.

Although we look now excitedly to the preparations for our 9th International Congress to be held in Glasgow, August 23-28, 1982, we recognize that ISH faces a special challenge in the intervening years -- one that will probably widen as we proceed into the eighties. Hypnosis has more recently, particularly in North America, become the focus of increasing attention from individuals who have little or no training in the clinical professions. They practice their own unlicensed form of medicine or psychotherapy heavily dependent on the use of hypnotic techniques, or they engage in the use of hypnosis to obtain information for the courts from victims and witnesses. This is in direct conflict with the principle of ISH which considers it essential that anyone intending to use hypnosis in a clinical manner be first adequately trained in his or her own clinical discipline.

Because of the erroneous impressions created by the lay practices, it is important for ISH to reaffirm what it has learned from experience, namely, that knowledge of hypnotic techniques does not bring with it clinical competence, that hypnosis is best viewed as an adjunct to treatment and not a treatment per se, and that hypnosis and the hypnotic situation deserve the most studious investigation.

To enable the legitimate use and serious study of clinical hypnosis to survive our own era, we will probably do best to marshall our facts carefully, and describe our successes in measured phrases. This might be one way of meeting the challenge.

I look forward to serving the Society, and welcome your comments and suggestions.

Fred H. Frankel
President

From the Newsletter Editor:

Psychoanalysis has been fiercely criticized over the years as being unscientific, with the status of a myth. Karl Popper proposed that theories be relegated to a third world together with arguments, ideas, and problems. This world is objective and is autonomous, but distinct from the second world of mental states and the first world of physical objects. Likewise all "whole person" medicine has been attacked and derided as pseudoscientific, without scientific hypothesis, "untestable", and not obeying the rules of true empiricism.

Psychologists and indeed hypnotists realize the narrow restrictive quality ascribed by philosophers to "science," and the adoption of qualifications -- e.g. "pre-science," "young science" (Hilgard, 1970); or "normal" and "revolutionary" science (Kuhn, 1971) -- draws attention to our relationships with the biological sciences.

At the present time we are restricted to describing human behavior with the mythical terminology of psychoanalysis of the third world. We are well aware that we lack good scientific theory for human behavior, using the vaguest terms such as inter-relationships, dynamism, and interactions. We are also well aware we react with each other in higher level systems. Popper (1963) himself stated that "I personally do not doubt that much of what he [Freud] says is of considerable importance, and may well play its part one day in a psychological science which is testable." Is it for hypnosis to make coherent what modern technological medicine has excluded and lay a basis for a psychoanalytical science? Whatever the future, the social and psychological relationships of illness must never ever be relegated to a secondary discipline.

M. Anthony Basker

