

Hypnosis in Spain (1888-1905): From spectacle to medical treatment of mediumship.

Posted At : October 30, 2014 12:01 PM | Posted By : [Tim Brunson, PhD](#)

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Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some Spanish physicians sought to legitimize hypnotherapy within medicine. At the same time, hypnotism was being popularized among the Spanish population through stage hypnosis shows. In order to extend the use of medical hypnotherapy, some physicians made efforts to demarcate the therapeutic use of hypnotic suggestion from its application for recreational purposes, as performed by stage hypnotists. However, in the eyes of some physicians, the first public session to legitimize hypnotherapy turned out to be a complete failure due to its similarities with a stage hypnosis performance. Apart from exploring this kind of hitherto little-known historical cases, we explore the role of spiritists in legitimizing medical hypnosis. At a time when Spanish citizens were still reluctant to accept hypnotherapy, the spiritists sponsored a charitable clinic where treatment using hypnosis was offered. We conclude that the clinic was effective in promoting the use of hypnotherapy, both among physicians as clinical practice, and as a medical treatment for patients from the less privileged classes of Spanish society.

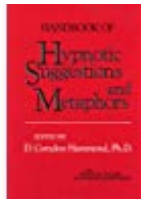
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Stud Hist Philos Biol Biomed Sci. 2014 Aug 7. pii: S1369-8486(14)00082-X. doi: 10.1016/j.shpsc.2014.07.002. Graus A. Author information: Centre d'Història de la Ciència (CEHIC), Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 08193, Bellaterra (Barcelona), Spain. Electronic address: andrea.graus@uab.cat.

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