

INTRODUCTION TO THE SPECIAL ISSUE IN HONOUR OF JOHN F. CHAVES

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This special double issue of *Contemporary Hypnosis* is dedicated to John F. Chaves, who served as North American Editor of *Contemporary Hypnosis* from the inception of the journal until he died in his home in Tucson, Arizona, on 2 February 2008 at the age of 66, after a 2-year battle with stomach cancer. In more than 75 publications, Chaves championed a scientific approach to hypnosis and made important contributions to the psychological treatment of pain, education in dentistry and psychological aspects of illness.

This special issue brings together contributors who were influenced by John as a person and a scholar. The articles are substantive, including empirical studies, narrative reviews, theoretical discussions and a meta-analysis. Given John's dedication to scientific investigation and his brilliance in theoretical discussions, we think this is the most fitting testament to his life.

Born with cerebral palsy on 2 August 1941 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the age of 6, Chaves was enrolled as a student at Cotting School for children with disabilities, where he learned to gain mobility with the help of his mother and sister. He later served for many years as President of the Cotting School Alumni Association, which established the John Chaves Graduation Award in his honour. John earned his bachelors degree in psychology at Boston University in 1963 and attended graduate school at Northeastern University where he received his masters (1965) and doctorate degrees (1970).

Much of the narrative that follows John's early involvements with hypnosis is based on written descriptions that John provided to Steven Lynn. John's interest in hypnosis was sparked in graduate school when he took a course in motivation with Harold Zamansky, who used the topic as a vehicle to talk about hypnosis. John's first hypnosis study was done in collaboration with Zamansky, Bertram Scharf and Roger Brightbill on the topic of tachistoscope visual recognition thresholds during hypnosis.

John became friends with David Calverley, also a student in Zamansky's class, who told John of his work with the prolific hypnosis researcher, Theodore (Ted) X. Barber at the Medfield Foundation in nearby Medfield, Massachusetts. Barber's programmatic research exemplified a scientific approach to hypnosis, and John became fascinated with how such an elusive and ephemeral concept like hypnosis could be studied in a rigorous way. His initial interest derived from his prior interest in the philosophy of science, especially the work of Gustav Bergman and the Vienna Circle. In later years, John expressed his abiding interest in the philosophy of science in a stream of publications on hypnosis theory and the history of hypnosis.

Calverley suggested that Chaves visit Barber at the Medfield Foundation. Calverley assured John that Barber would be more than willing to spend time with him, which proved to be an understatement. At Medfield, Ted had relatively little access to graduate students and was very open and delighted to spend time educating John about the philosophical issues that also fascinated him. John spent most of a day with him during their first encounter, and John visited on many additional occasions. Ted offered him a summer

job, which eventuated in John's first published paper: 'Hypnosis reconceptualized' (1968).

John continued working at Medfield intermittently in various roles for the next 10 years, and full time for the last three years. During his second year, John invited his friend and fellow graduate student Nicholas Spanos to meet Ted. Spanos became similarly enchanted with Ted's work. Prior to that time, Spanos was doing work in physiological psychology with Helen Mahut. John expressed amazement that so many of Nick's animals survived his inattention to detail – like their meals! Nick and Ted got along very well, and Ted was thrilled to have someone like Nick who was so bright and willing to spend the endless hours that Ted expected (and modelled).

From 1965 to 1970, an impressive cohort of graduate students joined Nick and John, including Al Fogione, Karl Hahn, Richard Johnson, John McPeake, Priscilla Walker, Maurice Silver and Barbara Slack. Each pursued their own area of interest as they related to Ted's, creating a fertile intellectual environment. William Coe, a pioneer in developing role theory with Theodore Sarbin, came for a sabbatical leave in 1965. William Morgan, an eminent sport psychologist and hypnosis researcher, came to do a sabbatical at the nearby Army Research Institute for Environmental Medicine, but he spent considerable time at Medfield. Joseph Cautela, an innovator in behaviour therapy from Boston College, was also a frequent visitor. Medfield became a locus for colloquia by locals, including Harvard psychologists Gary Schwartz and Richard Davidson, well-known physiological psychologists, as well as international visitors such as hypnosis researcher Campbell Perry from Montreal. In 1974, Barber, Spanos and Chaves published their influential and highly acclaimed book, *Hypnosis, Imagination, and Human Potentialities*.

By 1975, both Nick and John realized that they would need to leave Medfield to establish their independent careers. Spanos pursued a brilliant career at Carleton University in Ottawa, and published more than 250 articles, until his untimely death in 1994. Over the next two decades, Chaves collaborated with Spanos and Barber on 14 publications, including the landmark volume, *Hypnosis: The Cognitive-behavioral Perspective*, co-edited with Spanos (1989). In this and other contributions, John elucidated a cognitive-behavioural view of hypnosis and coping with pain, and contributed to our understanding of how spontaneous and learned cognitive strategies moderate responses to clinical and experimental pain. John's work helped pave the foundation for the emerging field of health psychology, and shaped perceptions of the psychological roots of a variety of conditions including somatoform disorders.

Because of his interest in pain and the increasing difficulty of studying pain experimentally, due to ethical concerns, Chaves opted to work in environments that would normally face the challenge of pain management. In 1975, John accepted a position as Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Applied Behavioral Science at the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Dental Medicine, and the following year became chair of the Department of Community Dentistry and Human Behavior. It was there that he developed an interest in the education of health professionals, which became the focus of most of his empirical research in later years.

In 1980, Chaves was promoted to professor and continued to serve in various administrative capacities at SIU until 1995, interrupted by a leave of absence from 1983 to 1985, during which he was a Visiting Professor of Psychiatry and Associate Clinical Director of the Pain Management Program at the St. Louis University Medical Center. In 1995, he moved to Indiana University, where he was a Professor of Oral Biology and Head of the Division of Behavioral Medicine and Bioethics in the School of Dentistry. There he was able to pursue his interest in problem-based learning in medical/dental

education. In 2003, he became Vice Dean for Dental Education at the State University of New York in Stony Brook, which eventuated in a split administrative position with the Medical School, at which he remained until his health issues forced him to take a medical leave in 2006. John played an important role in the increased acceptance of hypnosis in dentistry, much as his empirical and theoretical contributions helped move hypnosis into the mainstream of scientific inquiry.

John assumed a variety of service roles as a vice-president and president elect of the National Academy of Educational Research, and as president of the Missouri Psychological Association and Division 30 (Hypnosis) of the American Psychological Association (APA). He was a Fellow of the American Psychological Association, the American Psychological Society, the National Academy of Educational Research, and the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis. John was the recipient of the Morton Prince Award for Distinguished Contributions to the Development of Hypnosis in the Science and Profession of Psychology, bestowed by the Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis, and he is one of only a handful of people to receive the awards for both distinguished scientific and professional contributions from the APA. John will be long remembered as a gracious, kind and generous person who served as an exemplary role model to the editors of this special issue and to other contributors to this volume. John is survived by his wife, B.J. Chaves; his children John, Kristina, Eric and Victor; and nine grandchildren.

References

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