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The sociocognitive perceptive (SCP) has come to **dominate the theoretical literature on** hypnosis in recent years. This influence has less to do with any real or imagined demise of the dissociative "school" – state theories are very much alive (Kirsch, 2011) –, but rather with the relative novelty of the SCP approach. Compared to the older state theories, which can be traced back at least to Anton Mesmer (Crabtree, 1993; Pintar & Lynn, 2008; Vaitl, 2012), the SCP is said to have emerged in the 1940s and 1950s; subsequently, in the 1980s and 1990s, it developed into a mature theory that seriously challenged the widespread view of hypnosis as a special (trance) state (Lynn & Green, 2011, p. 278). According to Lynn and Green **(2011)**, sociocognitive theories owe much to Robert White's argument of the early 1940s that hypnotic behavior was goal-directed action based on participants' ideas about hypnotists' expectations; Theodore Sarbin's denial, first voiced in the 1950s, that hypnosis was an altered state of consciousness; and Theodore Barber's contention, put forward a decade later, that the state concept was logically circular because hypnotic responsiveness both inferred the existence of a hypnotic state and explained this state at the same time. Lynn & Green, Lynn & O'Hagen (2009), as well as Lynn, Kirsch, & Hallquist (2008) have suggested that the SCP now stands for the following positions: first, hypnotics enact the social roles expected of them; second, hypnosis resembles response sets and automatic responses in everyday action; third, hypnotic behavior, not unlike everyday behavior, is goal directed; and fourth, participants act on their own terms and display control of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors during hypnosis.

Much of the literature on the SCP indicates that thinking about hypnosis in sociopsychological terms only really emerged in the second half of the twentieth century – and did so within a strictly English-speaking context. This view, however, is ahistorical. For one, it is reductive "in its premise that 'people are sentient agents continually involved in

organizing sensory inputs into meaningful categories or schemas that are used to guide actions'" (Radtke & Stam, 2008, 194). Put differently, it assumes that the unhistorical, cognitive approach *is* the sociopsychological approach. In fact, the SCP largely ignores the very social contexts that supposedly give rise to the "hypnotic situation" in the first place, hypothesizing a timeless social context that does not require further explanation. As Radtke and Stam have put it, "What goes by the name of 'sociocognitive' is frequently no more than a functionalist thesis about the presumed functions or internal workings of the hypnotized person" (p. 197). For another, it disregards the sociopsychological thinking on hypnosis that existed well before the 1940s, much of which anticipated some of the ideas Lynn and his collaborators have come to identify as central tenets of the SCP.

The article sets out to redress the balance. Historicizing psychological theories means to contextualize both the broader culture in which they emerged and the scientific traditions that informed their "style of thought," enabling the scholars of a specific "thought collective" to ask the questions they did (Fleck, 1980; Fleck 2011). By examining German discourse on hypnotic suggestion from 1900 onward, it is possible to demonstrate the variety of arguments advanced to account for the social relationship that many scholars believe to be intrinsic to hypnosis; to remind readers that the sociocognitive perspective does not define the sociopsychological study of hypnosis; and to contribute to the general history of suggestion, hypnosis, and social psychology in the early twentieth century. It is hoped that future work will attend to the intellectual climate that formed the foundation of some of these theories.

An Infectious Relationship

Between 1900 and 1960, German theorizing about the "social" in hypnosis involved two idealtypical positions: the first focused on the hypnotist, the rapport between hypnotist and hypnotic, and the passive acceptance (through "infection," "imitation," or "compulsion") of the hypnotist's demands. The second emphasized regression, reciprocity, expectancy, motivation, empathy, emulation, and mutuality. Before turning to the more relevant concern with the social, it is worth contrasting it with the majority view at the time.

Binary thinking underlay scientific and lay opinion on hypnosis since the end of the eighteenth century. The common distinction between control on the one hand and loss of control on the other typically set male hypnotists against hypnotized women. In the fin-de-siècle period, public prosecutors, journalists, and psychologists disseminated information on the dangers of "suggestive crime," warning women to avoid the gaze of unknown men lest the "weaker sex" succumb to the powers of "fascination" (Lilienthal, 1887; Forel, 1911; Moll, 1924; Laurence & Perry, 1988; Pick, 2008). The media coverage on trials related to "rape" as a result of "psychic slavery" and "sexual dependence" was extensive (Harris, 1985; Harris, 1989; Dierks, 2012, Peter 2015a). Later, in the Weimar Republic, films such as Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler*, conjured up an atmosphere of dangerous suggestion and deception. Many critics feared that this modern gothic tale, in which the main protagonist employs hypnosis to manipulate the police, financial industry, and stock market, was sadly accurate in its rendition of behavior in a post-hypnotic state (Killen, 2012; Kauders, 2015). Because most critics were male bourgeois psychiatrists, physicians, and jurists, their gendered language regularly discriminated between active hypnotists and passive mediums— irrespective of whether a medium would enter a special state or not. In other words, even supporters of Hippolyte Bernheim, for whom "hypnotic" phenomena neither required a hypnotic setting nor a hypnotic state (Kinzel, 1993; Schröder, 1995; Mayer, 2002), held fast to the idea that suggestion bespoke an asymmetrical relationship between the source of the suggestion and its respective recipients (Kauders, 2015).

However much this asymmetrical relationship constituted a social relationship – it may be recalled that even the early experiments in magnetic somnambulism were understood as "special connections" and "profound communications" between magnetized and magnetizer (Crabtree, 1993, p. 41; Pintar & Lynn, 2008, p. 25) –, the asymmetry entailed in the "rapport" gave rise to conceptions of suggestion that interpreted the social very one-sidedly. This was also true at the beginning of the twentieth century, when commentators discussed the nature of suggestion in manifold ways, ranging from straightforward descriptions of the

phenomenon to more speculative sociological interpretations. It is helpful, in this connection, to distinguish between two kinds of commentaries, one well known to historians of hypnosis, the other more familiar to scholars of "mass psychology."

Describing hypnosis as a sleep-like "rapport" was commonplace during this period. Most definitions distinguished between hypnosis and sleep on account of the "rapport" between hypnotist and hypnotic that persisted during the trance state. The hypnotized remained in "spiritual contact" with the hypnotizer (Meyer, 1922, p. 32); maintained an "awkward psychic relationship" with the hypnotist (Schilder, 1922, p. 5); experienced hypnosis because of the rapport (Kaufmann, 1920, p. 7); established contact with the outside world through the rapport (Sopp, 1920, p. 26); behaved in accordance with the prompts, requests, and demands issued forth as a result of the rapport (Kronfeld, 1924, p. 151); and depended entirely on the hypnotist during the rapport (Isserlin, 1926, p. 11).

As many of these remarks show, the interaction was heavily tilted in favor of the hypnotist, whose authority stood at the center of the exchange. Two of the most prominent psychotherapists during the Weimar period stressed the importance of this authority. Max Isserlin, founder of child psychiatry in Germany, advised that the therapist dominate the situation, lest the patient dictate the nature of the relationship (p. 4). And Arthur Kronfeld, one of the country's leading sexologists, averred that every hypnosis depended on the "unfaltering will" of the hypnotist to achieve success (Kronfeld, 1924, p. 188). Later, in the post-war period, prominent experts expected the "unconditional surrender" of the hypnotic (Kihn, 1951, pp. 77-78), whose responsibility it was to accept the hypnotist's role as "priest-magician" (Stokvis, 1957a, p. 2).

Given their concern with larger entities, psychologists expounding on mass psychology had little too say about rapport. Instead, many of their contributions betrayed skepticism regarding the ability of individuals to withstand the allure of collective emotions. Eugen Bleuler's remarks were comparatively reserved in this respect. The director of Zurich's world-famous Burghölzli hospital explained that, while mass suggestion produced the "unity"

and "duration" of collective affects, it also lowered the "ethical" and "intellectual" inhibitions (*Hemmungen*) that underwrote civilized coexistence (Bleuler, 1906, pp. 52, 67. See also Trömmer, 1922, pp. 110-112). Other commentaries were less circumspect. The "masses," one such contribution read, stood for psychic, intellectual, and moral "slavery" (Erismann, 1927, p. 289). Mass behavior, especially in times of war and revolution, led to the leveling of individual differences (Schilder, 1922, p. 26). When popular ideas "electrified" larger groups, the "freedom of the individual" was seriously at risk (Kaufmann, 1920, pp. 120-121). For a majority of psychologists, the power of suggestion was synonymous with "psychic compulsion" (Stoll, 1904, pp. 700-701), regardless of whether it stemmed from the "masses" or took place in the confines of a doctor's surgery.

More sophisticated interpretations introduced terms such as imitation to elucidate the passive acceptance of (hypnotic) suggestions that these scholars associated with the "masses." The concept of imitation, first detailed by the French sociologist Gabriel Tarde in 1890 and borrowed by the Italian criminologist Scipio Sighele shortly thereafter, helped some psychologists to outline the workings of the "mass psyche" (Van Ginneken, 1992; Gamper, 2007). Tarde had referred to Bernheim, Joseph Delboef, and Alfred Binet in his equation of "social beings" with "real somnambulists," holding that the hypnotized public falsely believed that its ideas originated in spontaneous thoughts rather than unconscious imitation (Tarde, 2009, pp. 97-98; Stäheli, 2009, p. 399). Unlike other sociologists of the time, however, he was keen to stress the reciprocity involved in imitation. As the French sociologist put it, in the beginning the "connection between model and copy, master and servant, missionary and evangelist was necessarily one-sided and non-reciprocal," but eventually – and particularly in contemporary society – imitation became something "interdependent and interchangeable" (Tarde, 2009, p. 99), where the origins of a feeling or belief could no longer be identified. Tarde's emphasis on the dynamism inherent in the imitative relationship between members of mass society was the most innovative facet of his theory (Stäheli, 2009, pp. 403-404).

Where the French sociologist used the concept of imitation to illuminate the workings of society in general and modern city life in particular, others were more interested in returning to the "somnambulism" that formed the backdrop to his theory or to provide more concrete details of the connection between suggestion and "imitation" (Meyer, 1922, p. 45). Readers were reminded that it was easier to resist suggestion in one-to-one situations than to show equal resolve in larger companies (Erismann, 1927, p. 283). For example, if a girl in a larger group of girls started to laugh, her friends would not necessarily follow suit. But if two or three girls giggled, then it was much more likely for the rest of the clique to join in the fun. By the same token, the more passengers suffered from seasickness, the more probable it was for other people on board to experience comparable symptoms (Trömmer, 1922, pp. 110-111. For a similar example, see **Freud, 1921**). Spectators at soccer games, another author affirmed, often imitated the players on the pitch, moving their bodies and turning their heads so as to become part of the game (Sieber, 1918, pp. 30-31).

Even though Tarde and like-minded psychologists moved away from the one-sided image of all-powerful hypnotists and powerless hypnotics who invariably complied with the instructions of the former, they remained committed to a dualism that distinguished between active disseminators and passive addressees. To be sure, in claiming that all kinds of actions in modern society depended on dynamic interrelationships, these early social psychologists recognized the non-hierarchical components of mass suggestion. At the same time, however, their reliance on terms such as "infection," "imitation," and "somnambulism" implied that the transmission of creeds, fashions, and emotions occurred unselfconsciously, requiring neither goal-directed behavior on the part of the recipient nor contractual relations between the parties involved. The theory of imitation may have been premised on democratic principles, but it still presupposed that the success of a given suggestion derived from the puppet-like "somnambulism" of the population at large.

Toward a Reciprocal Relationship

There were other, more promising avenues to explore the social aspects of suggestion. One of the earliest such attempts coincided with a well-known rejection of hypnosis. Sigmund Freud, erstwhile admirer of Jean-Martin Charcot and translator of Bernheim's seminal *Suggestive Therapeutics: A Treatise on the Nature and Uses of Hypnotism*, came to distance himself from the hypnotic enterprise. His critique, whether directed at the individual or group level, sounds reminiscent of the above-mentioned accounts that focused on the asymmetrical relationship between the hypnotist and hypnotic. In the course of this liaison, Freud averred, the therapist activated elements of the patient's "archaic heritage," most prominently the image of an all-powerful and dangerous male toward whom the patient developed a "passive-masochistic" stance (**Freud, 1921**). Hypnosis, or "group formation with two members" (**Freud, 1921**), was tantamount to infatuation. In fact, the hypnotic revealed the same kind of uncritical and submissive sequaciousness typical of persons in love. The hypnotist, it followed, became the only object of desire, and the hypnotic relationship assumed the character of an "unreserved amorous devotion", save sexual consummation. According to Paul Schilder, Viennese psychoanalyst and co-author of the seminal *Lehrbuch der Hypnose*, the patient exploited hypnosis as an opportunity to fulfill his or her own deepest wishes (Schilder, 1922, p. 24).

As for the group level, Freud remained indebted to a popular notion of social entities. Tarde's notion that self-organizing crowds arose from mutual affective contagion, a belief shared at least in part by Gustav Le Bon (Stäheli, 2011, p. 71), proved anathema to his psychoanalytic perspective. Instead, he argued that the masses projected their "ego-ideal" onto a certain love object (in the beginning a primal father, subsequently a religious, military, or political figure) whose narcissism made him (and it was always a male) oblivious to the multitude's adulation. Whereas the crowd required a leader, the leader required only himself. Other experts writing about hypnosis, including Kronfeld and Isserlin, adopted identical language in coming to terms with the hypnotic setting (Kronfeld, 1924, p. 204; Isserlin, 1926, pp. 47-49).

At first sight, Freud's position hardly differed from contemporary representations that pitted active, authoritative hypnotists against passive, fickle hypnotics. Yet in explaining rapport primarily with the patient or crowd in mind, the psychoanalyst envisaged persons as performers. The importance accorded to projection and the construction of ego-ideals, it can be argued, appreciated suggestion as a performative act, in which the patient-agent did something in order to achieve something. And although Freud conceived these acts as manifestations of unconscious libidinal desires, he prefigured later theories that defined hypnosis as a dialogical rather than top-down exercise. The hypnotic, in this view, was just as responsible for the goings-on during hypnosis as the hypnotist (Sarbin, 2002).

While Freud was one of the first to highlight the participatory function of the patient in a suggestive setting, he was much less concerned, given his repudiation of hypnosis, with a thorough exposition of that function as part of a wide-ranging analysis of suggestion. One notable scholar, however, attempted just that. Paul Häberlin, professor at the University of Basle, ascribed a central role to the hypnotic, albeit from a different vantage point. Unlike Freud, he did not postulate an unconscious as part of the hypnotic encounter. More importantly, Häberlin was chiefly concerned with overturning the prevalent image of the active suggestor and the passive recipient. In his words: "one should not equate the exposure (*Einwirkung*) and the experience (*Erleiden*) of this exposure with activity and passivity. For the recipient of the exposure too is active, and not only insofar […] as he influences the partner, but also at the same time as receiving the dominant exposure. It is he who is taking it in, and this absorption does not happen without his cooperation (*Zutun*), as if by pure assimilation, but is rather active appropriation (*tätige Aneignung*)" (Häberlin, 1927, p. 15). Put differently, the renowned Swiss psychiatrist and philosopher contended that the will, incentive, and interest of the patient determined whether or not suggestions succeeded. Häberlin contrasted his view with the outlook, common among professionals and laypeople alike, that saw the hypnotist as the ultimate arbiter of the hypnotic process. This belief, he stated, centered unduly on the implementation and execution of a specific method. Indeed,

questions relating to the quantity and quality of technique paled in comparison to the patient's personal engagement – a factor that was relevant well before any hypnotic encounter actually occurred. If one wished to "penetrate the secret of suggestion," Häberlin surmised, it was crucial to ask how an "individual confronts the exposure to [suggestion] that it [ends up] becoming a suggestion" (Häberlin, 1927, p. 25).

One way of making sense of this course of action was to contrast suggestion with simple obedience. The author associated such behavior, say in a military context, with instrumental reason. The soldier surrendered to the wish of the officer because doing so was in his best interest; refusing to yield, after all, would result in sanctions that were to be avoided at all costs. Before meeting the officer, however, the soldier knew nothing of an order and therefore lacked motivation to be obedient (pp. 36-37). In a suggestive setting, things were very different. The hypnotic, to take an obvious case, did not respond to the hypnotist in order to avoid reprobation or serious maltreatment. "*Every* reception means active participation," Häberlin wrote, "and thus an adaptation of the impulse (*Reiz*), and this adaptation never happens without an interest guiding the adaptation. The recipient approaches every forthcoming exposure with an active interest, and the reception is already an engagement of this interest with the nature of the exposure" (p. 39). Opaque as these lines may be, the eminent psychiatrist sought to distinguish suggestion from simple commands as *prior interests* within *recipients* that led persons to transform prompts, requests, or demands into suggestions.

Yet Häberlin did not leave it at that. Referring to his earlier work on elementary psychology (Häberlin, 1924), he commenced to define "interest" as it pertained to suggestion. In *Der Geist und die Triebe* (The Spirit and the Drives), the Swiss had juxtaposed interest based on self-assertion (*Selbstbehauptung*) with interest based on self-transformation (*Selbstveränderung*). Since these were "primordial" interests that governed the psyche, he also called them "basic drives" (*Grundtriebe*). Deciphering Häberlin's choice of words presents few problems: the drive responsible for self-assertion expressed continuity,

conservation, and preservation; the drive responsible for self-transformation represented discontinuity, difference, and change. The first drive, in manifesting the self against the "other," precluded suggestions. Because every "foreign impulse" was regarded as an attempt to throw the self off course, the drive deflected or parried such impulses (i.e. prompts, requests, demands) so as not to disturb the overall goal of self-assertion (pp. 40-41). Obeying an order, to return to the previous example, was such a means of self-preservation. Or, to quote another of Häberlin's case studies: "If someone threw me in the water in spite of my resistance, I might fall into the water, but not as a result of a suggestion" (p. 41).

The second drive, by contrast, was all about suggestion. Häberlin introduced another term to illustrate the nature of this interest: the tendency-to-change-oneself (*Selbstveränderungstendenz*), which applied to character, lifestyle, and a person's general condition. This inclination could be observed in imitation, identification, and love. The erotic was the quintessential tendency-to-change-oneself, that is, to embark on a new life through the co-existence with another human being (pp. 44-45). But even less intense encounters demonstrated the "willingness to surrender to the exposure, because every exposure provides us with the opportunity for change" (p. 46). When the recipient of a suggestion "says 'yes' to the challenge" that inheres in the exposure from an outside source, he or she does so on account of an interest in this particular exposure. Suggestion, then, was the voluntary surrender to an exposure for the sake of self-transformation.

Like Freud, Häberlin saw no reason to discuss the efficacy of certain techniques or methodologies in connection with (mass) suggestion. Inasmuch as their starting point was not the manipulator whose skills determined the impact of suggestions, but the patient or crowd as anticipator and transformer thereof, both denied the image, common then as today, of active hypnotists and passive hypnotics. Where Freud had located "doings" in projections and ego-ideals, Häberlin was much more explicit in accentuating the decisive role played by the recipient: although on the receiving end, the reception was appropriated actively and, in the process, altered according to the needs of the person involved. Much as these thinkers

stressed the contribution of the hypnotic during suggestion, they felt little need to attend to the question of reciprocity between hypnotist and hypnotic. Häberlin had nothing to say in this regard, while Freud's groundbreaking discovery of transference and countertransference was meant to replace hypnosis as psychotherapy. With the exception of references to "regression," the influence of psychoanalysis on the future development of hypnosis in German-speaking Europe remained marginal (Stokvis, 1957b, p. 79; Stockmeier, 1984, pp. 16-18; Palaci, 1992; Peter, 2015b). Häberlin, whose preoccupations had always been eclectic, increasingly turned to philosophy and anthropology, writing books on aesthetics, ethics, and existentialism. The lackluster recognition of his innovative theory may be attributed to this otherwise laudable intellectual curiosity, as well as to a more general lack of interest in hypnosis in the German-speaking world from the late 1920s onward (Kihn, 1951, p. 66; Hengstmann, 1961, p. 209; Schmitz, 1964, p. 5; Peter & Lenhard, 2016).

Reciprocity

In the preface to his book, Häberlin mentioned the parallels between his own work and that of the Berlin neurologist Erwin Straus. Both had met at the annual conference of Swiss psychiatrists in Zurich in November 1926 (Häberlin, 1927, p. 10), both combined psychology with philosophy, and both pursued a holistic approach to their field of study. Forced to leave Germany in 1938, Straus later taught at Black Mountain College and the University of Kentucky. After the war, Straus held visiting professorships in Frankfurt am Main and Würzburg. His work on suggestion, possibly owing to his unbroken ties to the country, continued to influence German scholars of hypnosis. Where Häberlin examined the way in which patients and hypnotics reworked the "exposures" they were experiencing, Straus argued that society itself was the "exposure" that had to be acknowledged before individual suggestions even came to pass.

Straus's principal investigation of the subject, published in a supplement of Karl Bonhoeffer's prestigious *Monatsschrift für Psychiatrie und Neurologie*, was devoted to the "essence and procedure" of suggestion (Straus, 1925). On the face of it, the author struck a

familiar, Bernheimian tune when he construed suggestion as the act of assimilating a foreign will; alluded to the similarities between suggestion and political manipulation; assigned special agency to the suggestor; and believed that suggestion was not limited to a special state. The modus operandi, Strauss claimed, ran along the following lines: Person A puts forward an opinion. Person B considers only the meaning of this opinion. Although person B has no knowledge of how this opinion came about or the degree to which it is accurate, he or she decides to embrace it, as if the motivation for doing so is purely down to facts. This self-deception is the source of every suggestion (Straus, 1925, p. 3). The more obscure and abstruse an ideology, Straus continued, the more likely it was for a leader to attract followers through suggestive means. Far from being a reason to doubt the potential of a political movement, such vagueness actually allowed suggestion to operate in the first place (p. 44). Self-deception on the part of the hypnotic, ambiguity as part of the message, and a suggestor partly responsible for both: it is not surprising that the psychiatrist found fault with state theory (for a contemporary discussion of ambiguity, see Gheorghiu, 1993). The "final consequence" of the latter, he wrote, was that it could not account for the "specific connection" between the source of a suggestion and its recipient. Once the extraordinary state of consciousness had set in, it became immaterial who gave instructions and what these instructions encompassed (p. 33).

As noted above, one of the central components associated with hypnosis in the early twentieth century was the "rapport" between hypnotist and hypnotic, an attachment variously described as one-sided, unequal, and authoritarian. Whatever interaction existed during this state, most scholars assumed that the hypnotist was in charge of the communication. Even non-state theorists who negated the reality of a special rapport tended to uphold this belief in an asymmetrical relationship between the source of the suggestion and its respective recipients. Straus's theory was unusual in that it featured seemingly conflicting elements. He criticized state theorists for ignoring the rapport that ensued in the course of a suggestion, even though state theorists usually focused on this rapport in contradistinction to non-state

advocates. And he strove to delimit the nature of suggestion, even though he posited, in good non-state fashion, the ubiquity of the phenomenon (p. 9). Straus returned to the question of rapport, but had a much larger entity – society at large – in mind. What he proposed, in short, was a description of suggestion as universal experience.

Phenomenology informed much of his thinking. Straus started from the premise that suggestion was a personal encounter rooted in expressions rather exchanges of information. Words such as *Ausdruck* and *Kundgabe*, both of which denoted "expression," were supposed to convey the inter-personal nature of the relationship. "When two people say the same thing," he remarked, "it doesn't necessarily mean the same thing. In every confrontation, in every conversation it is more effective to increase the intensity of the expression (*Ausdruck*) than to formulate better arguments." Like other commentators sympathetic to phenomenology (Stieler, 1929), the psychiatrist believed that the "soul" (*Seele*) could be comprehended only through affects or expressions, thereby privileging perception over sensation. Every perception, moreover, was governed by inter-subjective standards and conventions that determined what counted as "normal" or "standard" (Zahavi, 2003; Zahavi 2007).

Straus also adopted a Gestalt frame of reference. The "pure logical content" of an utterance, he argued, was not primary for the "experience" (*Erlebnis*). In fact, logic itself was "the product of an artificial isolation." The discrete elements comprising an expression, be they logical or illogical, were filtered, isolated, and analyzed only in retrospect. In the heat of the moment, it was impossible to separate them (p. 17), as human beings invariably experienced a "mysterious connection" (*geheimnisvolle Zusammenhang*) between the enunciator and the enunciation. In the case of a suggestion, the meaning of a sentence did not stand on its own, but was more properly grasped as an expression (*Kundgabe*) in its entirety (p. 22).

Straus was convinced that his observations confirmed Gestalt psychology's findings. In asserting the primacy of perception over sensations in the constitution of consciousness,

Gestalt theorists such as Marx Wertheimer, Wolfgang Köhler, and Kurt Koffka had put forward a "conception of the subject as involved in, rather than separated from the world," thereby opposing the sensualism and associationism of Hermann Ebbinghaus or Wilhelm Wundt. According to Gestalt psychology, "there were experienced objects and relationships fundamentally different from collections of sensations, parts, or pieces" (Ash, 1995, pp. 1-2. For the controversial debates within psychology at the time, see also Bühler, 1978; Ash, 1985; Rinn, 2005). Straus concluded that it was necessary, in the spirit of Gestalt theory, to combine psychology with sociology. He called for a new psychology of "we-experience" (*Wirerlebnis*), in which the experience of the individual within the community would be studied alongside the experience of the community through the individual (Straus, 1925, p. 51-53).

The psychiatrist thus coined the neologism "we-experience" to imagine suggestion as a collective affair. Not every statement "awakened the willingness to cooperate" (*Mitvollziehen*). Such an inclination, rather, depended on who delivered the message. "Where there is no pre-existing community (*Gemeinschaft*) [or] we-experience," Straus remarked, a willingness of this kind did not come about and the potential suggestor faced instantaneous "disapproval and resistance." If, on the other hand, "we-experience" existed, the suggestor was accepted and his world became ours (p. 30). This is the defining moment of suggestion. Once a "we-experience" has been established, the content of a suggestion can be embraced. Straus had already insisted that the content in itself remained ineffective unless articulated in a certain way, as part of a more general "expression." Now he elaborated that this expression had to be perceived as one's own before it could take effect (p. 54). In other words: "We-experience always precedes suggestion. Communal life (*Gemeinschaftsleben*) does not arise through suggestion but sustains it, makes it possible" (p. 55). Referring to Tarde's theory of imitation, Straus reminded his readers that the reproduction of feelings, sentiments, and concepts also presupposed community (p. 31).

This finding meant that the reciprocity involved in the encounter between hypnotist and hypnotic did not rest on the suggestor and her message or the expressiveness of the utterance or the suggestibility of the patient. The reciprocity occurred because the wider culture – its traditions, values, and emotional make-up – allowed for certain expressions to carry the weight they did. The hypnotic was able to apprehend and then embody the suggestion for the simple reason that the suggestion, just as he himself, already belonged to the community concerned. To use Straus's phrase: the experience of the community *through* the individual would ensure that the hypnotic would be able to respond to the suggestion.

In many ways Straus's *Wesen und Vorgang der Suggestion* differed considerably from later social psychological discourse that referred to hypnosis in terms of response sets and automatic responses in everyday action. His work's theoretical underpinnings, and especially its holistic view that individual human beings were not self-sufficient units but dependent on social, historical, and cultural contexts, was more in tune with important German philosophical traditions – historicism, Gestalt theory, phenomenology, hermeneutics – than with newly emerging Anglo-American social psychology (Mattes, 1985). Straus not only influenced scholars in the inter-war period (Häberlin, 1927; Nachmansohn, 1933), but also impressed German-speaking psychologists in the post-war period, when the aforesaid traditions continued to characterize the discipline.

Several scholars responded in some detail to *Wesen und Vorgang* after 1945. Wilhelm Pöll of Munich, a psychologist otherwise interested in religion, concurred with the book's author on a number of points. Like Straus, he believed that the success of suggestions owed nothing to their content. Instead, the "expessiveness" peculiar to a suggestion, including the "magic" and "tone" of the spoken word, "exerted an irresistible influence" on the addressee (Pöll, 1951, pp. 19-20, 47-48). Pöll also agreed with Straus that suggestion neither inhibited independent-mindedness nor strength of will (*Willensenergie*), not least because its impact was contingent on the active participation of the recipient (pp. 35, 81).

If Pöll was something of an outsider, Berthold Stokvis, Dietrich Langen, and Uwe Stocksmeier were not. Stocksmeier **re-edited** West Germany's standard textbook on hypnosis **of the pre-Ericksonian era**, a volume that **Stockvis had originally written in 1955**. Stokvis, who taught at Leiden University in the Netherlands, also penned the authoritative entries on hypnosis and suggestion in the German handbook of psychotherapy, edited by Viktor Frankl, Victor von Gebsattel, and Johannes H. Schultz in 1957. Straus's voice could be discerned in many passages of these manuals. Stokvis, for example, defined suggestion in terms reminiscent of *Wesen und Vorgang*: "The events surrounding suggestion are based on the relationship between the suggestor […] and the suggerendus" (Stokvis, 1957a, p. 5). Or: suggestion is the "interpersonal ability to influence someone (*zwischenmenschliche Beeinflussungsmöglichkeit*) on the grounds of mutual experience (*Gemeinschaftserlebens*)" (p. 8). Stokvis underscored the constitutive role played by the recipient during this interpersonal communication. Such a person "must have the willingness, the inclination to engage with the suggestor in order to enter into a certain emotional relationship." The belief in the suggestor's authority and knowledge led to the expectation that the suggestion would be of vital, existential importance to the recipient, which in turn assured the desired effect of the suggestion (pp. 8, 14) No hypnotic state could be realized, Stokvis insisted, without the prior knowledge and engagement of the hypnotic. In fact, not the hypnotist was responsible for hypnosis, but the hypnotic, whose "autosuggestive imaginations" produced the hypnotic state (Stokvis, 1957b, p. 73).

In 1955, Stokvis's handbook on hypnosis first appeared in Germany; ten years later, upon his unexpected death in 1963, Dietrich Langen assumed **co-editorship** of the volume. The 1972 revised edition of the handbook was translated into Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, and French.

1973 and chaired the medical psychology department at Mainz University;

Langen served as president of the International Society of Hypnosis from 1971 to 1973 and chaired **medical psychology** department at Mainz University; **he also presided over the 5th International Congress of Hypnosis and Psychosomatic Medicine of the International Society of Hypnosis held 1970 in Mainz.** The handbook's final version, **re-edited** by psychotherapist Uwe Stocksmeier in 1984, contained frequent references to Stokvis and Langen. Indeed, the continuity from Straus to Stokvis to Stockmeier is apparent throughout the book. A few examples should suffice: hypnosis is defined as "affective resonance," a term that Stokvis had introduced in the 1950s to connote the interpersonal background of any successful suggestion (Stockvis, 1957a, p. 14; Stokvis & Wiesenhütter, 1963, pp. 38-40; Stocksmeier, 1984, 1). Rapport, once a term used to designate the hypnotist's (unlimited) authority, now refers to the "communion" (*Wirbildung*) between hypnotist and hypnotic, an association subject to feelings of respect, sympathy, friendship, and solidarity (Stocksmeier, 1984, p. 16). Finally, even where Stocksmeier speaks of the "increasing significance of social psychological and communicative factors" – presumably referring to developments outside a specifically German-language context –, he continues to use the discourse of *Wirbildung* to shed light on the social nature of hypnosis (p. 22).

<div align="center">Conclusion</div>

Some one hundred years ago, German-speaking psychologists, sociologists, and philosophers discussed hypnosis and suggestion in ways that anticipated Nicholas Spanos's distinction between "happenings" and "doings." According to Theodore Sarbin, the difference between Spanos and theorists such as Martin Orne and Ernest Hilgard could be traced to the background value judgments guiding their respective scientific approach. While Spanos "proceeded from the root metaphor of contextualism," with its emphasis on culture and society, Orne and Hilgard relied on a "mechanistic root metaphor," with its emphasis on causality within the organism. Unlike Spanos, who held that responses to suggestions were agentic, the prominent advocates of the special state hypothesis "regarded the diacritical acts

of hypnotized persons as happenings, as events not under the agency of the subject" (Sarbin, 2002, pp. 194-195).

Spanos's contrast is a helpful way to draw attention to the novel directions the study of hypnosis and suggestion took well before the emergence of sociocognitive theory. If, for the sake of argument, we identify "doings" with the comparatively recent social psychological approach, then a number of early twentieth-century German-speaking scholars interpreted hypnosis in a similar fashion. Freud's "passive-masochistic" hypnotics, for example, were not as "passive" as he may have thought. After all, they projected their fantasies and desires onto the hypnotist; in a similar vein, the equally masochistic "masses" projected their ego-ideals onto the leader. Without the element of projection grounded in the imagination, hypnosis could not be understood (for an early view of the role of imagination in hypnosis, see the report of the commissioners charged by the king of France to examine animal magnetism, Franklin, 1785/1970). Furthermore, projection as performance relativized the significance of the hypnotist. Häberlin, it will be remembered, was quite explicit in discrediting the notion of the passive hypnotic. His study portrayed the addressee of a suggestion as someone for whom suggestion was a means to transform her personality. Consequently, the suggestive "exposure" was not only appropriated but also reworked during the exposure itself. Häberlin did not simply contend that persons took possession of a suggestion, which would already entail agentic behavior. He claimed that their participation changed the very nature of the original prompt or demand. Straus, finally, contemplated suggestion as personal encounters the outcomes of which were heavily dependent on expressions that individual recipients decoded. His work stressed the preliminaries of suggestion: the community that existed before the personal encounter; the community that existed through the person in the encounter; and the community that made the translation at the center of the encounter possible. Society as such, he concluded, was the exposure that determined all future suggestions.

Radke and Stam have blamed the sociocognitive perspective for neglecting the social

contexts that engender hypnotic situations (Radke & Stam, 2008). For the champions of the SCP, there are at least three possible responses to the critique: first, to refer to the social psychological experiments that reinforce the SCP; second, to examine the scientific discourse for clues as to how hypnosis has been construed at a given place and time; and third, to investigate the wider culture that forms the background to the scientific discourse and the experiments meant to sustain it. Predictably, the first option evades the charge by assuming that the experiments themselves are sufficient proof for the social context. This is another way of saying that the "imaginative experiences" encouraged during hypnosis, the "widely available scripts" affecting the research, the "laboratory compliance" intrinsic to the trials, and the "goal-directed" behavior common to both experiment and psychotherapy are cross-culturally similar or identical (Lynn, Kirsch, & Hallquist, 2008, pp. 112-114, 117). But this is precisely what Radke and Stam dispute – and from an anthropological or historical perspective, there is little reason to take issue with their incredulity. Goal-directedness, experiment, laboratory, imaginative compliance: all these are familiar concepts to scientists at universities in Britain, Australia, or the United States in 2016. Yet they are components of a style of thought (to use Ludwik Fleck's term) or "we-experience" (to use Erwin Straus's term) typical of modern social psychology.

The second option is to analyze styles of thought in order to grasp the meaning of hypnosis within a specific scientific context. In the case of sociocognitive theory, such work remains a desideratum. In the case of the "social" in early twentieth-century German texts on (hypnotic) suggestion, this paper has shown how the passive observer, recipient, or victim of hypnosis, a trope familiar to the discipline for many decades, was called into question. But it was not called into question by scientists experimenting in laboratories and postulating subjects that "never truly lose control of their actions during hypnosis" (p. 114). On the contrary, the neurologists, psychologists, and philosophers who proffered a new way of seeing suggestion, one that privileged the hypnotic as well as the reciprocity between hypnotist and hypnotic, were part of a wider movement within the social sciences that

distanced itself from "positivistic" methodologies and "scientistic" verities.

According to this reaction against "materialism," the study of psychology, were it to embrace the whole personality, character, or soul, was not to be reduced to sense impressions and reaction times. William Stern had already distinguished a "subject psychology" from a "subjectless psychology" in the early century (Ash, 2002). In the Weimar Republic, an increasing number of psychologists, most prominently Eduard Spranger, maintained that there was no such thing as isolated sensations, emotions, or perceptions. Taking their cue from Wilhelm Dilthey, who in turn had been influenced by Edmund Husserl (Beiser, 2011, p. 338), they maintained that a descriptive psychology (as opposed to the "mechanical" psychology of Wundt and Ebbinghaus) had to develop its own methods and standards; regard conscious experience not as a collection of simple sensations but as a structured whole combining intellect, feeling, and will; conceive this whole as a dynamic "living, unitary, activity" (Ash, 1995, p. 73); and commence with the whole of our inner experience in order to subsequently analyze its separate parts. The hermeneutic circle – individual phenomena could only be comprehended with reference to the prior knowledge of the total context – underpinned this approach (Morat, 2008, pp. 109-111). Dilthey's injunction to proceed from the whole to the parts thus became "the common wellspring of Gestalt theory and the so-called Leipzig school of 'holistic psychology'" (*Ganzheitpsychologie*) (p. 72).

For this (social) psychology in a different key, some of whose exemplars we touched on above, hypnosis and suggestion too were to be studied with active subjects as part of dynamic wholes in mind. How this scientific discourse reflected the wider culture – the third possible means of historicizing social psychology – cannot be considered in this short essay. Just as is true for the SCP, such a contextualization awaits its future historians.

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