

# **Declaratives and Dissonance in The Case of Hypnosis**

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Master's Thesis

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### **Fair Use Notice**

This work appropriates screen shots of videos designed to teach hypnosis for the sake of therapy or entertainment. These videos are assumed copyrighted but title 17 of United States code permits limited use of copyrighted work for the sake of commentary, criticism, scholarship, and education. The appropriation of script and images from these videos is strictly for the sake of scholarly analysis and depict only small portions of the complete works from which they are appropriated. For this reason, the representation of copyrighted works within this paper is within fair use guidelines.

## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to glean some insight into the social cognitive mechanisms of the hypnotic experience; particularly of interest is how interaction between hypnotist and subject shapes the subject's experience as both fantastical and genuine. Three instructional videos designed to instruct would-be hypnotists provide the data for this analysis. Each video features a different hypnotist offering instruction in his methods with purportedly unscripted demonstrations involving subjects in both entertainment and therapeutic contexts. The performances were transcribed using conversation-analysis notation conventions; the transcripts were then broken down into units of interaction and descriptively coded. The codes allowed for the recognition of themes within each case and for cross-case comparisons. Across all three cases there appears to be a reasonable understanding between hypnotist and subject of what the hypnotist expects, along with an implicit obligation of the subject to perform. I suggest that an implied interactional commitment exists between hypnotist and subject towards the performance. As that performance becomes counter-intuitive, an incongruence may evolve between the subject's subjective experience and outward performance, thereby creating conditions under which cognitive dissonance could arise and be resolved in favor of the hypnotic performance. The videos do not permit direct observation of the subject's inner state, but they reveal the recurring interactional conditions from which the mechanism is inferred. Cognitive dissonance is thus proposed as the mechanism that drives the attitudes and self-attributions of an altered state of consciousness in the case of hypnosis. What the present data cannot settle is the final step of that process, whether and under what conditions the mounting dissonance resolves into the reported phenomenology of trance; that step is offered as a claim open to experimental test.

## Introduction

Go deep asleep now! That's it, go deep asleep! Sound, sound asleep! You are sinking on down and down into a deep, sound sleep. Go deep asleep now! Go sound asleep! You are breathing deeply. You are breathing deep and free. Breath deep and free. Your breaths are coming deeper and deeper, and every breath you take is sending you on down deeper and deeper to sleep.

Ormond McGill (1996)

The hypnotist utters a repetitive sequence of directives to which the subject—the person being hypnotized—complies with anticipation of entering an altered state of consciousness where he will access a remote and higher portion of his mind to unleash otherwise latent but restricted mental powers with the hypnotist as his guide. Why is it people believe in the power of hypnosis? More to the point, why is it a hypnotist can make a few repetitive declarative utterances alongside a few stereotyped gestures and produce in their subjects an attribution of an altered state? One might imagine that for many who have experienced hypnosis there was a point in their experience where they wondered if they had yet crossed the threshold. Surely many who have been hypnotized continue to wonder about the efficacy of their experience; yet, many others express no doubt, insisting on a deep profoundness to their experience. The pressing question is what mechanisms account for crossing the threshold? The threshold being a point of time in the sequence of the hypnotist's ritual where the subject's attitude towards the authenticity of the experience is resolute and attribution of their experience leans towards the fantastical.

To begin, we must have a working definition of hypnosis. While there is the notion of self-hypnosis and the proposition that meditation is synonymous with the inner workings of

hypnosis, here we are most immediately concerned with the common-sense representation of hypnosis. That is to say, most people in western culture recognize hypnosis as a ritual interaction involving a hypnotist who explicitly attempts to bring about a state of consciousness—hypnosis—by directing his subject’s attention with words, gestures, and directions. Phrases such as “you’re getting tired,” “your eyelids are getting heavier,” “you’re becoming more and more relaxed,” are stereotypical declarations used by hypnotists, which most people in American or European culture would probably recognize as part of the hypnotic ritual. Other cultural images of hypnosis that might be familiar to the average westerner are the swinging of a pocket watch, the tuxedoed performer whose persona rests somewhere between that of a professor and that of a showman, or the psychiatrist sitting above his client who rests rigidly on a couch while the psychiatrist attempts to recover traumatic memories using hypnosis. Hypnosis is not easy to define—in part because of a scholarly debate over exactly what it is—but it is easily recognized. For the purpose of analysis, I have sought cases that are stereotypical of hypnosis as a culturally recognizable phenomenon where it is clearly defined by the performers as hypnosis.

Several scholars have claimed that hypnosis is analogous to a variety of other phenomena (Spanos & Chaves, 1991); I agree to the extent that the cognitive processes underlying hypnosis are not specific to hypnosis. The famous hypnotherapist, Milton Erickson, regarded hypnosis as a natural state between sleep and waking where the conscious mind could access the much wiser but counter-intuitive unconscious mind (Gafner & Benson, 2000). Erickson believed that the common experience of driving a car and then losing awareness that one was driving is an example of natural hypnosis as is daydreaming; I disagree. It is my observation that hypnosis is not mindlessness in the sense of lacking conscious control but is rather the focused intent of maintaining an altered reality. It is an altered reality—not an altered

state—precisely because the concerned individual has chosen to act on a counter-intuitive definition of their situation. Most individuals do not accept daydreams as reality; the notable exception is psychosis, where an individual attributes internal thoughts as external occurrences. The latter may indeed have a relationship with the process of hypnosis but daydreaming under normal circumstances does not have an apparent relationship to either psychosis or hypnosis. While scholars have defined phenomena such as ecstatic religious practices as analogous to hypnosis (Spanos & Chaves, 1991), I believe hypnosis equates to a much more generalized process of persuasion. Other scholars have argued the same position, most notably Graham Wagstaff (1981). In maintaining that proposition, I presuppose that the process underlying hypnosis also underlies phenomena that are more mundane and thereby propose that the social cognitive mechanisms by which a hypnotist brings a subject to attribute his or her state of being to the psychological object of hypnosis constitutes a process of persuasion that can exist in abstract outside of the frame and context of hypnosis itself.

There is a belief about hypnosis that a hypnotized individual will not do what is against their moral convictions; a proposition often made by hypnotists themselves (e.g., McGill, 1996). The statement presupposes that hypnosis is a tangible thing of real effect and known parameters. Why would an individual act like a chicken on a stage but not carry out an assassination? The common sense constraint appears to be awareness of consequence or an inability to inhibit conscience. It is a reassuring belief but suppose it is wrong. Suppose it is possible to hypnotize an individual to believe he is a deputized police officer charged with detaining and interrogating a criminal who in actuality is an innocent person. Something to the effect of that situation has actually happened and the interrogation turned into a sexual assault at the direction of the hypnotist. The difference is that the hypnotist was not really a hypnotist,

per se, but a man on the phone claiming to be a police officer. The event just described is dubbed by the media as *the strip search prank* (Wolfson, 2005) and I later allude to it in the context of a thought experiment in the section titled, *Differential Cases*. To be clear, *the strip search prank* cannot be defined as hypnosis because the situation was framed in a very different context from our common-sense understanding of hypnosis but the social cognitive mechanics, I posit, are the same. Thus, I argue that hypnosis is not only a cognitive phenomenon in its own right but a cultural manifestation of mechanics that have potentially broader consequences. Hypnosis, then, is a case study of persuasion that manifests in the cultural fabric as a readily recognizable ritual based on an ideology that falls somewhere between the mysticism of the mind and the science of the mind but persuasion towards counter-intuitive belief is at its essence.

Graham Wagstaff (1981) effectively argued that hypnosis equates with compliance, referencing the Asch (1956) conformity experiments and the Milgram (1974) experiment to support the proposition of a strong need to comply with norms or authority, but Wagstaff fell short of a working model, a cognitive level explanation, other than to insist on a latent instinct to comply. But the problem is expanded, it's not just why people comply with the hypnotist but also about why they believe their compliance successfully alters their mental state. I begin with Wagstaff's proposition that hypnosis works by mundane processes of persuasion and examine three transcribed performances of hypnosis in order to glean some insight into the possible mechanisms of how an individual can be persuaded to believe they are in an altered state of consciousness or have lost self-volition to the dictates of a trance induced by another.

My analysis of the transcribed cases of hypnosis herein presented reveals instances of behavioral incongruence between what the hypnotist directs and what the subject does. I suggest that this incongruence indicates cognitive dissonance and that the theory of cognitive

dissonance offers a rich cognitive level explanation for how belief in the hypnotic state escalates in the subject. Leon Festinger and colleagues (2009) proposed cognitive dissonance as a phenomenon where inconsistent and conflicting beliefs exist, causing psychological discomfort and a need to resolve the discrepancy. Festinger and colleagues proposed their theory in order to explain why members of a doomsday cult continued to believe in the cult's teachings after their cult leader's very specific date for the end of the world failed to transpire. The idea being that the prophecy's failure combined with belief in the cult's ideology were incongruent cognitions, which required resolution. Most members of the cult accepted their leaders' explanation that the group's faith had inspired the Earth's would be destroyers to give Earthlings a second chance. Whereas the cult had been secretive, its leaders were now willing to proclaim to the media that they had saved the world; the cult's members—who once tried to avoid attention—now actively engaged in recruitment. In abstract, it seemed that commitment to a counter-intuitive idea became even stronger as the counter-intuitiveness of the situation increased. Could hypnosis work by the same dynamic?

To hinge a theory of hypnosis on cognitive dissonance requires some attention to the notion of commitment. Commitment, I propose—in the case of hypnosis—is what gives the subject the necessary anchor to uphold the counter-intuitiveness of the altered reality proposed by the hypnotist against the doubt of the senses and of reason. I suggest doubt is natural to hypnosis because it is inherently a counter-intuitive proposition to claim consciousness has changed to a state that differs profoundly from normal consciousness, as it is counter-intuitive to believe that a declaration of change—as the hypnotist makes—directly results in such change. It is the problem of *magic words* because it is as if to say that by concentrating on my words, my declarations, that hypnosis is real and that by following my directives you will be there—hypnotized—by the time I count to one from ten, backwards. How will you know it

worked? Can you really be sure? For it to work there must be commitment against the grain of uncertainty. Graham Wagstaff (1981) recognized that once an individual committed to hypnosis they would more likely than not comply with the hypnotist. But commitment in the case of hypnosis deserves detailed inspection and I examine it in the context of an implied contract, an implicit agreement. Without commitment to act on the hypnotist's directives and to accept the hypnotist's declaratives, there is no obligation to face the discomforting doubt of the counter-intuitive situation and if there were no counter-intuitiveness to the situation then there would be nothing fantastical—mind altering—about the situation that is hypnosis.

### Methodology

This is a qualitative observational study of hypnosis that utilizes an analytic procedure that is widely attributed to Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) known as *grounded theory*. The elements of grounded theory as advanced by Glaser and Strauss are the use of analytic codes to describe segments of data, constant comparison of the data, writing memos throughout the analysis in order to capture emerging impressions, and constant development and refinement of theory. Other qualitative approaches utilize many of these same strategies without reference to Glaser and Strauss such as phenomenological reduction (e.g., Mruk, 1983) and the construction of cultural models in cognitive anthropology (D'Andrade, 2005). Indeed, it seems that the principles of grounded theory are often generally applied under the broad and generic label of qualitative research as evidenced by computer programs such as Atlasti and Dedoose both of which are structured around the practice of coding data, writing memos, and visualizing codes into broader categories. There is also debate amongst grounded theorist methodologists over proper procedures with a schism between Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss over Strauss's insistence that grounded theory aim for verification—thereby incorporating deductive logic—

while Glaser insists grounded theory emphasize discovery—inductive logic—(Glaser, 1992) while other grounded theorists have criticized both for leaning towards positivism while advocating constructivist approaches (Charmaz, 2006). The research herein presented does not blindly follow any specific breed of grounded theory but has evolved from a generalist approach with inspiration taken not just from grounded theorists but also by other qualitative researchers and philosophers of science, which shall be discussed below, with emphasis placed on the logic of discovery.

Because qualitative researchers often pit themselves against positivists (Charmaz, 2006; McGrath & Johnson, 2003; Ratner, 1997; Willis, 2007) and because science, social science included, is a branch of philosophy, a brief ontological and epistemological statement is in order. As already mentioned, in the social sciences, there are two extreme ontological assumptions, first is the proposition of an absolute and knowable reality (in the tradition of, Popper, 1998), and second is the denial of an absolute reality apart from subjectivity (e.g., Gergen, 2009). The epistemology of the first view contends that an absolute reality is knowable whereas the epistemology of the latter emphasizes the subjective construction of knowledge (Willis, 2007). In the middle there is post-positivism, which contends there is an external reality that we can never be fully certain of but can approximate (Willis, 2007). There is also scientific realism sympathetic to subjectivity in the tradition of Thomas Kuhn (1977) who recognized reality is a matter of perception that is cognitively modeled and subjectively interpreted—that the vast unknowable renders constructions of reality approximate rather than absolute—and that the same data can reveal different explanans to different observers as well as take multiple expressions of the explanandum they represent. Other middle ground traditions are less concerned with the subjectivity of the researcher but intimately interested in the subjectivity of what is researched (e.g., Blumer, 1969b; Ratner, 1997). Ratner (1997) also attacks positivism's

attempt to isolate variables from their natural context but equally assaults postmodernist approaches towards qualitative research, insisting qualitative research is empirical and more accurate than laboratory studies because variables are not isolated from their context. This study is concerned with empiricism and validity, as well as with potential universals in cognitive processes that can be assumed from observing others' behavior, which are further assumed to directly and indirectly reflect subjectivities. Any claims that are made here are not assumed proven but corroborated from observation. I claim no superiority in methodology over experimental approaches but rather view qualitative approaches as useful for both discovery and corroboration and like Ratner (1997) see the necessity of qualitative research for studying phenomena in context.

Robert Cialdini's (2011;2010) *full-cycle social psychology*, comes closest to the ideal epistemology on which this study is based. Cialdini argues that a comprehensive psychology must be both qualitative and experimental through a cycle that begins with observation from which theory evolves and is then tested through experimentation, and then again proven in the field. Experimental studies place subjects in artificial environments, removed from the natural complex unity of variables that exist in correlation with the experimental variable; experimental studies therefore sacrifice holism for variable control (Cialdini & Paluck, 2011; Ratner, 1997). Qualitative research, on the other hand, sacrifices variable control for holism (Cialdini & Paluck, 2011; Mortensen & Cialdini, 2010). The idea of *full-cycle social psychology* is to amend the weakness of each research approach by combining them. This study is observational in the hope of producing experimentally testable hypotheses. Notwithstanding, the use of divergent cases within this study corroborates the theory; Cialdini with Mortensen (2010) and Paluck (2011) argue that qualitative research is empirical and therefore capable of testing theory.

The onus of validity ultimately rests on the quality of evidence and the logic of the argument given it; method is part of the logic. In the most reduced sense, the method used for this study is observation from divergent sources—cases—with the intention of forming an explanation that is consistent across all cases of the observed phenomenon. The aim is to make a declaration of universality from a limited number of observations; Mill's methods of inductive logic form the logical basis for the methodological design of this study. Mill's methods inform a number of methodological approaches including historical-comparative sociology (Mahoney, 2003), cross case comparison (George & Bennett, 2005), Ragin's (1989) qualitative comparative analysis, and analytic induction (Goldenberg, 1993). Of these methods, the approach used here is consistent with analytic induction, which looks for congruency across divergent cases. Mill's (2011) method of agreement dictates that if there is congruency between a set of circumstances across all cases of a particular effect then the congruent set of circumstances is likely part of the cause of the effect. Mill's (2011) method of difference dictates that when two or more instances have everything in common but one set of circumstances and an effect then the differentiated circumstances are part of the cause of the effect.

Two levels of analysis shall be offered here, utilizing two different types of cases; one set of cases serve to develop theory while another set of cases test the theory.

The data for the first set of cases comes from instructional videos and instructional books. My reason for choosing instructional videos rests with the assumption that their intention to teach renders their methods unusually explicit, even though their commercial production does not guarantee that the demonstrations are unedited, representative, or independently verifiable. The videos are: *The Manchurian Approach* by Anthony Jacquin (2010), a four-set DVD instructional video aimed at teaching mentalists how to include hypnosis in their performance; *Naturalistic Hypnosis 1* with Peter Blum (2008), from a training series for clinical hypnotists and

therapists; and *How to Hypnotize Anyone* by Richard Nongard (2007), oriented towards hypnotizing individuals for either therapy or entertainment. Each video contains purportedly unscripted demonstrations and serves as primary data for my analysis. Two instructional books are also utilized to corroborate the claims of the videos: *The New Encyclopedia of Stage Hypnotism* by Ormond McGill (1996) and the *Handbook of Hypnotic Inductions* by George Gafner and Sonja Benson (2000), which is oriented towards therapy. These particular sources were selected from a limited range of commercial material because (1.) the videos purport to offer relatively complete accounts of hypnosis, while many online videos depict only a brief segment; (2.) they each claim to offer unscripted and authentic demonstrations; (3.) their emphasis on teaching other hypnotists demonstrates confidence that their techniques can replicate results; and (4.) the range of material represents both therapeutic and entertainment venues and therefore provides contextual variance. The sample is consequently suited to exploratory theory development, but not to estimating the prevalence of any behavior or independently establishing the authenticity of the demonstrations.

The second set of cases is counterfactual—in essence forming the basis of a thought experiment through which to examine the theory that evolved from the first set of cases—and is inspired by real-world phenomena referenced in the discussion. The data from the first set of cases serves to develop theory, while the counterfactual cases serve as conceptual probes of whether that theory remains coherent when carried beyond the conventional frame of hypnosis. They do not constitute independent empirical tests. Validity within analytic induction requires attention to theoretical congruency and to potentially differential cases (Goldenberg, 1993), and I therefore develop cases that resemble hypnosis only in some aspect of their outcome. Scholars define a vast array of experiences as analogous to hypnosis, including spirit possession, shamanic trance, ecstatic religious experience, and faith healing (Spanos & Chaves, 1991); in this spirit, I examine

phenomena that cannot conventionally be described as hypnosis yet, like hypnosis, conclude in extraordinary and seemingly fantastic states of compliance. The cases include a martial arts teacher who can apparently knock students out without touching them; evangelical faith healing; and a heinous serial hoax known as the strip-search prank, in which the prankster convinces restaurant managers that he is law enforcement and persuades them into lewd acts against targeted employees. The first case invokes an image of mind over matter, a common theme in hypnosis, and I assume many scholars would attribute the effect to suggestion. The second case hints at the placebo effect, which scholars have also attributed to suggestion (Evans, 2004), and falls within the category of religious ecstatic experience that Nicholas Spanos and John Chaves (1991) classify as analogous to hypnosis. The last case is the least trance-like, but I chose it to examine Graham Wagstaff's (1991) proposition that hypnosis equates with extreme persuasion, which this study specifically aims to elaborate. Much of the evidence for these conceptual cases is anecdotal, and I will occasionally ask questions that require counterfactual assumptions, a practice with a notable history in the social sciences (George & Bennett, 2005) as well as the natural sciences (Brown, 2010).

The classic version of analytic induction begins with a hypothesis or set of hypotheses that are tested against diverse cases (Goldenberg, 1993; Katz, 1989; Znaniecki, 1928). My approach, in contrast, began with an exploratory examination of the data, derived from five different sources, with the purpose of developing hypotheses that were congruent across all cases as opposed to testing a set of well-formed hypotheses. Admittedly, it is impossible to undertake research without assumption or bias. Initial hypotheses were rather nominal such as the proposition that hypnosis equates with persuasion as opposed to a divided state of consciousness and I remained committed to changing my position should the data dictate it. Indeed, I was initially hopeful that I would find middle ground between the state vs. non-state

debate and my explanatory assumptions changed quite a bit as I began to look at actual occurrences of the phenomenon. This open approach to theory development is analogous to grounded theory's emphasis on theory development by discovery (Charmaz, 2006) as opposed to hypothesis testing. I placed an additional condition on my initial analysis—not emphasized by grounded theorists—requiring that the conditions accepted for my theory exist across all cases; this requirement is consistent with analytic induction and Mill's method of agreement.

In the first stage of the analysis, where the ambition was discovery, I employed the coding and categorizing conventions of grounded theory, informed by Karen Henwood and Nick Pidgeon (2003) as well as Kathy Charmaz (2006). The analysis began with a dissection of the cases into units that I took to be instances of interaction, which I coded according to my interpretation of the action, which the unit represented. I asked questions and developed theoretical notes as such thoughts occurred through the coding and categorizing process—a process described by grounded theorists as memo writing. Once the cases were coded, I began grouping the codes according to common themes. Other qualitative researchers, such as cognitive anthropologists (D'Andrade, 2005; Quinn, 2005) and phenomenological psychologists (Mruk, 1983), utilize similar coding and categorizing strategies.

To illustrate the coding process, the excerpt below is a sample from one of the videos I transcribed (see Appendix A for transcription symbols). The bold numbers represent codes, which I discuss after the excerpt.

Note: prior to the excerpt below, Irv (the subject) was apprehensive, and hesitantly and unconvincingly declared, "Anything is possible."

### Sample Excerpt

1. Blum: =anything's↑ possible ((assuring voice))..OK ((slight nod )) **25**
2. Irv: with an open mind.. I think it is possible ((sounds more assured))

3. [ ] 26
4. Blum: (yeah?) ((as if asking if in agreement))
5. Blum: ((reaches over and shakes Irv's shoulder))
6. Blum: Together we can work miracles here ((enthusiastic))
7. [ ]
8. Irv: Yes ((assured response then laughing)) 27

#25 represents *enthusiastic assurance*; #26 represents *increased agreement*; #27 represents *commitment*. In line one, Blum (the hypnotist) enthusiastically argued with persuasive intent, "Anything's possible," followed with the phrase "OK," which was a request for agreement. Irv (the subject) seemed to agree with Blum stating with some confidence, "I think it is possible." Blum followed Irv's amiable statement with a request for further belief investment by saying "yeah," in an asking manner, after which he shook Irv's shoulders and declared, "Together we can work miracles." The result of this interactive episode is that Irv appeared to come to agreement with Blum, the hypnotist, about a belief concerning hypnosis and its possibilities to such an extent that he optimistically laughed as if to signal emotional investment.

Throughout the coding process, I wrote down analytical notes (memos) as thoughts came to me; a convention of grounded theory (Charmaz, 2006; Henwood & Pidgeon, 2003). I created a template in Microsoft Publisher to serve for transcriptions, dedicating one fourth of the page to a margin on the right hand side, which I used for codes and memos (for example, see Appendix B). It was very often the case that I would write a descriptive note and then bold one or two fitting keywords for the code. In the excerpt above, I had asked if the enthusiastic utterance, "anything's possible," stands for a *social representation*. A social representation is essentially a mental model of an object or idea shared between individuals. In hypnosis, there is much reference and allusion to the idea of "the subconscious," and the notion that it can be accessed or programmed to bring about results in a mind-over-matter context; my memo for this excerpt asks whether the statement "anything's possible" stands in this context. Writing

such memos encouraged critical thinking and were instrumental to realizing the emerging theory; they also served to identify contexts when it came to grouping codes into categories.

Categorizing the codes essentially entailed recognition of overarching and abstract themes in which classes of actions, events, or concepts formed an ideal taxonomy. I will mention without reservation, that it was apparent to me during the grouping process that I could have focused on different things in the data (a point made by Kuhn, 1977); in other words, I could have represented the data in a different manner and still have had valid points to make. The analytic memos I had made during the initial coding of the transcripts had essentially narrowed my focus on how to categorize my data. Nevertheless, there was still much diversity in the categories—too much—and between my cases, I averaged about twenty categories. I discovered that by abstraction I could merge most categories into a few meta-categories; for instance, *social representations* subsumed *education* while *authority*, *establishing role*, *managing roles*, and *managing expectations* fell under the higher category of *persuasion*. In the representative excerpt, we saw Blum, the hypnotist, managing Irv's expectations in an attempt to control his experience by imposing a belief, an act that it is easily interpreted as possessing persuasive intent. The excerpt succinctly demonstrates the category, *active persuasion by the hypnotist* to induce the subject to believe in the reality of the situation and its possibilities. I ultimately narrowed my categories down to five observed categories plus two additional hypothesized categories. What I want to make clear is that abstracting themes to only a few categories allowed me to become cognizant of a variety of conditions and the relationships between them. For instance, I describe the situation between Blum and Irv in the representative excerpt as active persuasion but I know that in this particular case it involves defined roles and Blum trying to manage Irv's potentially dissonant experience. Thus, I consider categories an enabling reductionism that is not without cognizance of their complexity.

My divergence from standard grounded theory as described by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss (1967) and Charmaz (2006) began with an insistence that each category in the emerging theory is represented in each individual case; I utilized a table to plot the congruent conditions between cases in order to seek uniformity between cases and the conditions that gave rise to them (see table 1). While my approach is divergent from grounded theory, it is not unique. Lonnie Athens (2010) described the same research strategy as *naturalistic inquiry*, which he declared an evolution of the methodology of Herbert Blumer and which has also been called *analytic induction* (Denzin, 1989). Criticisms have been made against analytic induction's claim at causal explanation and generalizability, notably by Sheldon Goldenberg (1993) who argues that analytic induction's quest for differential—potentially falsifying—cases doesn't guarantee generalizability because the cases are selected from an ideal position as opposed to being a blind sampling as required by probability theory. Goldenberg nevertheless concedes that analytic induction is a useful exploratory tool and I too insist that what is offered here is suggested in the data and is compelling but requires further investigation.

### **Background Literature and Theoretical Foundations**

The psychologist and philosopher of psychological science, Carl Ratner (1997), argued that science doesn't evolve from mere observation but from interpretation that is guided by prior theoretical understanding. There is little doubt that theory is a creative force that allows the researcher to grasp a domain of knowledge and elaborate upon problems in theory that become apparent in observation or to apply theory—proposed dynamics of social forces and psychological processes—to novel observations. Notwithstanding, there is a danger that theory can anchor inquiry, anchoring is a cognitive bias where an individual relies too heavily on a

single perspective or piece of information in his or her assessment of the situation (Mussweiler, English, & Strack, 2004), and can thus lead to confirmation bias. (Note: I will use the term anchoring in a very different manner when discussing the theory of social representations.)

To address potential theoretical bias I am forced to delve briefly into the personal and to reflect on the issue as both observer and theorist that is embedded to the observation itself—a practice and stance within ethnography called reflexivity (Pollner & Emerson, 2007). In an earlier research proposal on which the current study evolved, I recognized only one theoretical proposition that I've maintained in the current model—social representations theory. The notion of cognitive dissonance actually hit me outside of my official research within the same period that I was transcribing and coding videos of the phenomenon. An associate described their experience of stage hypnosis to me as being simultaneously real and not real; he knew that the suggestions were not real and yet despite that realization he still experienced them as if they were real—voilà, cognitive dissonance! At that point, in time, I began looking for evidence of cognitive dissonance in the videos that I was analyzing and found that the situation of hypnosis is conducive to dissonance. I hinge my dissonance theory of hypnosis on a specific definition of *social fact*. Margaret Gilbert's theory of social facts is in some ways the foundation of my theory but it is actually a theory that I argued against in a graduate seminar on social metaphysics while studying at Indiana University (Goodman, 2012). Thus, prior to my inquiry, I had very little disposition to the position that I now take, with exception.

I must admit that I have a preference, and therefore a bias, for the so-called social cognitive theories of hypnosis as opposed to the neo-dissociation theories of hypnosis. The former argue that hypnosis manifests as the result of normal social cognitive processes (Coe & Sarbin, 1991; Lynn, Fassier, & Knox, 2005; Spanos, 1991; Wagstaff, 1991; Wagstaff & Coe, 2005) while the latter argue that it develops from a distinct state of consciousness (Davidson &

Bowers, 1991; Ernest R. Hilgard, 1975, 1991; Jaynes, 1976; John F. Kihlstrom, 1998; Woody & Sadler, 2008). To be fair, both theoretical positions are cognitive in basis (e.g. of dissasociative theories explained in cognitive terms, Woody & Sadler, 2008) but social cognitive and sociocognitive have come to designate, within the field, the denial of a distinct hypnotic state with more emphasis on social factors as impacting the cognitive processes resulting in hypnosis. My position most blatantly takes a social cognitive position by positing that hypnosis works by persuasive dynamics. As stated earlier, I am not so much concerned with the notion of a state but rather by the processes that give rise to the appearance of a hypnotic state. Again, I argue that the processes that entail the phenomenon best define it.

The process entailing the experience of hypnosis—I will argue—is cognitive dissonance, structured by social representations that are partially prior beliefs held as cultural knowledge and partially situational constructs arising from the hypnotist's declaratives, which I describe in terms of Gilbert's social facts. Before presenting the empirical evidence for a cognitive dissonance theory of hypnosis, I will briefly describe the foundational theories on which it is based.

### Social Representations Theory

Social representations theory is a meta-theory of social cognition, which places more emphasis on the social nature of cognition than on the intra-individual aspects of it. Social representations are socially shared cognitions. Serge Moscovici (1961) postulated social representations in his study of how specialized knowledge—psychoanalytic theory—is understood by the general public. An audience makes sense of new knowledge—such as psychoanalytic theory—through a process called anchoring. For an individual to understand a new concept they must utilize their existing knowledge and thereby anchor new knowledge to

an existing worldview. Once the meaning of the concept is understood, it then undergoes the process of objectification in which the abstraction is perceived as a real object or a valid process (Rateau, Moliner, Guimelli, & Abric, 2012). Social representations theory describes the fact that sociality requires a shared reality; it also describes the process by which individuals assimilate new knowledge.

The fact of the matter is that social representations theory has utility in describing any facet of social life. In observations of the performance of hypnosis, it becomes evident that hypnotists and subjects have certain shared expectations, which the hypnotist exploits, alters, and manages. Cognitive anthropologists might describe hypnosis as a cultural model, which is accurate. Models, according to Roy D'Andrade (1995, 2005), are an individual's conceptualization of a phenomenon; in other words, the mind's eye perspective of an aspect of perceived external reality. Cultural models, like social representations, are distributed across a set of people. I prefer to work within the context of social representations theory because it is broader; social representations can describe cognitive schemas, models, categorizations, or action scripts as well as the process of anchoring and objectification by which representations become perceived as reality.

Cultural beliefs as well as the apparent shared and emergent cognitive representations of the phenomenon of hypnosis held between the actors during the act present many possibilities for inquiry. Here, I am concerned with the necessity of social representations for guiding behavior in the social situation. I posit that hypnosis would be impossible for a subject (the actor who complies with the hypnotic performance towards the goal of achieving an alteration of consciousness) who does not understand what is expected of him, in terms of entailments of a phenomenon of which they believe—or fail to believe—they are a part. In this light, social representations form, or frame, scripts towards which action is motivated.

### Identity Theory & Existential Motive

Social representations facilitate mutually understood identities and the obligations those identities entail, which I can succinctly describe as role normativity. The question now raised is what motivates compliance to the norm. Identity theory, a structuralist symbolic interactionist take on the social psychology of identity, provides a fitting framework towards motive in positing that identity is grounded to roles, which serve not only social pragmatic ends but existential ends (Sets, 2006). According to identity theory, individuals have multiple roles, which are salient according to their situations. An individual's understanding of their role is a matter of interpretation; the individual may also actively negotiate others' perceptions of his or her role (Goffman, 1959). Structural interactionists argue that social structures (e.g. conventions and norms) place constraints on identities to such an extent that individuals are likely to maintain their identities even when they are free from the constraints that formerly defined them (Burke & Stryker, 2000; Stryker & Serp, 1987). The relative consistency of identity is likely motivated by an existential need to preserve the meaning of things (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006), a proposition supported by terror management theory's exposition that existential anxiety motivates cultural investment and the preservation of cultural identity (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 2003). Peter J. Burke (1980) defines another constraint on identity; roles, according to Burke are always taken with cognizance of a related role, e.g. mother to a child, teacher to a student. Thus, there are both expectations about roles as well as actions that facilitate diametric reactions that give way to roles, but such emergence necessitates a polar role.

One of the original social cognitive theorists of hypnosis, Theodore Sarbin (1950), defined hypnosis as role enactment. Sarbin recognized that individuals felt their enactments of hypnosis were authentic (Coe & Sarbin, 1991) but he failed to explain the dynamics that would

make role enactment feel real. It has been the goal of my research to resolve this issue. What appears to happen is that beliefs—social and cognitive representations—about roles become embodied at which point the individual they embody no longer thinks about the role in terms of “others” or as a social object but rather feels the role as a reality of the situated self.

### Margaret Gilbert’s Social Facts as Social Contract

Margaret Gilbert (1989) is an analytic social philosopher who has elaborated Émile Durkheim’s proposition of social facts. A social fact, in a generic sense, is a fact of social life as opposed to physical life (Hall, 1982); for instance, national borders are not physical facts but they are social facts. The theory of social representations is also inspired by Durkheim’s proposition of social facts (Rateau et al., 2012). There is, however, a striking contrast between social representations and Gilbert’s theory of social facts. The usual proposition of a social fact is that of a belief that is shared by a majority within a population, which is defined by Gilbert (1989) as a *summative account*. The summative account is implied in the social contract theory of John Locke (1690) and Thomas Hobbes (1651), and is explicit in the political philosophy of Rousseau (1762). While political philosophy addresses institutional facts, the social psychology of social representations addresses the normative and tacit facts of everyday living, which too are construed as existing in a state of relative consensus. Margaret Gilbert, however, disagrees with the proposition that social facts require consensus and instead argues for a *nonsummative account*.

*The members of G jointly accept that p if and only if it is common knowledge in G that the members of G individually have intentionally and openly expressed their willingness jointly to accept that p with the other members of G.*

Margaret Gilbert (1989)

A superficial reading of the above maxim may appear to purport a summation of belief, but it is in fact a negation of the necessity for private belief. A careful reading of Gilbert's chapter on collective belief in her book *On Social Facts* reveals that a social fact rests on openly expressed willingness to accept a proposition jointly and on the obligations generated by that joint acceptance. In the interactions examined here, silence alone cannot demonstrate Gilbert's full condition of joint commitment. An unchallenged declarative may nevertheless create a local interactional presumption that the proposition will be accommodated for the purposes of the encounter. Similarly, Philip Pettit (2000) argues that a social contract is better understood as the absence of an effective rebellion than as implicit consent. I therefore use Gilbert's account to illuminate the obligation that can emerge from outward accommodation, not to claim that every unchallenged statement automatically becomes a social fact. Once John has closed his eyes at the hypnotist's suggestion so as to give the appearance that he has become hypnotized, the prior declaratives and his own responsive conduct may strengthen the expectation that he will continue to enact the role, whether or not he privately feels that he is hypnotized.

It is entirely possible that an individual will accept the hypnotist's proposition that his eyelids are getting so heavy that he can no longer keep them open without actually believing it; he may show his social acceptance of the proposition by closing his eyes but may indeed believe that his eyelids did not feel heavy and instead feel as though he closed them by choice. Gilbert (1989) claims that social facts possess a coercive power because once people allow them to stand they are then obliged to socially maintain those declaratives as facts. Once John has closed his eyes at the hypnotist's suggestion, so as to give the appearance that he has become hypnotized, he now has an obligation to be hypnotized whether or not he feels that he is.

### Cognitive Dissonance Theory

Cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual holds two conflicting cognitions resulting from an incongruent behavior. The theory of cognitive dissonance presumes that the individual who experiences cognitive dissonance is motivated to reduce the dissonance (Kruglanski & Sleeth-Keppler, 2007). The phenomenon was originally described by Leon Festinger, Henry Riecken, and Stanley Schachter (2009) in their book *When Prophecy Fails* (published in 1956), which reports the writers' ethnographic participation in a new religion with a sci-fi doomsday orientation. The authors took part in the meetings of a UFO based religion, in the guise of believers, who followed their leader's declarations that on a specific day in the near future, the world would end, but aliens would beam up the loyal members of the cult group to the safety of their UFO. The authors, being social psychologists, were interested in what would happen the day when prophecy failed. When the day arrived, the world did not end and aliens did not beam up cult members to the safety of a spacecraft. Instead, the group's leaders reinterpreted the failed prophecy as the aliens' mercy toward the cult members' convictions; the majority of the group's members reaffirmed their belief in the group's ideology, which many had sacrificed for, and in the following days began actively recruiting for new members. Festinger and his colleagues explained the members' reinvigorated convictions in the face of the contrariety of the group's beliefs by the failed prophecy in terms of cognitive dissonance. The members were motivated to reinterpret the significance of the failed prophecy in support of a belief for which they had made significant sacrifices.

Cognitive dissonance became a major research program in social psychology, particularly in the study of attitudes, attitude-change, and persuasion (Gass & Seiter, 2007). Over fifty years of experimental studies in cognitive dissonance confirm the theory but have also placed an increasing number of conditions on the phenomenon (Cooper, 2012). According to Cooper's (2012) revision of dissonance theory, cognitive dissonance occurs when an individual's behavior

contradicts an attitude they hold, resulting in the self-perception of the behavior as aversive but only when the individual takes personal responsibility for the behavior with foresight of its consequences. Experiments conducted by Jeff Greenberg and his associates (1996) challenge the necessity that the conflicting cognition must be aversive; they posit that conflicting cognitions are in themselves enough to arouse dissonance. In line with such developments, I assume that dissonance occurs (a.) when an individual behaves in a manner contradictory to an attitude (b.) when the individual owns and takes responsibility for their contrary behavior and (c.) when the individual adopts such behavior with some cognizance of its entailments.

As I have already pointed out, hypnosis requires the subject to outwardly accept the declaratives of the hypnotist whether or not he or she phenomenologically believes those propositions to be true. According to the theory of cognitive dissonance, if an individual does not initially believe in the reality of their behavior, they will be motivated to align their attitudes to their behavior if they believe they have freely chosen their behavior with some cognizance of its entailments. Thus, if the hypnotist convinces the subject to act in a certain manner, and that manner of acting is perceived as constituting hypnosis, and the subject believes he has the choice of walking away from the hypnotist then he will experience cognitive dissonance with the result of being motivated to attribute his compliance to being hypnotized.

### Sequential Commitment

Defining hypnosis in terms of commitment to a role is entirely consistent with identity theory. Sheldon Stryker and Peter Burke (2000) write, "Commitment shapes identity salience shapes role choice behavior." The question is how do individuals become committed to the role of hypnotized subject?

A variety of research demonstrates that once an individual makes a commitment they are likely to remain consistent to that commitment to the point that they are willing to make much larger concessions than they would have had they not made an initial commitment (for a review see chapter 3; Cialdini, 2001). The effect is sometimes called “the foot in the door” tactic as door-to-door salesmen know that if they can get you to agree on a seemingly trivial matter, you’ll likely maintain that consistency, which the salesman can use to his advantage (Gass & Seiter, 2007); e.g. you agree that the environment is very important so why not buy these environmentally friendly cleaners as opposed to the environmentally detrimental cleaners that you have been using? The technique increases cognitive dissonance by making the targeted individual feel “obligated” to the otherwise unpleasant situation of dealing with a high-pressure salesperson, which consequently has the potential to sequentially increase the individual’s commitment to the now salient and perceived obligation. In other words, asking for a small commitment opens up the dynamics for sequentially larger commitments, which the individual would not have otherwise made. Hypnosis too escalates from a series of small requests—suggestions—to increasingly more drastic and counter-intuitive suggestions.

### Deindividuation

If hypnosis entails a state of consciousness then I propose that this state is what social psychologists call *deindividuation*. The term was first described by Festinger, Pepitone, and Newcomb (1952) to describe the phenomenon of individuals losing a sense of themselves and becoming less inhibited in crowds. Because hypnosis is essentially an individual following the directives of another, it may seem counterintuitive to describe it as “less inhibited.” However, it may be that that is exactly what happens in that the hypnotized person loses some sense of self-responsibility for their actions in agreeing to hypnosis. Philip Zimbardo (2008) equates

deindividuation with anonymity and describes several experiments where anonymity significantly altered participants' behavior, including a willingness to harm and show aggression towards others. Social identities provide individuals with a certain degree of anonymity (Spears & Lea, 1991) and the relationship between subject and hypnotist constitutes a hierarchical social identity. The phenomenon of escalating commitment described above entails increasing deindividuation as commitment to the hypnotist's directives escalates and the dissonance aroused from the counter-intuitiveness of the situation is resolved in favor of hypnotism, that is, deindividuation.

### Metacognition

I assume that the resolution of cognitive dissonance results in changes to the metacognitive system. Metacognition constitutes higher order cognitions, thoughts people have about their own cognition, which serve to structure and regulate lower order cognitions and memory (Koriat, 2007). Several clinical researchers have implicated distorted metacognition and metacognitive beliefs as the cause of hallucinations, which is interesting because hypnosis can—proponents claim—induce hallucinations (Aleman & Laroi, 2008). Richard Bentall (1993) argues that psychotic experiences are a breakdown in reality monitoring—a function of metacognition—induced by beliefs, which results in attribution bias; Bentall gives the example that if a person believes deceased ancestors continue to live they are likely to attribute “imagined” ancestors as real. Anthony Morrison (1995) presents a different model of how internal thoughts are attributed to external sources; Morrison posits that intrusive thoughts contradict metacognitive beliefs in hallucinating patients leading to dissonance, which is resolved by attributing the intrusive thought to the perception of an external event or object. My position here is simply

that hypnosis leads to an altering of metacognition—by means of cognitive dissonance—in which the subject perceives the suggestions of the hypnotist as particularly significant.

### Findings

The following three cases present diverse performances of hypnosis. The cases derive from training videos that purport to show unscripted demonstrations of methods used to induce hypnosis and were chosen both for their diversity and because they seemed fairly representative of normative expectations. Case one presents a generic approach that the performer claims can be used for either hypnotherapy or performance. Case two focuses on hypnosis intended solely for therapeutic purposes and purports a more conversational and less direct approach. Case three presents an approach intended solely for entertainment, specifically targeting street magicians and mentalists, and its method of inducing hypnosis is streamlined to produce rapid and dramatic results. All three cases demonstrate very different approaches, yet there is a great deal of similarity between them. The observations establish patterns of expectation-management, solicitation of cooperation, hesitation, and eventual compliance. They do not by themselves establish the subject's private experience of cognitive dissonance. I contend more narrowly that each case contains observable interactional conditions under which dissonance could arise when a subject is uncertain whether to accept declaratives made by the hypnotist regarding the subject's own psychological state. Compliance following hesitation is therefore treated as evidence consistent with, but not sufficient to prove, dissonance resolution. For brevity's sake, I utilize excerpts to highlight dissonance-conducive situations and the behavioral evidence from which the hypothesis is developed.

### Case 1

This first case comes from Richard Nongard's (2007) video *Learn Hypnosis*; Nongard gives instruction and commentary on how to hypnotize others and provides a demonstration with a subject, which he insists is unscripted. Nongard claims to be a therapist as well as an entertainer and the video appears to be more oriented towards using hypnosis for entertainment but Nongard explicitly claims that the same approach is effective for inducing a therapeutic hypnosis session. My analysis focuses on the actual demonstration but also takes into consideration the hypnotist's instructional lecture. Nongard describes the "pre-talk" as the first stage in the hypnotic session, elaborating that the function of the pre-talk is to explain hypnosis, to dispel myths about hypnosis, and establish roles. After an instructional lecture, Nongard introduces a volunteer named Steve who has agreed to allow Nongard to hypnotize him for the video.

Steve and Nongard are sitting on chairs that are facing forward but also tilted in towards one another at approximately a fifty-degree angle (see figure 1).



Figure 1

Richard Nongard (right) with subject conducting "pretalk". From *Learn Hypnosis*.

**Excerpt 1.1**

1. Nongard: So Steve I want to thank you for ah agreeing to par:ticipate in this process here  
(.)=
2. Nongard: =and ah be (.) ah essentially be ah become the star of this >hypnosis video<=
3. Steve: =I'm excited ((smiles))=
4. Nongard: =<Have you ever experienced hypnosis before>=
5. Steve: =No I haven't
6. Nongard=No: OK ah great=
7. Nongard: =U:m you've certainly seen hypnosis °though °  
[
8. Steve: ((nods)) Yes:  
[
9. Nongard: °ok °
10. Nongard: and ah (.) ah you actually watched ah one of my videos <the other day>
11. Steve: ((single nod))
12. Nongard: < °did you learn a:nything from that °>  
[
13. Steve: Yes >it was very interesting<

Nongard thanks Steve for “agreeing to participate” as a “star” in his “hypnosis video,” which demonstrates some prior arrangement towards role taking. Furthermore, it is clear that Nongard’s subject, Steve, is familiar with hypnosis as a concept, has confirmed he has “seen” hypnosis and is familiar with Nongard’s expectations of his subjects having watched one of his prior videos. The excerpt represents the beginning interaction between Nongard and his subject in regards to the documented act of hypnosis—though Nongard alludes to prior interaction—the dialogue demonstrates that there is some shared mutual understanding of the phenomenon’s entailments.

Following the excerpt, Steve admits to trying hypnosis on a friend in order to relieve a headache using a method informed by Nongard’s prior video tutorial. Nongard asks Steve if “it worked” and Steve acknowledged that it did and Nongard follows with several declaratives about how good hypnosis feels. Less than two and half minutes pass before Nongard proceeds

into what hypnotists call the “induction,” which is believed by hypnotists to be the sequences of actions necessary to hypnotize another. The induction begins with Nongard asking Steve to “relax” and allow himself to “feel good” and to “let the tension of the day slip away” before directing Steve to focus on the “light up there,” which is presumably on the ceiling. The sequence quickly follows with Nongard suggesting to Steve that his eyes will become tired and asking Steve to close his eyes “when that point comes.”

### Excerpt 1.2

1. Steve: ((Steve sitting in the chair with erect posture, palms relaxed on thighs, head tilted slightly upwards and appears focused on the point, which Nongard requested))
2. Nongard: .h but continue to simply stare at that light=
3. Nongard: =and as you do° (. ) breath in ((Nongard draws a deep breath))=
4. Nongard: = Breath out=
- [
5. Steve: = h:::((prolonged exhale with noticeable deflation of chest))
- [
6. Nongard: = continuing °to look at that light°
7. Nongard: (...) and as you continue looking at that light=
8. Nongard: =>breath in again< ((draws hands towards chest to gesture inhaling))=
9. Steve: ((noticeable expansion of chest with slight rising of shoulders))
10. Nongard: =(.) and <breath out> ((draws hands away from chest to gesture exhaling))
- [
11. Steve: h:::((noticeable exhale with deflation of chest))
12. Nongard: (...) and there will come a point when your staring at that light=
13. Nongard: =>that< your eyes simply become tired (.) °<from staring at that light>°

14. Nongard: <when that point co>mesz: (.) simply °let you eyez close::°

15. Steve: ((prolonged blink then closes eyes))

16. Nongard: nd this will help you to relax (..) and °<to feel good↑>°

At this point, Nongard has made a number of declaratives and Steve has demonstrated his willingness to comply with those that take the form of directives. So far, Steve has demonstrated a commitment to outwardly accommodating the hypnotist's declaratives within the performance. When Nongard directs Steve to breathe in, Steve's chest noticeably swells and his shoulders rise; when Nongard directs Steve to exhale, he does so audibly. These actions provide clear evidence that Steve is committed to acting on Nongard's directives, although they cannot establish that he privately believes every proposition accompanying them.

Nongard actively engages in persuading Steve that the experience of hypnosis will be positive, concluding in line 16 of the excerpt that following his directives will help Steve "relax" and "to feel good." When Nongard directs Steve to inhale and exhale, he gestures the action and also lowers and slows his voice, more or less performing the very actions that he wants Steve to perform. It is an act of persuasion and possibly of conviction on Nongard's part, which has the effect of molding an action script constituting the social representations of hypnosis that is shared between Steve and Nongard. I use the term action script here to denote that aspect of a cognitive schema/social representation that prescribes an idealized action. Because Nongard is proactive in demonstrating and suggesting the appropriate action by modeling his behavior to it, Steve is not left solely to his own preconceived notions of how to behave towards Nongard's directives. It is a testament to the more subtle and proactive nature of the persuasion involved in educating the subject on how to behave, demonstrating the full intricacy in which

the first tenet of the theory—actively shaping the subject’s cognitive schema of the phenomenon— manifests itself.

The final actions depicted in the excerpt are of particular interest. In lines 12 and 13, Nongard makes the declarative that a “time will come” when Steve’s eyes simply “become tired from staring at the light,” and in line 14 Nongard directs Steve to close his eyes “when that point comes.” Steve closes his eyes briefly then opens them briefly and then closes them again. What is interesting about this sequence of actions is that Nongard makes a qualitative directive, in which Steve must close his eyes but is outwardly only obliged to do so when he feels that his eyes are “tired from staring at the light.” The statement is a declarative, not a directive, but it presupposes an action on Steve’s part and therefore implies a directive—eyes will shut—that first requires Steve to accept the declarative that his eyes will become tired.

The hypnosis session continues with Nongard asking Steve to “allow the little tiny muscles” of his face to relax around his brow and mouth. Steve is sitting erect in the chair with his eyes closed and palms faced down on each thigh while Nongard continues to ask Steve to relax various parts of the body and let the tension go.

### Excerpt 1.3

1. Nongard: And you may find it more comfortable to perhaps=
2. Nongard: =let your chin fall towards your chest=
3. Nongard: =as the muscles in your back begin to relax=
4. Nongard: =and the muscles in your shoulders begin to relax=
5. Nongard: =simply let your head fall forward to your chest=
6. Steve: ((Steves slightly lowers chin))
7. Nongard: ° and as you do that it will reinforce the sensation that you’re feeling of <relaxation>°=

8. Steve: (drops chin a little further)) ((see figure 2))
9. Nongard: And allow every muscle in your body to become loose and limp=
10. Nongard: =°like a pile of rubber bands°=
11. Nongard= and let the sense of relaxation extend through (.) your arms:=
12. Steve:= ((begins lowering chin and dropping head significantly more)) ((see figure 3))
13. Nongard: =and even through the little tiny muscles of your fingers:°=
14. Nongard: =and as you listen to the words I use:: <you may be> .h carefully paying attention=
15. Nongard: >to each and every word ° (.) perhaps even wonder if your experiencing=
16. Nongard: =hypnosis the way you should be<=
17. Nongard: = .h:: let me assure you you are doing very very well



Figure 2

Richard Nongard (right) with subject conducting "induction" with subject's head dropping on suggestion. From *Learn Hypnosis*.



Figure 3

Richard Nongard (right) with subject moments after figure 2. Notice that subject's head has dropped even further. From *Learn Hypnosis*.

Again, Steve demonstrates acceptance of Nongard's declaratives. From lines 1 through 4, Nongard declares that certain muscles are relaxing and suggests that it will be more comfortable for Steve to let his head drop and Steve complies. The sequence demonstrates Steve's willingness to comply.

The most interesting aspect of the above excerpt is that Nongard anticipates the possibility that Steve may doubt whether or not he is experiencing hypnosis (lines 14-17). It demonstrates that the hypnotist does not assume that the subject will automatically recognize the desired experience and therefore builds reassurance into the induction. Nongard's statement does not establish that Steve was in fact skeptical, but it shows that possible skepticism is treated by the hypnotist as an ordinary problem to be managed within the interaction.

The hypnosis session continues over several more minutes with Nongard guiding Steve through visualizing being in a tranquil place and focusing on a "white puffy cloud". Upon waking Steve, Nongard questions him about his experience, asking whether he had trouble with the

imagery to which Steve confides that he found it rather easy, in part because he “likes clouds,” elaborating that he enjoyed watching clouds as a child. Steve admitting to actively visualizing Nongard’s directive of seeing “white puffy clouds” seems to confirm that he was actively motivated to genuinely cooperate.

The brief discussion between Nongard and Steve ends with Nongard stating that he’s now going to demonstrate a “rapid induction.”

#### Excerpt 1.4

1. Nongard: Alright Steve (.) we did it the slow way
2. Nongard: Are ready to do it the quick way
3. Steve: We’ll give it a try
4. Nongard: Press your palm against my palm ((positions right hand in front of Steve’s chest))
5. Steve: ((presses his palm against Nongard’s)) ((see figure 4))
6. Nongard: continue to press and as you continue to press against my palm=
7. Nongard: breath in and breath out
8. Nongard: And as you breath in and breath out continue to look into my eyes=
9. Steve: ((Steve redirects his attention by looking into Nongard’s eyes))
10. Nongard: = and as you look into my eye continue to breath in and breath out
11. Nongard: SLEEP ((removes hand))
12. Steve: ((slumps over, Nongard places hand on back of Steve’s neck as if to hold him down)) (see figures 5 & 6)
13. Nongard: > all the way down drifting dreaming floating<=
14. Nongard: =letting each and every muscle of your body relax=
15. Nongard: = ten times deeper with each number I count backwards=
16. Nongard: =5, 4, 3, 2, 1 allow the sensation of relaxation to double=
17. Nongard: = as you drift and dream and float both mentally and physically
18. Nongard: = 5, 4, 3, 2, 1.. at this point Steve you’re highly suggestible=
19. Nongard: =responding to each and every suggestion that I’ve given=
20. Nongard = as if it were absolute and complete truth



Figure 4

Richard Nongard (left) with subject demonstrating “speed induction”. From *Learn Hypnosis*.



Figure 5

Richard Nongard (left) with subject moments after figure 4. Richard Nongard has removed his hand and the subject falls forward. From *Learn Hypnosis*.



Figure 6

Richard Nongard (left) with subject immediately following figure 5. Richard Nongard has placed his right hand at the base of the subject's neck. From *Learn Hypnosis*.

Nongard wakes Steve up and asks Steve how it felt...

30. Steve: It was like I (.) you were guiding my down in there (.) and I had no choice

31. Nongard: .h::: (?)

[

32: Steve: I mean I had a choice

[

33: Nongard: Right=

34: Steve: =>I mean I had a choice< (.) =

35: Nongard: =but physically it was easier for me to follow you than resist you with my mind

This induction is described in Ormond McGill's (1996) *The New Encyclopedia of Stage Hypnotism*, but what is interesting about the excerpt is not the rapid induction itself but Steve's phenomenological self-report after Nongard wakes him. From lines 25 through 30, Steve describes his experience as without "choice" before correcting himself and insisting that he "had a choice" but found it "physically" easier not to resist with the "mind." The correction provides unusually direct evidence of tension in Steve's interpretation of his own agency. Such a report is compatible with cognitive dissonance, although a single retrospective statement

cannot determine whether dissonance, expectancy, cooperation, or some combination of processes produced the experience.

## Case 2

This case is transcribed from volume one of Peter Blum's (2008) *Naturalistic Hypnosis Training* video series, which is aimed towards training hypnotherapists. Blum's approach is derived from the teachings of Milton Erickson and claims to be more conversational and less direct than "traditional hypnosis." In this video, Blum hypnotizes a subject, Irv, who desires to lose weight with the aim of helping him achieve his goal. The video appears to be shot continuously and features voice over commentary by the hypnotherapist; again, the focus of the analysis is predominately on the interaction as opposed to the instruction.

Irv is lying down on a reclining chair in what looks like a space dedicated to the practice of hypnosis while Blum is sitting next to him in an upright chair (see figure 7). Blum mentions the camera to Irv and acknowledges that they are being filmed. He also alludes to a prior conversation where Irv had mentioned being interested in hypnosis and states that Irv has never been hypnotized (Irv nods to confirm).



Figure 7

Peter Blum (right) with his subject discussing the fact that the hypnotherapy session is being filmed. From *Naturalistic Hypnosis Training, Vol. 1*. Appropriated within the established guidelines of *fair use* for critical commentary.

### Excerpt 2.1

1. Blum: What do you think it will be like
2. Irv: ((looking up mouth slightly open)) ..h ah I came in with no expectations...just ah:...=
3. Irv: =kind of go with the flow and ah ..h I trust in..ah...you=
4. Blum: hm (straightening up in seat)
5. Irv: =and I trust that it will (ah?) benefit me=
6. Blum: ((nodding head))
7. Irv: and ah...we'll hope for the best
- [
8. Blum: >that's a great↑ starting place< ((nodding in agreement))
9. Blum: that's a great starting place...cause sometimes I don't know people that well=
10. Blum: =and I have to work a while to gain their trust ah..and ah...h ((noticeable deep breath))
11. Blum: (...) cause that's an important element in all forms of good communication and ah=
12. Blum= ...my understanding of hypnosis is that it really is a special form of communication=
13. Blum (...) you know...there's been a lot of (.) misunderstanding (...) .h in..in the past=
14. Blum: =over what hypnosis is or isn't...and people have all manner of cockamamie ideas...
15. Blum ((look of concern and then slight gesture to Irv with right hand and slight laugh))
16. Blum: ...it's a technical term ((Blum laughs quickly followed by Irv))
17. Blum: ah...that it was=
18. Blum: ((hands extended out towards Irv with fingers protruding))
19. Blum: =some kind of force that ((slightly waving hands)) flowed through=
20. Blum: =(now resting hands)) you know
21. Blum:=(hands now gesturing again in rhythmic fashion as if casting a spell)) ((see figure 8))
22. Blum: =..th:...they=
23. Blum: =(gesturing as if pulling something from the end of fingers))
24. Blum: ((repeating gesture several times--see figure 8))
25. Blum: =they thought there was a magnetic current ((imitating with hands))=
26. Blum: =was coming out of the fingers..or..you know.. They (...)=
27. Blum: =had old .hh saying...look deeply into=
28. Blum: =..and...and...you know..I made...joked around with people=
29. Blum: =who would come in for the first time...you know...=



After Blum asks Irv what he expects hypnosis will be like, Irv claims he “came with no expectations,” which Blum declares is a great “starting place,” after which he begins to describe what people used to think hypnosis was, further elaborating as “misunderstandings.” He describes these “misunderstandings” by conjuring an image of a hypnotist with “twirling” eyes and “magnetic” energy shooting out from the finger tips and uses expressive gestures to reinforce the images. Despite claiming that such beliefs are “misunderstandings,” he refers to a client who claimed his eyes really were swirling, which in the least alludes to the possibility of altered perception. In reenacting the supposed encounter with the prior client, Blum looks intensely at Irv’s face and declares “you’re already in trance” while laughing, which incites a less sure laugh from Irv.

Despite Blum arguing against the image of the hypnotist possessing extraordinary powers, directed by the fingers and eyes, he effectively paints a portrait—a representation—of the hypnotist and the hypnotized subject. Blum concedes that Irv and he had had a prior discussion about hypnosis and that Irv was at that time interested in the phenomenon, thereby we know that Irv already possessed some set of understandings about hypnosis. Blum’s discussion of the “misunderstandings” of hypnosis is interesting because it paints a representation of hypnosis, alluding to the possibility that it actually is possible to see “swirling” eyes while simultaneously denying that reality.

In the opening excerpt, a number of conditions for cognitive dissonance arousal are already evidenced. Representations—expectations and beliefs about hypnosis—are acknowledged with the hypnotist taking an active role in managing the subject’s expectations while leaving the perceptual and phenomenological experience open to possibility. Roles are clearly established with Irv lying down and Blum sitting next to him in a manner reminiscent of a psychoanalysis session; furthermore, Blum uses a term, “cockamamie”, assuming Irv doesn’t

understand the word although he doesn't really show any signs of struggling to understand, Blum nonetheless insists it's nothing to worry about as it's just a funny "technical" term, which inspires laughter from both. The effect of rendering "cockamamie" into a technical term seemingly heightens Blum's stature as an expert as he clearly controls the dialogue. It is seemingly a counter-intuitive experience as Irv is apparently laughing at a phrase that he doesn't understand yet ascertains its humor because of Blum's laughter (line 16). Blum has effectively controlled Irv's mental representations of hypnosis, establishing his role as the hypnotist, while Irv demonstrates motivation to accept his role as subject with escalating commitment to agree with Blum, even when it apparently doesn't make sense to Irv (line 16). This particular narrative over the significance of "cockamamie" is nested in a broader narrative of Blum reciting a story of a supposed prior "client" but he reenacts his story dramatically and directs himself towards Irv as if he were the other character described in the story and therefore when Blum recounts telling his prior client "you're already in trance" the effect is as if he is sincerely making that declaration to Irv. Irv seems to have a sense of the semantic trickery at play as he makes a weak and hesitant laugh, indicating dissonance about what is going on—the situation certainly seems counter-intuitive—and the subject demonstrates uncertainty towards his situation.

There is further discussion about hypnosis and Irv's goals. Irv is undergoing hypnotherapy with Blum in order to lose weight, therefore, it's clear that Irv has intrinsic motive to comply with Blum's directives, which as those of a hypnotist carry the implicit assumption of possibility. Blum, however, takes it upon himself to reassure Irv of the possibilities in the following excerpt.

## Excerpt 2.2

1. Blum: Do you think it's possible to unconsciously control your metabolism=
2. Blum: =(.) without a..ah..with just a normal thyroid.. that you could ah=
3. Blum: =give a suggestion to your metabolism=
4. Blum: =to be able to digest food.:>take the nutritional value you need out of it<°...=
5. Blum: =and to process the rest  
[
6. Irv: .h: (...)
7. Irv: I think anything's possible
8. Blum: =Anything's ↑ possible ((assuring voice))..=
9. Blum: = OK ((slight nod ))
10. Irv: with an open mind.. I think it is possible ((sounds more assured)  
[ ]
11. Blum: yah(?) ((as if asking if in agreement))
12. Blum: ((reaching over and shakes Irv's shoulder))  
[
13. Irv: Yes...((laughing))
14. Blum: To ↑ gether we can work miracles here ↑ ((enthusiastic))
15. Irv: Yes...((laughing))  
[
16. Blum: Alright... ((both laughing and then Blum makes a serious face))
17. Blum: and it is about together ((Irv nodding)) this is ah..ah...cooperative venture...

Prior to this excerpt there had been further discussion of hypnosis but also on practical ways of losing weight, such as “exercise,” and “eating healthy” and though it appears that Blum advocates power of the mind to control metabolism he has also advocated practical approaches towards losing weight (outside of the excerpt).

The significance of the above excerpt is that it demonstrates sequential persuasion as it begins with Blum's proposition that the “unconscious” can “control” “metabolism,” a proposition proposed as a question, in which Irv must agree or disagree, Irv briefly considers the question, which is demonstrated by a pause and preliminary exhale signifying a coming statement still in mental formulation (line 6), followed by the exclamation “I think anything's

possible.” Irv has made a diplomatic statement, it’s assured but impersonal and lacking any sort of strong affect, such as ecstatic conviction, which Blum introduces loudly and enthusiastically in repeating Irv’s less than convincing statement (line 8). Blum then says “ok” but it’s a declaration that begs for commitment to which Irv replies “with an open mind, I think it is possible,” but this time Irv is more personal in his assuredness with “it” seeming to signify the hypnosis that is to occur between him and Blum, which is effectively agreeing with Blum’s enthusiasm. Blum enthusiastically shakes Irv’s shoulders and they both start laughing with seeming conviction.

Approximately another seven minutes pass between excerpt 2.2 and 2.3 (below). In between this dialogical space, there is more discussion about hypnosis, which mostly constitutes Blum’s declaratives, which are often situated in concrete narratives. For example, Blum describes hypnosis as analogous to driving a car or watching television in which one loses awareness of one’s surroundings, calling such “natural trance,” further suggesting that in such states “the unconscious” is in the “driving seat.” Blum is applying Milton Erickson’s psychoanalytical ontology that the nonconscious is a reservoir of memory and creativity, always active towards solving waking problems from behind the scenes but is accessible through hypnosis, which Erickson viewed as a sort of a conduit between the conscious and nonconscious (Zeig & Rennick, 1991). Blum describes the efficacy of hypnosis to Irv on similar terms, denoting that hypnosis entails trusting the “unconscious” for guidance. It’s a paradoxical statement because unconsciousness is lack of consciousness and therefore there is no way to phenomenologically know unconsciousness as anything other than lack of consciousness; notwithstanding, the cognitive representation is understood—hypnosis exists as a mental space outside normal consciousness where the reservoirs of the self work in blind cohort to bring about effect—seemingly paralleling the magical thinking of faith, but of a deeper self.

As of yet, Irv has his eyes open and Blum has not overtly claimed to Irv that a hypnotic induction is occurring, although in the voice-over elaboration Blum describes his ongoing discussion with Irv as “covert hypnosis.”

The dialogue since excerpt 2.2 has essentially been a monologue directed at Irv as to what to expect. For instance, Blum tells Irv “part of his mind can stick around,” a declarative that can serve to manage expectations in the instance that hypnosis is assumed a sort of blank consciousness; however, Blum does not qualify it that way but rather insists that the “mind” will “stick around” so Irv can remember what he needs to remember in order to replicate “this”—presumably hypnosis—at home. Blum points out to Irv that he will be able to hear the noises of the environment and then asks him to become aware of what he is doing with his body, with his breath, “where” his “hands are crossed.” After further elaboration on “becoming aware,” Blum asks Irv to focus on a point in his “field of vision.” Blum’s voice now slows as he describes to Irv that hypnosis is a “lower gear” as opposed to the “normal gear” of “waking consciousness.” Blum then suggests that at this “lower gear,” “a place of deep relaxation,” is a good place to focus on breathing. Although Blum doesn’t tell Irv how to breathe, he does say that a person “who is in a deep sleep will have slow breaths.” Ever since Blum asked Irv to focus on a point in his “field of vision,” the act of hypnosis in this case has taken on similarities with the first case; which also had Nongard asking his subject to focus on a point in space then to become conscious of breathing and to relax. The difference between Nongard and Blum is that Blum is much less direct and is much less assertive in his directives, which take the form of declaratives that provide a norm for the subject to follow, e.g. Irv knows to take slow breaths because Blum suggests that the “lower-gear” state of hypnosis requires it. The actions so described since excerpt 2.2 eventually lead up to the symbolic act of Irv closing his eyes, but it’s not without hesitation.

**Excerpt 2.3**

1. Blum: You know.. As you're listening.. and you feel ↑ your eyes:=
2. Blum: =Feel the muscles around your eyes... you might feel yourself=
3. Blum: = blinking more often..staring at any one spot for a while a person=
4. Blum: = could find their eyes getting tired... many people like to close their=
5. Blum: eyes.. When they go into trance..you can do that if you want=  
((Irv's eyes are still open)) ((see figure 10))
6. Blum: =or\_ you can keep them open a while longer until they want to close=
7. Blum: = all by themselves:: knowing that whatever it is your seeing hearing=
8. Blum: = on the outside world will continue to be here.. will be here when you..=
9. Blum: =open your eyes(..) will be here even now as you continue to focus =
10. Blum: = your eyes on that point.. That spot that you have chosen..=
11. Blum: =And you feel the vision to fix your gaze on...=
12. Blum: =everything else dropping away..=
13. Blum: =Simply being in your moment here... small sounds=
14. Blum: =... music... °my voice..= the rhythm of breathing°..
15. Blum: = any place in the shoulders.. In the back or the neck where=
16. Blum: =there might be or might have ↑ been any tension.. Unnecessary tension=..
17. Blum: = can relax those areas because we can send a message through..=
18. Blum: =Can send a message through...=
19. Blum: =from one part of self to another... so focusing really more.. again..=
20. Blum: Back on your breath=
21. Blum: =noticing where the air enters.. and leaves the body .hhh=
22. Blum: =feeling every passage of air=
23. Blum: =... tip of the nostrils.. Imagining that air going through the nose=
24. Blum: =and down through back of the sinus cavity=  
((Blum has eyes closed and appears to be imagining his own words))
25. Blum: =through the throat  
[
26. Irv: ((closes eyes))
27. Blum: .. down.. In to the lungs... lungs inflating with each in breath=



Figure 10

Peter Blum's subject apparently resisting or oblivious to Blum's suggestions that he close his eyes. From *Naturalistic Hypnosis Training, Vol. 1*. Appropriated within the established guidelines of fair use for critical commentary.

On line 26 of the excerpt, Irv closes his eyes, but Blum's dialogue throughout the excerpt is directed towards bringing him to do so and requires a good deal of talk and action. In lines 1 through 4, Blum asks Irv to become conscious of his eyes and declares that a person fixated on one spot will often "find their eyes getting tired." On lines 4 and 5, Blum declares, "many people like to close their eyes when they go into trance." At this point, Irv looks dreary-eyed, but it bears remembering that he is lying down in psychoanalytic fashion and that twenty minutes of virtual monologue has passed. Of interest is that Irv does not close his eyes when it is first suggested, after which Blum makes explicit that he expects Irv eventually to close them. Another twenty lines of monologue and gesturing pass before Irv complies. The delay may indicate uncertainty or resistance, but fatigue, concentration, or acceptance of Blum's invitation to wait are also consistent with the visible behavior. What can be observed with confidence is that the expected action did not occur immediately and that Blum sustained the interaction until it did. The sequence therefore identifies a dissonance-conducive negotiation of compliance without permitting direct access to Irv's subjective state.

### Case 3

Case three is transcribed from Anthony Jacquin's (2010) *Manchurian Approach*, a set of four DVDs aimed at instructing magicians and mentalists in hypnosis for use in entertainment. The *Manchurian Approach* features instruction from Jacquin along with demonstrations from himself and two other hypnotists using his method. In the other cases, descriptions of events were in chronological order; the presentation of this case will not be the same. Because there are three different hypnotists and several sessions featured within a lengthy tutorial, the focus here will be on describing the method, which the three hypnotists purport to use. The excerpts offered here will demonstrate that the situation set-up by this particular approach towards hypnotism is just as conducive to cognitive dissonance as the other cases.

Anthony Jacquin calls his approach "impromptu hypnosis" and the essential idea behind it is that a street performer can walk up to an individual on the street and explain to that individual that he is a hypnotist and offer a demonstration; in essence, hypnotize that individual. Jacquin calls it a "numbers game" so it is hard to ascertain the success rate in terms of the percentage of strangers on the street that will go along with the performance although Jacquin estimates it at "60-70%." While the other two cases emphasize lengthy introductions, Jacquin's approach aims for brevity but does not sacrifice the seeming necessity of educating the subject. It is clear that the subject must have an expectation of what hypnosis entails and what is expected of them—a social representation of the phenomenon on which to act.

Anthony Jacquin demarcates his approach into several stages that begin with an "opener," proceeds to "the set-up," and then on to "the set-piece," before escalating fully into the "induction." After the induction, Jacquin offers instruction on various entertaining stunts the hypnotist can pursue with the subject. This case, however, is concerned only with the sequence

of actions leading up to the compliance of the individual and need go no further than the apparent success of an “induction.”

“The opener” is simply the act of the hypnotist—in the case of impromptu street hypnosis—walking up to a potential participant and introducing him or herself as an “entertainer,” “a hypnotist.” Jacquin describes being impressed by a street magician named “Paul Brooks” who would walk up to a stranger on the street and have them give him a “bank note” in order to demonstrate some sort of magical feat. Jacquin speculates that Brook’s opening statement, “hi, I’m a performer, can I show you something,” is the secret to his success in acquiring cooperation from strangers. According to Jacquin, the role of being a “performer” provides “huge latitude over the things you can ask people to do.” Jacquin also suggests using a compliment for the opener, followed by an introduction, “I’m an entertainer, I’m a hypnotist,” in turn followed by a simple request, “can I show you something?” According to Jacquin, being a “hypnotist,” creates “intrigue” and “expectation;” A proposition demonstrating that the hypnotist can presuppose most people having some expectation of what it means to be hypnotized. There exists a social-representation, a cultural model, of hypnosis, which the hypnotist exploits by defining the situation according to such cultural knowledge and defining roles on those terms.

The “set-up” amounts to the “pre-talk,” which Nongard and Blum particularly emphasize as important. Nongard and Blum stress the pre-talk as a means of educating the subject on their own definitions of hypnosis—creating mutual expectations—and also to overcome anxieties or dispel myths; for both Nongard and Blum, the pre-talk was relatively lengthy. Jacquin claims that the “set-up...may just amount to a few sentences,” or might not even be necessary with a receptive audience and strong “opener.” Like Nongard’s “pre-talk” Jacquin describes the “set-up” as over-coming fears and defining hypnosis, which Anthony describes as “simply an

increased state of concentration.” It is worth pointing out that such a definition describes hypnosis in terms of a skill, rather than compliance, which likely creates motive in hypnotized individuals to demonstrate ability.

The “set-piece” is a trial of compliance, so to speak. There are various “set-pieces,” which essentially test the subject’s suggestibility, although Jacquin protests describing them as “tests” because “most people will pass them.” One “set-piece” Jacquin describes is “magnetic fingers” which requires the subjects to clasp their hands together with their forefingers sticking out and separated from one another. They then must imagine magnets on the tips of their fingers pulling their fingers together. Most subjects will find that their fingers draw closer to one another. While Jacquin protests calling the “set-piece” a test it is effectively that because the entertainer is generally having several people perform the feat at the same time and will select the most agreeable subjects to continue the performance. The “set-piece” also serves as a convincer—likely exploiting the shared circuitry between thought and action that characterizes the ideomotor response (Hurley, 2005)—bringing the subject to believe in the efficacy of the hypnotic act. Jacquin also emphasizes a “yes-set,” asking people “can you,” do this or can you do that, which fits with cognitive dissonance theory’s requirement of acting on choice (Cooper, 2012) and sequential models of persuasion (Gass & Seiter, 2007).

Upon successfully completing one or two “set-pieces,” less cooperative subjects may be dismissed while the others—likely a majority—will continue on to the induction. Jacquin acknowledges there are thousands of hypnotic inductions but describes a “rapid induction,” where the hypnotist asks whether the subject is right or left handed and then proceeds to ask if he can borrow that hand. The hypnotist then holds the subject’s palm in front of his or her face and asks the subject to focus on “the lines of the hand” and to pick a spot to focus on. The hypnotist then moves the subject’s palm towards his or her face and says to the subject, “your

eyes will begin to change focus and as you become aware of your eyes and as you become aware of your eyes,” at which point the hypnotist snaps his fingers and commands “SLEEP.” As with the set-piece, the induction begins with a request, creating commitment, which escalates into—if successful—a dramatic “hypnotic sleep.”

Another aspect of the induction is the “deepening,” which is in essence a set of declaratives intended to deepen the hypnotic “sleep,” with phrases such as “deeper, deeper, deeper down, sinking, floating, that’s right, drifting deeper, and deeper, to a place of absolute bliss.” Jacquin also describes directing the subject to focus on his breathing and on relaxing in a manner comparable to Nongard and Blum but whereas the latter take minutes Jacquin’s method reduces it to a few utterances. For example, the statement “every breath you take, every word I say, you can relax,” may follow the declaratives of “deeper, deeper, deeper down...” but no more than a few more utterances—at most several fragmented sentences—will constitute the “deepening.”

A large portion of Anthony’s training videos is dedicated to “routines,” which are the things hypnotists have subjects do that create good entertainment. For instance, Anthony describes how the above induction could be taken right into a “routine” by forcing the palm of the subject onto her forehead and then telling the subject something along the lines that “it’s stuck to your forehead and no matter how hard you try you will not be able to remove the hand from your forehead.” Such spectacles are what create the entertainment value of stage and street hypnosis as onlookers look with amazement and amusement as the subject seemingly desperately tries to remove their hand from their forehead. I will not focus on the “routines” except to suggest that at this stage in the performance the subject is under considerable obligation to perform; one might imagine that having committed and cooperated throughout the entire induction, the subject would be put on the spot, so to say, if they failed to follow

through with a “routine.” The obligation to comply with counterintuitive behavior—which the subjects would have marginally anticipated—and which they now must come to terms with would be a dissonant situation; the easiest resolution, I propose, is to attribute such self-behavior to the incredible power of hypnosis.

Because Jacquin’s training video shows several hypnotists performing routines, none of which are complete from beginning to end—at least from the point of approaching the strangers—I’ve elected to emphasize describing Jacquin’s technique, which the other hypnotists in the video share, rather than emphasize an analysis of sequential excerpts. Nevertheless, I’m going to offer two excerpts for brief discussion, the first will demonstrate that subjects have cultural expectations about hypnosis, which I propose facilitates their roles. The second excerpt demonstrates a feeling of social obligation to comply with the hypnotist’s directives. These two conditions together establish a climate for dissonance.

### Excerpt 3.A.1

1. Anthony: Feet flat on the floor (.) I need you in a comfortable resting position=
2. Subjects: ((comply))
3. Anthony: =you’re going to be there for a few minutes `yeah? °
4. [
5. Subject 1: ok
6. Anthony: .h what do you think hypnosis is
7. Subject 2: ... .h you go into your subconscious ah:
8. [
9. Anthony: Yeah ah=
10. Anthony: =I’d say that’s ah (.) essentially it=
11. Anthony: =(.) it’s not like go into it (.) because your kind of in it the whole time anyway=
12. Anthony: = and .h it’s about using <that part of your mind>=
13. Anthony: =so: the part of you (.) that can concentrate and use imagination=
14. Anthony: =be creative (.) rather than the bit that thinks=
15. Anthony: =and is logical ah rational and .h that has its place=
16. Anthony: =(.) but I want you to try to get ah sense of what >I’m saying to you<=
17. Anthony: =(.) meaning (.) if I say (.) imagine something (.) do your best=
18. Anthony: =(.) if I say .h get a feeling for something (..) <try and feel it>
19. Subject 2: ((nods))

20. Subject 2: =ok  
21. [   
22. Anthony: OK

In this particular demonstration, the video begins with Jacquin and two subjects sitting on patio chairs facing Jacquin who is standing a few feet in front of them (see figure 11). The video here does not show the process Jacquin calls “the opener” but demonstrates what Jacquin describes as the “set-up,” equating to what other hypnotists call “the pre-talk.” When Jacquin asks, “what do you think hypnosis is?” Subject 2 suggests it is a state of being in the “subconscious.” Such an answer seems entirely consistent with popular notions of hypnosis being a sort of trance or sleep, where implicit cognition is presumably active. It seems then that at least one of the subjects has cultural assumptions about hypnosis. Jacquin agrees, saying that’s “essentially it” but argues that the “subconscious” isn’t something you go into but is rather something that’s already a part of you, elaborating that “it’s about” using the “imaginative part” of your mind as opposed to the “rational” part of your mind. While it seems that the subjects have some notion of what hypnosis is, Jacquin has painted a picture of hypnosis that expands on subject 2’s notion of going into the “subconscious.” It is a flattering picture because Jacquin claims that it is the creative side of the brain, but also denotes that you have to set aside logic and rationality; thus, Jacquin’s representation of hypnosis establishes rules.



Figure 11

Anthony Jacquin facing two subjects and delivering “the opener,” which equates with what other hypnotists call “the pretalk.”

The next excerpt comes from a demonstration by Amit Badiani, which appears situated in a bar or public lounge. Badiani has a dozen or so college-aged individuals surrounding him in a circle. He asks the participants what they think hypnosis is to which a woman replies, “getting in touch with the inner-self,” to which he replies “fantastic. You’re right, that’s what hypnosis is about.” Badiani then tells the audience that he is going to ask them to perform a couple of tasks to test their concentration and imagination. He has the participants place their arms straight out in front of them and then clasp their hands, “nice and tight as if the hands were glued together...”

### Excerpt 3.B.2

1. Badiani: Now what I want you to do (.) =
2. Badiani: =I want you to put your hands in a praying position (gestures action)
3. Badiani: and you can all (make one if you want?) HEY: ey.
4. Badiani: OK (.) I want you to put your index fingers one inch apart (gestures action)
5. Audience: ((all comply))
6. Badiani: (...) and (.) and look in the middle of your index fingers.. ((figure 12))=
7. Badiani: =because in a minute your fingers are going to go closer and closer together
8. Subject 1: ((fingers are touching and Badiani walks up to him))
9. Badiani: >when they touch close your eyes< (grabs subject 1’s hands and pulls them down))
10. Badiani: and relax (.) and sleep(?) for me ((Badiani precedes to second subject))  
[
11. Subject 1: ((rather than closing his eyes he looks at Badiani briefly then tilts head down))
12. Subject 1: ((once Badiani moves on to the second subject, Subject 1 lifts head and looks at the person to his left and smurks but that person is unresponsive—see figures 13))
13. Badiani: ((preceding to the next person whose fingers are touching))
14. Badiani: Closer, and closer, and closer ((pointing at the subject’s fingers))=
15. Badiani: when they touch relax ((grabs hands and pulls them down))=
16. Badiani: sleep for me ((subject two now has her head facing down and eyes closed))
17. Badiani: that’s right



Figure 12

Hypnotist, Amit Badiani at the center of a group of young volunteers following Badiani's initial directives.



Figure 13

The male with the glasses near the center (subject one) has failed to obey an initial directive to "sleep," instead he looked at the subject at his right and smirked but she was unresponsive. After a brief moment of seeming confusion he refocuses his attention towards the center of the circle and droops his head and closes his eyes following subject number two's compliance (see figure 14).



Figure 14

Badiani, moving counter clockwise, skips one person and commands his second subject to “sleep” (far left), after which the first subject from figure 13 (far right) seems to imitate the response and now has his head tilted down with his eyes closed. Note that subject two on the right seems to have a suppressed smile on her face even though she is complying with the directive to sleep.

Badiani continues around the circle repeating the same procedure, first with those individuals whose fingers have touched or are close. His first subject does not immediately conform to the directive to sleep (lines 11 and 12 and figure 13), while his second subject goes along with the act with what appears to be a suppressed smile (figure 14). After Badiani finishes with subject number 2, subject 1 has his eyes closed with his head dropping (figure 14). The sequence resembles the public coordination found in the classic Asch conformity experiments, particularly because subject 1 looks to the people around him before joining the common response. It cannot be known from expression alone whether he doubted the efficacy of hypnotism, sought a behavioral cue, felt embarrassed, or was simply orienting himself to the performance. It is nevertheless interesting that he is the only member of the large group who noticeably interrupts the expected response before conforming. The final subject walks away after what appears to be a misunderstanding: Badiani says “stand there for me,” prompting her to open her eyes and look around with a confused expression; she eventually walks away as Badiani seemingly dismisses another subject. Badiani, of course, keeps the most responsive subjects for the act and dismisses the less responsive subjects. This selection procedure is itself important because the apparent uniformity of the final performance is partly produced by retaining those who most readily conform.

When Badiani commands participants to “sleep” and pulls their clasped hands down as to cause them to slump over, it does not seem that the participants are in any sort of somnolent state. Despite nearly all participants complying with the directives, most demonstrate some subtle expression of active cognitive questioning—such as a muted smile or raised eyebrows

(see figure 14)—while others seem more focused with intention towards an unwavering compliance.

## Discussion

Qualitative research is inherently interpretive (Ratner, 1997), and it is challenging, if not impossible, to fully separate description from interpretation. Nevertheless, the last section, titled Findings, focused more on description while briefly touching on interpretive implications. In the discussion that follows, I distinguish as carefully as possible between visible conduct, interpretations consistent with that conduct, and the hypothesized cognitive mechanism. The cases allow strong claims about the organization of interaction but more limited claims about private experience. This section begins by elaborating the interpretive implications before delineating a theory of hypnosis based on them and situating that theory in the broader literature. Finally, it examines whether the psychosocial dynamics proposed for hypnosis remain conceptually coherent in other phenomena through counterfactual cases based on real-world examples.

### Interpreting the Findings

After **excerpts 1.1** and **1.2** it was pointed out in the findings section that Nongard, the hypnotist, had made a number of declaratives and directives and Steve, the subject, demonstrated willingness to comply with those directives and agree with the declaratives. This ongoing and escalating commitment to the actions directed by Nongard would have a self-persuading effect on Steve according to the background literature discussed earlier. From the perspective borrowed from Gilbert's (1989) elaboration of *social facts* the hypnotist has made a series of open declaratives and because the subject doesn't challenge them—allows them to stand—is obliged to uphold them. Social psychologists from both the psychological side of the fence and the sociological side of the fence have argued that there

exists an innate psychological disposition to strive for consistency in self-behavior (e.g., Burke & Stryker, 2000; Cialdini, 2001). Furthermore, dissonance theory is posited on the axiom that individuals strive for cognitive consistency (Cooper, 2012). The implication is that Steve is predisposed to be a cooperative subject in that if he is to be hypnotized he must cooperate; after all, if he doesn't do as the hypnotist says can we call him hypnotized? We can thus say Steve is obliged to comply with Nongard's directive if he is to be hypnotized. According to the need to be consistent postulate, Steve's own act of compliance is self-persuasive (Cialdini, 2001). If Steve's compliance—his behavior—is incongruent with his beliefs or attitudes then he also experiences cognitive dissonance and is thereby motivated to achieve congruency in belief as well as action.

In **excerpt 1.2** we face the notion of "relaxation" where Nongard, the hypnotist, directs Steve through a controlled breathing exercise while explicating that it will "help" him "relax." The notion of relaxation appears to be commonly associated with hypnosis. Most readers will be familiar with the use of the metaphors "deeper and deeper" in connection with such imagery as, perhaps, a psychoanalysis patient sitting on the couch listening to the hypnotist count from ten to one—with each succession the patient is expected to go deeper—or to go deeper with each passing swing of the pocket watch turned pendulum. Most readers will be familiar with such associations because it is cultural knowledge. The notion of "relaxation" as well as the metaphors of going "deeper" or of "sleep" are elements of what cognitive anthropologists would call a *cultural model*, which is a mental representation—objectification—of a cultural phenomenon and which informs cultural participants of correct behaviors and expectations (D'Andrade, 1992; Quinn & Holland, 1987). Social psychologists describe a similar concept but label it *social representations theory* (Rataeu et al., 2012). In reality it doesn't seem that "relaxation" is required as it is certainly absent from most stage routines that are acted rather quickly nor does relaxation seem central to the final case examined in this study (demonstrated by Badiani). Furthermore sociocognitive accounts of hypnosis completely deny any reality of the "deeper" metaphor having any real relationship with a distinct state of consciousness (Bayne, 2007; Spanos, 1991; Wagstaff, 1981). It also seems qualitatively apparent that hypnosis is something entirely different from sleep. What it does mean to "relax," to "go deeper," to "sleep" in the hypnotic context is to have some preconceived

understanding—shared with the hypnotist—of what these declaratives mean in terms of acting appropriately towards the act of being hypnotized.

Also in excerpt 1.2, Nongard makes the declarative that a “time will come” when Steve’s eyes will “become tired,” and when that point comes Steve is directed simply to close them. The statement that Steve’s eyes will “become tired” is a declarative rather than a direct command and appears to give Steve the opportunity not to accept it, since it concerns a personal and phenomenological condition. Because Steve closes his eyes, he has behaviorally accommodated the declarative within the performance. The act alone does not prove that his eyes felt tired or that he privately accepted the proposition as true. It does demonstrate that he chose an action congruent with Nongard’s suggested reality without explicit physical coercion. This is the point at which I propose that the subject may begin attributing his own compliance to the hypnotist’s directives under the pressure created by the counter-intuitiveness of the experience. The observation supports the interactional sequence; cognitive dissonance remains the proposed explanation of how that sequence could become subjectively persuasive.

In excerpt 1.3, Nongard addresses the possibility that Steve “might not be experiencing hypnosis” the way he should be before reassuring him that he is doing “very, very well.” This demonstrates that the hypnotist possesses a theory of mind concerning the subject and does not assume that the subject will automatically identify the experience as hypnosis. Nongard treats thinking, uncertainty, or possible skepticism as compatible with successful performance. The statement is therefore an attempt to preserve the legitimacy of the experience—the hypnotist’s propositional reality—against a form of doubt the hypnotist anticipates, whether or not Steve was actually experiencing it at that moment. If the subject accepts Nongard’s proposition, then Nongard has altered the working representation of hypnosis between them by making questioning non-negating. Possible questioning is consistent with cognitive dissonance, but it is not itself proof of dissonance; the important observable fact is that the hypnotist proactively supplies a metacognitive interpretation by which uncertainty can be absorbed rather than allowed to terminate the performance. It is likely that there can be various levels of dissonance just as there can be cognitions and cognitions about cognitions—described as

metacognitions (Koriat, 2007). In this case, the hypnotist need not negate every instance of uncertainty but can mitigate its force at the metacognitive level by defining some measure of it as acceptable.

**Excerpt 1.4** concludes with a brief post-hypnosis interview of Steve describing a particular aspect of his experience as having “no choice”. In this particular event Steve was asked to press against Nongard’s hand, which Nongard rapidly moved so that Steve’s own weight would force him to fall forward. While Nongard removed his hand he shouted “sleep” while bringing his other hand to rest on the back of Steve’s neck to encourage Steve to slump over. The question of why Steve didn’t resist is nested in the fact that hypnosis entails contractual roles, which oblige cooperation. Steve’s cooperation implies that he accepted his role as subject and that the sequence of events leading up to the final excerpt served to cement his commitment to that role. The proposition here is that the further Steve participates, the greater Steve’s commitment escalates and the harder it becomes for Steve to walk away or deny the effect of hypnotism. To deny the effect of hypnotism would have the effect of breaking an implied agreement, the strength of which grows stronger with every act of cooperation. Steve might now wonder whether he has been hypnotized but his own behavior is counter-intuitive to the contrary and thus he resolves the discrepancy by attributing his own behavior to the phenomenon. The act of rapidly slumping over to the command of “SLEEP” seems dramatic—albeit Steve incrementally demonstrated to Nongard that he would comply with his directives but the escalation is dramatic nonetheless—and therefore Steve may restructure his higher-order beliefs about hypnosis to accommodate the radical behaviors that he experienced and now attributes to hypnosis.

The second case involves a very different approach to hypnosis with the primary aim being therapeutic. In **excerpt 2.1** we see Blum, the hypnotist, describing hypnosis interestingly from the perspective of “misunderstandings;” for instance, Blum describes hypnosis as not being “swirling” eyes. Paradoxically Blum conjures a cultural representation of hypnosis, which he claims to deny yet insists he had a client who actually claimed his eyes were swirling thus alluding to the possibility that it actually is

possible to see “swirling” eyes while simultaneously denying that reality. We can describe Blum’s presentation as presenting *conceptual dissonance* through a contradictory narrative.

Of the 36 lines in **excerpt 2.1** only 5 are spoken by Irv, the subject. Blum makes a number of declaratives and Irv passively accepts them. Once again we can say that the hypnotist’s declaratives take on the force of Gilbert’s (1989) *social facts* because they go unchallenged by the subject thus predisposing Irv to maintain those propositions. We see that Irv tacitly accepts the role of subject for himself and the role of hypnotist for Blum because he lies back in a reclining chair while Blum sits over him in a manner reminiscent of psychotherapy and allows Blum to describe to him what hypnosis is. The dialogue is not a free exchange but a monologue presented by someone presenting as an expert. The position and behaviors depicted in this scene imply that Blum is in a position of authority and that Irv accepts that position of authority. It also implies that both parties came to the situation with certain role expectations thus suggesting some degree of shared social representations about what hypnosis is and isn’t. This proposition is supported by the fact that Blum was describing hypnosis by what it wasn’t—“swirling” eyes—as if to speculate that he assumed Irv would share this representation of hypnosis. Despite the proposition that existent cultural knowledge of hypnosis exists in the cognitive walls of the subject, which inform and motivate his behavior, we can assume a great deal of uncertainty also exists for the subject. Jan E. Sets (2006) points out that roles are usually only salient against counter-roles; we can thus assume that an authoritative role is better positioned to define an emerging situation including the submissive roles such a situation encompasses.

While much of Blum’s dialogue is counter-intuitive and latent with conceptual dissonance, it serves simultaneously to manage Irv’s experience while keeping the possibility open for an extraordinary experience. For example, calling “swirling” eyes and “magnetic” fingers a “misunderstanding” is to connote to Irv that he shouldn’t expect to experience such a thing and yet Blum leaves open the possibility by saying that a prior client insisted his eyes were swirling. Therefore there are no parameters for a phenomenology of hypnosis; it can be whatever the hypnotist insists so long as the subject accepts

the proposition. In this case Blum hasn't established clear parameters for a phenomenology of hypnosis but has left it wide open while giving the illusion that he has defined it by teasing the imagination while at the same time denying any sort of fantastical phenomenological claims.

In **excerpt 2.2** Blum asks Irv if he—Irv—thinks “it’s possible to unconsciously control” his own metabolism. Irv impersonally and dispassionately responds “anything’s possible.” Blum aggressively restates Irv’s declaration “ANY THING IS POSSIBLE” then states in an asking way, “OK?” Irv nods his head and more assuredly states “with an open mind anything’s possible.” By the end of the dialogue they’re both enthusiastically laughing at the “miracles” they’re going to work together. The sequence of the actions within the excerpt appears to be a behavioral manifestation of attitude change as Irv takes on a more assuring and enthusiastic behavior towards his expectations for hypnosis. Irv has adopted of his own accord—without physical coercion—a more enthusiastic position towards hypnosis. But there is a coercive element here to the extent that Irv has undertaken the interaction of hypnosis understanding there exists an obligation to act on the hypnotist’s directives and that not doing so is to breach an agreement. For practical purposes, Irv has adopted his more enthusiastic attitude about hypnosis of his own volition in interaction with Blum, who plays a very persuasive role. This position satisfies Cooper’s (2012) condition for cognitive dissonance that the actor accepts responsibility for his or her actions. The actor, Irv, now faces dissonance between his internal state and his external behavior; the hypnotist—Blum—guides and promotes the latter from which the former should conform and confirm. The excerpt ends with Blum declaring that hypnosis is a “cooperative venture,” which explicates Irv’s obligations to accept Blum’s declaratives. The hypnotist clearly has the opportunity to mold the internal state of the subject by dictating the subject’s behavior; if the subject cooperates but doesn’t agree then dissonance exists between attitude and behavior. The subject could just go along with the act; however, such would be counter-intuitive and inconsistent with the proposition that individuals act on belief. The subject freely accepts his or her own behavior because of the implicit obligation entailed by accepting the role of being a “subject” to hypnosis which thereby provides a strong motive for Irv to accept his own amiability towards Blum’s declaratives as attribution of belief.

In **excerpt 2.3**, Blum's intent seems to focus on persuading Irv to close his eyes because the hypnotic state compels them to close. As discussed earlier when elaborating **excerpt 1.2**, popular culture seems to metaphorically equate hypnosis with sleep. Metaphorically is not the same as analogous or sameness but of a representational character that resembles another quality closely enough as to constitute a relationship by abstract similarity. To the observer, hypnosis has a somnolent quality and may therefore appear to share an analogous relationship with sleep but hypnosis researchers of the social cognitive tradition explicitly deny any sort of special trance (e.g., Bayne, 2007). The reason for the sleep analogy is that hypnosis routines have subjects close their eyes; compliance with the hypnotist's request to close eyes is the signification that hypnosis is occurring. The request from the hypnotist to the subject to close his or her eyes is often not an explicit and straightforward demand but a conditional demand contingent on the subject experiencing a subjective state; thus, closing the eyes validates the subject's own subjective state. It is now on Blum to bring Irv to close his eyes in a manner as to validate the subjective state proposed by the hypnotist as hypnosis.

In excerpt 2.3, there was considerable space between the time Blum first suggested that Irv close his eyes and when he actually did. Dissonance is one possible interpretation of the delay, but the delay is the observation. Irv may simply have closed his eyes when he was ready, as Blum permitted; he may also have been fatigued, concentrated on the instructions, uncertain about the appropriate moment, or reluctant to enact the expected response. What the eventual compliance demonstrates is that Irv understood the direction in which the interaction was moving. A less obvious pressure also imposed upon him: should he never close his eyes, he risks negating the role of satisfactory subject, which entails responsiveness to the hypnotist's directives. In order to fulfill that role, Irv must eventually close his eyes, but he does so on terms connoted in Blum's declaratives that equate the act with trance, a subjective state. The sequence is therefore consistent with the proposed movement from uncertainty to outward accommodation, while the claim that cognitive dissonance mediates that movement remains a hypothesis requiring independent evidence.

Here Gilbert's (1989) elaboration of Durkheim's social facts has special significance, provided the analogy is stated carefully. Gilbert's full account of joint acceptance requires openly expressed willingness to

accept a proposition together; mere silence cannot establish that condition. Within the present interactions, however, an unchallenged declarative combined with responsive conduct can create a working presumption that the proposition will be accommodated for the purposes of the encounter. Once a participant repeatedly acts in accord with that propositional reality, the proposer has increasing practical reason to expect its maintenance. An interactional commitment may therefore emerge without proving either private belief or a formal Gilbertian joint commitment. There is also a longing to behave meaningfully (Pyszczynski et al., 2003) and authentically (Robinson & Smith-Lovin, 2006); such self-attributions arise from and are measured against the social order. Irv is in this limited sense affirming the situated order in which he has agreed to participate. When he closes his eyes as the hypnotist requires, he acts of his own accord but under an evident social expectation. This produces an important qualification for the dissonance model. If the expectation is experienced as sufficient external pressure, the subject can explain his behavior as mere compliance and need not alter his attitude. The proposed mechanism should therefore be strongest when the subject experiences cooperation as freely chosen, regards the behavior as meaningful, and lacks an adequate explanation for why he has enacted a state he does not privately recognize. Under those conditions, accepting hypnosis as the cause of the behavior becomes an economical remedy for the discrepancy. Irv might then attribute both his behavior and subjective state to the sequence of actions imposed upon him—and to which he has agreed—as hypnosis.

Our last case centers on the methods proposed by street performer Anthony Jacquin whose instructional video features performances by several hypnotists using his methodology of “impromptu hypnosis”—the video is marketed primarily to mentalists and magicians. The findings for this case were based on Jacquin’s instructional lecture and relied heavily on the observation of a performance by Amit Badiani. While there were many features similar to the other cases such as a brief “pre-talk,” soliciting cooperation, and educating the subject on what to expect there were also some notable differences. Jacquin’s approach is quick in that he might ask you to try an exercise such as “magnetic fingers” (described in Findings) and if you show compliance—suggestibility—he might instantly require you to slump into “SLEEP.” Though it shares many features with the other cases there is no prolonged

visualization or relaxation but rather a quick exercise or two of “suggestibility” and if the subject demonstrates “skill” he or she is commanded quickly into a dramatic “trance.”

In **excerpt 3.B.2** the hypnotist Badiani stands in the center of a large crowd of youths who form a circle around him. After telling the group he is going to test their “concentration and imagination” he has them put their hands clasped in front of them with forefingers sticking out about an inch apart from one another and asks them to focus on the space between them because—he elaborates—“in a minute your fingers are going to go closer and closer together.” He further instructs, “When they touch close your eyes.” Some people’s fingers are already touching one another and Badiani walks around the circle and grabs those whose fingers are touching by the back of the head, pulls them forward, while commanding “sleep.” Interestingly, several subjects show confusion. The first subject looks up and then looks to each person at his side and gestures as if nothing happened but he fails to solicit a response and then after failing to gain support soberly closes his eyes as if in a deep trance. The sequence of actions seems eerily similar to those of the famous Asch (1951) experiments.

Another participant complied but seemed to show a muted grin—an expression of playful cooperation but disbelief. Expressions are not proof of wakefulness because people make many expressions in their sleep. Nonetheless, I propose that the participants are in full waking consciousness. Subject 1’s initial doubt and then compliance after the fact that nobody endorsed his doubt is a testament that the state that exists for that particular subject is not any sort of paraconsciousness but a sense of obligation. Another subject opened her eyes in a state of confusion over whether or not the hypnotist was talking to her and not being able to resolve the confusion ended up walking out. Such seems to indicate that that subject was in a state of intending cooperation as opposed to paraconsciousness, at-least prior to her walking away. Consciousness is indeed altered by the tacit social contract to perform and when such performance becomes counter-intuitive it should arouse dissonance, which causes the subjects to attribute their experience not to personal agency but to the culturally defined phenomenon that has counter-intuitively dictated their behaviors—hypnosis. At the point at which an individual makes this attribution of his or her own behavior being the result of hypnosis, then it is reasonable to define their consciousness as altered; however, it is not an altered state that makes

hypnosis but alterations of metacognition that lead to an externalized attribution of agency in belief in the efficacy of the phenomenon of the situation of hypnosis itself.

### Tenets of the Dissonance Theory of Hypnosis

Having reviewed some basic literature on hypnosis I proposed that conventional mechanics of human behavior as understood by social scientists, social philosophers, and social psychologists might elaborate the phenomenon of hypnosis better than existent theory specific to hypnosis. I suggested a few theoretical lenses in the section on background literature that are widely influential and have significant explanatory power over the behavior that has been described and discussed. A dissonance theory of hypnosis can now be delineated. Dissonance theory of hypnosis begins with the thesis that hypnosis is a cultural phenomenon, a mental model, a social representation, which is induced by virtue of an actor attributing his experience to hypnosis, most often as the result of following the directives of a hypnotist, who is purported to bring about the experience of hypnosis by a ritual of words and directives. The hypnotist is able to induce the phenomenon because of the following...

1. The subject shares a social representation of the phenomenon with the hypnotist. Constituting the social representation are various beliefs about what hypnosis is and is not. The subject is assumed to understand what hypnosis looks like and to know, at least roughly, how to emulate it. Both subject and hypnotist take roles that are defined by their beliefs towards those roles. The subject understands his or her role is submissive to the hypnotist. The hypnotist actively educates the subject thereby shaping his expectations about what s/he will experience or how s/he will behave. The hypnotist is thus actively engaged in persuasively shaping the mental representations of the subject.
2. The subject outwardly accommodates the declaratives and propositional reality of the hypnotist. In terms informed by Gilbert's (1989) social facts, the subject must permit the

hypnotist's propositions to function as the working reality of the encounter, although silence by itself does not establish full joint acceptance or private belief. If the subject is told that s/he is getting tired and can no longer keep the eyes open, yet cannot be brought by persuasion to close them, the hypnotist has failed to obtain the conduct by which hypnosis is publicly recognized. The hypnotist often explicitly conditions success on cooperation, and cooperation does indeed seem necessary. We can therefore define hypnosis behaviorally as an actor—the subject—acting on another actor's—the hypnotist's—directives or suggestions within a shared interpretive frame. If the subject understands and accepts the role, s/he becomes increasingly expected to accommodate the hypnotist's declaratives and directives.

3. Hypnosis is a sequential affair. The role of subject entails s/he commits to acting on the hypnotist's "suggestions," which may begin with modest requests such as taking deep breaths and relaxing. Suggestions may escalate to drastic and counter intuitive demands. Once the subject has accepted his role as defined by hypnotist and situation, he may be thrust into hypnosis rather quickly. The sequence is in the very least, acceptance of a proposition, carrying out an action supporting the proposition, and when successful, increased commitment to the validity of the proposition.
4. The fact that the subject commits to an action—even if only mental in nature—testifies that the subject is sufficiently motivated to participate. If the hypnotist demands that the subject close his or her eyes, then s/he must do so or be brought to do so by persuasion alone, or else hypnosis has failed at the level of observable performance. The subject is not physically or legally constrained and ordinarily remains free to leave, although the interaction can impose substantial social pressure. The subject often

believes there are benefits to conforming: experiencing an altered state, leaving behind inhibitions, or receiving post-hypnotic suggestions for physiological or psychological problems. Not following a suggestion may also threaten the role and interactional commitment already undertaken. Yet the distinction between pressure and experienced choice is crucial. If the subject regards obligation as a sufficient reason for compliance, behavior need not produce dissonance; if the subject regards the behavior as freely chosen and meaningful while privately doubting its reality, the conditions proposed for dissonance become stronger. The model therefore depends not on compulsion alone but on cooperation experienced as sufficiently voluntary to require self-explanation.

5. A subject's attribution that s/he is in a hypnotic state is a matter of belief that may be influenced by his or her own counter-intuitive behavior. I propose cognitive dissonance as the mechanism by which behavior that lacks an adequate external explanation is resolved in favor of the hypnotic interpretation. This formulation yields a prediction: when cooperation is experienced as voluntary, more drastic or counter-intuitive compliance should produce stronger belief in and attribution of experience to hypnosis. The prediction distinguishes the proposed mechanism from the descriptive observation that compliance merely occurs and makes the claim subject to experimental test.
6. The routine is counter-intuitive to ordinary conduct and is undertaken in the expectation of an altered state. Because performing the routine does not by itself deliver that state, a discrepancy opens between the action taken and the result sought, and the very fact of having performed the routine functions as evidence to the subject that the state must be genuine. Dissonance intensifies against the counter-intuitiveness of the situation until it is resolved in the direction of belief, at which point the phenomenology of trance is

realized and the subject's meta-cognition is restructured to give credence to the mental representations induced by interaction with the hypnotist. The dissonance is not incidental to this process; it is generated by the structure of the induction itself, which is why it arises even in self-hypnosis, where no social compliance is at stake and a high-belief practitioner runs the routine alone. Skepticism must be suppressed to maintain the altered perception of reality that justifies the behavioral sequence leading to the current state of belief. What remains open to empirical test is not whether dissonance is present but whether, and under what conditions, its resolution produces the reported phenomenology. Motives for actively maintaining an altered perception of reality may include the need to preserve self-esteem, the need to view one's actions as significant, and an existentially driven disposition to believe in a counter-intuitive reality (Solomon, Greenberg, Pyszczynski, Cohen, & Ogilvie, 2010).

If dissonance is the engine I claim it to be, then the model must say what happens when an induction does not take, and the answer should fall out of the tenets already stated rather than be added on. I propose two failure branches, and they are not of the same kind. In the first, the subject breaks the act outright and states plainly that s/he is not going along. In the second, the subject performs the routine to completion but denies that any phenomenology of trance was experienced. The first branch is not really a failed induction at all. By tenet four, commitment to the action is what testifies to sufficient motivation, and the mechanism depends on cooperation the subject experiences as voluntary. The subject who refuses from the outset never makes that commitment, so no gap opens between action taken and result sought, and the dissonance I have described is never generated. Restated: this subject falls outside the conditions under which the mechanism operates, and thus tells us where the mechanism begins rather than testing whether it works.

The second branch is the one that tests the theory, because this subject has done exactly what tenet three describes. S/he has carried out the counter-intuitive actions in sequence and accumulated the very

commitments that I claim should generate mounting dissonance, yet reports no altered state. My model does not treat this as a case the dissonance failed to appear, but as a case in which it resolved in the other available direction. A person who has performed the whole routine and felt nothing may reduce the resulting tension not by concluding s/he was hypnotized but by concluding the routine does not work, or that s/he is a poor subject, or that s/he was merely being agreeable. That is still dissonance reduction; it simply discharges the tension through an attitude toward the behavior instead of belief in the state. What governs which direction the resolution takes is the same variable introduced in tenet five. Where cooperation is experienced as freely chosen, the pressure to explain one's own counter-intuitive conduct pushes resolution towards belief in the hypnotic state; where the sense of external pressure remains salient, the explanation "I was only complying" stays available and resolution turns away from trance. The mechanism therefore predicts both the successful induction and its failure from a single principle, and it is falsified not by the subject who refuses, but by the subject who freely and meaningfully completes the escalating sequence and still, reliably, attributes nothing of the experience to hypnosis.

The conditions for dissonance outlined by Joel Cooper (2012)—(a.) behavior contradictory to the beliefs or attitudes of the actor, (b.) the actor's belief that the behavior is of his or her own volition, and (c.) some foresight of the behavior's entailments—are represented as theoretical requirements in the tenets described. The cases provide behavioral indicators that are consistent with those requirements, including voluntary participation, hesitation, escalating commitment, and retrospective uncertainty about agency. They do not permit direct measurement of contradictory beliefs, experienced choice, arousal, or subsequent attitude change. The strength of the case is therefore not that dissonance has been observed as an inner state, but that hypnosis creates a situation in which its arousal is plausible and its resolution provides a parsimonious explanation for some accounts of profound experience. The observations demonstrate that subjects are predisposed to behave according to a propositional reality framed by the hypnotist. That reality can become counter-intuitive as the performance escalates. It is not a far stretch to theorize that a subject's voluntary action on counter-intuitive declaratives may motivate attitudes to conform to behavior because the behavior requires explanation. Nevertheless,

cooperation, expectancy, fatigue, ideomotor response, or strategic role enactment may also account for particular actions. The present study generates a mechanism and predictions; it does not by observation alone adjudicate among every competing explanation.

### **Situating Dissonance Theory of Hypnosis in the Broader Literature**

From the three cases reviewed, six tenets—conditions—constituting a candidate causal mechanism for hypnosis are proposed on the basis of careful observation, considered alongside relevant theory in social behavior and research specific to hypnosis. The cases establish the interactional sequence from which the mechanism is inferred; experimental inquiry remains necessary to determine whether cognitive dissonance mediates the resulting attributions.

A limiting case sharpens the point. Consider self-hypnosis practiced by someone who firmly believes in it. Here the social scaffolding is stripped away entirely: there is no hypnotist to obey, no audience to satisfy, no unchallenged declarative to uphold, and no Gilbertian obligation to another party. The practitioner simply performs the routine alone. Yet the essential structure that I have argued produces dissonance remains fully intact. The routine is counter-intuitive to ordinary conduct; it is undertaken in the expectation of an altered state; and the bare performance of the routine does not, by itself, deliver the phenomenology of trance. The practitioner is left holding precisely the discrepancy on which the mechanism depends, that between the actions carried out and the experience sought.

This case matters because it isolates the variable. Social pressure, deindividuation, and joint commitment can each plausibly account for the group cases, and I do not dispute that they operate there. But if the mechanism truly hinged on those social factors, self-hypnosis should not work at all, since none of them are present. That sincere self-hypnosis is nonetheless reported to succeed indicates that the driver lies deeper than social obligation. The practitioner's own completed actions become the evidence to themselves that the state must be legitimate, and it is the gap between those actions and the not-yet-arriving experience that creates the dissonance and heightens it, until its resolution issues in the phenomenology of trance. The social factors examined in the observational cases are best

understood, then, not as the cause of hypnosis but as conditions that intensify a dissonance the induction would generate in any event.

I began my inquiry with a nominal theoretical foundation in what is called the sociocognitive or social cognitive approach to hypnosis, which as a tradition denies hypnosis as a distinct or special state of consciousness. My purpose is not to deny hypnosis as a state of consciousness but to resolve two themes of the social cognitive tradition, hypnosis as role enactment as proposed by Theodore Sarbin (1950) and his contemporary William Coe (1991) and hypnosis as persuasion as proposed by Graham Wagstaff (1981, 1991). While it is hard to deny that hypnosis is a form of role enactment that utilizes persuasion, the mechanisms that make them so have not been sufficiently theorized in terms of cognitive mechanics. Sarbin elaborates hypnosis as a situational narrative that is actively maintained by “self-deception,” because self-deception is necessary for hypnotic effects such as hypnotic amnesia. Sarbin and Coe (1991) are on the brink of describing cognitive dissonance as a mechanism for attribution and belief but fall just shy of making that leap. Wagstaff (1991) views hypnosis as a social cultural phenomenon, which one complies with—appealing to classic social psychology experiments such as those of Solomon Asch (1951) and Stanley Milgram (1974)—and speculates that whether one attributes the legitimacy of the experience depends on the degree of their expectations, with more reasonable expectations producing greater attributions. For instance, if one can visualize an object on cue and is content with this expectation of hypnosis then they can attribute their visualization as a hallucination; if on the other hand, a subject expects to experience a true hallucination, they may comply with the performance but feel that the experience was without efficacy. I agree with Wagstaff that social dynamics of compliance are essential to hypnosis as are expectations; I also agree with Wagstaff’s connotation that hypnosis is a mere matter of interpretation on the part of the subject (at least on a metacognitive level); however, I don’t believe Wagstaff has sufficiently modeled the social cognitive dynamics of his assertions and I’m skeptical of the position that Wagstaff seems to connote in his position on expectations and that such are not externalized and perceived but interpreted within some scope of rationalization against an otherwise unchanging perception of reality. Delusions and hallucinations do occur and these are speculated to have a basis in metacognition (A. P. Morrison, 2001)

and we can reasonably assume that social interaction can alter metacognition and can in fact bring about alterations in perception. My research here aims to explain exactly how, in terms of social cognitive mechanics, an individual adopts a hypnotized role, the dynamics of persuasion to that effect, and the potential outcomes upon the subject's cognitive system—including the potential for truly altered perception.

It is fair to mention that the seeming effects of hypnosis may belong to multiple causes. For instance, I have mentioned the hypothesis that there exists shared circuitry within the neurological substrate that controls movement, perception, and imagination (Hurley, 2005), which explains the ideomotor response. As demonstrated in the second excerpt from the third case, when subjects are asked to imagine a force pulling their forefingers together, the majority will find their fingers becoming closer—an example of the ideomotor response. The ideomotor response need not equate with hypnosis but does serve to effectively persuade subjects of the efficacy of hypnotic suggestion. The therapeutic efficacy of hypnosis may also depend on practical coaching such as assisting the participant with goal setting and providing support and encouragement. Sports psychologists believe that mentally imagining an activity helps to prepare for its successful execution (Holmes & Collins, 2001), which would have parallels with the shared circuit hypothesis. It may be that simply imagining success—common in therapeutic hypnosis—in terms of goal setting leads to positive effects. The extent to which one believes in hypnosis would also have a placebo effect on certain ailments and motivate needed adjustments to behavior. Indeed, one psychologist has suggested that all types of psychotherapy are efficacious by means of placebo (Evans, 2004). Not to mention the fact that hypnosis researchers of the social cognitive tradition have been pointing out that people are about as equally suggestible whether or not they have been through a hypnotic induction (Spanos, 1991). My suggestion here is that hypnosis as I have defined it—a state of attributing one's cognition and behavior to a state—is not limited in therapeutic efficacy on those same terms. In other words, directed behaviors associated with hypnosis may have positive benefits in their own right; it is, however, a mistake to define hypnosis by visualization or ideomotor responses, which exists independent of the distinct and readily identifiable sociocultural phenomenon known as hypnosis, which it may assist.

I have posited that hypnosis involves a series of escalating and often counter-intuitive commitments, which creates dissonance towards a social cultural role construct, which the subject reenacts. I have not found any evidence in observation that hypnosis is a biologically natural response—a unique cognitive state arising from a neurological basis—induced by either guidance or natural stimuli specific to hypnosis. “Unique” is the qualifying term to the last statement as I’m not suggesting that hypnosis is not without a state but that it is not a uniquely hypnotic state. In each case I observed, it was clear that subjects do not recreate the hypnotic role in a vacuum but rather possess some notions or expectations about hypnosis. The interaction between subject and hypnotist redefines some of those notions and expectations and an assumed contract is created between subject and hypnotist to act on those notions in accord with the hypnotist’s directives. The subject is tacitly obliged to do as the hypnotist directs. In this manner, the hypnotic state is analogous with those of the participants of the famous Milgram experiment. In the Milgram experiment (1963; Stanley Milgram, 1974), a participant believes s/he is part of an experiment on learning and is given the task of delivering increasingly higher voltage shocks to another participant—in fact, an actor—when that pseudo-participant (confederate) answers a question incorrectly; as the experiment continues the confederate progressively responds incorrectly, requiring that the participant deliver shocks of increasing intensity. Despite the participant’s reluctance and the horrible screams of the actor who pleads to be released, the experimenter—wearing a white lab coat—demands that the experiment continues and more often than not, the participant reluctantly proceeds.

Milgram argued that his experiment demonstrated a strong compulsion to defer to authority in unpleasant situations. A cognitive dissonance interpretation of the Milgram experiment by Dominic Parker (2003) notes that most “disobedient” participants refuse to continue upon the confederate’s initial request to be released, after which it is much more likely that participants will continue. Parker (2003) writes, “after ignoring his initial request, it became increasingly difficult to acknowledge the validity of his subsequent pleas and to justify a new course of action.” “Increasingly” is a key term, which I assume is wholly correct as to say that after a denial of each subsequent plea it becomes even increasingly harder to justify discontinuance of the subject’s obligations to the experiment because they

have committed to the action; otherwise, the dissonance would be too great. Hypnosis is generally a different situation, which doesn't involve inflicting harm upon another but it is a counter intuitive situation that involves the subject acting on the hypnotist's directives and with each act of compliance there is even further obligation upon the subject to continue the act.

Cognitive dissonance need not have malicious consequences. As early as 1979, cognitive dissonance was advocated for therapeutic exploitation (Jensen, 1979). Joel Cooper and Danny Axom (1985) proposed that the efficacy of psychotherapy hinges on attitude change by dissonance reduction; they conducted an experiment on 52 patients using two "bogus" therapies, one of which required significant effort on the part of the participant while the control group was a low-effort therapy. The postulation being that effort creates greater personal investment and therefore greater dissonance when the effortful act is contradictory to the current attitude-disposition of the participant. The Cooper and Axom experiment showed positive results for the experimental group, thus suggesting that increased personal investment leads to therapeutically beneficial behavioral changes. Cooper (2012) suggests that cognitive dissonance is an active element of many psychotherapies and advocates modifying psychotherapy to take advantage of dissonance. It is, of course, relevant and of interest, that hypnosis serves two roles: therapeutic and entertainment. I have proposed that dissonance leads to an attribution of the hypnotic state on the part of the subject but it may also reinforce the goals of therapeutic hypnosis though presumably for such to occur the hypnotherapist must bring the subject to make significant personal investments that counter the conflicting behavior. In the least, experiments that seem to validate the efficacy of self-invested effort in psychotherapy also broadly support the claim that dissonance arousal towards goal directed behavior leads to greater conformity to the desired behavior.

Social cognitive theorists have implicated goal-motivated behavior in accounting for the hidden-observer effect. James Stevenson (1976) first described the hidden observer effect as the result of disassociation. Proponents of the influential neodissociation theory of hypnosis proposed the hidden-observer effect as evidence for multiple streams of consciousness (Ernest R Hilgard, Morgan, & Macdonald, 1975; Knox, Hilgard, & Morgan, 1974). Hilgard's (1991) neodissociation theory proposes multiple streams of consciousness—described as "cognitive structures"—subordinated to an "executive

ego.” The hidden observer is, according to the neodissociation perspective of hypnosis, a compartmentalized stream of consciousness suppressed by the “executive ego” and relegated to an alternative hypnotic stream of consciousness. Its discovery comes from the fact that patients undergoing hypnotic analgesia are able to report pain or memory of pain by “automatic-writing” or by “automatic talking” when given the suggestion that they do so if some part of them feels or felt pain though they continue to assert that their hypnotic-self somehow does not feel the pain (Ernest R. Hilgard, 1991). Social cognitive theorist Nicholas Spanos (1991) interprets the hidden-observer effect as “goal directed” behavior and has tested the assumption by experimental manipulation in which a group undergoing hypnosis received the suggestion that some part of them would “feel pain” and retain memory but that they would not be conscious of that part of themselves while the experimental group was told the same thing with the exception that the hidden part of them would be “deeply hidden.” Those in the experimental group provided reports that described being “less aware” of the pain thus suggesting willful effort that mirrors the phrasing of the suggestion. Supporting the proposition that hypnotic amnesia is the result of motivation over disassociation are studies that show that subjects will breach amnesia when they believe doing so demonstrates being an excellent subject (John F Kihlstrom, Evans, Orne, & Orne, 1980; Spanos, Radtke, & Bertrand, 1984).

I suggest here that the hidden observer effect is the result of motivated cognitive dissonance resolution in favor of the hypnotic experience. During the course of transcribing videos for the current study, an associate described to me his experience of stage hypnosis where a hypnotist induced hallucinations that he had to act on, which he described as simultaneously experiencing and yet knowing nothing was there. Graham Wagstaff (1991) has interpreted some of the hidden observer subject reports used by neodissociation researchers as discursive evidence to support a motivated response as opposed to a divided self; for instance subjects often report from their hidden observer self as speaking “honestly,” “the truth,” and “the way things really are” as to suggest they “really” knew the truth. Wagstaff’s observation need not negate the truth of the hypnotic subjects’ experiences as the subject has an alternative construct of reality that occurs simultaneously with a non-hypnotic reality, which in turn creates dissonance towards the actions of behaving as if in a hypnotic state—the alternative

construct of reality—thus motivating dissonance resolution in favor of attributing self-behavior to the hypnotic state. A divided stream of consciousness is not needed, as the subject need only prefer the motivated reality and is free to resolve the dissonance of his or her memory in favor of the preferred reality afterwards.

Tim Bayne (2007) has pointed to “a nasty little problem” in relying on hidden observer reports, which is that they are ultimately produced by a single subject purporting a multiple identity but treated as if it is indeed an alternate identity producing the report. From Bayne’s perspective, the researcher should default to skepticism in taking such claims at face value. Indeed, what guarantees a distinct stream of consciousness in the hidden observers’ reports? Bayne takes an approach suggested by Spanos in elaborating the experiential reality of the hidden observer phenomena, that it is possible for a “switch” in conscious content to occur, that is, that the subject simply becomes aware of content rather than it existing within a separate stream of consciousness. Bayne describes Ernest Hilgard’s neodissociation as a “bottom-up” account of the hidden-observer phenomenon while calling Nicholas Spanos’ social cognitive “unity of conscious account”—a denial of divided consciousness—as being “top-down.” I presume “bottom-up” refers to the assumption of innate structures or processes as causal while “top-down” refers to sensory input as causal. I propose a different top-down approach in suggesting that the subject’s attribution of his or her behavior to the hypnotic state leads to changes in meta-cognition. My own approach, of course, assumes certain bottom-up processes but the emphasis is that attribution—perception—leads to believed-in states as opposed to an inherent state being the state itself.

While my observations cannot validate hypnotic hallucinations or directly reveal subjective states, they do suggest that participants often display reservation and then progress into a more agreeable disposition, seemingly confirming what the hypnotist declares. These observations can be described conservatively as dyadic interactional incongruence followed by conformance: a subject hesitates or behaves out of unity with the hypnotist’s directive and then complies. I reserve cognitive dissonance for the hypothesized intrapersonal process that may accompany this visible sequence. The distinction matters because hesitation does not necessarily demonstrate dissonance, and compliance does not necessarily demonstrate its resolution. I suggest that hypnosis often begins with some uncertainty and

progresses towards belief as the subject confronts his or her own behavior, but this progression must ultimately be established through evidence of subjective attribution rather than behavior alone. Odd attributions and even hallucinations are possible from top-down processes if phenomena such as mass delusions and mass psychogenic illness are taken as evidence for vulnerability in stressed but otherwise healthy populations (for a review see Bartholomew, 2001). To consider whether hypnosis can produce true hallucinations and confabulations requires deference to literature specifically pertaining to cognitive theories of hallucinations as well as research capable of separating dissonance from alternative processes.

Of particular interest is the proposition that cognitive dissonance resulting from metacognitive beliefs such as the rigid belief that one should not have intrusive thoughts produces externalized attributions of those thoughts as posited by Anthony Morrison and colleagues (1995). Morrison (2001) suggests that intrusive thoughts undergo intrapersonal interpretation with meta-cognitive, physiological, social knowledge, and situational factors all weighing in on how the intrusive thought is attributed with Morrison further implicating dissonance between incongruent beliefs and psychotic attributions; for instance, when thoughts conflict with moral and religious beliefs they might be attributed to supernatural temptations. One study supporting Morrison's model sampled the metacognitive beliefs of several groups including psychiatric patients currently experiencing hallucinations, individuals that once hallucinated but no longer do so, schizophrenics, individuals that have never hallucinated, and patients suffering from obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and found strong correlations between the metacognitive beliefs of current hallucinators and individuals suffering obsessive-compulsive disorder—particularly superstitious beliefs—which is taken as evidence supporting the dissonance by intrusive thought model because OCD is more or less defined by uncontrollable and anxiety provoking thoughts (Garcia-Montes, Perez-Alvarez, Balbuena, Garcelan, & Cangas, 2006).

The same dynamic easily transfers to the case of hypnosis if the average person has a belief that they should not act a certain way unless they believe it appropriate to do so and furthermore believe they should not act without sincerity. If the dissonance and metacognition theory of hallucinations has any basis in reality then the aforementioned scenario could cause an attribution of self-behavior to the

act of hypnosis and could also cause an externalization of the hypnotist's suggestions as well as a reconfiguration of memory to support the reality of the experience—confabulation. I propose that the subject cannot simply immerse in an alternate reality without dissonance because of the impositions of reality and that the resolution of dissonance in favor of the alternate reality is relatively equivalent to delusion. While a phrase such as “delusion” may sound psychiatrically derogatory, I propose that it is human nature to default to one's worldview when facing confounds to that very worldview because culture provides—and is felt—as an existential extension of the self, as the source of meaning (Greenberg & Arndt, 2012). This is to say that socially induced delusions are more the norm than the exception and perhaps no one has immunity, just as no individual is wholly rational. The question remaining is why do individuals so readily invest in, and come to believe, the counter-intuitive reality of hypnosis?

In terms of adaptation, there are two questions to ask. Why do individuals comply with the situation of hypnosis? Why do individuals undergoing hypnosis attribute their behavior and mental state to hypnosis? There are innumerable perspectives to consider but for the sake of brevity, I will make three postulations based on what I consider reasonable accounts and to which many of those “innumerable perspectives” could be lumped. First: human beings being social animals whose success is largely due to an adaption for social cooperation and coordination and therefore have a disposition for social harmony (particularly but not exclusively towards the intragroup dynamic), which manifests as obedience to authority, social conformity, and most importantly, reciprocation and obligation to social indebtedness (Cosmides & Tooby, 2005; Fiske & Fiske, 2010; Gilbert, 1989; Hogg, 2012; Mark Van Vugt, 2004; Rappaport, 1999; Tajfel, 1982). Second: humans strive for legitimization of self, which existentially derives from sociality, culture and situated experience (Becker, 1971; Burke & Stryker, 2000; Echterhoff, 2012; Pyszczynski et al., 2003). Third: individuals engage in behavior because they attribute meaning to it and have *desire* or *want* for belief in the efficacy of the meanings attached to the phenomenon (Becker, 1971; Blumer, 1969a; Solomon et al., 2010), which in part stems from the needs motivated by the first two impositions.

I have argued that the hypnotist makes declaratives that the subject outwardly accommodates, thereby creating an interactional expectation that can function like an implicit contract. Margaret Gilbert's proposition of a social fact illuminates this dynamic but should not be reduced to the claim that every open declarative becomes binding merely because it goes verbally unchallenged. Gilbert (1989) requires openly expressed willingness for joint acceptance. In the cases examined here, the relevant evidence is the combination of declaratives with a sequence of responsive conduct through which subject and hypnotist publicly coordinate a role. Humans are presumably sensitive to such conduct as, prior to vocal language, *Homo sapiens'* ancestor—a social creature—relied extensively on iconic and indexical paralanguage from which symbolic capacity evolved (Donald, 1991). The notion of keeping one's word, denoted or indexically implied, is understood in evolutionary language as the problem of free riding (Rappaport, 1999). Social living requires reciprocation and coordination; societies—whether small tribal bands or empires—fail unless traits motivating reciprocation and cooperation are deeply instilled in their members. Coordination requires more than symbolic language: it requires sensitivity to expectations based on behavioral norms in conjunction with attunement and vigilance towards the behavior and paralanguage of conspecifics. Thus, when the hypnotist solicits small commitments and the subject repeatedly responds, the sequence can create increasing pressure for consistency. This pressure is best understood as an emergent interactional commitment; whether it produces private belief through dissonance remains the cognitive hypothesis advanced by the model.

## Differential Cases

I have argued that hypnosis is a cultural phenomenon that exploits latent social cognitive dynamics. The aspects that make the phenomenon recognizable as hypnotism are cultural, while the proposed dynamics may also manifest in other persuasive phenomena. In this section, I borrow from a tradition in philosophy and the natural sciences and present three counterfactual cases—thought experiments—to examine the conceptual reach of the bare-bones proposition that the dynamics of hypnosis resemble the dynamics of other persuasive phenomena. These cases do not independently test universality; they ask whether the theory remains coherent when hypnosis-specific imagery is removed. Each hypothetical

case is a mental simulation of real-world occurrences and should be read as a source of comparison and potential falsifying questions rather than as additional empirical data.

### Ecstatic religion.

*John attends his friend Sarah's charismatic church; John is Christian and believes in God but has never attended a charismatic church. While in attendance the preacher energetically gives a brief sermon and asks if anyone "is feeling the Holy Spirit," to which there is an overwhelming affirmation from the audience. Some members of the congregation begin making unintelligible but fluid utterances, which John understands as "talking in tongues." The preacher then asks everyone to stand up and "await to receive the Holy Spirit." The preacher then proceeds down the first row of the congregation asking each participant if they are "ready to receive God," to which each replies "yes," the preacher then shouts "Lord be with you" as he energetically but lightly smacks each on the forehead; the result being that they slump back into their chairs as if knocked unconscious though some twitch. As the preacher confronts John, he recognizes that John is new and affirms to John that he will be ok; he further asks that the people behind John assist him to his seat "when it's time". The preacher then grasps both of John's shoulders while shouting "demons be out" and then swiftly smacks him on the forehead—John slumps over. After the service, John explains to Sarah that he had no control and felt as though "the lord had taken his body and exorcised the demons."*

The first variable hypnosis, or analogous behavior, requires is a cultural mental representation of the phenomenon, which guides behavior and facilitates self-attribution of the behavior. In the hypothetical situation described above, I assume John has a nominal understanding of what to expect as well as some openness towards the experience. On the other hand, I insist that if John had no comprehension of the behavior and didn't understand

that the participants attributed the behavior to supernatural forces then John would be incapable of experiencing the collective interpretation of the phenomenon as a holy and supernatural experience. It is not inconceivable that John would conform to the behavior in perceiving such behavior as normative (Cialdini, 2012) but would lack a culturally facilitated attribution of the phenomenon. In the hypothetical situation I have described, John is exposed to discourse and behavior that is easily interpreted as supporting the proposition that divine ecstasy is the cause of the ensuing behavior and thereby facilitates an emergent social representation. Given the situation, John would either have to have cultural or cognitive deficits in order not to interpret the collective meaning of the behavior, although he is free to disbelieve it.

The second variable hypnosis, or analogous behavior, requires is that John outwardly accepts the declaratives that are made in support of the phenomenon. This means only that John does not outwardly argue or discredit any propositions supporting the attribution and efficacy of the behavior. If Sarah had described the practices of her church and exclaimed them as “the work of the Holy Spirit” and John does not argue Sarah’s declaratives, Sarah will feel she can count on John to publicly support her proposition, which creates an implicit contract between her and John (Gilbert, 1989; Pettit, 2000). The same dynamic exists as John observes the church’s services without challenging them. It might be argued that John is simply being polite but when John is required to participate in the services, his politeness now obligates his uncontested compliance. If John openly argued and failed to agree on the propositions claimed by Sarah and her Church then John would not be obliged to participate in the church’s ecstatic practices or interpret his participation as significant on the same terms that church members interpret it.

The third variable hypnosis, or analogous behavior, requires is sequential commitment. In the hypothetical situation described, the first commitment is only to attend a friend's church. While attending services John has committed to not challenging any declaratives supporting the ecstatic beliefs of church members. Furthermore, John has committed to participating in the church's services and finally John has committed to interpreting his experience as divine ecstasy. If at any stage in the sequence, John fails to commit, the subsequent actions will lack the necessary momentum for further cooperation. Simply put, if John does not agree to visit Sarah's church, he won't participate in the services; if John agrees to visit Sarah's church but argues that psychology, not God, is at work, he might not fall down when the preacher attempts to exorcise the demons from him and if he refuses to commit to the possibility that God is at work, he won't attribute his compliance to supernatural causes. Presumably, each subsequent commitment tightens an implied contract to enact a role and attribute it to the prescriptions of the dictating cultural ethos. The fourth variable—motivation—is implied by the subject's continued participation and subsequent attribution of the behavior to the prescription of the dominating cultural beliefs dictating the situation.

The fifth variable hypnosis, or analogous behavior, requires—specifically in regards to inducing belief—is counter-intuitive behavior, which creates cognitive dissonance and forces the participant to resolve the dissonance in favor of the cultural belief facilitating the behavior. The prior four variables have induced the participant's behavior but behavior does not necessarily align with the subjective state; however, if there is incongruence between behavior and subjectivity and the behavior is self-willed then dissonance will occur (Cooper, 2012). The dissonance is increased to the extent that the subject is obligated to uphold the propositions on which the behavior is based. In the hypothetical example, John faces the threat of being

unauthentic if he merely plays along but doesn't accept the social reality of the situation. If John does not accept the authenticity of his situation, he then faces an existential crisis in that his social reality is to him, fictitious, and false; if John plays along with the scenario but doesn't believe in its reality he then confronts his own psyche as being unauthentic. In short, if John plays along but doesn't in fact believe, he then faces the dissonance of a false world and, or, a false self, which presumably disjoins John's psychosocial equilibrium and ability to connect with others (Echterhoff, 2012).

In resolving cognitive-behavioral dissonance in favor of the cognitions motivating the behavior, John's metacognition becomes altered. Even if John anticipated a spiritual experience, the actual attribution of its reality reinforces the cultural ideology motivating the behavior. Even the most devout believers face dissonance in the ever-present possibility that religious rapture will not occur or is somehow a false experience. This postulate parallels terror management's proposition that existential anxiety motivates cultural investment because culture buffers a fear of insignificance with meaning (Becker, 1971; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1997; Solomon et al., 2010) and therefore conflicting worldviews, by consequence, threaten the self-concept (Pyszczynski et al., 2003). The process in which belief takes form and becomes entrenched within the mind roughly corresponds with social representation theory's concepts of *anchoring* and *objectification*. The process of anchoring is the process of ascribing meaning to a concept while the process of objectification is the process of turning abstractions into tangible beliefs (Rateau et al., 2012). As concepts solidify as beliefs, and beliefs become more deeply entrenched by affirming actions, the overarching cognitive architecture adjusts with the solidification and affirmation of such beliefs, with the effect being a belief-affirming filter on perception.

Note: This example is inspired by evangelical Christianity and observation of video from televised ministries such as those of Benny Hinn.

### **Dim Mak knock out.**

*Carl is a martial artist who has taken Karate for five years and avidly reads martial arts books and magazines. Carl has read stories about aikido masters being able to throw opponents to the ground without touching them as well as kung fu dim mak masters that can direct their energy and knock opponents to the floor without any physical contact. Such feats are based on a belief in qi, an ethereal life force according to traditional Asian medicine that plays a theoretical role in various martial arts as well as acupuncture. Carl has learned that a local martial artist—Sensei Ted—has mastered this ability and teaches his students how to harness the mystical force. Upon visiting Sensei Ted’s dojo, Carl witnesses various students charging Sensei Ted as he executes distant punches and throws that send them to the floor before they ever make physical contact.*

The scenario may seem fantastic but there is a martial arts teacher in Chicago who can knock his students out without physically touching them just as I have described. Though I propose the dynamics are analogous to those I’ve outlined for hypnosis, at first glance the situation seems to defeat key propositions regarding the dynamics of hypnosis. Most particularly is that the action seems that it requires no sequential commitment on the part of the individual being knocked down. Indeed, Sensei Ted proposes he can subdue an enemy by harnessing his own life force and directing it against his enemy’s life force. The presupposition is that the enemy’s thoughts have no bearing on the matter but is rather a fact of supernatural physics. The reality is that Sensei Ted’s dim mak qi is only effective on martial arts students that

are familiar with the belief. All of Sensei Ted's students were once in a position similar to Carl in that they were exposed to narratives purporting the ability and desired the ability for themselves.

The proposition is thus this: Sensei Ted would not be capable of non-physically knocking any one down to the ground without them (1.) possessing a social representation of the phenomenon (2.) agreeing to allow propositions of Ted's abilities to stand (3.) possessing varying degrees of commitment to the proposition, which begins with entertaining the plausibility of the dim mak narrative and ends with acting on an implicit obligation to conform to the action required of Sensei Ted's knock out gestures. Conformance to these three conditions forms a counter-intuitive behavior, which is falling to the floor when another individual makes the actions of a punch without the punch ever having touched the person who has just acted as if physically acted upon. Again, dissonance resolution supporting the ideology motivating the counter-intuitive behavior offers a parsimonious theory for the experientially based belief that follows the situation. Supporting the tenets that efficacy requires the opponent accept the propositions that are being made is that in two televised accounts of the martial artist on which my hypothetical account is based, he has failed to knock out skeptics.

#### **Vicarious law enforcement.**

*Jen, the manager of a fast food restaurant named Q-Burgers in the city of J-town, receives a telephone call from a man that introduces himself as "Officer Craig" of the j-town police department. Officer Craig informs Jen that one of her employees is a criminal suspect for burglary and then asks Jen to confirm whether an employee fitting a certain description is currently working. The description Officer Craig provides Jen describes an employee by the name*

*of Kelly. Officer Craig now suggests that Jen enlist the assistance of a man in order to detain Kelly in the manager's office until police arrive. Jen calls Kelly to her office and explains to her that the police are on the phone and that she has been accused of theft, which Kelly ardently denies. Jen asks an assistant manager to watch Kelly until police arrive but the assistant manager refuses, Officer Craig explains that the police are currently busy and suggests that Jen call someone on her cell phone that can watch Kelly until police arrive. Jen calls her friend Ted who lives in an apartment just a few blocks away.*

*Once Ted arrives, Jen goes back to work and leaves Ted on the phone with Officer Craig behind the closed door of her office with a teenage girl named Kelly that is being detained on charges of theft. Following Officer Craig's orders, Ted demands that Kelly strip off her clothes in order to make sure she is hiding nothing. Officer Craig then insists that Ted have Kelly do jumping jacks while nude, which he protests at first but is then told that it's a technique that compensates for a body cavity search because if she is hiding anything in her vagina it will fall out while she is doing jumping jacks. Ted speaks forcefully as Officer Craig advised and Kelly complies in fear. Nothing falls out but someone knocks on the door and Officer Craig then tells Ted to have Kelly cover up with an apron. Jen then comes into the office where Ted is watching over her detained teenage employee who is now nude, except for an apron, and asks only how long it will be until police arrive for which Ted relays a response that seems to satisfy Jen. For another hour Ted will forcibly question Kelly, demanding she confess to a crime she never committed while stripped of her clothing and her dignity. The situation escalates when Officer Craig suggests that Ted pull his penis out, demanding Kelly perform oral sex on him, and is reassured that it is an interrogation method that is meant to intimidate the suspect. Ted does as Officer Craig suggests and Kelly, now fearing for her life, complies with the act. In a short time,*

*Jen will receive a call from the district manager who she believed was simultaneously on the phone with Officer Craig only to learn that the district manager had been sleeping and knew nothing of the situation. Jen now calls police and, as an investigation proceeds, learns that the whole thing has been a criminal prank, which has resulted in forced sodomy.*

As horrible as this hypothetical situation sounds it follows very closely a real life event that occurred in 2004 at a McDonald's in a small Kentucky city in what has become known as *the strip search prank*. More remarkable is that up until that event over fifty similar situations had occurred at McDonald's and other fast-food restaurants around the U.S. over a period of a couple of years. The 2004 Kentucky incident led to a phone trace and an arrest, which ended a bizarre string of crimes that took the form of a fictitious police officer calling restaurants and ordering managers to detain employees and interrogate them, with the interrogations often becoming sexual violations. If the hypothetical scenario sounded horrible and bizarre the real life situation on which it is based is only more so in that it turns out that it's not exceptional. Ted's real life counterpart called a friend after the incident and told his friend he had done something "really bad" (Wolfson, 2005). Based on how widespread these occurrences were over several years, the hypothetical case assumes that it would not have been in Ted's nature to sexually violate another had the situation not created the circumstance.

While the prior cases have a supernatural flavor to them, this case is based on a more mundane social representation, which is the role of the police officer. Ted was brought in to help "an investigation" and took over a telephone conversation with an "officer" for whom he served as proxy. Officer Craig provided Ted with law enforcement explanations for all the actions that he was to force upon Kelly; forcing her into nudity was to search her, forcing her to do jumping jacks while nude was a form of cavity search, an hour of heated interrogation followed before

he unzipped his pants to “intimidate” her as an “interrogation tactic.” Ted would have had a vague notion of what it meant to be a police officer with any cultural competence but from a position of authority, the fictitious Officer Craig finds it easy to manipulate and educate Ted on how to handle the situation as vicarious law enforcement.

Like the other cases, the situation requires that Ted both accept and commit to Officer Craig’s propositions. Like the assistant manager, if Ted was not willing to commit to Officer Craig’s directives he would not have found himself in a state of criminal obedience. The experimental variable best explicated by this particular case is the sequence of commitments that escalated into exponentially more counter-intuitive behavior. The proposition here is that Ted could not have been simply introduced to the situation and made to expose himself and force another person into sodomy without intermediate commitments to a path of actions leading up to the event that served to alter his perception of reality. Restated: Ted would have thought the directive to expose himself absurd had it been among the first requests. However, it is *more reasonable* to ask a person to undress under the direction of the police in order to ensure they are not hiding anything suspect. The situation was from the beginning counter-intuitive but masked with a façade of authenticity with the resulting actions incrementally increasing in counter-intuitiveness. While interrogating Kelly might seem less malignant than prior actions, its prolonged duration was also counter-intuitive and consisted of increasingly counter-intuitive demands, each of which required its own justification if the path already taken was to make sense. By the time Ted exposed himself, his conduct had moved far from anything he would ordinarily have found acceptable. The escalation is consistent with the deindividuation Zimbardo describes; a secondhand account cannot establish his internal state, but it illustrates how incremental, seemingly authorized commitments can carry a person into conduct that

would have been refused outright had it been requested at the outset. This dynamic, across all cases and in comparison with seemingly analogous phenomena, is what hypnosis seems to resemble most.

Note: this case is differentiated from all others in that blatant deception and malicious intent was involved but such does not negate the dynamics involved, except to the extent the deception seemed to legitimize counter-intuitive actions in violation of another.

## Conclusion

My task has been to resolve the powers that compel individuals to enact roles that override their sense of self, to inquire through observation whether hypnosis is mere persuasion, the result of a peculiar state, or perhaps some combination of persuasion and state. Broadly, I have been concerned with the interaction of individuals, social influence, the power of situations, and the ability of some individuals to manipulate situations. I have based my analysis on social cognitive theoretical foundations, which are at odds with some varieties of interactional and discursive ontologies that view the mind and self as primarily a product of the present context (e.g. Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007b); as a discourse analyst, I followed the example of Teun A. van Dijk (Dijk, 1990, 2001) who recognizes knowledge, experience, and social cognitive structure as bearing on the situation as much as the situation bears upon itself. I suggest here that for an individual to manipulate a social situation with some prediction—as hypnotists do—there must be a pattern in human psychosocial nature to permit it. As potent as culture is there must be psychological mechanisms to compel us to its manifestations and when certain behaviors

transcend various cultural manifestations then we must entertain the possibility—if not the probability—of a universal human condition.

I have outlined what I deduced from the three cases observed as a possible “pattern in human psychosocial nature” that permits hypnotists to do what they do. This pattern is posited in the form of six tenets, and I propose that one mechanism behind attributions of alterations in consciousness may be dissonance resolution. The claim is significant because cognitive dissonance has been implicated in alterations of perception (Morrison et al., 1995) as well as profound alterations in attitude (Cooper, 2012). While hypnosis researchers of the sociocognitive tradition have argued that mundane processes are at work and are explainable through a social psychology of persuasion (Wagstaff, 1981), the present model offers a more explicit account of how role enactment, sequential commitment, and self-attribution might become linked. The observational cases support the interactional sequence but do not directly demonstrate the cognitive mechanism. As such, the current model elaborates the social cognitive tradition by producing a coherent and falsifiable account that can be tested against alternative explanations. Its principal contribution is not proof that dissonance causes hypnosis, but a specification of the conditions under which dissonance should be expected to strengthen hypnotic attribution.

Also of importance is that previously hypnotized subjects sometimes report fantastical experiences such as hallucinations. Though observation of behavioral dissonance strongly suggests cognitive dissonance at various points in the three cases of hypnosis examined, it is an even more attractive proposition that dissonance triggers belief and compliance in light of other research implicating cognitive dissonance as the cause of delusions and hallucinations. Thus, a dissonance theory of hypnosis has the potential to account for some of the more dramatic claims made by hypnotists and their subjects. It also mediates the debate about whether

hypnosis entails separate streams of consciousness by elaborating the social cognitive account of the hidden observer effect; namely that the hidden observer reflects active attempts to suppress dissonant cognitions. Thus a cognitive dissonance account of hypnotic experience is not only harmonious with social psychological theory but also with the very mysteries—the fantastical experiences reported by hypnotized subjects—hypnosis researchers have been grappling with.

There must be two collaborative lines of research to further explore the phenomenon of hypnosis and the potential role of dissonance in triggering subjective accounts of hypnotic experience. One line of research must be qualitative while the other must be experimental. Qualitative research allows us to intimately explore the details of experience. Through qualitative research it is possible to arrive at causal propositions as any time a change in a variable precedes another change there is potential causation and the case for such causal claims is strengthened with consistent observation of the sequence (Mithe & Gauchier, 2008). Not only can qualitative research yield rich descriptive data of the phenomenon it also provides some basis for causal claims when careful logic and observation are applied. Despite the claim that qualitative research can fully comply with the scientific method (Ratner, 1997), it is challenged by the fact that quantification is the standard for assessing the strength of associations; indeed, how can we begin to prescribe significance to an occurrence that seems linked to a particular phenomenon if we can't tally it up? It is thereby understandably challenging to argue that the causation of a particular phenomenon is generalizable to most instances of that phenomenon without some kind of quantification. One means of quantifying the thesis herein made is by establishing experiments that test for the explicit dynamics this paper claims exist. A vast number of hypotheses can be derived through the tenets I have

described but perhaps the most pressing is whether a person's commitment—by obligation—to a counterintuitive behavior based on a counter-intuitive claim will 1. produce increased attributions of the behavior to the claim and 2. whether the strength of those attributions can impart a sense of profoundness to participants. Such experiments would not only provide quantification and therefore generalizability of the phenomenon but also provide a clear test to falsify the hypothesis.

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## Appendix A: Transcription Symbols

This transcription system is based on and adapted from the widely used notation system used by conversation analysts, first developed by Gail Jefferson (see: Hepburn & Wiggins, 2007a; Potter, 2003; Psathas, 1995).

|                   |                                                                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| .                 | Pause                                                                   |
| ...               | Extended pause (each additional period emphasizes continuance of pause) |
| (.)               | Just noticeable pause                                                   |
| =                 | Latching or contiguous utterance                                        |
| >words<           | Increased pace                                                          |
| >>words<<         | More increased pace                                                     |
| <words>           | Decreased pace                                                          |
| <<words>>         | More decreased pace                                                     |
| <u>words</u>      | Increased volume                                                        |
| <b>WORDS</b>      | Even Louder                                                             |
| °words°           | Decreased volume                                                        |
| °°words°°         | Even quieter                                                            |
| <u>word</u>       | Emphasis                                                                |
| <b>word:</b>      | Prolonged sound                                                         |
| <b>word::</b>     | Prolonged sound (each additional colon emphasizes continuance of sound) |
| .h                | Audible in-breath                                                       |
| .hhh              | Audible in-breath (each additional h emphasizes continuance of breath)  |
| h                 | Audible out-breath                                                      |
| hhh               | Audible out-breath (each additional h emphasizes continuance of breath) |
| heh               | laugh                                                                   |
| (...) or (words?) | Inaudible or unintelligible                                             |
| ((words))         | Transcriber's comments                                                  |
| [      ]          | Interrupting utterance                                                  |

## Appendix B: Sample of Transcription with Coding

5

## Notes on Naturalistic Hypnosis Training by Peter Blum

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
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| <p>=long time ago say (.) man.. you were a skinny.. string bean...RIGHT</p> <p>Irv: [ Right</p> <p>Blum: <u>So what happened</u> ((Irv has slight smile))</p> <p>((Both laugh))</p> <p>Blum: the good life ((laugh))</p> <p>Irv: Yes ((laugh)) the good (.) family life (note 17)</p> <p>Blum: ((serious)) hmnn... family life... OK(...) not very mysterious...you know what subliminal tapes are? You've heard about them...right?=[</p> <p>Irv: ((nodding)) °°yes°° (note 17)</p> <p>Blum: = well: I really don't think that they.. they... work..except for the fact that people believe that they will work...because if you can't hear something... you can't hear it ((slight laugh))... you know so: conscious or unconscious (note 18) you can't hear it...you can't hear it...So↑ if somebody be ieves that...for instance...there are suggestions on it...ah...that they will.. ah..then follow those imaginative suggestions...So ah..it was suggested that.. make a tape or DVD for distribution ah: and it was ah... Hypnosis.. you know... for slimming down... for weight management... and at the beginning it would say (...) ea-t less..eat healthier food... and exercise more... and the rest of it would be blank ((both laugh)) (note 19)...((gesturally animated)) &gt;people would listen and fill in whatever suggestions they may need&lt; so... because it's really not that complex (note 20) unless you got a glandular disorder.. where your body isn't metabolizing things correct ly.. that does happen.. you know.. you know.. that does happen=</p> <p>Irv: [ °right° (note 21)</p> <p>Blum: =there are people... you know... their thyroid is under-active.. You give them something and it doesn't matter how much.. they still put on weight (note 22) and there are other people whose thyroid is over-active &gt;hyper thyroid&lt; and those people can eat quantities that make... you know... dieters.. really immensely jealous...because they don't gain any weight.. So what do you think? Do you think it's possible to unconsciously control your metabolism? (.) without a...a..with just a normal thyroid...give a suggestion to you metabolism to be able to digest food.. take the nutritional value you need out of it...and to process the rest... (note 23)</p> <p>Irv: I think anything is possible= (note 24)</p> | <p>17. <b>Rapport</b> / signaling <b>agreement</b> /cooperation</p> <p>18. Reference to the <b>unconscious</b> again (is integral part of <b>social representation</b>)</p> <p>19: continued <b>allusion to stereotypes</b> (social representation). Demonstrating <b>rapport</b> with mutual laugh.</p> <p>20. alluding to the simplicity of hypnosis as being simply suggestion—<b>managing expectation</b></p> <p>21. continued agreement</p> <p>22. Speaking with <b>authority</b>. <b>managing expectation</b> in suggesting that there could be a glandular disorder?</p> <p>23. <b>counter-intuitive</b> ↓</p> <p>24. Really? Could this be <b>polite agreement</b>? It seemed to me to be a restrained agreement (not overly optimistic)</p> <p>10:50 minutes into film</p> |
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**Table 1: Categories that Exist Across All Cases**

| Assumed from observations                                                                                                                                                                                | Across All Cases           | Not Universal |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Observed</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          |                            |               |
| <b>Hypnotist</b> engaged in active persuasion. Includes: Role establishment and active attempts at managing subject's expectations and experience.                                                       | <b>X</b>                   |               |
| Subject must know what behaviors are expected of him or her—defined as <b>social representations/action script</b> —includes evidence of preconceived ideas and active educating on what to do or expect | <b>X</b>                   |               |
| <b>The subject must allow the hypnotist's declaratives to stand</b>                                                                                                                                      | <b>X</b>                   |               |
| <b>The subject must be sufficiently motivated</b>                                                                                                                                                        | <b>X</b>                   |               |
| <b>The subject must conform to the hypnotist's directives</b>                                                                                                                                            | <b>X</b>                   |               |
| <b>Hypothesized</b>                                                                                                                                                                                      |                            |               |
| <b>Belief as a precondition to attributing experience to a distinct state of consciousness</b>                                                                                                           | <b>X</b><br>(hypothesized) |               |

|                                                                                                                                    |                            |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Cognitive Dissonance</b><br>motivates belief in hypnosis<br>and the attribution of<br>experience to hypnosis.<br>(hypothesized) | <b>X</b><br>(hypothesized) |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|--|