Investigating Understandings of
Hypnosis

PS 16

Abstract

Informed by conversation analysis (CA), this review on hypnosis comes at an exciting and critical time in the history of hypnosis, as hypnosis is now recognised as a clinically validated and cost-effective method for attaining physical, social and emotional wellbeing. For this reason, it is important that a review of hypnosis theories and research be conducted to promote deeper understandings of what hypnosis is. From this review, the chapter calls for educational (and other) planet shapers to scientifically investigate naturally occurring interaction between the hypnotist and the highly skilled subject in real world clinical settings so that our research might inform policy, theory, research, and practice. An implication from this review is that problems in agreeing on a single definition of hypnosis have been complicated by an overwhelming focus on the activities of only one of the participants in the hypnotic relationship, and by applying standardised experimental procedures in an effort to obtain “controlled” results. The chapter highlights the limitations with experimental studies of hypnosis interaction (between the hypnotist and the subject), and particularly deep hypnosis (between the hypnotist and the highly skilled subject). This review calls for researchers to bear in mind that we still know little when it comes to understanding the processes that are involved in interaction during deep hypnosis. The chapter concludes with a recommendation for the use of CA.

Introduction

Though considerable attention has been given to the study of hypnosis, professionals have been unable to agree on “what hypnosis is” (Rossi, 1993, p. xvii). Many describe hypnosis as the process by which a person induces an altered state of awareness in another person, but others insist that it is the product of mundane responses to suggestion. (For review, see Abela, 2000; Heap & Kirsch, 2006; Lynn & Rhue, 1991b.)

In spite of conflicting “state” and “nonstate” views, hypnosis is recognised as an increasingly popular and cost-effective effective treatment for a wide range of health problems (Jones, 1986; Lynn, Kirsch, Barabasz, Cardena, & Patterson, 2000; Nash, 2004). For example, Lynn, et al. (2000) have summarised findings on: (i) hypnosis and the treatment of pain, (ii) hypnosis in medicine, (iii) hypnosis and smoking cessation, (iv) hypnosis with children, (v) hypnosis in the treatment of trauma, and (vi) hypnosis as an adjunct to cognitive-behavioural therapy. Further, Nash (2004) has reviewed pivotal findings on: (i) hypnosis and clinical pain, (ii) hypnosis and digestive tract disorders, (iii) hypnosis as an adjunct to surgery, and (iv) hypnosis and memory.

This chapter presents a conversation analytic review of the literature on hypnosis, with a focus on theories and research that are relevant to the scientific study of the interaction between the hypnotist and the subject. The review aims to
assist the reader with an understanding of the complex and elusive nature of the phenomenon of hypnosis and the many difficulties associated with its empirical investigation. In the final part of the review limitations with current methods of inquiry are highlighted. In addition, conversation analysis’ very different method for the study of interaction during deep hypnosis is recommended for educational (and other) planet shapers with an interest in discovering how deep hypnosis works in real world clinical practice.

The review first briefly introduces conversation analysis and then presents an overview of hypnosis, with a focus on theoretical and methodological issues arising from the literature, including those associated with the difficulties of defining the phenomenon.

Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA), is an area of inquiry that is oriented towards understanding the organisation of naturally occurring interaction between people in real-world settings (Heritage, 1984). CA developed within the ethnomethodological tradition in sociology, and emerged in the 1960s through the pioneering work of Sacks and his colleagues, Schegloff and Jefferson (Heritage, 1984).

Since those early days, CA, or the study of talk-in-interaction, has devised a number of basic theoretical and methodological assumptions, as well as its own unique terminology. According to Heritage (1995, p. 394-397), the basic assumptions of conversation analysis are:

- **The primacy of ordinary conversation** “Ordinary conversation” between peers represents a fundamental domain for analysis, and a basic resource for the extension of CA into other “non-conversational” domains. Research has found that ordinary conversation differs in systematic ways from, for example, practices of communication in legal and medical institutions, where task objectives generally involve a reduction in the range of behaviour that is usually found in ordinary conversation (Drew & Heritage, 1995).

- **The use of naturally occurring recorded data in conversation analysis** CA is insistent on the use of recordings of naturally occurring data as the empirical basis for analysis. This is because naturally occurring recorded data provides a permanent record that can be transcribed and re-transcribed with the aim of recovering and reproducing the detail of the *actual* interaction under study. Further, the use of recorded data together with the availability of transcripts enables others to check the validity of the claims being made, while the recording of naturally occurring data (instead of data that is controlled and contrived for the purpose of study) ensures the validity of interactions as possible events in the real world (which, as mentioned earlier, is something that practitioners of Hypnosis have called for).

- **The structural analysis of conversational practices** Social interaction is informed by structural organisations of practices to which participants are normatively oriented. CA searches for structural organisations of interactional practices in a particular way. That is, like ethnomethodology, CA adopts the stance of “indifference” (Garfinkel, 1967), in that it abstains from taking any position on what constitutes the phenomenon under study, and gives prominence to co-participants’ understandings of their own and each others behaviours. In other words, CA sets aside preconceived theories and conceptual categories in
favour of exploring the phenomenon under study in fine detail, which, is something that hypnosis researchers have advocated (Sheehan & McConkey, 1996).

Defining Hypnosis

Hypnosis theories and research have been shaped by traditions in mainstream psychology and its related disciplines (Abela, 2000; Heap & Kirsch, 2006; Lynn & Rhue, 1991b). However, traditional attempts at reaching a commonly accepted definition of hypnosis have given cause for critique. These attempts have been responsible for the development of numerous hypnosis theories that have endeavoured to explain the phenomenon. Consequently, there has been much theoretically driven empirical research on hypnosis (Lynn, et al., 2000; Nash, Minton, & Baldridge, 1988).

Empirical research has, however, focused almost exclusively on the individual; that is, an individual-subject level of analysis (Bányai, 1998; Demosthenous, 2006; Diamond, 1984, 1987; Haley, 1958; Whitehead, 2004). This means that relatively few attempts have been made to investigate the interaction between both parties (i.e. the hypnotist and the subject). In fact, as Sheehan and Perry (1976) observed over 30 years ago, and Whitehead (2004) reminds us, “features of the hypnotist-subject relationship have been analysed much more closely in theory than in practice” (Sheehan & Perry, 1976, p. 257; Whitehead, 2004, p. 8).

Further, it is important to note that empirical research which has focused on interactional aspects of hypnosis can be divided into two camps. The first comprises experimental studies with a focus on “the interaction” between the subject and the hypnotic context (e.g., Lynn, Nash, Rhue, Frauman, & Sweeney, 1984; Nash & Spinler, 1989; Sheehan & McConkey, 1996). The second consists of experimental studies with a focus on interaction between the hypnotist and the subject (e.g., see Bányai, 1991; Bányai, 1998; Bányai, Gösi-Greguss, Vágó, Varga, & Horváth, 1990; Bányai, Mészáros, & Csókay, 1985; Field, 1964; Hearn, 1978; Varga, Bányai, & Gösi-Greguss, 1994; Whitehead, 2004).

Only interactional studies with a focus on the hypnotist and the subject form the background to this review. The following section considers issues that have been raised in relation to the difficulties of defining hypnosis, with a focus on what constitutes an adequate account of conduct in interaction in hypnosis.

Definitional Difficulties

Despite scientific interest in hypnosis, the question of what it actually is remains a matter of dispute (e.g., Heap & Kirsch, 2006; Rossi, 1993). The difficulties associated with defining hypnosis have, no doubt, been complicated by the fact that “hypnosis” has alternatively been referred to as “trance” and variously described as “hypnotic trance” or “therapeutic trance.” In addition, hypnosis has been described in terms of a person’s ability to go into different levels of trance, that is, from light trance to deep trance. The former is associated with naive subject inability while the latter distinguishes very highly accomplished or “superb” hypnotic subject capability (T.X. Barber, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c). Furthermore, the term “deep hypnosis” is an umbrella term that is synonymous...
with “somnambulistic trance” and “stuporous trance” (Erickson, 1952/1967). (For a detailed review of the observable differences between the stuporous and somnambulistic trance states of the client only, see Erickson 1967a.)

To further complicate matters, the term hypnosis refers both to the strategic techniques or procedures that are used to induce the phenomenon and the phenomenon itself (J. Barber, 2000; Nash, 2005). For instance, as Nash (2005) argues, “the terms hypnosis and hypnotized are both ambiguous, sometimes meaning a ‘procedure’ and sometimes meaning ‘the product of a procedure’” (p. 267).

The prominent contemporary definition of hypnosis provided by the 2003 American Psychological Association (APA) Division 30 exemplifies the ways in which the procedures involved in achieving hypnosis and the concept of hypnosis have been conflated:

Hypnosis typically involves an introduction to the procedure during which the subject is told that suggestions for imaginative experiences will be presented. The hypnotic induction is an extended initial suggestion for using one’s imagination, and may contain further elaborations of the introduction. A hypnotic procedure is used to encourage and evaluate responses to suggestions. When using hypnosis, one person (the subject) is guided by another (the hypnotist) to respond to suggestions for changes in subjective experience, alterations in perception, sensation, emotion, thought, or behaviour. Persons can also learn self hypnosis, which is the act of administering hypnotic procedures [not] on one’s own [but on one’s self]. If the subject responds to hypnotic suggestions, it is generally inferred that hypnosis has been induced. Many believe that hypnotic responses and experiences are characteristic of a hypnotic state. While some think that it is not necessary to use the word hypnosis as part of the hypnotic induction, others view it as essential.

Details of hypnotic procedures and suggestions will differ depending on the goals of the practitioner and the purposes of the clinical or research endeavour. Procedures traditionally involve suggestions to relax, though relaxation is not necessary for hypnosis and a wide variety of suggestions can be used including those to become more alert. Suggestions that permit the extent of hypnosis to be assessed by comparing responses to standardized scales can be used in both clinical and research settings. While the majority of individuals are responsive to at least some suggestions, scores on standardized scales range from high to negligible. Traditionally, scores are grouped into low, medium, and high categories. As is the case with other positively scaled measures of psychological constructs such as attention and awareness, the salience of evidence for having achieved hypnosis increases with the individual’s score. (Green, Barabasz, Barrett, & Montgomery, 2005, pp. 262-263)

It can be seen from the above elaborated definition that the procedures for the induction of hypnosis are given precedence and that a clear conceptualisation of the product of the procedure hypnosis itself is absent. Critiques of this and earlier definitions of hypnosis have noted this form of definitional inadequacy (see e.g., Green, et al., 2005; Hasegawa & Jamieson, 2002; Holroyd, 2003; Kirsch, 1999; Nash, 2005; Wagstaff, 2000; Zeig, 1988; Zeig & Rennick, 1991). For instance, of the definition above, Nash (2005) has remarked that it is “a clunky half-measure that leaves the definitional door wide open to unfortunate research designs that are grounded in a priori theoretical biases” (pp. 266-267).

A second critique has focused on the ways in which hypnosis has been theorised in research as evidenced in the objects of study. For instance, the study of the activities of only one of the participants in the interaction reflects an implicit theorisation of hypnosis as involving a single party. This is also reflected
in the definition above in which the actions of one participant (i.e. the hypnotist) are construed as actions and those of the other (i.e. the subject) are construed as responses only.

This is equally evident in the literature on hypnosis, which has overwhelmingly focused on explaining the actions of only one of the participants in the hypnotic event. For instance, the bulk of experimental research provides a sustained account of hypnosis as a single party activity focusing on only one side of the partnership (i.e. the subject), despite the emphasis in a number of theories of the significance of “the hypnotic relationship” (Diamond, 1984, 1987, 2000; Fourie, 1983; Watkins, 1963).

A closely related methodological issue arising out of psychological theories of hypnosis and the focus on procedures and activities of a single participant is that most research on hypnosis has been conducted using standardised experimental procedures in an effort to obtain “controlled” results. This is also reflected in the definition above in which the actions of one participant (i.e. the hypnotist) are construed as actions that can be “ignored,” while the actions of the other participant (i.e. the subject) are construed as responses that need to be assessed for individual differences in ability to achieve hypnosis (hypnotisability). It is also evident from the literature on hypnosis that standardised procedures have largely been restricted to measuring the actions of only one of the participants involved in the hypnotic induction event (i.e. the subject). (For an exception, see Whitehead, 2004.) Further, in hypnosis research the use of standardised measures prevails, despite the varied criticisms that have been raised by some researchers and many clinical practitioners of hypnosis (e.g., Bányaı, 1998; Demosthenous, 2005, 2006; Erickson, 1952/1967; Fourie, 1991; Fourie & Lifschitz, 1988; Hearn, 1978; Whitehead, 2004).

Each of the important issues outlined above have been central to the conduct of hypnosis research to date and therefore form the background to this literature review. The next section reviews major hypnosis theories, models and approaches, commensurate with their influence on advancing conceptualisations of hypnotist and subject interaction.

Major Hypnosis Theories, Models and Approaches

As one might expect from a research tradition that has spanned well over two hundred years, attempts at reaching a commonly accepted definition of hypnosis have resulted in an overabundance of theories. From these many theories only selected aspects of those theories that have directly influenced thinking and research on hypnotist and subject interaction will be considered. Each of these major theories, models, and approaches will be reviewed in terms of its developmental trajectory, its position on the question of whether explanations of hypnosis do or do not need to refer to an altered state of consciousness, and its contribution towards advancing an understanding of hypnotist and subject interaction. This section begins with a brief summary of some of the earliest theories of hypnosis in the 18th century. The relevance of these early theories of hypnosis to the current review is that they focus on providing preliminary accounts of naturally occurring actions of the hypnotist and the subject.
**Early theories**

Mesmer’s (1734–1815) theory of “animal magnetism” (now known as hypnosis) relied on initial theories that celestial bodies, the earth and human bodies influenced each other with an *invisible fluid*, and that an imbalance of this fluid in the body resulted in disease (Gauld, 1996). The theory posited that this fluid could be channelled by the magnetiser to provoke a “crisis” and then a sleep-like, “stuporous state” in patients to restore them to good health (Gauld, 1996; Heap, 1999). Significantly for research into hypnosis, Mesmer’s theory located the hypnotic event in (i.e. attributed the hypnotic effects to) “the magnetizer himself [sic],” even though the success of the procedure (i.e. achieving a cure) was considered to be dependent upon the establishment of a special relationship (i.e. rapport) with the patient (Gravitz, 1991, pp. 24-25).

Hypnosis was, for that reason, also theorised as having an emotional component, such that it “must in the first place be transmitted through feeling” (Mesmer cited in Gravitz, 1991, p. 25). This early theory also included a theory of mutual production of hypnosis by the magnetiser and the patient, because in Mesmer’s account of “magnetic reciprocity” the “patient’s special feelings toward the magnetizer and the belief that the patient could sense the magnetizer’s thoughts” were influential (Gravitz, 1991, p. 25).

Later theories of sleep and consciousness relevant to hypnosis resonate with notions developed from early magnetists, most notably Puységur (1751–1825) (Gauld, 1996). Puységur reported that his subjects did not display any of the usual signs of crisis (i.e. crying, convulsions and so forth), but instead, fell into an unusual, sleep-like “somnambulistic state” (Gravitz, 1991). In this altered state of mind subjects were reported to be able to behave in extraordinary ways and after they were awakened they were reported to be amnesic, that is unable to remember what had occurred during the magnetic event (Gauld, 1996; Gravitz, 1991). Further, according to Gravitz (1991), “Puységur made the important observation that somnambulists would often speak spontaneously of matters that concerned them, after which they would feel relieved” (p. 28). Note that Puységur’s reported observations suggest that hypnotised persons’ actions may not necessarily be limited to responses, as currently implied by the official 2003 APA Division 30 definition of hypnosis.

In contrast to Puységur, and other mesmeric fluidists who attributed the magnetic effects of animal magnetism to the magnetiser, Faria (1756–1819) theorised that patients were essentially responsible for producing this altered sleep-like state themselves. According to Faria’s theory of “lucid sleep”, patients produced somnambulistic behaviour by virtue of their own ability to concentrate and respond to suggestions for sleep and constructive change (Gravitz, 1991). Significantly for research into hypnosis, Faria’s theory located the hypnotic event in the hypnotic subject, thereby providing explanation for the—now widely accepted—view of individual differences in hypnotic response (Gravitz, 1991). Note too that Faria’s account suggests that hypnotised persons’ actions are restricted to responses, as currently implied by the earlier presented official 2003 *American Psychological Association Division 30* definition of hypnosis.

This section has reviewed early understandings of how hypnosis functions, from conflicting magnetic fluidist (in which the effects of hypnosis were attributed to the hypnotist) to lucid sleep perspectives (in which the effects of hypnosis were
attributed to the subject). There has since been a series of pendulum-like swings in which the effects of hypnosis have first been attributed to the hypnotist and then to the subject (Diamond, 1984, 1987). The following section provides a review of contemporary psychoanalytic theories of hypnosis. These are relevant to the current review in that they focus on the hypnotic relationship.

**Psychoanalytic theories**

Psychoanalytic theories of hypnosis focus on the hypnotic relationship, primarily as a hypnotist dependent state of regression in the patient. This emphasis on the hypnotist in the regressive relationship grew out of Freud’s (1856–1939) theory of the patient’s submissive behaviour toward the hypnotist as an unconsciously driven libidinal fixation, or regression in the transference (Nash, 1991), which drew on early mesmeric notions. The theoretical constructs that inform this perspective are explained below.

To begin with, Freud conceived of the mind in terms of three levels of awareness: the **conscious** (what we are aware of at a given point in time), the **preconscious** (what we can easily have brought into our awareness) and the **unconscious** (what we are totally unaware of, but motivated by) (Liebert & Spiegler, 1994). Then, Freud posited that personality is organised in relation to three functions: the **id** (which functions by demanding gratification), the **ego** (which functions by thinking and solving problems realistically), and the **superego** (which functions by judging an act as right or wrong) (Liebert & Spiegler, 1994).

The relationships between Freud’s personality functions to the levels of awareness show that personality functions are largely governed by unconscious awareness. Note also that Freud conceptualised the unconscious as “a morass of conflicting drives and unsavoury ideas” (Haley, 1967, p. 531). This conceptualisation informed his explanation of hypnosis as “essentially an eroticized dependent relationship” (Gravitz, 1991, pp. 34-35), and influenced his successors for many years. However, psychoanalytic notions of this relationship eventually evolved from those that emphasised the unconscious desires of the id to those that emphasised the conscious resolve of the ego. For instance, Kubie and Margolin’s (1944) theory of the **dissolution of ego boundaries** between the hypnotist and the subject posited that the hypnotist’s directives to the subject were experienced by the subject as the subject’s own thoughts.

On the other hand, Gill and Brenman’s (1959) theory of hypnosis as **regression in service of the ego** denounced the view that the subject’s submissive behaviour toward the hypnotist was the result of a libidinal regression; instead they posited that it was the result of a shift or regression in ego functioning, which they conceived of as occurring only in a subsystem of the ego. In other words, they viewed the shift from primary (unconscious) to secondary (conscious) process thinking as a regression in service of the ego. Fromm’s (1979; 1992) theory of **ego-psychology** drew a basic distinction between primary and secondary process thinking, with primary process thinking construed as unconscious, illogical, and developmentally immature, and secondary process thinking deemed as conscious, logical, and developmentally mature. Further, Fromm’s theory of **ego receptivity** put forward that the hypnotised person responds to the hypnotist and to their own inner experience.

In contrast to customary person-oriented and person-focused psychoanalytic accounts of the hypnotic relationship, psychoanalytic clinicians
(most notably, Diamond, 1984, 1987; 2000) have begun to provide an account of the interactive nature of hypnosis with a focus on the roles and relationship of the hypnotist and the patient. For instance, Diamond (1984) has drawn attention to the neglected importance of the hypnotist in an interactive hypnotherapeutic relationship. Diamond (1987) later proposed an interactional framework of four essential dimensions of hypnosis for examining the relational aspects of hypnosis. These relational dimensions are: (i) transference phenomena in which previous object relationships are enacted; (ii) a goal-oriented working alliance comprised of “rational” and “irrational” expectations about the efficacy of hypnotic procedure and its participants; (iii) a symbiotic or fusional alliance in which the hypnotist is experienced as a purely internal figure; and (iv) a realistic contemporary relationship (Diamond, 1987, p. 3).

Significantly for research on hypnosis, while psychoanalytic theories of hypnosis have located the hypnotic event in the hypnotist, more recent work by Diamond has essentially located the hypnotic event in the interaction between the hypnotist and the client. In addition, while psychoanalytic conceptualisations of hypnosis are insightful, comprehending them is difficult because they are, for the most part, presented in an abstract and obscure manner, which does not easily lend itself to empirical examination. In fact, Diamond (2000) has recently advocated the “need to strive for a more down-to-earth, experience-near language … through a detailed presentation of the actual exchanges (verbalized and otherwise) of the two people involved in treatment” (p. 71).

This section has reviewed current understandings of how hypnosis functions from a psychoanalytical perspective. The following section reviews contemporary sociocognitive theories of hypnosis. The relevance of sociocognitive theories of hypnosis to the current review is that the actions of the subject and hypnotist are both explicitly theorised.

Sociocognitive theories

Sociocognitive theories of hypnosis focus on social and situational aspects of the hypnotic context, as well as subjects’ attitudes, expectations and beliefs about hypnosis. This concern with social and cognitive features of hypnosis was influenced by the theoretical work of Sarbin (1950), the first scholar of hypnosis to unequivocally disagree with the classical view of hypnosis as an altered state of consciousness. In drawing on social psychology, role theory and metaphors from the theatre, Sarbin conceptualised hypnosis in terms of a theatrical performance in which the hypnotist and subject enact reciprocal roles (Coe & Sarbin, 1991). Within this theory, the role of the hypnotic subject is that of respondent, thus the notion of interaction is reified and becomes action and response rather than interaction per se.

Sociocognitive theorists have elaborated upon Sarbin’s original role theory to include numerous determinants of hypnosis. For instance, Sarbin and Coe (1991; 1972) have elaborated the constructs of expectations, role requirements and self perception, imaginative skills, situational demand characteristics, deception, self-deception, metaphors and narratives. T. X. Barber (1969) has called attention to the role of subjects’ attitudes, expectations and motivations. Further, Lynn and Sherman (2000) have emphasised that central to all sociocognitive theories is the notion that “participants’ expectancies, attitudes, and beliefs about hypnosis, as
well as their interpretations of suggestions and aspects of the hypnotic context are crucial to understanding hypnotic responding” (p. 296).

In Spanos’ (1991) account of hypnotic responding, subjects’ behaviours are considered as “mundane forms of social action” (p. 324). In contrast to special state conceptualisations, hypnotic subjects are seen to be “attuned to contextual demands” and are to “guide their behaviour”, in accordance with their “understanding of situational contingencies” and “the goals they wish to achieve” (Spanos, 1982, 1991). Significantly for research into hypnosis, sociocognitive theories of hypnosis (or hypnotic responding) have located the hypnotic event in the subject. Further, although sociocognitive theories of hypnosis propose that subjects guide their own actions, these theories only allow for subjects’ actions in the form of responses, and thereby ignore the possibility of subjects’ actions in the form of initiated behaviour.

Sociocognitive theories tend to disregard subjects’ accounts of their own responses as “exaggerations and at worst out-and-out misdescriptions of their private experiences” (Spanos, 1991, p. 338); that is, whenever subjects’ accounts contravene pre-existing sociocognitive theory. Further, while some sociocognitive theories have placed more importance on relational factors and unconscious determinants of hypnotic responsiveness (Lynn & Rhue, 1991a; Lynn & Sherman, 2000), empirical considerations have only focused on relational aspects of hypnotic interaction in terms of individual-subject differences in response. Thus, while sociocognitive accounts have lent themselves to much empirical examination, they have not directed attention to hypnosis as an event jointly constructed by both hypnotist and subject as action in interaction.

This section has outlined contemporary theories of hypnosis from a sociocognitive perspective. The following section presents Ericksonian models of hypnosis. The relevance of Ericksonian models of hypnosis to the current review is that the actions of the subject and the actions of the hypnotist are both explicitly theorised.

Ericksonian models

Ericksonian models of hypnosis focus on interpersonal communication which stimulates unconscious capabilities and responses in the hypnotic subject. This emphasis on interpersonal communication and unconscious processes in hypnosis is based on studies of Erickson’s (1901–1980) work. (For a review of the collected works of Erickson, see Hilgard, 1984.) Unlike others in the field, Erickson developed his main beliefs about hypnosis from practice instead of theory. He described hypnosis as an interpersonal relationship that depends upon the intrapersonal relationships of the subject (Erickson, 1967a). Some further explanation will help with understanding Erickson’s concept of “intrapersonal relationships.”

Erickson conceived of intrapersonal relationships as occurring within the subject, but between different levels of the subject’s awareness. He wrote:

[′...t the lighter levels [of hypnosis] there is an admixture of conscious understandings and expectations and a certain amount of conscious participation. In the deeper stages, functioning is more properly at an unconscious level of awareness. (Erickson, 1952/1967, p. 12)
Here Erickson’s use of the words “more properly” serves to indicate that the deeply hypnotised person is able to function without conscious awareness and participation. In extending this line of thought Erickson went as far as to conceive of “the unconscious mind as wiser and more perceptive than the conscious mind” (Erickson & Rossi, 1979, p. 302).

Erickson’s recognition of subjects’ differing abilities to learn and to respond during hypnotic work led him to develop a “naturalistic approach”. This approach involved “accepting and utilising the situation encountered without endeavouring to psychologically restructure it” (Erickson, 1958/1967, p. 424). He went on to explain that “in so doing the presenting behaviour of the patient becomes a definite aid and an actual part in inducing the trance” (Erickson, 1958/1967, p. 424). In other words, the use of a naturalistic approach to hypnotic work enables the hypnotist to utilise the subject’s naturally occurring behaviour, in contrast to a standardised approach which required the hypnotist to speak in the same way to each subject. Within this theory the hypnotic subject is viewed as capable of engaging in hypnotic work with the hypnotist. Thus the notion of interaction taken here is in line with the conceptualisation of interaction, as an event jointly constructed by both the hypnotist and the subject.

Ericksonian models of hypnosis have focused on different aspects of Erickson’s work. Haley (1958, 1966, 1993) has presented a number of different (but complimentary) models. Haley (1958) initially offered an interactional explanation of Erickson’s hypnosis or trance as a meta-complementary relationship. In a hypnotic meta-complementary relationship the hypnotist and the subject jointly work out that the hypnotist is to control what sort behaviour is to occur. As Haley (1958) put it,

[the trance is successful when the subject communicates the messages requested by the hypnotist, qualifies those messages with denials that he [sic] is communicating them and therefore denies that he [sic] is defining the relationship, and thereby acknowledges that the hypnotist is in control of the definition of the relationship. (p.57)

Haley (1966, 1993) later emphasised Erickson’s use of directives to get patients to do something, and noted Erickson’s frequent use of implications to indirectly elicit behaviour from patients.

Rossi has co-authored several books with Erickson (Erickson & Rossi, 1979; 1981; Erickson, Rossi, & Rossi, 1976). They detail two central components of Erickson’s hypnosis, namely, the forms of indirect suggestion and the utilisation approach. In these works the nature of trance is emphasised as a normal experience that can develop through inner absorption and lead to an altered state of consciousness, whereafter learning can occur at an unconscious level of functioning.

While most models of Erickson’s hypnosis have emphasised the nature of trance, Zeig and Rennick (1991) have argued that the notion of trance is not relevant to an explanation of hypnosis. They argue for the abandonment of the concept of trance because they believe that this better enables them to regard hypnosis as an interpersonal process. Zeig and Rennick (1991) have consequently characterised Erickson’s work as an “interpersonally focused communications system” that is particular to those involved, and intent largely “(this is the ‘hypnotic’ element) at [sic] tapping unconscious capabilities and responsiveness” (p. 275).
Significantly for research into hypnosis, Ericksonian models of hypnosis locate the hypnotic event in the interaction. That is, unlike sociocognitive conceptualisations of hypnosis, Ericksonian conceptualisations of hypnosis allow for subjects’ actions in the form of initiating and responsive behaviour. Ericksonian models of hypnosis are, thus, based on a notion of interactivity, with both parties able to act. However, this does not mean that Ericksonian researchers have carried out empirical studies within an interactional framework.

Recent studies have primarily focused on controlled experimental testing of the importance of indirect suggestion over direct suggestion (Zeig & Rennick, 1991). One reason for this, as Zeig and Rennick (1991) have noted, is that Erickson’s “highly individualized procedures do not lend themselves readily to the standardized approach required by most controlled studies” (p. 295).

This section has reviewed understandings of how, from an Ericksonian perspective, hypnosis naturally occurs. The following section provides a review of a contemporary social-psychobiological model of hypnosis. A social-psychobiological model is relevant to the current review in that it advances a hypnotist-subject conceptualisation of hypnosis, and has promoted empirical research on interaction between the hypnotist and the subject.

**The social-psychobiological model**

The social-psychobiological conceptualisation of hypnosis focuses on the interaction between behavioural, experiential, relational and physiological dimensions of hypnosis. This conceptualisation developed through Bányai’s interest in integrating interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of hypnosis, and over many years resulted in her social-psychobiological model of hypnosis (Bányai, 1998) (For a review of the many and varied influences on her thinking, see Bányai, 1991.)

The social-psychobiological model conceptualises “hypnosis as an altered state of consciousness that may have a socially and biologically adaptive value” (Bányai, 1998, p. 52). Bányai posits that this alteration in consciousness occurs in a “special social context as a result of the reciprocal interactions between the subject and the hypnotist” (Bányai, 1998, p. 52). Bányai’s (1991) all-encompassing conceptualisation of hypnosis posits that hypnosis is affected by both the hypnotist’s and the subject’s personal characteristics and physiological predispositions (i.e. their attitudes, expectations and cognitive styles), and their relationship to one another. Further, the development of hypnosis is also seen to be affected by physiological, behavioural, and subjective experiential modifications during the process of inducing (or testing) it. Thus the social-psychobiological model regards hypnosis as a continually-changing process of interdependent hypnotist-subject interaction.

According to Bányai (1991, pp. 565-566) the social-psychobiological model stresses the following as essential features of hypnosis:

1. The subjective experience of alteration in consciousness: An altered state of consciousness essentially involves subjective experience. The state is, therefore, measured by susceptibility scales (which are routinely used in hypnosis research), and via verbal reports by subjects about their own subjective experiences;

2. The role of the special social context: Since this altered state is very much related to interaction between two persons (i.e. the hypnotist and the
subject) it is considered to be situated within a special social context. “This altered state, nestled within a special social context, is the very essence of hypnosis.” (p. 566). Within this context both the hypnotist and the subject are seen to take active roles and, through “reciprocal interaction,” affect each other; and

3. The adaptive value of hypnosis: Historically hypnosis has been seen to “help participants to perform more adequately, constructively, and creatively in the social-biological milieu” (p. 566).

Significantly for research into hypnosis, the social-psychobiological model of hypnosis largely locates the hypnotic event in the interaction between the hypnotist and the subject. As such, the model has influenced the direction of empirical research on hypnosis within an interactional framework.

Since the social-psychobiological conceptualisation of hypnosis attributes the hypnotic state (of the subject) to a special social context as a consequence of reciprocal interactions between the hypnotist and subject, it advances sociocognitive notions of the subject as a respondent only.

This section has outlined contemporary conceptualisations of hypnosis from a social-psychobiological perspective. The following section provides a review of a contemporary ecosystemic approach to hypnosis. The relevance of an ecosystemic approach to the current review is that the focus is wholly on the interaction between those involved in the hypnotic situation, and the behaviours are mutually qualified as “hypnotic” by all involved in the hypnotic situation.

An ecosystemic approach

An ecosystemic approach to hypnosis focuses on a complexly interwoven and ongoing set of objects and their attributions in interrelationship with one another, in which certain classes of contextually bound behaviour come to be seen as of a type called “hypnotic” (Fourie, 1991; Fourie & Lifschitz, 1989). An ecosystemic approach is a way of thinking about hypnosis wholly in interactional terms. This emphasis on the interaction was largely influenced by developments in systems theory, including Bateson’s (1972) conception of a system as an ecology of mind (which in turn drew on Erickson’s hypnotic work, mentioned above).

It is important to note that an ecosystemic approach stresses the shortcomings of applying Newtonian thinking (with its emphasis on reductionism, linear causality, and neutral objectivity) to the study of hypnosis (and other forms of human social interaction) (Fourie, 1983, 1988, 1991; Fourie & De Beer, 1986; Fourie & Lifschitz, 1985, 1988, 1989). It follows that Fourie and his colleagues denounce the widely accepted practice of giving hypothetical constructs, such as the “ego”, and “the unconscious” particular properties, and then treating them as entities. Instead, an ecosystemic approach conceives of hypnosis as “a concept denoting a situation in which certain classes of behaviour come to be seen as of a type called ‘hypnotic’ or ‘involuntary,’” by those in the situation (Fourie, 1991, p. 469, emphasis in original). “Hypnotic” or “involuntary” behaviours can include the subject’s experience of a hand lifting without perceived effort, or the subject’s experience of a hand being unable to lift despite perceived effort to the contrary.

So in contrast to early and contemporary state theories, an ecosystemic approach does not perceive of involuntary behaviours as caused by an altered state of consciousness in the patient or subject, because, like sociocognitive theories, it
perceives of them as ordinary behaviours that are designated as “hypnotic.” However, unlike all other theories of hypnosis, an ecosystemic approach only designates behaviours as hypnotic through ongoing mutual qualification by all involved in the hypnotic situation, that is, the hypnotist, the subject, and any spectators (Fourie, 1991; Fourie & Lifschitz, 1985). Since an ecosystemic approach proposes that participants mutually qualify behaviours as “hypnotic”, (like Erickson) it rejects the notion of standardised susceptibility or hypnotisability testing which is usually applied to subjects in hypnosis research (Fourie & Lifschitz, 1988).

Significantly for research into hypnosis, Fourie’s ecosystemic approach locates the hypnotic event wholly in the interaction between the hypnotist and the subject. Accordingly, an ecosystemic theory of hypnosis provides for the complexity of interrelating factors of influence in the hypnotic setting, since hypnosis is considered to be co-constructed by the people in a particular situation, instead of occurring in the hypnotist (as proposed by mesmeric fluidists and contemporary traditional psychoanalytic theorists) or in the subject (as proposed by Faria and Braid and contemporary sociocognitive theorists). As Sheehan (1991) has pointed out, however, an ecosystemic account does so “in the absence of a methodology that is distinctively attuned to studying the consequences of the array of interactive events” (p. 522).

The previous section has provided an overview of major theories and models of, and approaches to hypnosis that have contributed to current understandings of hypnotist and subject interaction. This included a brief commentary on the design and findings of hypnosis research. The following section reviews empirical research that has focused on the interactional activities of both the hypnotist and the subject. Recall that the interactional activities of both the hypnotist and the subject have received much more attention in theory than in practice. As a result, the reader will be unable to relate all of the above theories to the research that is presented in the following section.

**Empirical Research**

The direction of empirical research on hypnosis has been influenced by the conceptualisation of hypnosis as a psychological phenomenon, and by the traditions in mainstream psychology and its related disciplines. This section reviews empirical research on hypnosis which has directly focused on hypnotist and subject interaction. It outlines the methodological issue that arises from the fact that empirical hypnosis research has conventionally been synonymous with experimental research. Then it delineates the methodological issue that arises from the fact that empirical research on hypnosis has typically considered only one of the participants in the interaction (i.e. the subject and not the hypnotist). Following that it reviews experimental research on hypnosis that has directly considered both participants’ actions in the hypnotic event, and draws attention to limitations with current methods of inquiry.

*An experimental research tradition*

Empirical research on hypnosis has traditionally been synonymous with experimental research. An experimental research tradition emphasises the “operationalization of concepts, quantification, the use of controlled experiments,
An individual subject level of analysis

Experimental research on hypnosis has overwhelmingly centred on an individual subject level of analysis. This interest in the subject (i.e. the hypnotised person) has led to the specification of a commonly accepted category of hypnotic phenomena, or what Hilgard (1904–2001) called “the domain of hypnosis” – which includes phenomena, such as “muscular movements or inhibitions, sensory distortions, positive and negative hallucinations, and posthypnotic amnesia and dreams” (Hilgard, 1973; 1991, p. 86). These phenomena comprise the experimental test items on contemporary susceptibility and hypnotisability scales (e.g., see Barnier & McConkey, 2004.) So, experimental research has primarily focused on defining and conceptualising hypnosis in terms of subjects’ changes and on accumulating data relating to the subjects’ abilities to produce these changes. In addition, experimental research has been especially interested in the changes of the subject with a high capacity to respond to hypnosis, that is, “the highly hypnotisable person”, or the so-called “highs” and not the so-called “lows” (Heap, Brown, & Oakley, 2004).

In this way, researchers have managed to agree on the phenomena that comprise the domain of hypnosis, while continuing to differ on how best to describe them. So, whether researchers have conceptualised hypnotic phenomena in terms of a special state of consciousness or as ordinary, mundane behaviours, they have, largely, limited their focus to the hypnotic subject. Clearly, then, comparatively little empirical research has centred on the actions of both the subject and the hypnotist. Bányai (1998) states that,

While this split in the focusing of attention may have had a beneficial effect on data reduction when studying different phenomena of hypnosis, it seems to have an unfortunate theoretical consequence as well. Namely, as a result of placing emphasis either on the hypnotist or the subject, the cause of hypnotic effects became attributed to only one of them. (p. 52)

An interactional hypnotist-subject level of analysis

It is beyond the scope and interest of this chapter to present research with a focus on explaining the behaviours and experiences of only one of the participants in the hypnotic interaction. Therefore, what follows is an overview of empirical research that has focused directly on an interactional hypnotist-subject level of analysis, albeit under controlled conditions.

Interaction Process Analysis

To examine hypnotist-subject interaction two experimental studies made use of Bales’ (1950) Interaction Process Analysis (IPA): a method that was initially designed for the observation of social interaction in small groups (of two to twenty people). IPA is a preformulated category system. IPA classifies
interaction in accordance with exclusive, encoded categories that are divided into areas of positive and negative socio-emotional content, and task-related involvement. Positive socio-emotional content includes acts such as agrees, while negative socio-emotional content includes acts such as shows tension. Task-related involvement includes acts that are more neutral in emotional content, such as, gives suggestion and asks for suggestion.

In the first experimental study, Field (1964) used IPA to compare the interaction profiles of hypnotists and subjects. Two hypnotists and six subjects participated in the experiment. Both hypnotists were experienced practitioners. Four subjects were highly hypnotisable, while two subjects were instructed to simulate hypnosis (i.e. to act as if they were hypnotised). Each hypnotist worked with two highly hypnotisable subjects and one simulating subject. The work was filmed. According to Field (1964), clearly marked interactional differences were found between the hypnotists and the highly hypnotisable subjects that he studied. For instance, hypnotists displayed a high frequency of behaviour in the categories gives suggestions, asks for information and shows agreement, whereas highly hypnotisable subjects displayed more behaviour in the categories seems submissive, gives information, and gives opinions. As Field pointed out, given the high frequency of questions by the hypnotists it was to be expected that subjects would give more answers in the form of information and opinions. No consistent differences were found in the interaction between hypnotists working with highly hypnotisable subjects and hypnotists working with simulators.

In the second experimental study, Hearn (1978) used IPA (Bales, 1950, 1970) to conduct a rigorous investigation of the dynamics of social interaction in the hypnotic context. Hearn (1978) hypothesised that “the process of social interaction between hypnotist and subject is dependent upon the susceptibility level of subjects” (p.iii). Hearn tested his hypothesis by conducting two separate experiments. The first experiment involved 32 subjects, while the second experiment involved 12 subjects. Equal numbers of high and low susceptibles participated in both experiments. The same hypnotist participated in both experiments.

According to Hearn (1978), the process of interaction between the hypnotist and the subject was found to contribute to the difference between high and low susceptibles’ hypnotic performance. In particular, initial analyses revealed that when working with high susceptibles the hypnotist displayed a high frequency of behaviour in the categories shows tension and asks for information, while subsequent analyses, which were performed on data that excluded indistinguishable hypnotic performance between groups, found that when working with high susceptibles the hypnotist displayed most behaviour in the category seems friendly (and only next most behaviour in the categories shows tension and asks for opinion). In other words, once the hypnotist was able to distinguish possible high susceptibles, from possible low susceptibles, he began to alter his patterns of interaction by spontaneously behaving in a friendlier manner with those who were performing well hypnotically, despite the “controlled” conditions under which he was working.

As a result, Hearn (1978) designed a different experiment in an attempt to control the hypnotist’s seems friendly behaviour across groups. However, when the hypnotist managed to behave in the same seems friendly manner with both high and low susceptibles, he altered his patterns of interaction by spontaneously
behaving in a more dramatic way with high susceptibles. This led Hearn (1978) to conclude that “[t]he dynamics of the process of interaction seem to be such that changing, or attempting to control one aspect, leads to compensatory changes in other aspects, thus making control of the artefact very difficult” (p. 54). Further, it led him to contend that “the process of social interaction directly influences hypnotic response” (Hearn, 1978, p. 51).

**Modifications of Experiential Analysis Technique**

To enable a multidimensional investigation of hypnotist-subject interaction, Bányai and her colleagues (1994) developed the *Parallel Experiential Analysis Technique* (PEAT). PEAT is an extended version of the *Experiential Analysis Technique* (EAT), which was first developed by Sheehan and McConkey and Cross (1978) (also, see Sheehan & McConkey, 1996). EAT is a method of inquiry designed to draw out subjects’ comments about their own hypnotic experiences. An independent inquirer asks subjects to (retrospectively and subjectively) comment on their own behaviour and experiences during hypnosis, while viewing a videotape recording of their experimental hypnosis session. The EAT was adapted from Kagan, Krathwohl and Miller’s (1963) *Interpersonal Process Recall* (IPR): a method that was first designed to inquire about and stimulate recall of dynamics in the interaction between counsellor and client.

EAT videotape replay is used to aid subjects’ recall. The subject is free to stop the videotape and comment on their behaviour and experiences at any time. The inquirer is provided with a list of predetermined questions. These questions relate to (predetermined) categories of inquiry, which include “cognition, images, expectations, perceptions, image presentation, interpersonal relationship, associations and sundry feelings” (Sheehan & McConkey, 1996, p. 85). For example, a category of inquiry concerning “associations” might involve asking the questions: “what meaning did that have for you?” and “Was this familiar to you?” (Sheehan & McConkey, 1996, p. 86).

Note that while EAT is only concerned with the subjective experiences of the hypnotised person, PEAT is also concerned with those of the hypnotist. In other words, PEAT applies EAT to both the hypnotist and the subject in a similar or parallel manner; by two independent inquirers (Varga, et al., 1994). In addition, following PEAT interviews, hypnotists and subjects are asked to complete questionnaires concerning relational characteristics (Bányai, 1998). Quantitative data are statistically analysed, while qualitative data are judged and assessed independently, and subsequently subjected to content analysis (Bányai, 1998).

Since the 1980s, Bányai and her colleagues have conducted research in a multidimensional interactional framework. (For summaries of their work, see Bányai, 1991; 1998.) On the strength of some of their findings on the effects of hypnosis on selective attention, Bányai (1991) has argued that “the essential feature of the hypnotic state, which differentiates it from other altered states of consciousness, may lie in its social character” (p. 579, emphasis added). Relative to that argument is the report that “subtle cues emanating from subjects direct hypnotists’ attention and, in turn, influences the hypnotists’ communications to their subjects” (Vágó, et al., cited in Bányai, 1991, p. 581). (For a clinical review of the subject’s influence on the hypnotist’s state of consciousness, and ensuing trance, see Diamond, 1987.)

In extending the work of Bányai and her colleagues, Whitehead (2004) sought to clarify the role and importance of relational factors in hypnosis, with a
focus on interpersonal perceptions in the hypnotist-participant interaction. To this end Whitehead (2004) devised a further modification of EAT, namely, the (Hypnotist-Participant) Experiential Analysis Technique (H-P)EAT. The difference between Bányai’s and Whitehead’s modifications of EAT is that PEAT applies EAT to the hypnotist and the subject in a parallel, but separate, way, while (H-P)EAT applies EAT to the hypnotist and the subject while they are together in the inquiry room. Qualitative data were judged and rated independently, using a set of specially developed rating sheets. However, much of the quantitative rating sheet data were found to be statistically unreliable. These were, therefore, in some cases, subjected to a form of transcript analysis.

Whitehead (2004) hypothesised (among other things) that “the nature of susceptible (as opposed to nonsusceptible) participants’ involvement with the hypnotist will be distinctive, in terms of such factors as an especially positive attitude towards, and a high degree of involvement with, the hypnotist” (p. 73). Whitehead (2004) tested this hypothesis by conducting an experiment which involved two hypnotists and 124 undergraduate psychology student-participants. Approximately equal numbers of high and low hypnotically susceptible student-participants were involved in the study (i.e. 63 susceptible and 61 nonsusceptible). Equal numbers of medium-to-high and low hypnotically susceptible hypnotists were involved in the study (i.e. 1 medium-to-high susceptible and 1 nonsusceptible).

Whitehead’s (2004) “results suggest that the experiences of hypnotically susceptible student-participants involve complex multi-level relational processes that are largely intrapsychically-based” (p. vi). In particular, susceptible participants predominantly reported their perceptions of the hypnotist as a voice instead of an actual person. For example, during the inquiry one susceptible participant retrospectively commented “It was just this voice coming out of nowhere…” and another retrospectively commented “I wasn’t aware of being with someone” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 81).

**Limitations of current methods**

Limitations have been found with current methods of standardised experimental research on the interactional basis of hypnosis. Researchers of hypnosis (Field, 1964; Hearn, 1978) have noted a number of limitations regarding the application of IPA (see Appendix A) to the study of social interaction in the hypnotic event, despite the fact that IPA has been accepted as “a sound method for identifying the communicative functions of group problem-solving and decision-making interaction” (Keyton, 2003, p. 260). For instance, Field (1964) pointed out that IPA does not permit a “distinction between superficial and more important interactions – for example, although there are occasional disagreements by S [i.e. the subject], these are probably about superficial matters such as the colour of a hallucinated object, not about the existence of a hallucination” (p. 97, insert added). Such findings led both researchers to independently recommend that a modified method of analysis be developed in order to distinguish distinctive and subtle aspects of hypnotist-subject interaction. Further, Hearn (1978) critiqued the exclusiveness of IPA’s categories. These critiques build a strong case against the application of IPA for the study of hypnosis.

Further, although both of the modified versions of the EAT provide us with a systematic method of studying the interaction between hypnotists and subjects in hypnosis, they too have a number of limitations (Varga, et al., 1994;
Varga, Bányai, & Gösi-Greguss, 1996; Whitehead, 2004). For instance, Whitehead (2004) criticised (H-P)EAT for its inability to “produce comprehensive data on relational features of participants’ experiences” (p. 119). Whitehead (2004) recognised that some problems, such as participants feeling unable to report on their feelings about the hypnotist in the presence of the hypnotist, could easily be resolved through a separate or parallel application of the EAT (i.e. the PEAT). But she stressed that one limitation particular to the nature of the interactive phenomena under investigation would remain problematic. That is, highly susceptible “participants may not necessarily be consciously aware of important features of their affective involvement” (Whitehead, 2004, p. 119), as they are likely to experience post hypnotic amnesia.

This highlights a serious limitation with the PEAT and the (H-P)EAT, since both of these experiential analytic techniques are based upon conscious verbal report after the hypnosis session has been concluded. Further, reliability problems have been found with both PEAT and (H-P)EAT (Varga, et al., 1994; Varga, et al., 1996; Whitehead, 2004). This is probably because “there is no way of knowing how an interpretation of an action by a participant, produced in a setting different from the original one, relates to the action so interpreted” (ten Have, 1990, p. 11).

Significantly for research into hypnosis, the aforementioned limitations of the application of the IPA and the modified versions of the EAT (i.e. PEAT and (H-P)EAT) to the study of perceptions about social interaction in the hypnotic event have pointed to problems with a standardised experimental research design. These echo observations made by Condon and Ogston (1967) over forty years ago. As Condon and Ogston (1967) stressed:

> the need to control the variables in experimental method tends to modify the process under investigation. In human behaviour, it is quite often not even clear what the variables are, such that they could be controlled. What is required ... is a method which could investigate and make relatively rigorous, predictable statements about a process without disrupting the process too severely. (p. 221)

As discussed elsewhere, conversation analysis (CA) is a method that satisfies these requirements (Cuff, Sharrock, & Francis, 1990; Sacks, 1992).

Future Directions

This review recommends CA as a suitable method for the study of deep hypnosis interaction. A detailed review of the application of CA to the study of the organisation of naturally occurring interaction between participants in hypnosis and deep hypnosis is provided elsewhere (see Demosthenous, 2005; 2006; 2009).

As Diamond (2000) has advocated the “need to strive for a more down-to-earth, experience-near language … through a detailed presentation of the actual exchanges (verbalized and otherwise) of the two people involved in treatment” (p. 71), it is proposed that CA’s focus on turn-organised activity provides just such a focus on actual exchanges, and, therefore, will fill this significant and acknowledged gap in hypnosis research.

In addition, recent Ericksonian studies have mainly focused on controlled experimental testing of the significance of indirect suggestion over direct suggestion. As Zeig and Rennick (1991) state, this is because Erickson’s “highly individualized procedures do not lend themselves readily to the standardized approach required by most controlled studies” (p. 295). It is here proposed that
CA’s empirical and analytical framework provides for a naturalistic method of investigation, and consequently will fill this significant and acknowledged gap in hypnosis research.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that even though Fourie’s ecosystemic theory of hypnosis considers that hypnosis is co-constructed by the people in a particular situation (instead of occurring in the hypnotist or in the subject, as Sheehan (1991) has argued), it does so “in the absence of a methodology that is distinctively attuned to studying the consequences of the array of interactive events” (p. 522). Therefore, it is proposed that since CA’s analytic method is distinctively attuned to studying the consequences of the array of interactive events it will fill this significant and acknowledged gap in hypnosis research.

Thus, it is my hope that this review will encourage educational (and other) planet shapers to use CA to take on rigorous and systematic research on actual interaction between the hypnotist and the profoundly hypnotised person in real world clinical practice, because it is through such undertakings that we may come to an understanding of how deep hypnosis actually works.
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