

Hypnotism - a Perspective-2007, Part I

by

Dennis K. Chong and Jennifer K. Smith Chong

In this essay, all male pronouns will apply to either gender.

The nominal pronoun will apply to the first author.

The plural pronoun will apply to both authors.

The spelling is English English.

Usually, a student of Hypnotism begins by learning its history. In our case it began with an exploration about the chants of Pharaoh's priests and their ceremonies to the work of shamans and then to the relative modern work of Franz Anton Mesmer, 1734 – 1815 and on to the present.

We propose to take a new and different direction.

We suggest that at the heart of either stage or clinical Hypnotism are the critical manoeuvres, verbal and non-verbal, to alter the ontologyⁱ of the subject or patient. It is for this that perhaps it is time that every hypnotist recognizes that he is really an applied ontologist. For this, to paraphrase Ormand McGill, to become something in order to do that thing, "*you will have to have some knowledge of what you do.*"

Where do we begin to get this knowledge?

We suggest that it begins with Étienne Bonnot de Condillac, 1715 –1780. He was a French philosopher. His Einsteinian mental experiments examined what would be the predicates of language of a human sentient being who grew up with only the sensory faculty of vision. His conclusion was that such an entity would only have the linguistic predicates of vision. These would include see, look, view, vista, outlook, overview, see, oversight, insight, focus, glare, bright etc. If he grew up only with the faculty of audition, he would only have auditory linguistic predicates, to wit, hear, listen, tune in, tune out, loud, soft, hum, murmur, squal, scream, yell, rant, shout and so forth. If he grew up only with the faculty to feel, his language predicates would be restricted to feel, touch, grab, grasp, hold, hit, thump, happy, sad, joyful, depressed, blow, sense, reach, hug, embrace and so forth. If he grew up only with the ability to smell, his verbal predicates would be restricted to such words as smell, fragrant, putrid, acrid, sniff, bouquet, feter, inhale, inspire, breath, effluvium, rankness, reek, odour, stench, stink, whiff, wisp, fume and so forth.

Here is the origin of the ideas of NLPⁱⁱ with respect to the link between linguistics and the neurology of our senses. It also had, at an implicate level, the idea of representational systems.

Then the next critical link in the understanding of human ontology came with the work, *The Philosophy of As If* by Hans Vaihinger, 1852-1933. It was in this work that these critical propositions were put:

1. “we construct systems of thought and then assume that these match reality”. Such systems = our unfolded reality = As If they are the real world
2. at one level, our reality is forged out of our “sensory sequence complexes.” The classical sensory sequence complex = V \longrightarrow K = when I see (V) you, I feel (K) so happy.

Ontology is therefore a function of our understanding (our semantics) of our unfolded reality. This of course raises the issue of what is the epistemologyⁱⁱⁱ of a human being’s understanding. What we came to realize is that semantics in turn is embedded in the sensory sequence complexes, a.k.a. NLP’s concept of human strategies. It was then found that it is possible to change these sensory sequences by formal applied manouvres or by hypnotic metaphors; and in so doing evince powerful and critical changes in the ontology of a person.

The next person of note in the story of Hypnotism was Alfred Habdank Scarbeck Korzybski, 1879-1950. His most singular contribution was to index that the Aristotelian system of Cause Effect, a.k.a. Causality was 1. “unsane” and 2. it had a language system that was the underpinning of human natural language. We were then to discover that its linguistic formats constituted a substantial component of the language of Hypnotism, (ref: *Linguistics of Hypnotism*, Journal of Hypnotism, December 2006, Volume 21, Number 4). By it, a hypnotic operator can evince the most untoward phenomena in stage work. It is untoward to convert a person with normal sight into one who cannot see, a prim and proper lady into utter embarrassment because abdominal gas is hissing out her belly button, man with a sane respect for life’s dangers now willingly invites another to cut into him and then to encourage the knife wielder to cut into him as deep as he wishes as in surgical hypnoanaesthesia.

Then, in their work, *Structure of Magic*, Richard Bandler and John Grinder corroborated the findings of Korzybski that Cause and Effect is semantically ill-formed^{iv} = unsane. They created the metalanguage in 1975, The Meta Model. This was superceded in 1992 by the Gathering Information Module of NSP^v, also known as the Watzlawick-Weakland-Fisch-metalanguage, (WWF-ml)^{vi}. It was they who proposed that (1) a hypnotic state = inversion of a person’s normal strategies and (2) the inversion of their Meta Model = Milton Model = language of Hypnosis. However, like everything in life, it is a little more complicated, refer to the article, *Linguistics of Hypnotism*, something we will take up in Part II.

ⁱⁱⁱ **ontology** was a part of ancient Greek philosophy. It was about the study of the fabric or structure of human subjective reality. Today this study has been resurrected by the field studies of Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Neuro-Semantic Programming, NSP. In fact NSP is particularly interested in the exploration of how to alter the semantics of a given ontology; and even more, the epistemology of the ontology and how to change the former. Modern Psychiatry and Psychology have no interest in these explorations. Their focus is to use their potentially frail and faulty linguistic intuitions about what client’s have to say about their problems and then to label them with the conviction that their label = the ontology of the problem!

ⁱⁱ **NLP** = Neuro-Linguistic Programming, a field of study developed by two friends and collaborators, Richard Bandler and John Grinder, alas now mutually and egregiously persona non grata.

ⁱⁱⁱ **Epistemology** was also once a part of ancient Greek philosophy. It was about the exploration about how a person knows to know. So, if you have a specific understanding that you must belt a bomb to your person and blow yourself up in a Tel Aviv café, the question = how do you know to know that this is what you want to do and must do! Again, modern Psychiatry and Psychology are above these trifling mundane explorations!

^{iv} **semantically ill-formed** = meaning that is bent, twisted, kinked, malformed, deviant, anomalous

^v **NSP** = Neuro-Semantic Programming is the field of study that examines the meta-structures by which a person knows to know how arrive at his unique semantics of his being to context and the meaning of the context itself. When it comes down to it, the work of any clinical hypnotist is find out how to change these unique semantics of being and of context when either or both constitutes a problem state for the person.

^{vi} **Gathering Information Module (WWF-ml)**.

The information about the above can be found in the work, *Power and Elegance in Communication*.