

Hidden Effects of Influence and Persuasion

Stéphane Laurens

We are automata as much as mind; and hence it follows that the instrument by which persuasion is effected is not demonstration alone. How few things there are that are demonstrable! Proofs are convincing only for the mind. It is custom that establishes our strongest and most believed proofs; it lends inclination to the automaton, which then leads on the unthinking mind. (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées* 470, 1658)

These two paths of persuasion distinguished by Pascal do not enjoy the same level of acceptance. Whereas it is considered normal, acceptable and moral to be persuaded by demonstration or analytical argument, through what is called by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) the 'central route' or by Eagly and Chaiken (1993) the 'systematic route', it is equally observable that Pascal's second pathway of persuasion, that which leads the mind into acquiescence without prior probative conviction, is one which arouses all sorts of fears.

The effect of this second persuasive pathway is the generation of a strange and disturbing range of phenomena of influence and persuasion. Recent controversies around processes of mind manipulation or the influential power of certain fundamentalisms are clear examples of this, as in times past were debates around the dangers of hypnosis and animal magnetism or the fears aroused by demonic possession. This secondary route has led some to think that there may be embedded within us certain concealed 'back doors' through which we may be affected by certain influences and consequently be open to being manipulated. It is feared that in such cases the self is no longer master of its own house, and that others, through their influence or their acts of persuasion, may be capable of leading us into doing or believing certain things without our finding within ourselves the bases or sources of these acts or beliefs.

Conceived thus, persuasion or influence can take on the appearance of being abnormal elements that are perturbatory of individual and social functioning. They are seen as disrupting the normal relationship of the subject with the world, falsifying perceptions and judgements . . . they generate uncontrolled and even irrational

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behaviours, whereas the absence of such influence facilitates a perception that is more correct, a power of judgement that is more sound, ideas that are more logical . . . and also a higher level of self-esteem.

Through the analysis of certain typical forms of influence (possession, hypnosis, etc.) which have characterized the influence relationship in various socio-historical situations, I shall attempt to demonstrate that the effects of persuasion and influence have been very often confused with the very fears one had of them more than what fact and observation might show to be genuinely true.

Social influence as an arbitrary servile submission?

Asch (1956: 2) had noticed that the prototype of social influence is an arbitrary and servile submission to group pressure, and the processes of persuasion or influence (notably those described by functionalist models, cf. Moscovici, 1979) have often been confused with the phenomena of conformity, submissiveness, obedience, followership or manipulation. In consequence, there exists almost always an asymmetrical linkage bringing together two fundamentally opposed and complementary entities which has formed the model for the relationship with the other: a dominant source which is pursuing certain objectives and which makes use of a target subject through or by whom to achieve these. The initiator of the influence is generally marked by a strong will, desire, power and awareness, whereas the subject individual becomes no more than his instrument, an agent who unconsciously realizes the objectives assigned to him by the persuasive source.

However, as a conceptual model this schema is not only limited in its extent, seeing that, for theoretical and experimental reasons, the relationship with the other must be recognized as being symmetrical and reciprocal (Laurens, 2005a), but furthermore this overly simple and schematic conception may lead to discriminatory procedures, since, to protect the target subjects, some source identification might have to be put in place together with a check on these latter individuals (Laurens, 2003, 2005b).

For Asch (1952: 399), it is the famous hypnotism demonstrations of Charcot and Bernheim which best illustrate this particular conceptual model of persuasion and influence. He gives some astonishing and fascinating examples such as the induction of involuntary movement, inhibitions of movement such as arm catalepsies, and modifications of perception. This characteristic research on hypnosis and suggestion undertaken by the founders of American social psychology¹ most frequently derived an explanation based upon the differentiating aspects of the source and target individuals. For Allport, for example, in the most extreme cases of submissiveness (such as hypnosis), everything occurs as if the stimulus (in this event the suggestion) directly governed the muscles and the thoughts of the target subject, allowing the conclusion that suggestion bypasses the pathways of conscious reflection, being carried rather by lower-level subcortical pathways (Allport, 1924a: 243). In this way, suggestion appears as a powerful mechanism by which numerous functions might for example be controlled from outside by the suggesting voice (Allport, 1924a: 244).² This classic explanation of the hypnotic state³ or of submissiveness⁴ is also advanced

for situations observed in considerably different social and cultural contexts, as in the case of possession for example.

However, for Asch, suggestion is essentially a normal phenomenon, which may indeed even constitute the basic form of relationship between individuals, as Tarde (1890/1993: 82–3) thought with his famous formula ‘social man is a somnambulist’.

But, as Asch (1952) points out, what is strange and even paradoxical about these suggestion phenomena which he considers as fundamental for social life, is that something which has no basis at all in reality can come to be accepted by the individual under influence⁵ on nothing other than the word of the suggester.

What struck observers most was that one person could induce effects in another *without* introducing corresponding changes in the environment. The heart of the phenomena of suggestion, the property that made them unique, was the ability to produce changes in individuals in the absence of appropriate objective conditions. By means of commands it was apparently possible to produce experiences and beliefs to which nothing in the environment corresponded. Here was an effect produced by purely ‘psychological’ means, one that short-circuited the workings of real conditions and had no foundation in fact or reason. (Asch, 1952: 399–400)

How can such a phenomenon so central to social life, ‘possibly the fundamental form of interaction between person and person’ (Asch, 1952: 399) be based on such automatic responses and produce such effects? There is indeed a great contradiction between, on the one hand, those regressive and primitive forms of suggestion in the image of a person under influence who appears lessened and diminished by it . . . and on the other hand the life of a society which, if sometimes it is marked by apathy and stagnation, may also be marked by enthusiasm, talent, intelligence and progress (Asch, 1952: 387–8). Moscovici (1979) will make a similar observation by showing notably that influence, if considered solely from the point of view of inducing conformism, cannot account for the phenomena of innovation and social change which nevertheless are found within societies in the same fashion as dominance-following.

The two bodies of evidence

The object of this present investigation is to revisit these notions of influence, persuasion and influence-bound subjects. More particularly, the aim is to illustrate and critique the dominant prevailing concept of influence and its effects, which, though diversely denominated and presented through various theories, always comes down to reaffirming the relationship of dominance and the possibility of the nullification of the subject within the relationship with the other.⁶ If it is certainly the same conceptual framework which is thus reasserted at various periods, the forms by which it is expressed are nevertheless quite different and reveal that social environments contribute broadly to the way in which the influence relationship and its effect are manifested.

If it is true that a very large body of evidence gives substance to this conceptual framework, that of arbitrary servile submission (studies on submission to authority,

on conformism, persuasion, manipulation, etc.) whereby the influenced individual is revealed as being passive and bereft of will or intelligence, other, admittedly rarer and almost always overlooked, evidence points up a contrasting picture: it shows that influence can stimulate creativity, intelligence, a spirit of critique or an acuity of the senses.

Hence, when the different studies on persuasion or influence are reviewed, it is observable that there are almost always to be found two opposite sets of evidence, and that the theories that have been developed to account for this have hardly ever integrated the whole of this evidence, but rather have focused on a single body of it, thus selecting certain sets of related facts and neglecting those arising from a different perspective.

This selectivity around a restricted set of homogeneous observations, a selective process that has recurred several times over the centuries during which these influence phenomena have been studied (perceived under their various forms of influence, suggestion, hypnosis, somnambulism or possession), has led to the elaboration of some ad hoc theories, but which are still non-comprehensive because they neglect another whole body of evidence. These incomplete ad hoc theories are those which, in various guises, have served to justify (not without criticism, notably from Asch and Moscovici), the prototype of social influence, that is, an influence relation considered as one of dominance by the source together with the nullification of the target subject.

The second object of this investigation is therefore to bring to attention some of the bodies of information which have been systematically neglected or set aside. Therefore, as regards certain forms of influence which are normally taken as confirming the prototype, I will attempt to bring to light other research and other observations which illustrate these neglected influence effects and which, as a consequence, point to the need to modify the fundamental conception.

The devil and the possessed

It is no doubt the figure of the individual said to be possessed by demons (the *energumen*) who, centuries prior to the great waves of demonic possession that swept the Christian world (De Certeau, 1980; Mandrou, 1968) illustrates an extreme conception of the particular state into which a person coming under influence is plunged.

According to Rousselle (1990: 134), the term *energumen* arose in the 4th century in the *Dialogues* of Sulpicius Severus (II, 8 and III, 6). The term derives its originality and novelty from the state of passivity that it designates: the *energumen* is one who is *acted upon*, he endures a passive subjection. This passivity is not an apathy, an absence of bodily activation, but rather a disassociation of the subject from what his/her body is doing. The acts performed by their bodies, the words formed by their mouths, are not theirs, they appear as though they are captives, prisoners, taken over, they are *acted upon* by another, transformed into being agents of that other's will or desire.⁷ One is therefore led to wonder, along with Rousselle (1990: 141), if they are still subjects, psychologically speaking, as what this state supposes is in

effect an alteration of subjectivity, an annihilation of the 'I' in its link with the body in favour of an 'I' exterior to the body that is taking control of it.

The possession state, how it is described and the interpretations given of it partially reflect this configuration and provide a very good illustration of the logic of the phantasmatic conception of influence and the psychic construction on which it is built. Possession is described as a powerfully regressive mechanism, something which all the imagery associated with possession shows very well: the possessed is reduced to simple automatism which can present as convulsions, rolling on the ground, shouting, slobbering . . . This imagery reveals a regression to the level of primitive and basic functions together with the loss of higher-level mental functions such as reflective thought, language and any critical sense.

However, this imagery of possession is partly negated by factual observation. Thus, numerous investigations carried out into incidents of possession reveal that this interpretation is based on only part of the evidence. Those observations which ran counter to this interpretation were simply withdrawn from the lists of symptoms manifested by the possessed subjects. During those investigations, the image of the possessed subject as being passive, reduced to a state of simple automatism and being under the complete subjection of some other agency was constructed. At the same time (as though to add the final elements to the table setting out the evidence of the influence relation) exorcists would summon up the devil, who would then speak through the voice of the possessed, often appearing as very intelligent, showing himself capable of lying, of making ironic comments, of pouring scorn on those questioning him, but also revealing an excellent memory, etc. Thus, the prototypical influence schema provided an explanation for the phenomenon of possession: a source (here the devil or evil genius who is conscious, desiring and pursuing objectives known to him alone) exercising an influence over a target subject (the possessed, reduced to the state of *subjectum* or involuntary agent).

If we consider the evidence in toto, we must recognize that it is the same body, the same individual who is simultaneously presenting two sets of manifestations; on the one hand the manifestation of regressive states attributed to the possessed whose personality has been reduced to a nullity by the devil, and on the other hand the manifestation of higher qualities which are attributed to the devil. This schema therefore reposes on the basis of a mechanism of distribution, or attribution, to two distinct entities of manifestations emanating from a single body: to the possessed the symptoms of passivity, the behaviours associated with simple automatism, and to the devil all that shows intelligence, will and desire.

But this allocation is only operative on the presumption of the presence of the devil, for in the absence of such an intrusive external entity, it reverts to being the subject himself who is presenting all these manifestations at the same time. If the demon hypothesis is set aside, the two contrasting sets of manifestations become so intermingled that there is an extremely fine line in determining whether the subject under influence is presenting a regressive state, or whether to the contrary he is revealing capacities much more advanced than he is normally capable of.

From possession to mesmerism and from mesmerism to somnambulism

There is another important event in history which shows up this duality of two contrary bodies of facts. Through the binary pair of devil and possessed, a single individual or single body was the locus of these two orders of manifestations considered by observers to be opposite or contrary to each other. At the end of the 18th century, as interest in animal magnetism passed towards somnambulism, a sudden change was observed in the behaviours presented by subjects under influence. The immense majority of the manifestations observed by Mesmer were similar to those that had previously been observed by exorcists (Ellenberger, 1994: 87), whereas, but a short time later, Puységur was observing contrary effects.

After the great epidemics of witchcraft and possession phenomena (De Certeau, 1980; Mandrou, 1968), Mesmer's interpretation of the effects of animal magnetism on a subject marked the separation of the possession relationship from the religious dimension: through the concept of animal magnetism, the convulsions of patients were attributed to a fluid⁸ that was manipulated by an operative individual rather than being attributable to a supernatural entity (the devil) (Carroy, 1991: 20). But for exorcists and mesmerists alike, during convulsive crises the individual's subjectivity was obliterated. Either it was the devil speaking and acting through him, psychologically supplanting and eliminating the subject (possession), or the subject was reduced to the state of being solely body (Mesmer's animal magnetism concept), in which state no words or thoughts could be attributed to him.

In 1784, the very year in which the French Royal Commission set up to investigate animal magnetism reached a conclusion that noted 'the power of the imagination and the nullity of magnetism in relation to the effects produced' (Royal Commission on Animal Magnetism, 1784: 46), a significant change occurred in the manifestations observed and attributed to magnetism. The Marquis de Puységur, who made use of magnetism in treatments (habitually inducing convulsive crises in the patient, as did other magnetizers of his time, crises that were considered to be the turning-point of the illness), produced and described on one occasion a paradigmatic case that was quite different from those that had hitherto interested the magnetizers.⁹ The young man magnetized by Puységur on 4 May 1784 did not enter into any convulsion and after a few minutes fell into a calm and apparently deep sleep while manifesting at the same time a strong mental activity. In this state, he seems to possess new qualities which he was lacking in the wakeful state (Puységur, 1784: 27–9). Treatments by induction of convulsive crises thus gave way to eliciting a new form of crisis: that of lucid sleep which allowed the patient's speech to emerge and establish a relationship with the other. Among the circle of Puységur magnetizers, the physician adopted the role of questioning his patient to determine what treatment was most suitable to give, and what stages the cure would pass through, etc. With this form of induced somnambulism, the body of manifestations neglected by the Mesmerian school and previously attributed to the devil reappeared: within the magnetic relationship, the somnambulist was reputed to acquire capacities considerably superior to those he possessed in the normal state, and even capacities higher than those of his magnetizer (Méheust, 1994, 1999).

One may briefly summarize, as follows, the main changes that occurred over this short period:

(i) From 1765 to 1775 Gassner reproduced the phenomena already familiar to exorcists of past eras, using the same interpretative framework which had broadly dominated for more than five centuries.¹⁰

(ii) In 1775 Mesmer was appointed to the Bavarian Academy of Sciences where he studied Gassner's cures, demonstrating that he could produce the same effects as the latter but without the involvement of priests. In consequence, compared with what had been observed by exorcists, Mesmer continued to emphasize regressive phenomena like convulsive crises, but never, in the descriptions he reported, did he mention the aspects that the exorcists had attributed to the devil. As a result, a whole body of evidence was occluded.

(iii) In 1784, Puységur, a pupil of Mesmer's, was no longer able to reproduce the manifestations that Mesmer observed, despite using the same methods of magnetic induction: his magnetic passes no longer induced convulsions, and far from eliciting a regressive state, he observed a state that appeared to be far superior to that presented by the subject in his normal state: the somnambulist would speak, often very fluently, would have a heightened sense of judgement, would show proof of intelligence and of excellent memory, to such an extent that Puységur and various magnetizers subsequently would consider this somnambulist to be extraordinarily intelligent and well educated. Some even attributed to the somnambulist super-human capacities which in earlier times had been attributed to the devil: ability to speak various languages, predictions of the future, awareness of others' thoughts. In this context, the influence relation was thus reversed: the somnambulist became the source of knowledge that informed others (including the person performing the magnetization).

It appears then that the abandonment of the religious dimension in the treatment of such crises led in the first instance to the effacement of the devil and the manifestations produced within the person possessed that were attributed to this source. From this amputation arose mesmerism. A body of similar descriptions of the individual in a state of influence which began with Mesmer gained celebrity with Charcot or more recently with Milgram, and can still be found today in certain conceptual interpretations of persuasion, engagement techniques (notably cascading engagements), brainwashing, etc.

In the second instance the manifestations involuntarily produced by the possessed individual, which exorcists attributed to the devil, reappeared, but within an interpretative framework which by that period no longer permitted a theological explanation. The idea became prevalent that there may exist latent human faculties and higher functions that magnetism could potentially unlock. The exaggerations of interpretation and over-simplification (which previously saw the individual under influence as being reduced to no more than a body, a mere puppet in the power of the influencing source) here consist in seeing the influenced individual as being one who accedes to new higher faculties. A considerable part of the research undertaken on somnambulism and subsequently on hypnosis was to be directed towards attempts to shore up evidence of these higher functions. The Society for Psychical Research or the different spiritualist circles which would proliferate at the end of the

19th century are the most prominent exemplars of this. While proof of such extraordinary powers would not seriously be established (cf. James, 1909), the evidence which proves that the senses and the mental functions of such somnambulists or hypnotized subjects are very much active and not extinguished or diminished is legion (examples include Bergson's experiments on visual perception, Flournoy's [1900] observations on creativity, multitudes of experiments on the actualization of complex suggestions carried out by Binet, Bernheim, Janet, etc.).

Thus, as Méheust (1994, 1999) observes, there definitely exist two contradictory bodies of evidence: on the one hand, one that relates to the 'suggets' who lack autonomy of decision, and on the other the evidence of the 'surjets' who are able to surpass their normal capacities.¹¹ It is worth noting that this distinction is present in the earliest descriptions and interpretations of somnambulism. As Boureau (2004) shows in his history of demonology in the 13th and 14th centuries, 'whereas in a Thomist anthropology, any alienation of a mental faculty diminishes the cognitive and spiritual power of man, in an Augustinian anthropology such a limitation may be transformed into new opportunity' (2004: 213). For example, Pierre de Olivi [1248–98] exchanged the classical term of 'sleeper' for the term 'semi-sleeper' which he invented after observing that individuals in a somnambulist state revealed abilities higher than those they showed in their normal waking state (see Olivi cited in Boureau, 2004: 213). In so doing, he 'clearly demonstrated the desire to accord a positive existence to the somnambulist, whereas, up to that time, such a person appeared as someone deprived of the control of his soul' (Boureau, 2004: 214).

As Janet very precisely noted concerning the state of somnambulism and its supposed specific characteristics in comparison with the normal state, somnambulists do not show any particular new capacity (Janet, 1889/1998: 512), they are simply in an altered state of being which has no other character than that of being altered (1889/1998: 162). The two opposing sets of evidence share one thing in common, however, in that they are both victims of excesses of interpretation: on the one hand these excesses consist of the belief that an individual under influence is reduced to a mere bodily existence alone and that, under the total dominance of the influencing other, he loses power over certain of his faculties. But from an opposite point of view, these excesses of interpretation are found in the belief that the influenced individual accedes to new higher powers.

Conclusion: necessary or contingent influence?

After observing that the effects of influence or persuasion are quite disparate, and that it is only if one whole body of observational evidence regarding these is eliminated that we can see the influence relation as necessarily productive of subjection, passivity or diminution of faculties, it is interesting to uncover one of the fundamental theoretical issues which to a great extent conditions the determination of what have been considered recognized facts as far as the effects of influence are concerned.

As Roustang (1990) shows, there exist two diametrically opposite conceptions of the influence relation, and each of these conceptions strongly affects the orientation guiding the reading of the evidence.

One speaks of influence when a person or group acts in a secret manner upon another person or another group. Characteristics of strangeness become assigned to it, because it is disruptive of another type of communication to which we are more accustomed, that in which intentionality plays the preponderant role. But that is an optical illusion. Influence is in fact incessant, because we are continuously transmitting and receiving signals concerning our impressions and our affections, and because we are both actively and passively participating at every instant in the relational network which establishes our individuality. (Roustang, 1990: 75)

The diametrically opposed theories developed concerning panic phenomena well illustrate the place accorded to these phenomena of influence and persuasion (Dupuy, 1991). Either they are considered to be secondary and one sees in their presence a perturbation of the relationship of the subject with the world, or, on the contrary, they are considered primary, and one sees in their absence an obliteration of society.

(a) On the one hand, a stock-market panic (or crash) is often explained as a phenomenon of irrational mimicry which is said to seize control of individuals and cause them momentarily to lose their autonomy, their critical faculty. The normal functioning of the economy, and more broadly of society, goes on in the absence of particular influence, whereas perturbations of the economic process, such as panics, are considered to be the consequences of harmful negative influence.¹² For example, when there is a monopoly situation or economic constraint on the part of a state which imposes prices and exchange controls, the economy collapses; when there is a contagion of thought, or an imitative phenomenon takes hold, individuals sell or buy on an irrational basis and finally that also leads to collapse. Any form or constraint or social control, any climate of imitation or influence brings in the element of irrationality and damningly undermines any solidly based individual decision as well as all collective structure; hence their consequence is panic.¹³

(b) On the other hand, in opposition to this conception which sees influence as the instrument of the disaggregation of society, Freud considered that when mutual ties between individuals cease to exist, panic appears and society breaks down, 'and a gigantic and senseless fear is set free' (Freud, 1921: 96), and each person finds himself alone, being solicitous only on his own account, no longer caring for others. At the time of such a panic, where the individual is concerned only for himself and is not concerned for others, 'he bears witness in so doing to the fact that the emotional ties, which hitherto made the danger seem small to him, have ceased to exist' (Freud, 1921: 96). Henceforth, he is solitary, as all others are solitary. Paradoxically, the description of the solitary man who is solicitous only of his own direct interests is considered by Freud as the result of the disaggregation of society.

Another way of grasping the essential issues around the place of influence (primary and organizatory as opposed to contingent and disorganizatory) has been provided by Bernheim. If at the outset of his studies, Bernheim directed his interest particularly at the hypnotic state, considering that suggestibility was a consequence of this, 30 years later he reversed this explanation completely for the consideration that the hypnotic state was in effect simply the product of suggestion. Over the 30 years during which he would study these phenomena, suggestion took on more and more importance in his eyes.

In his view, if it is indeed possible to induce criminal acts by suggestion,¹⁴ it is not that suggestion directed towards criminal ends constitutes in itself an overwhelming factor which could completely nullify the subject's ego, nor is it that there might exist a state, the hypnotic state, in which any suggestion at all might be accepted by the subject, but rather that there exists in such cases a flaw in the construction of this subject. The in-born propensity to believe (*creditivity*) of the individual effectively enables her/his socialization through the complex of suggestions directed towards him/her. Furthermore, this substrate of socializing suggestion, if normally constituted, ought to allow him/her to resist acceding to criminally oriented suggestion. Bernheim indeed admits that somnambulists, even when in the grip of suggestion or hallucination, manifest an undoubted and complex intellectual activity (through story-telling, memory-recall, actions) and 'give clear evidence of a perfect self-awareness' (Bernheim, 1884: 84).

Thus, the causality is inverted: if criminal behaviour can be induced through suggestion, this is precisely because there was a failure of the prior social suggestion process. It is not therefore emergent suggestion which leads to deviance or the suppression of the ego, but rather a weakness in the suggestive nexus which should have allowed the subject to resist the criminal suggestion: 'a solid moral substrate, innate or acquired by education, constitutes in itself an anterior primordial suggestion which will neutralise or render difficult any subsequent counter-suggestion' (Bernheim, 1897: 31).

Suggestion is thus constitutive of the self, it is an active phenomenon which, contrary to the declarations of other theoreticians of the period (Despine, 1880, for example), is not limited to lower-level mechanisms. '[Suggestion] is not just a passive fact: it is not an imprint simply left on the brain. The central psyche actively intervenes to transform this trace into an idea and to elaborate it; each idea in turn suggests other ideas and these ideas transform themselves into feelings, emotions, diverse images; from this association of ideas, sensations and images emerges a complex working process which each individual person realises in their own fashion' (Bernheim, 1891: 30): 'A comatose brain is not suggestible because ideas are absent from it. The brain of an idiot is barely at all suggestible because few ideas are found in it' (Bernheim, 1911: 31).

As is well known, the place occupied by suggestion in Bernheim's theory would continue to expand over the 30 years he devoted to the study of these phenomena: In 1897 (p. 3) he wrote that 'every idea is a suggestion', and in 1911 that 'every phenomenon of consciousness is a suggestion' (p. 19). He would even get to the point of declaring that the hypnotic state was not a particular state in which suggestions may be easily put into realization, but was itself a state produced by suggestion (Bernheim, 1911: 16).

It is possible to see how Bernheim's conception can provide the broad guidelines for an interesting analysis of the phenomena of influence and persuasion. It in particular permits the avoidance of a paradox: as we have seen, if it is supposed that influence produces a state of passivity and that it is precisely because the subject is in this state that he will accept suggestion, it must consequently be admitted that this subject, whose individuality is so nullified, will not be able to carry out very much, given the very limited means he is then supposed to have mastery over. Whereas,

paradoxically, anxiety derives from the fact that, under the effects of influence, complex acts which require intelligence and persistence may be carried out.

Furthermore, to return to present-day controversies about the influence of fundamentalist sects, for example, if we follow the ideas of Bernheim, any potentially harmful suggestions should not be suppressed (by banning or excluding them), but rather we must ensure that institutions with the responsibility for education (the family, the school, etc.) provide a sound preparation for young minds (through prior suggestion) in such a way that future suggestions of a harmful nature may be rejected by the subjects themselves.

Stéphane Laurens
Université Rennes-2

Translated from the French by Colin Anderson

Notes

1. For example, the early research of Festinger (1939) was an adaptation of Binet's experiments with regard to suggestibility.
2. It is worth noting that Allport, while rejecting the notions of crowd soul, collective mind, group spirit, class consciousness or spirit of imitation (Allport, 1919, 1920, 1924a, 1924b) propounded notably by Ross and Cooley, nevertheless retained the notion of power of suggestion and went so far as to declare that in the hypnotized subject (Allport, 1924a: 250) or in the man in the crowd (Allport, 1924a: 317) it induces an immediate and arbitrary acceptance on the part of the receiver.
3. For example, Despine (1880) asserted that suggestion was effected via 'low level' mechanisms, automatic responses, whereas the higher mental functions (engagement of the self, judgement, consciousness) would form resistance on the part of the individual to suggestion.
4. For example, to account for his experimental observations, Milgram (1979) hypothesized the existence of an agential state. Each individual would thus have 'two functional modes: the independent mode by which s/he functions separately and for the sole satisfaction of internal needs, and the systematic mode by which s/he is integrated into an organizational structure' (Milgram, 1979: 166). Thus, the individual undergoes a subjective change by which s/he 'thinks of her/himself as the executive agent of an external will, in contrast with the autonomous state by which s/he considers her/himself to be the author of her/his own actions' (p. 167); more generally, s/he 'becomes a different person', presenting new characteristics quite different from those s/he normally presents (harmonized or self-elective behaviours, loss of sense of responsibility).
5. This is the definition as given by McDougall: 'Suggestion is a process of communication resulting in the acceptance with conviction of the communicated proposition in the absence of logically adequate grounds for its acceptance' (McDougall, 1908: 83).
6. Cf. Carroy (1991: 24–31) for the period covering animal magnetism and hypnosis, and Personnaz (1998: 2) with reference to studies on social influence.
7. For example, the demon-possessed bellow and shake outside of churches, particularly at the hour of Mass. They shout out their names: Jupiter, Mercury, etc., those of the former gods, and pour insults on the new God, his symbols and his faithful (cf. *Dialogues* III, 6).
8. This purported magnetic fluid, considered by Mesmer to be something that linked all living things with nature, was thought of as the Newtonian gravity principle generalized to the dimension of life.
9. If some magnetizers (including Mesmer) had also observed such cases (which were admittedly quite rare), they did not accord them any importance, as they were always intent on inducing convulsive crises which they considered necessary in order to effect cures.
10. For example, he elicited the faculty of thought communication, the ability to speak other languages (glossolalia, notably Latin, which was reputedly unknown to the subject outside of the ecstatic

- phase). On the body he was able for example to induce apparent death states, facial pallor, the mouth gaping, eyes rolled back, stertorous breathing, stiffening of the limbs, slowing (or acceleration) of the pulse and the usual convulsions (Bertrand, 1826: 441–2).
11. [Translator's note: *The use of the invented terms 'sugget' and 'surjet' to characterize the two opposite types of influenced individual depends on perception of oral wordplay linking these two terms with the standard word 'sujet' (= subject). 'Sugget' as spelled would be pronounced in almost the same way as 'sujet', but its spelling would link it with 'suggérer, suggestion', thus emphasizing the notion that a 'sugget' is a 'sujet sous suggestion' (a suggestible subject). On the other hand 'surjet', while still partly echoing the pronunciation of 'sujet', invites perception of the word as consisting of a prefix 'sur-' meaning 'over and above' as in 'surpasser' (which verb occurs in the French text) plus the stem '-jet' meaning 'cast, launched'. One also hears the echo of 'surgit' from the verb 'surgir' (= to rise up). Hence, a 'surjet' would be a 'sujet qui surgit' or a subject who rises above himself].*
 12. 'Knowing that our own individual judgment is worthless, we endeavor to fall back on the judgment of the rest of the world which is perhaps better informed. That is, we endeavor to conform with the behavior of the majority or the average' (Keynes, 1937: 214).
 13. 'The prices that emerge from voluntary transactions between buyers and sellers – for short, in a free market – could co-ordinate the activity of millions of people, each seeking its own interest, in such a way to make everyone better off . . . The price system fulfils this task in the absence of any central direction, and without it being necessary for people to speak to each other, nor like each other . . . The economic order is an emergence, the unintentional and unwished-for consequence of the actions of a large number of people driven by their own personal interest . . . The price system works so well, so efficiently, that we are not aware of it most of the time' (Friedman, 1981).
 14. The work of the Nancy school, especially that related to experimental crimes and post-hypnotic suggestion, has been the object of lively debate, such was the concern it generated by demonstrating how powerful suggestion can be.

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