

REVIEW ARTICLE

Hypnosis and Postmodernism: Multicultural Applications

Marty Sapp^{1*}

¹University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Department of Educational Psychology, USA

ABSTRACT

This article described the connection between hypnosis and postmodernism. Sapp (2015a) defined hypnosis as having features of dissociation and absorption. Also, Sapp provided applications of hypnosis to various cultural groups. Postmodernism generally includes solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, feminist psychotherapy, positive psychology, family systems therapy, and multicultural counseling. The major thesis of this article was that hypnosis was the glue for postmodern approaches to psychotherapy.

Keywords: postmodernism, hypnosis, multicultural counseling, phenomenology, adlerian counseling

Contemporary Founders of Post-Modern Therapies

Postmodern approaches typically include solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, feminist psychotherapy, positive psychology, family systems therapy, and multicultural counseling. Some contemporary founders of postmodern therapies are: Insoo Kim Berg (1935-2007), co-founder of solution-focused brief therapy with Steve de Shazer (1940-2005), and Michael White (1949-2008) and David Epston (b. 1944) who were co-founders of narrative therapy (Corey, 2012).

Phenomenology and Post-Modernism

The phenomenological approach of Rogers' Person-Centered psychotherapy is one of the foundations of

postmodernism (Sapp, 2004a; 2004b). Phenomenology suggests that clients are in a process of becoming, and thus is a client's subjective orientation, and it provides clients with views of how the world, people, situations, and circumstances operate. Clients tend to draw conclusions, not based on facts, but from their worldviews, which are subjective. Phenomenology includes everything that makes up a client's inner world. Postmodern approaches stress constructivism-the notion that clients actively construct their reality, and that they are not passive participants within their environments. Before postmodern approaches came into vogue, Adler emphasized phenomenology in psychotherapy, and one can argue that Adler was the philosophical cornerstone for humanistic and existential forms of counseling psychology. When hypnosis is applied to various cultural groups, it, too, becomes a postmodern approach. Here, hypnosis is adapted to individual cultures and it is not applied in a rigid manner.

Race, class, and gender are social constructions, and postmodern approaches accept clients' realities based on these constructs without questioning if they are true, accurate, or rational. A client's race, class, and gender can

*Correspondence: sapp@uwm.edu
Dr. Marty Sapp, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53211, USA.
Tel:(414) 229-4599; fax: (414) 229-4939.

Sleep and Hypnosis
Submit your manuscript at
www.sleepandhypnosis.org



be used to tell stories that create meaning. Hypnosis is a technique that allows culturally distinct clients to experience the past, present, and future in phenomenologically unique ways. Hypnosis as an experiencing tool allows therapists to connect with multicultural clients' inner worlds. Moreover, hypnosis can allow minority clients to feel part of a partnership with their therapists. Essentially, hypnosis can help minority clients to elicit narratives, to deconstruct narratives, and to process narratives. During a hypnotic trance, therapists who are from a background that is different from their clients can explore their clients' inner worlds with the following prompts during hypnosis: think about some aspect of your cultural background, and describe it to me in as much detail as possible; think about a particular strength of your culture, and describe in detail resources that you have gained from your culture. These prompts can help clients to share some of their cultural influences with their therapists. Finally, if therapists can approach minority clients without preconceived notions, they can use hypnosis as a means to connect with minority clients on a deep and subjective manner (Blatner & Blatner, 1997).

Hypnosis and counseling psychology are strength-based models that can capitalize on cultural differences. For example, both approaches have applications for minority groups. Because both approaches are optimistic, they stress the equipotentiality of human growth. In contrast to deficit models of counseling, these strength-based models suggest that clients are in an increasing phase of growth.

Specifically, Sapp (2004a; 2006) stated that Individual Psychology or Adlerian counseling is a forerunner to cognitive-behavioral theories of counseling. This is one of the most flexible approaches to counseling psychology. In fact, it predated the cognitive-behavioral movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Philosophically, Adler was influenced by Kant, Nietzsche, Vaishinger, Goethe, Shakespeare, and the Bible. Moreover, Adler was a subjective and socially oriented theorist (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999), who made the following 7 contributions:

- (a) the confluence of drives,
- (b) the transformation of drives into opposites,
- (c) the projection of one's drive onto another,

- (d) the relationship between the aggression drive and anxiety,
- (e) defense mechanisms as safeguards of the ego,
- (f) The ego-ideal concept, and
- (g) Ego psychology.

Long before many areas were popular, such as social and public policy issues, Adler addressed them, and 9 of these issues were the following:

1. At-risk children and students.
2. The rights of women.
3. The rights of women to have abortions.
4. Adult Education.
5. Teacher training.
6. Community mental health and family counseling clinics.
7. Experimental public school education.
8. Short-term and brief forms of psychotherapy.
9. Family education and family counseling.

One can clearly see that Adler had a strong influence on many areas, and he is seen as the father of self-help programs (Mosak & Maniaci, 1999). In addition, Adler influenced the major counseling approaches (Sapp, 2015).

As stated previously, hypnosis is an interpersonal relationship in which a helping professional offers suggestions to clients. Moreover, hypnosis is an adjunctive procedure that can be used to treat many psychological disorders such as anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders, and academic and self-esteem related disorders. Likewise, hypnosis is a theoretical construct that can enhance clinical practice and has effect sizes, quantitative measure of effectiveness, larger than many other procedures (Sapp, 2015).

In contrast to Freud's intrapsychic notion, Adler based his theory on social psychology, or the notion that adolescents live within a social field or social context. Freud's model of counseling is a deficit model and he viewed problems as existing within the individual, hence the term intrapsychic conflict. While Adler embraced a social psychology view of humans, he realized that not all problems are social and that problems can exist within adolescents. Freud saw the transference relationship as necessary for psychoanalysis; in contrast, Adler did not

emphasize the transference relationship, since Adlerian counseling is educational and does not involve the deep analysis and interpretation of adolescents' unconscious influences from the past. Freud viewed adolescents as basically "bad," whereas Adler took a neutral position. In terms of dreams, Freud viewed them as the royal road to the unconscious, in contrast, Adler viewed dreams from a future or current orientation. Within Individual Psychology or Adlerian counseling, teleology deals with purposefulness and the force that guides self-ideals. Self-ideals organize and guide toward the direction of the future. Unlike psychoanalysis, which stressed unconscious causation, teleology stresses the continuity among the past, present, and future, but with more emphasis and anticipation for the future (Sapp, 2004a; 2004b). Finally, because Adlerian counseling did not develop from academic psychology, it can be viewed as a nontraditional form of cognitive-behavioral therapy and can be integrated with other forms of cognitive-behavioral therapy and hypnosis.

Adlerian counseling is not a series of techniques (Sapp, 2004a; 2004b; 2015), and Sapp urged against just attempting techniques in counseling. In addition, research supports the fact that the counseling relationship, especially the one emphasized in Individual Psychology, is more significant than the wild eclectic use of techniques. Sapp (1997) pointed out that Adlerian counseling is a complicated and intricate intertwine of four objectives or four stages of a counseling process. Psychoanalysis also has four phases; and these phases, which are overlapping, are opening phase, development of transference, working through, and resolution of transference. During the opening phase, the counselor obtains the clients' case history, and free association is encouraged. This phase of free association can last anywhere from three to six months. Interestingly, one difference between short-term dynamic therapy and traditional psychoanalysis, other than the amount of time or years used for therapy, is that short-term dynamic therapy does not generally use free association, and there tends to be stringent selection criteria for adolescents to enter this form of counseling. The opening phase, along with the development of transference, represents the majority of counseling. Some

argue that Freud's greatest discovery was transference. Transference is part of the therapeutic relationship in which clients project feeling and fantasies from the past onto the counselor. If a client can distinguish fantasy from fiction, it is possible that transference can be worked through, and that analysis leads to the working phase. When a client can resolve issues of transference, the termination of counseling can begin. In contrast to psychoanalysis, the four phases or stages of Adlerian or Individual Psychology would be appropriate for many cultural groups (Sapp, 1997).

Adler did not have much to say about hypnosis, but others have linked his approach to hypnosis (Jones, 1997a; 1997b). Apparently, Adler's form of counseling is analytical; but it is also phenomenological in that it emphasizes how clients are affected by their internal worlds, and how their internal world interacts with their external worlds. Phenomenology is the philosophical cornerstone for Humanistic and Existential forms of counseling psychology. Moreover, phenomenology suggests that clients are in a process of becoming, and this is the foundation for Carl Roger's Person-Centered form of counseling. Finally, counseling psychology and hypnosis help clients identify their cultural and individual strengths, and Adlerian counseling and hypnosis could be adapted to their needs (Sapp, 2006); Smith (2006); hence, hypnosis, like the Adlerian approach can be viewed as a form of postmodernism.

Hypnotizability and African American College Students

Sapp & Hitchcock (2013) recruited two-Hundred African American college students from a historically black college in the Midwest. There were 105 males and 95 females, and their mean age was twenty. The characteristics of these students matched those of the ones that Shropshire (2007) used for her study and were at the same university where Shropshire collected her data. In addition, students completed questionnaires and listened to a pre-taped hypnotic transcript of the Waterloo-Stanford Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility, Form C (WSGC). This scale is a group adaption of the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Form C (Weitzenhoffer &

Hilgard, 1962). The WSGC is a 12-item scale that measures 12 suggestions that takes about one hour to administer. Scores on the WSGC range from 0-12, and the items are as follows: hand lowering, hands moving together, mosquito sensing experience, taste experience, right arm rigidity, dream recollection, left arm mobilization, age regression, music hallucination, visual hallucination, posthypnotic writing, and amnesia. The Inner Subjective Experiences Scale (INSUB) is a 12-item scale with scores that range between one and six, and this scale accompanies the WSGC; hence, measuring inner subjective experiences regarding hypnosis (Szabo, 1993). These items also measure hypnotic automatic responding. Shropshire (2007), Sapp & Hitchcock (2003a; 2003b) found that this scale produced reliable items for African American college students. The reliability of the INSUB for the current sample was .940, and a 95% confidence interval around the population reliability coefficient was .927 for the lower limit and .952 for the upper limit.

African American college students completed the Mainstream Orientation Questionnaire (MOQ). The MOQ is a 20-item Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure the level of acculturation of mainstream cultural characteristics of African Americans. Students obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .762 on this scale, and a 95% confidence interval around the population reliability coefficient was .709 for the lower limit and .809 for the upper limit.

The Multidimensionality Inventory of Black Identity (MIBI) is a 56-item, seven-point Likert scale questionnaire used to assess African American college students' racial identity. For these students, this scale had a reliability of .527, and a 95% confidence interval around the population reliability was .45 for the lower limit and .72 for the upper limit. The Oppressed Minority Scale of the MIBI had a Cronbach alpha of .50, and a 95% confidence interval around the population reliability was .22 for the lower limit and .61 for the upper limit.

Hypnotic depth scale was a one-item scale that had been used previously to assess individuals' perceptions of how hypnotized they felt. These scores range from 0 to 10. Zero is wide awake and not experiencing hypnosis at all, and 10 is the deepest level of hypnosis. The mean for this variable was 3.

Multivariate regression was used to test if the Spirituality Scale (SS), Mainstream Orientation Questionnaire (MOQ), or the Oppression Minority Scale of the MIBI were predictors of Hypnotic Depth, or Inner Subjective Experiences of the (WSGC). Hotelling's multivariate test found that there was not an association between these predictors and these dependent variables, $F(34, 222)=.214, p=.895$.

The purpose of this study was to replicate, partially, the study of Shropshire (2007). Like Shropshire, the current study did not find a statistically significant relationship among cultural measures and hypnotic susceptibility measures for African American college students. Similarly to Sapp & Hitchcock (2001), the current study found that inner subjective measures of hypnosis produced more reliable scores than behaviorally scored items of hypnotic susceptibility. In addition, Sapp and Hitchcock (2003a; 2003b) found that the inner subjective experiences method for scoring the HGSH:A produced more reliable scores than the standard scoring system. Also, Sapp (2004) found that the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Form C (SHSS: C) and the inner subjective experiences method for scoring the SHSS:C both produced reliable scores with African American students. Moreover, Sapp & Hitchcock (2003a; 2003b) found that point estimates of coefficient alphas did not differ from those obtained by European American college students. Based on a series of studies with African American college students, it is clear that the Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility (HGSHS:A) does not reliably measure hypnotic susceptibility with African American college students, but when the HGSHS:A is modified, by asking African American students to assess their inner subjective experiences in reference to the HGSHS:A, scores are reliable. With the WSGC, a similar modification is needed with African American college students, where inner subjective experiences for the WSGC as opposed to these behaviorally anchored items of the WSGC are used.

Shropshire (2007) found that age and church attendance significantly predicted hypnosis variables, but the current study did not find any significant relationship among these variables. In addition, she found

that church attendance and the frequency of participants' church attendance were significant predictors of the WSGC; however, these findings are the opposite of Pumphrey (2002). She found that religious attitudes did not influence hypnotic depth or hypnotic susceptibility with African Americans who reported attending church. Unfortunately, neither Shropshire nor Pumphrey reported which religions the African American participants endorsed nor how many described themselves as actively believing in their religion.

Pumphrey (2002) found that level of education was related significantly to inner subjective experiences with African Americans who reported attending church. In essence, she found that the more education an African American had, the more this individual was able to reflect internally and produce hypnotic experiences that appeared automatic. In summary, similar to Sapp & Hitchcock (2005), the Inner Subjective Experiences Scale was a more reliable measure of hypnotic responsiveness than the WSGC alone. Most of these participants fell into the lower range of hypnotic responsiveness of the WSGC. Likewise, participants also scored in the lower range on the inner subjective experiences. A similar pattern was found for hypnotic depth. Finally, this sample can be categorized as scoring low in hypnotic susceptibility.

There are two implications of these findings. First, like Sapp & Hitchcock (2005), Sapp & Hitchcock (2001) and Chien & Sapp (2012) found, it is necessary to modify group hypnotic susceptibility instruments with African American college students. Essentially, results from two studies have found that the WSGC produced less reliable scores than the Inner Subjective Experiences Scale with African American college students. Second, even though these African American college students did not score high on hypnotic measures, they could still benefit from hypnosis. Sapp (2000) reported that a high score on a standardized hypnotizability scale is not needed to apply hypnosis clinically. Specifically, many African American students feel marginalized and exhausted by being minorities who experience oppression. Bell (1982) suggested that feelings of racism and oppressed minority feelings could be managed through hypnosis with African Americans.

The current study has limitations. First, participants were African American college students at a Midwestern university and these results may not generalize to African Americans who are not in a college setting. In addition, this study would have some external validity if students were used on the South and East coast. Here, one would have replications across different settings. Also, the majority of these students were first year and sophomore students. Since African American students were at the early adulthood phase of development, generalizations cannot be made about African Americans at later stages of development. In terms of future research, it would be interesting to investigate the role that cultural mistrust may play in African American students' abilities to become hypnotized. In addition, qualitative information about how African American students view hypnosis is needed. Clearly, there are some cultural differences between African American college students and European American student when they experience hypnosis. It is hoped that future studies will explore in greater depth what happens to African Americans when they are hypnotized.

Hypnosis: African American and Latino Patients

Sapp, McNeely & Torres (2007) described applications of hypnosis to African American and Latino patients. African American and Latinos are the two largest minority groups within the United States. By the year 2050, the number of Latinos is expected to increase by nearly 17 percent and African Americans are expected to increase by 10 percent. Latinos are a diverse group and come from the Caribbean, Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America. There is consistent evidence that health disparities exist and will continue to exist for both groups. Sapp et al. (1982) pointed out how hypnosis could be used as a complementary and alternative medicine for African American and Latino patients. Theoretically, psychological stress tends to wear these groups down and lead to mental and physical health problems. Hypnosis can help Latinos and African Americans cope with their unfortunate realities. This is due partly to the hypnotherapist-client relationship that is

personalized. Mainstream medicine tends not to address the entire patient, and nor does it tend to take culture into account. Hypnosis is likely to offer greater congruence with the preferences of these two minority groups. In addition, the amount of verbal involvement with hypnosis is greater than that which occurs normally in traditional medical practice (Sapp, 2015).

Hypnosis and American Indians

There are over 5 million American Indians within the United States. Over one-third of American Indians live in the following states: California, Arizona, and Oklahoma. American Indians experience a number of issues such as high unemployment rates, alcoholism and drug issues, health disparities, high rates of incarceration rates and so on. Historical trauma is seen as the explanation for the ills the American Indians have experienced and continue to experience (Frey, 2013); Rouse-Arndt & Davis (2011). Hypnosis may have applications for treating Type II diabetes, posttraumatic stress disorder, and smoking cessation with American Indians.

Allen (2008) administered the Stanford Hypnotic Susceptibility Scale, Form C (SHSS:C) to forty self-identified American Indians from Idaho, Utah, and the state of Washington. Her results found that American Indians' distribution of scores differed significantly from The United States normative sample: Spanish, Italian,

German, and Dutch samples. Surprisingly, this sample did not differ significantly from the Mexican sample. These American Indians passed more items than other comparison samples. These American Indians had a mean of 7.75 on the SHSS:C and a standard deviation of 2.92; however, the reliability for their scores was .58. These results are similar to the ones Sapp & Hitchcock (2005) found with African American college students. The distribution of scores for American Indians was non-normal, specifically, the distribution was negatively skewed.

Summary

Hypnosis is a strength-based approach that has many applications, and this writer believes that is the glue for several post-modern approaches. Also, hypnosis can be viewed as a post-modern approach in that it is congruent with the philosophy of social constructionism and the principles of multicultural counseling. In addition, it can be used with solution-focused brief therapy, narrative therapy, family therapy, feminist therapy, positive psychology, and multicultural counseling. Hypnosis has many applications to post-modern approaches, and it can be applied across a broad range of theoretical approaches. Finally, hypnosis can be integrated within post-modern approaches and within non-post-modern approaches.

References

- Allen, S. R. (2008). *Stanford hypnotic susceptibility scale, Form C: Norms for an American Indian sample*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation.) Washington State University, Pullman, WA.
- Bell, C. C. (1982). States of consciousness. *Journal of the National Medical Association, 72*, 331-334.
- Blatner, A., & Blatner, A. (1997). *The art of play: Helping adults reclaim imagination and spontaneity*. Brunner/Mazel.
- Chien, L., & Sapp, M. (2012). Classical test theory and item response theory for Harvard Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility with African American college student. *Sleep and Hypnosis, 14*(1-2), 13-19.
- Corey, G. (2012). *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy*. Cengage Learning
- Frey, R. A. M. (2013). *The service and re-entry needs of youthful offenders: American Indian girls impacted by sexual trauma*. (Unpublished master's thesis). University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Jones, P. R. (1997a). Adlerian psychology and hypnosis. *Contemporary Hypnosis, 14*(20), 112-120.
- Jones, P. R. (1997b). Adlerian psychology and hypnosis. *Counseling Psychology Review, 11*(3), 19-25.
- Mosak, H., & Maniaci, M. (1999). *A primer of Adlerian psychology: The analytic-behavioral-cognitive psychology of Alfred Adler*. Philadelphia, PA: Brunner/Mazel.
- Pumphrey, K. K. (2002). *An investigation: The influence of religiosity and hypnotizability in an African American population*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.
- Rouse-Arndt, L. M., & Davis, A. R. (2011). Warrior spirit: Soul wound and coping among American Indians in law enforcement. *The Counseling Psychologist, 39*, 527-569.
- Sapp, M. (1997). *Counseling and psychotherapy: Theories, associated research, and issues*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

- Sapp, M. (2004). Hypnotizability: Harvard and Stanford scales with African American college students. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 6(1), 14-18.
- Sapp, M. (2004a). *Cognitive-behavioral theories of counseling: Traditional and Nontraditional approaches*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Sapp, M. (2004b). Hypnosis: Applications for academically at-risk African American high school student. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 6(2), 93-99.
- Sapp, M. (2006). Counseling at-risk youths. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 30(1), 1-10.
- Sapp, M. (2015). *Hypnosis, dissociation, and absorption: Theories, assessment, and treatment (2nd ed.)*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.
- Sapp, M., & Hitchcock, K. (2001). Harvard group scale with African American college students. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 3(3), 111-117.
- Sapp, M., & Hitchcock, K. (2003a). Creative imagination, absorption, and dissociation with African American college students. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 5(2), 90-99.
- Sapp, M., & Hitchcock, K. (2003b). Measuring dissociation and hypnotizability with African American college students: A new dissociation scale – the general dissociation scale. *Australian Journal of Clinical Hypnotherapy and Hypnosis*, 24(1), 14-22.
- Sapp, M., & Hitchcock, K. (2005). Waterloo-Stanford Group Scale of Hypnotic Susceptibility, Form C with African American college student and non-African American college students. *Sleep and Hypnosis*, 7, 42-46.
- Sapp, M., & Hitchcock, K. (2013). *African American college students' culturally based responses to hypnosis: A partial replication*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Sapp, M., McNeely, R.L., & Torres, J. B. (2007). Hypnotherapy: A useful modality for serving African American and Latino clients and patients. In L. A. See (Ed.), *Human behavior in the social environment from an African American perspective (2nd ed., pp. 677-693)*. Binghamton, NY: Haworth Press.
- Shropshire, S. Y. (2007). *African American college students' culturally based responses to hypnosis: an empirical study*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI.
- Smith, E. J. (2006). The strength-based counseling model. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 34(1), 13-79.
- Szabó, C. (1993). The phenomenology of the experiences and the depth of hypnosis: Comparison of direct and indirect induction techniques. *International journal of clinical and experimental hypnosis*, 41(3), 225-233.
- Weitzenhoffer, A. M., & Hilgard, E. R. (1962). *Stanford hypnotic susceptibility scale, form C (Vol. 27)*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.