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The Domain of Suggestibility: Attempt to Conceptualize Suggestional Phenomena.

1 Particularities of Suggestion

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■ In order to overcome the conceptual confusion concerning suggestion and suggestibility a domain of suggestibility is proposed. Its components are delineated in several ways. This chapter deals with the particularities of the suggestive situation. After discussion of the characteristics describing the suggestional process of "putting under" (sub-gere), an extended description of relevant suggestion effects is given.

1 The Confusing Character of Definitions of Suggestion

In the beginnings of suggestion research many authors, e.g. Baudouin (1924), Bernheim (1884, 1910), Janet (1919), McDougall (1908, 1935), to name only some of the most well-known researchers, were seriously interested in presenting definitions of suggestion (see Allport, 1985; Gheorghiu, 1972; Lerède, 1980; Stukat, 1958).

With the development of concrete goals in research the efforts to define the term rapidly decreased. In modern suggestion research - as in the famous articles of Eysenck (1947) and Stukat (1958) - no definitions are presented. The contributions of Stokvis & Pflanz (1961) and Weitzenhoffer (1953, 1989) are an exception.

The task of defining suggestion and suggestibility has been increasingly taken over by the publishers of different psychological, medical, and philosophical dictionaries. The confrontation with the various aspects which are repeatedly mentioned regarding suggestion, appears to be very confusing. One can only agree with Lerède (1980) who points out that, on the whole, the definitions of even the specialized dictionaries give the impression that where suggestion is concerned one is confronted with an extremely complex phenomenon on which there are various, often contradictory opinions. No consensus exists at all, unless the consensus lies in the fact that most definitions emphasize the interruption of the involved person's critical abilities (p. 26).

The psychological dictionary published by the French psychologist Piéron, is one of the few which explicitly refers to the vague and undefined character of the term "suggestion" (Piéron, 1963). On the whole though, there is still a lack of adequate criteria to comprehend the different facets of the phenomenon of suggestion in everyday life, in special fields of application, and in research in general.

This can be explained at least partly by the insufficient definitions of the term "suggestion" itself. Instead of subsuming the phenomena of suggestion under a more general generic term, a subdivision in several classification categories is favoured: auto- vs. hetero-, verbal vs. nonverbal, personal vs. impersonal, prestige vs. nonprestige suggestion, etc. These categories allow only a few conclusions about what the suggestions and the various aspects which they promise to explain, have in common. In this case we are faced with concepts which are discussed as if they explain themselves. In addition, contexts exist in different fields of psychological research, in which processes discussed regarding suggestion and suggestibility, are analysed together with other terms and in different ways. For the variety of "suggestional occurrences" there, basically, is no adequate superordinate construct. Although such a function is implicitly linked to the terms "suggestion / suggestibility", in the course of time these terms were attributed with specific connotations which make them unsuitable for generic use. Primarily, suggestion is considered to be a verbal term of communication or technique that is systematically used for influencing a person or group, as e.g. with inducing hypnosis, evoking hallucinations and manipulating opinions, views or decisions. Suggestibility, however, is considered to be the ability to react to suggestion and deals with interindividual differences of readiness to react.

In summary, it can be stated that the term suggestion, so far as it is actually mentioned in current scientific literature, is so unspecifically interpreted as a process of influence or communication that differences from related terms cannot be isolated (compare with Gheorghiu, Netter, Eysenck & Rosenthal, 1989; Schumaker, 1991; Schwaneberg, 1993). Also, with regard to known authors - a special characteristic at a time is emphasized which, however, makes it difficult to assign the variety of suggestion phenomena to a general term: e.g., "the absence of adequate logical reasons" (McDougall, 1908) - "interpersonal basic performance leading to affective resonance" (Stokvis & Pflanz, 1961); and "non-voluntary response which reflects the ideational content of the communication" (Weitzenhoffer, 1989).

Today, focus tends to be placed on suggestion methods, on possible applications of suggestion in the clinical and forensic spheres, and in the educational and sports fields, on suggestion influences in advertising and propaganda, on "waking" or hypnotic suggestion and suggestibility, on suggestion and placebo effects, and on suggestion techniques as a research method. Focus is also placed on suggestion as a way of explaining different processes of "putting under" or substitution, and on suggestion as a self-fulfilling prophecy.

This list should be enough to point out the necessity of finding out further details about the attributes belonging to the term "suggestion". According to Bunges (1967), the scientific definition should, amongst other things, promote "logical hygiene" to reduce ambiguity and vagueness to a tolerable degree.

In order to overcome the present confusion of terms, it makes sense to introduce partly new and "unbiased" concepts such as the concept of "suggestibility" (Gheorghiu,

1996, 2000). Such could serve as a general term for a broad and complex category of specific phenomena of influence which can lead the individual to modify his or her present emotions, judgements or behaviour, and to trigger new psychological processes. Alternative reaction possibilities are precluded without the involvement of reflex or reflection mechanisms.

The concept of suggestibility is thought of as being analogous to the terms "rationality" or "emotionality" which refer to the whole area of rational or emotional processes and their functions. As well as rationality or emotionality, suggestibility forms the general frame for crystallizing specific elements of suggestion. Here, one can presume a domain for suggestibility. In the context of hypnosis, it has been dealt with in a similar way. When in the sixties and seventies the research referring to hypnotic phenomena had significantly increased, Hilgard (1973), one of the pioneers of modern hypnosis research, made the effort "to map out its domain".

On the basis of everyday experiences and results from research and practical work, the following categorization of the domain of suggestibility can be offered:

- a. The suggestive situation or the suggestion and its effects: this is the phenomenal approach
- b. Suggestibility and its influential factors: this is the approach of general and differential psychology
- c. The "technology" of suggestion and its fields of application: this is the pragmatic approach
- d. The importance and meaning of suggestional phenomena: this is the theoretical approach

In this article only the first category of this subdivision will be discussed.

2 The Suggestive Situation or the Suggestion and its Effects: The Phenomenal Approach

In the course of time a variety of representative suggestion phenomena has been described which indicate what can be called a suggestive situation. The characteristics of this situation which represent the embodiment of suggestion will be explained regarding the following aspects:

The one-sided incentive attribution (section 2.1); the "switching of points" for the performance of the one-sided attribution: the process of "putting under" (section 2.2); and the exertion of influence: suggestion effects (section 2.3).

Though partly related to different contents, basically, we already find this categorization in the work of Baudouin (1924, 1951) who talks of three steps of suggestion: 'imagination or idea of a change'; the 'process of realization'; and the 'emerging of the change'. Stokvis and Pflanz (1961) for their part divide the "chronological course of suggestion" into three stages: 'stadium acceptationis', 'stadium suggestionis', and 'stadium effectationis'.

The essential part of this attempt to conceptualize can be summarized as follows:

Suggestion (suggestive situation) is a one-sided attribution which can unfold as a process of "putting under". The emerging exertion of influence can cause a variety of quantitative and qualitative changes in a range of psychological processes. The person involved potentially also has to have the alternative of being able to react in a different way. The exclusion of virtual alternatives for the benefit of the one-sided attribution is neither based primarily on reflection nor on reflex mechanisms, and eludes conscious control.

2.1 The One-Sided Incentive Attribution

2.1.1 The Indicative Situation

For the process of influence proposed here, one can assume a one-sided incentive situation. With regard to this, we generally use the verb "to suggest". Whether directly or indirectly, explicitly or implicitly; the subject of the (potential) influencing is one-sidedly "suggested" as to what or how the subject should do or leave, interpret, value, or feel about something. And it actually is this indicative character that is expressed by colloquial language: suggestion as a proposition, idea, advice, indication of meaning (and not as an exertion of influence that has already taken place). There are several partly overlapping particularities of the (suggestive) attribution. Among others, there has to be distinctions between the following categories.

2.1.1.1 Directly or only Indirectly Conceivable Indicative Situation

On the one hand, we are dealing here with attributions which directly and unmistakably point towards the intended reaction ("Your headache will decrease significantly if you take this 'bitter pill'"). On the other hand, cues are presented which cannot be identified as such. The attribution of direction and meaning that takes its effect can only be inferred "post hoc" with the help of the behaviour it has caused (see Stokvis & Pflanz, 1961; Weitzenhoffer, 1989). As hidden attributions, suggestive indicative situations which are covered up by primarily different influencing processes, also have to be taken into account. We are speaking here of suggestive components which accompany rational discussions, such as easy to remember examples, emphasizing special points during the course of argumentation, comparative assertions, etc. The same applies to many other kinds of influences which are erroneously thought of as being free of suggestive components. On the basis of the "dichotomy trap" a clear division between "placebo" and "verum" should be made. The first, regarded as a "substitute" of the second, is primarily assigned to suggestion influences. Considering the verum, however, which proves to be more effective than the "unspecific, empty" preparation, it is only to a limited extent, if at all, that we can take into consideration as well that placebo suggestive components also have an effect.

2.1.1.2 Developmental and Effect-Related Aspects of the Attributions

There are attributions with an anticipatory character as in the case of explicit or implicit forecasts, which trigger self-fulfilling tendencies (see Ludwig, 2000). The intended

reaction which is imparted at the beginning of the process can occur at different times. Such, for example, applies to guiding ideas, iatrogenic noxious factors, and suggestive conjurations. In other situations, the attributions only become clear through inductive or deductive processes (with the example of Othello's actions, Shakespeare illustrates how, step by step, a real suggestive "leitmotif" can develop from a variety of discreet, as well as apparent circumstances). Finally, situations must be mentioned in which attributions and reactions actually fuse (seductive situations or contagious model contexts, and situations of "slipping into something").

2.1.1.3 Sources of Attribution

We need to distinguish between primarily "intra-", "inter-" or "extra-"individual indicative situations. In reference to the first two categories, they usually are differentiated from auto- or heterosuggestion. For "extra-"individual indicative situations which occur as a result of the individual's interactions with his social and natural environment, there is so far no special term (e.g. "grab-it" or "take-it-with-you" situations, as they exist at counter displays of supermarkets, mostly without verbal requests).

2.1.2 The Suggestive Incentive Situation

Not only the one-sided attribution of direction and meaning, but also the accompanying incentive character is a typical feature of the suggestive situation. Intentional or unintentional, directly or indirectly, the suggerendus is prompted to follow the attributions to let them work. Fitchner (1916) and Weitzenhoffer (1953) primarily considered suggestion to be a stimulus with determining tendencies. The incentive character of the suggestive situation can be best explained on the basis of suggestion techniques. These procedures are not only applied in order to direct the subject towards a certain kind of behaviour, but by using different means, make the subject follow it.

2.1.3 The Alternative Possibilities of Reaction

Furthermore, it has to be stated that parallel to the (suggested) kind of reaction, alternative possibilities of reaction must also be expected. A person to whom, for example, it is suggested that he cannot open his folded hands, in actual fact is also given the alternative to oppose this request. When applying suggestion techniques, with practical as well as with experimental goals, it has to be checked each time which counter-reactions could occur. After all, every influence having an effect, is accompanied by the exclusion of virtually existing alternative solutions. By including an alternative possibility of reaction in the suggestive situation, it is implicitly assumed that the developing suggestive solution itself has at first to be considered as being a potential reaction. It can, but must not necessarily gain the upper hand. This generally applies to requests that allow alternative solutions. "I shall not be provoked", one says in colloquial language. This, however, does not preclude provocation as such.

The fact that the suggestive situation is not an obligatory situation, and that at least one possible alternative reaction is to be expected, is far too rarely pointed out in the current literature.

Without doubt, there is the difficulty of not always being able to decide whether there really are alternative possibilities in the actual, concrete incentive situation, or if internal vs. external compulsory factors (e.g. limited understanding, pathological conditions or situations of duty) do not allow alternative solutions. This, however, would have to be accepted. To do without the principle of alternatives, in fact, appears to place us at greater disadvantage than to keep the principle, as far as finding useful categorization criteria for the suggestive situation are concerned.

2.2 The "Switching of Points" for the Performance of the One-Sided Attribution: The Process of "Putting Under"

One of the greatest challenges of explaining the characteristics of the suggestive situation or suggestion lies in the fact that one must refer to the particularities of the "switching of points" that facilitates the performance of the suggested kind of reaction.

2.2.1 Reflection and Reflex Mechanisms: no Basis for the Performance of the One-Sided Attribution

A suggestion is to be regarded as being effective when the suggested solution gains the upper hand or when any alternative solution is excluded. This does not take place on the basis of reflection or reflex mechanisms.

2.2.1.1 No Reflection Process

The elimination of "all but one" (of the suggested solutions) does not take place through processes of thinking, questioning - of critical reflecting. After all, we are not dealing with an option proceeding in the sense of a balancing reflection with available alternatives. The specialist literature agrees as far as this characteristic is concerned.

The alternative solutions generally are not directly and obviously available. The process of influence induced by the one-side attribution, when efficiently working, pre-judges a confrontation with the competing alternatives. Our everyday experience proves this very well.

"Let us take the case of a man who buys a suit of clothes under the persuasion of a silver-tongued salesman. The seller points out its virtues in terms of fashion, flattering fit and comfort. Bombarded by the arguments the customer yields to persuasion; but he has not given due weight to equally relevant considerations that might have blocked the purchase expense, specific wardrobe needs, and personal preference. Even though the salesman may have introduced more determining tendencies than the buyer initially possessed yet, functionally speaking, the salesman has reduced the effective determinants. The buyer's purchase is therefore partly, if not altogether, the result of suggestion." (Allport, 1985, p. 19).

Although rational processes are not the basis of suggestive processes, they can still take part in activating these. McDougall (1935) points out that convincing arguments and obvious lines of reasoning can substantiate the power of suggestion. Stukat (1958) holds a similar point of view. It does not require special proof that human beings often

believe they have acted as a result of rational ways of looking at things; indeed however, they are subject to suggestive influences by arguments put forward which satisfy by their credibility.

2.2.1.2 No Reflex Process

Although it is more or less agreed that suggestion processes are not based on rational reflections, the literature tends to ignore the fact that they are not based on reflex mechanisms either. As already hinted above, reactions caused by reflex cannot be seen as reactions in conformity with suggestion, because they do not allow alternative solutions. This applies to regularly fixed patterns of behaviour as well as to reflex reactions which proceed automatically in certain situations, without being genetically determined as a reflex rather they are especially practised by the individual in manifold ways. If in the case of a forced limitation of free decision, the alternative of reacting differently cannot be given any more, then we cannot speak of a suggestive situation any more. This however, does not preclude the argument that suggestive influences are part of the development of stereotyped reactions. They can also create a favourable breeding-ground for further suggestive kinds of reaction (e.g. as with deep-rooted superstition or prejudices). The same can be assumed for the formation of conditioned reflexes, which is probably, how Pavlov (1927) is to be understood, when he describes suggestion as the simplest kind of typical conditioned reflex.

Conditioned associations suggest the formation of reflex-like reactions. As soon as we have to deal with a fixed kind of reaction, however, the conditioned reflex cannot be defined any more as a suggestive situation; under normal conditions, it does not leave any room for reacting alternatively.

The paradox of suggestion as a stimulus situation lies in the fact that it does not have a coercive character - which means it does not trigger the intended reaction reflex-like or automatically. However, this reaction can indeed occur compulsively via the induced suggestion process. For example, this can be observed with persons who subconsciously orientate their behaviour according to the forecast of a fortune-teller and by doing so, support the realization of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This process applies similarly to people who autosuggestively talk themselves into suicidal thoughts and, more or less, are compulsorily subjected to them. It is a known fact that not all persons confronted with such an incentive situation are subject to its influence, but are able to make use of virtually existing alternatives.

2.2.2 No Conscious Control During the Performance of the One-Sided Attribution (of the Suggested Solution)

One can assume that the suggestee can only in particular situations control the suggestion process. Where the application of direct and explicit suggestion techniques is concerned, the person can certainly be conscious of the fact that it is a method of influence. Every now and then, one tries to control the influencing process. While inducing a catalepsy of the eyelids, taking place in the sense of a so-called "challenge" suggestion

sion, for example, it can be observed that some subjects try to make use of the alternative solution by opening their eyes. (The particularity of the "challenge" situation lies in the fact that it is suggested to the subjects that they cannot open their eyes anymore, but they should still try to do so.) Some subjects succeed and in this case the suggestion actually does not work. Others try repeatedly, and one can watch them pulling up their eyelids and still not succeed. A third category of subjects does not even try to open their eyes, or go along with the "challenge" situation, i.e. they do not even try to control the induced catalepsy. These observations repeatedly made by the author, will probably be well-known to anybody who has gained experience with motor suggestion methods.

There are certain circumstances (which will be spoken of later) that are able to favour the readiness to react to suggestive contents. A patient as well as his or her therapist can be ever so eager, for example, to switch off pain, influence the healing of warts, remedy psychologically caused dysfunctions, etc., through direct and indirect verbal and nonverbal techniques. At the end of the day, it is not within their discretion to control the realization of the desired kind of reaction; it is known that a "desire to control" can, in fact, disturb the performance of the wanted influence. The effort can destroy the process it intends (Baudouin, 1951/1972; Hoffmann, 1981; Jaspers, 1948).

In the explanations cited above, it has been stated what suggestion processes are not: they are no reflection, reflex or consciously controlled processes. We are talking here of nonverbal, non-rational, non-conscious occurrences. This compromise, of course, has its disadvantages. They are:

a) By being negations of well-known and generally higher rated conditions, they, in some respect, are given a shadowy existence and are implicitly said to be pejorative;
 (b) an "either or"- classification is established, leaving little room for a dialectic of an "as well as" (e.g. for interconnections between verbal and nonverbal, rational and non-rational); (c) the independency, heterogeneity and the functions of these psychological facts are practically cut off from the "main" stem. At this point it can be added informally that the decades of ignoring non-rational and non-conscious phenomena have contributed to the fact that suggestion processes have been investigated only to a very limited extent.

The difficulty of searching for specific features of suggestion still remains. The main point of the suggestion question refers to the mechanisms that enable the person (the suggestee) to prefer a certain (suggested) solution when there are virtually existing alternatives. In this context one could metaphorically speak of a process of "putting under" or substitution. (Suggestion has been derived from the Latin "sugerere (= subgerere)" and means "to lay under" or "to put/to push under".) In the broadest sense of the word, "putting under" means the tendency to react according to the present (suggestive) incentive situation, as if there were no other possible alternatives in the actual context.

During the course of the process of "putting under", the individual acts - so far he

or she actually wants to or is able to give account to anybody - as if his or her judgements, assumptions and behaviour are more or less self-evident, comprehensible or inevitable reactions.

The fundamental psychological principles of the mechanisms of the process of "putting under" have been insufficiently investigated. Their further discussion belongs to the field of debate over questions of suggestibility. It has to be pointed out, however, that the term "putting under" carries meaning in colloquial language that is rather negative. (In Germany it is often used in the sense of insinuating or implying that somebody has done or said something or accused somebody of something). In the present context, however, it is not used in a judgmental way. From the fact itself that alternative possibilities, principally offered through the influence of suggestion, are not made use of by the suggestee, it cannot be inferred that the "putting under" that has taken place cannot be useful, or that the contents which have been "put under" necessarily are wrong.

2.3 The Exertion of Influence: Suggestion Effects

By suggestional processes, judgements, moods, behaviour, etc., can be a) initiated or annulled, b) accentuated or diminished, c) conserved or transformed. With the help of these three bipolar categories, phenomena caused or partly caused by suggestion can be produced. The same classification principles can also be applied to other categories of influence. Where suggestion-related effects are concerned, the characteristics of the suggestive situation and the suggestional process of "putting under" in any case have to be taken into consideration (see above).

2.3.1 Initiation

Different situations can be triggered (initiated) by the influence of suggestion.

2.3.1.1 Formation of New Circumstances

In order to solve ambiguous circumstances, in an unknown situation, an individual can take the first possible advice or act spontaneously in the sense of attributing direction that comes to mind rather by chance. While doing this, one may ignore possible alternatives and preclude the consequences of actions. In order to resolve uncertainty the subject can, however, talk to himself in a reassuring way and reach guidelines which give him or her hope, comfort or encouragement. In critical situations which are lacking in points of reference, he or she may spontaneously go along with the behaviour of others. This process similarly applies to circumstances in which inertia has to be overcome. Through attribution of meaning the influence of suggestion constantly contributes to marginal or unspecific matters that are relevant. This applies not only to persons and their relations, but also to occurrences, facts and things. In the final analysis, it is what is said or thought about which counts. What is said about an unspecific preparation (the placebo), after all, says a lot more than it says about itself.

Human beings constantly pick up ideas, judgements and assumptions of others, partly because of their novelty and stimulatory qualities. Quite often they take over and

tend to become independent. The subject picks up value judgements which he himself passes on, not just because of their contents, but also because of the people who spread them, who are liked or admired. Conversations may occur which provide escape from oppressive silence and resolve general indifference; they also rid the subject of some of his worries. While "gossiping", he gains new information that is rarely checked, which however, keeps him up-to-date on what is possibly thought and done in his surroundings. He often has to rely on the opinions of others who have got greater knowledge because of their education and experience, or whom he thinks are more competent than himself, which is why he does not (or not sufficiently) question them.

From the fact that alternative points of view or solutions are ignored, the spontaneously acquired information cannot be judged as merely content; it bothers him or her for no good reason or is a pseudo problem. Before human beings think about a problem, they let themselves be stimulated, led and seduced by many suggestive ideas. One has to consider whether quick-witted answers - the prompt and often clever responses to "comments that have been dropped" - would have to be classified here as well. After all, something new and unexpected is taking place that in general is neither triggered by preliminary thoughts, automatic reactions nor by conscious control.

2.3.1.2 Initiation of New Circumstances Against the Background of Latently

Present Processes

An individual goes along with omens, listens to his or her inner voice, acts intuitively, responds emotionally or complies with spontaneously occurring associations. Human beings, for example, know all about certain symptoms of illness, but do not necessary suffer from them. As soon as they are confronted with bad laboratory findings, spontaneous indispositions may occur.

Someone has not slept well at night, but still feels quite well. A glance into the mirror or the casually dropped comment: "You look a bit tired today", is enough to let the latently present tiredness emerge. The child who has hurt himself or herself often only starts crying after he has noticed the bleeding wound or sees blood flowing and by realizing the traumatic event, often breaks out in tears: "I'm bleeding, therefore I must be seriously hurt". Cognitive and affective interrelations increase the dismay that begins. Human beings generally are influenced by circumstances which are congruent with expectations, desires and assumptions, but also by fears; that is to say, by already existing conditions. They see or hear what they expect to see and hear, or react in line with what appears to be legitimate and self-evident according to their views. Doing so, they may ignore everything else (sometimes even things that could be extremely important to them). Maybe Freudian slips which, although appearing surprisingly, are generally based on latently present connotations (they practically are on the tip of one's tongue), and can be assigned to this category as well.

It is not always obvious that the exertion of influence takes place against the background of such latent processes. This can be illustrated by the example of the effects of

rumours. The interrelation between rumour and suggestion is obvious, as with the formation of rumours, objective points of reference for resolving the present uncertainty are usually missing (Sherif & Sherif, 1969). More recent research on rumours - "the oldest mass media in the world" - however, show that the obstinacy with which even the wildest of rumours survive not so much originates from their substance than from hidden desires as well as fears (Kapferer, 1996). The power of hidden or obvious fears, where evoking and creating realities are concerned, could be expressed in the vernacular: "Talk of the devil, and he's sure to appear" or "There is no escape from what you fear". And after all, a curse can only catch up with someone who fears it.

2.3.1.3 Initiation in the Form of De-Blocking Effects

Through direct or indirect methods of suggestion, psychologically caused motor blockings, including speech disabilities, such as aphonia, or amnesic conditions, for example, can be resolved (Barber, 1969; Gheorghiu, 1971; Hilgard, 1965; Kretschmer, 1975).

The effects of curses and damnations can be resolved by more ancient methods, e.g. by conjuring techniques.

A de-blocking can be triggered, however, in ways that are only partly aspired by the person who is involved. We are speaking here, for example, of information which the involved persons generally keep to themselves or only tell to confidants. Under certain circumstances, in which suggestive processes take their effect, however, self-control may be partially lost. This can happen, for example in the presence of strangers during long train journeys, at cheerful get-togethers with friends, or as a result of suggestive questions, coincidental associations or catharsis-like conditions, where unrevealed information slips out. De-blocking processes, however, can also be triggered by contagious, model or seductive situations and can refer to different kinds of behaviour.

2.3.2 Annulment Effects

The influence of suggestion can evoke the following blocking effects, among others.

2.3.2.1 Interruption or Annulment of Processes Presently Taking Place

This happens, for example, through the influence of suggestions that are applied under hypnosis. In a spectacular kind of way this is demonstrated, for instance, by dentists who, by using direct suggestion during hypnosis, actually stop bleeding that follows a tooth extraction. A choking reaction that does not seem to come to an end can also be annulled by similar means (see Gheorghiu & Huebner, 1994; Schmiere, 1990).

Blocking effects, however, can also develop through the influence of suggestive judgements. Students, for example, can be influenced by devaluing judgements in such a way that they completely give up studying for a certain subject ("You are no good at maths."). Critical comments which might have been mentioned in this way can stop human beings from continuing certain activities, or from starting already planned actions.

Suggestive influences can also show distractive effects, as they are attained by mothers, teachers and therapists, in order to get rid of inadequate or unwelcome behaviour.

2.3.2.2 Blocking of Processes that are Usually Triggered Easily

Amnesia or a motor blocking can be caused through direct suggestions or spontaneously. The subjects (temporarily) cannot remember usually familiar names or events, or believe they are not capable any more of making simple movements, such as lifting or lowering things, or bending their arms and legs (Barber, 1979; Gheorghiu, Goetz & Koch, 1999; Hull, 1933; Weitzenhoffer, 1989).

In the medical and psychological literature psychologically caused motor blockings, such as writer's cramp, paralysis, contractions, and the influence of suggestional processes in this context has been pointed out and repeatedly reported (see Klumbies, 1988; Kretschmer, 1975).

2.3.2.3 Tendencies of Avoidance and Repression

Here too, we are basically dealing with a wide range of annulment phenomena.

The tendency of many people is just not to want to admit certain things ("What I don't know, doesn't bother me"). What cannot be directly comprehended or visualized, is simply interpreted as nonexistent or as impossible ("Never heard of that."). This leads to a tendency to evade precautionary measures which could give the individual vital information. Discreet symptoms that could point to a pathological development are therefore more easily overlooked.

Tendencies of repression and negation may occur. Human beings, however, also tend not to want to admit, to negate or repress unpleasant facts that have already occurred or are very likely to happen. The tendency of negation, for example the attempt to talk oneself out of a present and really threatening situation, has been examined in research on coping by Lazarus (1969); but this has been without any explicit reference to suggestion processes. The interrelation between repression and suggestion, however, is definitely referred to by several studies dealing with the effects of suppressing traumatic experiences (see Yapko, 1994; Ornstein, Ceci & Loftus, 1996; Spanos, 1996).

2.3.2.4 Blocking of "Brake Mechanisms"

We are talking here of the annulment processes characterized by the fact that what is once triggered, cannot be stopped. A kind of "blocking of the blocking function" takes place.

One is convinced of not being able to stop a certain motor reaction any more (for example, the bobbing up or down of one's feet or legs), as if one has lost conscious control of motor activity. During a spending spree, one does not stop oneself on time and buys much more than originally planned or it makes sense to do; alternatively one is not able to stop talking, even though there is obviously nobody listening. "Pulled along" by the car in front, one forgets to brake although the traffic lights have just chan-

ged to red.

In the category mentioned here, however, a much more wide-spread manifestation of the lack of a brake mechanism can be detected. We are speaking here of the known inability to say "no" in the moment in which a tempting situation occurs (see Cialdini, 1997; Wegner, 1989).

2.3.3 Accentuation or Diminution Effects

Through the influence of suggestion - known also from everyday situations - something cannot only be "evoked" or "annulled". Conditions already present can be changed to a smaller or greater degree. Primarily, these quantitative changes are meant here:

2.3.3.1 Influencing the Intensity of the Experience

With the help of suggestion techniques one tries to annul, for example, painful sensations. During the course of time, a great number of analgesic suggestion methods, mainly applied under hypnotic conditions, have been developed (Barber, 1998; Hilgard & Hilgard, 1975; Peter, 1986). One aims at reaching a complete analgesia with these techniques, but only rarely attains this goal. The result usually is a reduction of the painful sensation which can, depending on the suggestibility of the patient, turn out to be quite considerable.

The intensity with which emotions, judgements, opinions, and actions are experienced and made visible can be influenced in stages or in a continuous fashion by a variety of means. It can be single words only, encouraging or devaluing judgements - by chance or purposefully "dropped" - that contribute to moods being heated or muted, present doubts being amplified or weakened, serious situations being trivialized, or trivialities being glossed over. This happens similarly through constantly talking oneself into something.

Changes in one or the other direction can be evoked by methods which complement and intensify each other. They may involve many sensory modalities and build up on contagious factors (e.g. laughing machines, making use of claqueurs); they may also involve contrasting effects and proven rituals, and are well known from political or ritualistic performances.

2.3.3.2 Influencing the Period of Effectiveness

This has especially been proven regarding athletic achievements (see Hammond, 1990; Holdevici, 1990) and in contexts of resistance of constant pain (Hilgard & Hilgard, 1975).

Furthermore, there are several methods which also include suggestive attributions, for example, that are used with the aim of prolonging or consolidating the effects of psycho- and physiotherapeutic procedures. These are the methods of patients who actively participate in the healing process, who participate in self-help groups, and who are involved in the demonstration of exemplary cases by specialists who have prestige or who are said to have it (Klumbies, 1988; Stokvis & Pflanz, 1961).

2.3.3.3 Favouring or Disturbance of Receptiveness

Here the contents of communications are put into a favourable light and are illustrated by suggestions. Here, also, certain parts are emphasized and expressed in catchy phrases, and concrete (touchable) patterns are made available. Influence in the opposite direction may occur, as well. The facts are presented in an ambiguous and complicated way; the subject is talked around or trivialized, and important information is held back from the person involved. Similes or comparisons are quoted that create additional possibilities for a variety of interpretations.

The accentuation or diminution of experience and behaviour to a great extent can be caused by influencing different inner processes of the subject, such as attentiveness, cognitive scripts, expectancies, attitudes and emotional bondings (the "rose-tinted glasses" effect of lovers), etc. (Barber, 1979; Cialdini, 1997; Gheorghiu & Wallbott, 1994; Kirsch, 1990; Stukat, 1958).

2.3.4 Tendencies of Conservation

This lies in the nature of human beings, to endeavour to keep up, protect themselves and, if necessary, develop, the things that have "proven themselves" or are "indispensable". Here as well, suggestion processes operate and have their effects.

2.3.4.1 Conservation of Habits, Attitudes or Behaviour

By various means, the individual tends to support and consolidate his or her behaviour, systems of belief (including prejudices), rituals, bonds with the persons, symbols, convictions as well as other rule systems that (from his point of view) make life and survival possible and bearable. Human beings have a relatively low desire to observe things critically and to rid themselves of attitudes and values which stand in their way or bring about serious consequences ("rather have an upset stomach than give it away"). Contexts are preferred that are congruent with attitudes and behaviour in order to legitimise them in their own eyes as well as in the eyes of their fellow man. Methods are defended even when they are against all reason.

Human beings take care of continuity without (necessarily) being aware of this. They often take the values of their teachers and models for granted. Once started, actions are mostly brought to an end, even when the original aims and motives have been forgotten, become independent or even turn out to be absurd. (These everyday experiences have also been substantiated by social psychological experiments). The experience continues only because it is expected to do so and one feels obliged to do so. Human beings keep to their words of honour and regard persons who redress their original behaviour (because of critical insight) as traitors.

Human beings, however, have the tendency to take care of their "sense of belonging" by letting themselves be led and seduced by idealized, often mythical ideas that quite often are accompanied by stigmatisation and exclusion of persons who have different opinions. How strongly suggestive elements can gain more influence is pointed out by Zwingmann (1978) in several very critical studies of examples of nostalgic phe-

nomena from everyday life. The latest happenings in the Balkans show the degenerative that may occur due to the "instrumentalisation" of a sense of belonging. An all-round analysis from the point of view of suggestion processes is only to be expected, and for this purpose, Milzner (1999) provides some points of reference.

2.3.4.2 Maintaining a Feeling of Well Being

Human beings typically look for entertainment and diversion; with their partners and circles of friends they take part in lively meetings or events, and capture their impressions, for example, by retelling them with the help of photographs and selected video recordings.

They like to visit well-loved holiday destinations as well as health resorts, use (natural) cures and take certain concoctions which they (quite often) acquire in roundabout ways. Primarily, what counts, is the attribution substantiated by suggestion that what they are doing is good for them.

Of growing importance for maintaining a feeling of well being, are relaxation and meditation techniques (hypnosis, autogenic training, progressive muscle relaxation, yoga as well as other self-awareness techniques). It is well known that the exercises intended for these relaxation techniques - which are carried out individually or under group conditions - are based on various suggestion methods (Edmonston, 1981; Stokvis & Wiesenhutter, 1963; Vaitl & Petermann, 1993).

2.3.4.3 Turning Away from De-Stabilizing Tendencies

An individual's attempts to conserve what is tried and tested is accompanied by his endeavours to counteract awkward situations or, if they have occurred, to overcome them. One of the main matters of concern is to set compensation mechanisms going. Stokvis & Pflanz (1961) attach great importance to this mechanism. According to them, suggestibility represents a "deficiency that presses for compensation". They understand "deficiency" not in a judgemental way, but purely phenomenologically. It is a "certain condition that incorporates the tendency to overcome itself" (S. 45).

In order to take their stabilizing needs into account, human beings use subtle defence mechanisms (according to Freud). They often fool themselves, improve and select their memories, rationalize their behaviour, seek refuge in daydreams and other substitute solutions. Likewise, they use avoidance or strain relief strategies. These help to remove, avoid or neutralize the effects of obstructions standing in the way of their development and self-assertion. These "clever tricks", as Allport (1970) called such defence mechanisms, originate (mostly) spontaneously in the context of (suggestive) attribution of direction and meaning without the person involved consciously controlling how a certain (suggested) kind of reaction asserts itself against another (for example, a more rational solution: see Gheorghiu, 1982, 1996).

2.3.5 Transformation Tendencies

In the literature on suggestion phenomena, especially as it relates to studies dealing

with effects that occur under hypnotic conditions, attention is drawn to a series of remarkable and partly unusual behaviours. These refer to qualitative changes which can be summarized as transformation effects or tendencies:

2.3.5.1 Paradoxical Reactions

It has been pointed out several times that when there are explicit suggestions for a certain kind of behaviour, opposite reactions may occur. The suggestive instruction of the therapist or course tutor who teaches his or her patients relaxation through autogenic training techniques (according to Schultz, 1932), refers to an increase of the sensation of heaviness or warmth in the right arm. The patients or subjects claim, however, that they perceived the intended change in the other half of their body. With some of the subjects the suggestion of heaviness or warmth produced contrary sensations: a feeling of "lightness", even "floating" set in, or subjects noticed a feeling of coolness in the addressed limbs (Hoffmann, 1981). Such paradox reactions, however, also occur under experimental conditions. When faking objective radiant heat with the help of plausibly disguised simulators, some subjects reported a feeling of heat loss (Diehl, 1986; Hoefner, 1986). Also, when influencing motor activity, it is established, for example, that instead of the suggested falling backward (body-sway-test), subjects may move forward and arms may move in a direction other than the one that is suggested. (These paradoxical reactions have been known for a long time, however, and have only been rarely examined. For reasons of "simplicity", these kinds of behaviour that run in a direction other than the intended one, are called "non-suggestible answers" (Gheorghiu & Walter, 1989).)

Paradoxical patterns of behaviour are, in fact, also known from everyday occurrences. A child or an adult may be repeatedly instructed not to drop a crystal vase, with the result that for all the care, the opposite is achieved. Such reactions have been described in detail by Baudouin (1951/1972) in his book on suggestion and autosuggestion. He characterized this phenomenon in terms of the expression "transformed effort". On the other hand, one should add the category "Freudian slips", which is a category of associations most of us would like to avoid (by which at the end of the day, however, we are defeated).

From the perspective of social, cognitive and clinical psychology, different kinds of paradoxical behaviours have been analysed, for example reactance phenomena (Brehm, 1966), boomerang effects (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), paradoxical intentions (Frankl, 1961); (one can deal with unwelcome thoughts, feelings or behaviour better, if, paradoxically, one lets them flow freely), as well as paradoxical effects that can arise by suppressing thoughts (Wegner, 1989).

The points of contact with suggestion research (which have recorded these kinds of phenomena) are generally missing. The same applies to studies in the field of placebo responses and imitation research. Firstly, tests about effects contrary to placebo effects, the so-called nocebo effects are relevant (see Lachaux & Lemoine, 1988); second-

ly, studies also on "anti-imitative" behaviour. The latter refers to reactions running in the direction opposite to the model (see Halisch, 1990).

The paradoxical reaction effects of suggestion have particularly been emphasized in Erickson's articles on so-called "paradoxical interventions" (see Hammond, 1990; Erickson & Rossi, 1976). In the contrary, in the case of many other suggestion methods, consideration of the knowledge of general cognitive and social psychology is lacking.

2.3.5.2 Cognitive Distortions

This expression is well known in the hypnosis literature (Hilgard, 1965) and refers to changes that occur dependent upon as well as independently of hypnosis. It refers in particular to distortions of perception and memory that can be evoked by the influence of explicit or implicit suggestion.

Already at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, it has been experimentally demonstrated that sensory impressions can be evoked for which no objective stimulus exists (Clark, 1916; Hofstaetter, 1957; Seashore, 1895). On the other hand, experiments have been carried out the other way around, i. e. the impression was given that the objective stimulant did not exist. In this instance, subjects were told to concentrate on a certain area of the room and while doing so, imagine a banana as intensely as possible. During this imagination test a picture of a banana was actually projected (Perky, 1910; Segal, 1971). Subjects typically considered their description of the banana, as a product of their own imagination. Furthermore, it was shown in various tests that unchanged characteristics of the stimulant situation, under the influence of suggestion, were experienced as different. These kinds of experiments began with the classic "progressive lines test" (Binet, 1900). At first, Binet showed the subjects lines that were getting longer and longer and afterwards lines which stayed the same length. It turned out that persons susceptible to suggestion who were to judge the lengths of the lines shown to them one after the other, animated by the first experience ("suggestive leitmotif" according to Binet), thought the lines got longer, even though they were the same length. (For other discussion of suggestion-related perceptual distortions, see Gheorghiu, 1973; Huebner, 1994).

Perceptive distortions, in fact, are also phenomena of everyday life. For example, one believes in having heard the bell ring, even if one mistakenly has pressed a light switch. Anxious people who go through the woods in the dark, think they can see strange figures in the branches swaying in the wind. Far better known, because of their special fascination, are perceptive distortions that are acquired under hypnosis. Most tests of this kind explore the possibilities and limitations of the formation of so-called positive and negative hallucinations (see Forel, 1889/1907; Hilgard, 1979; Orne, 1979; Spanos & Coe, 1992; Weitzenhoffer, 1989).

Some time ago, and mostly related to the forensic setting - suggestion-related distortions of memory processes have been proven (Binet, 1900; Hull, 1933; Stern, 1904).

More recent studies carried out, both dependent and independent of the hypnotic context, have shown how complex and partly contradictory the distortions which are (co) induced by suggestion, can be for different memory processes (Gudjonsson, 1992; Loftus, 1979; McConky & Sheehan, 1995; Toland, Hoffman & Loftus, 1991; Volbert, 1999).

In the broader sense, the classification of cognitive illusion could be assigned to the (vague) description of the cognitive distortions that have been mentioned. They are analysed by social and cognitive psychology, and have established themselves as a separate field of research (Fiedler, 1993) in which numerous psychological mistakes, confusions and falsifications have been investigated (Hell, Fiedler & Gigerenzer, 1993). The discussion of (self-)deceptive phenomena that are of importance in everyday life, should also be viewed in this light (Gheorghiu, 1982; Goleman, 1997; Loew-Beer, 1990; Sommer, 1992). The beginnings of this branch of research go far back (Sully had published (1981/1982) a wide ranging monograph about illusion phenomena and, in this context, also discussed interrelations with suggestion influences for some of the illusions). In the current literature about cognitive illusion and its influence factors, suggestion processes are only seldomly referred to (see Pohl, 1999). An exception is the influential body of works (also see above) that in the last few years has been published in the context of memory distortions (Gudjonsson, 1992; Johnson, Hashtroudi & Lindsay, 1993; Loftus, 1979; Volbert, 1999; Zaragoza & Mitchell, 1996).

Explanations regarding the relation between cognitive illusion and suggestion phenomena are also included in the studies about attribution and confirmation bias (Bierhoff & Klein, 1989; Fourie, 1994; Gheorghiu & Wallbott, 1994; Haisch, 1989).

2.3.5.3 Unusual or Bizarre Behaviour

This category refers to reactions which are especially due to the accompanying consequences; they draw attention to the "cutting out" of relevant control and supervision systems. Many of these phenomena are known from classic suggestion literature (LeBon, 1896; Bechterev, 1899), but still involve specialists from other fields of research. For example:

- Reactions that mainly occur in the context of social influence factors. There are smaller or larger groups of the population as well as individuals who lose control over their behaviour temporarily or for a longer time. Against the background of convictions, superstition, desires, expectations, deep-rooted insecurity, etc., they are subject to the influence of cunning and unscrupulous, often charismatic seducers who use and exploit them for antisocial, sometimes criminal activities. The suggestion and persuasion techniques used, are practically the same (also see Cialdini, 1997; Festinger, Rieken & Schachter, 1956; Lay, 1985; Moscovici, 1981; Lichter, Tomorug, Gheorghiu & Diaconescu, 1966). How far such kinds of behaviour can be evoked under experimental conditions is shown by the obedience experiments of Milgram (1985).

- Self-destructive tendencies occur that go as far as mass suicide. With this pheno-

menon of irrational behaviour, according to older and more recent knowledge, contamination effects can be shown to play an important role (see Cialdini, 1997).

- Unusual effects are often connected to suggestion influences under hypnosis. On the one hand, the literature refers to the effects of "posthypnotic" suggestions; on the other hand, it refers to influences directed towards antisocial behaviour. Regarding the possibilities and limitations of the latter kind of influence, there is much controversy (see Heap, 1995a, 1995b; Orne, 1979).

2.3.5.4 Seemingly Justified Decisions

Decisions are made by military persons, politicians, managers or scientists, with the explanation that they are inevitable (so-called "practical constraints" exist). Blinded by the alleged correctness of the envisaged solution, alternatives are not seriously looked for, or examined, and tend not to be perceived.

With these insufficiently thought about decisions, the consequences of action are only considered superficially or are ignored, or even blindly accepted. The question is, what are the effects of suggestion processes of "putting under"? These are: the idea of an (alleged) exclusiveness becomes independent and dictates the rules of the game for further reflections and proceeding. A self-fulfilling tendency comes about (see Watzlawick, 1981), aided by a tendency for self-justification and reactions of approval from one's own supporters. However, it is not only the components of suggestion and persuasion that are at issue, but also their continual relation with rational processes, from which the exertion of influence originates and is substantiated. In addition, there are emotional reactions of the persons involved who, in the scope of existing or striped-for positions of power, stake everything on just one thing.

It will still be discussed for a long time to come whether the military intervention of NATO (in order to end the anti-human policy initiated and carried out by the Belgrade government) was right or wrong. Only the future will tell. Well-known politicians, military persons and scientists - from NATO countries as well as opposition parties in Yugoslavia - are known to have said, already before and during the intervention, that the theory of there being no alternative cannot be upheld, and the action itself was insufficiently thought over, and carried out on an emotional basis. In other words: With persuasive self-justifying strategies, supporters may have increasingly manoeuvred themselves into an allegedly indispensable military solution, and thus, may have robbed themselves of the chance to see possible alternatives.

A rather special kind of phenomenon envisaged here, refers to so-called "tests of courage". Although they have relatively seldom been explained with regard to possible destructive suggestion effects, among other things this is due to the fact that not all of these phenomena have been attached to something negative. They give evidence, however, of profound effects of this kind. The participants in "heroic deeds" repeatedly ignore early warnings and good advice. They do not calculate the consequences of their actions that might occur for themselves, for others or for the environment. As they

are sure of being admired by a large audience and want to prove themselves, they feel confirmed in their attribution of meaning. In addition, there often is a feeling of infallibility, of "being someone special", of arrogance (and of power and ability), paired with a general sense of carefreeness and foolhardiness.

2.3.5.5 Reversal Effects

Phenomena of influence referring to changing or transformation processes (which can sometimes also adopt unusual features), can be assigned to this category. Among other things there can be sudden changes that are reached under hypnotic conditions. On the basis of direct or indirect methods of suggestion (for example, the age reversing method; age regression), it turns out to be possible (even if only in a few cases) to have access to knowledge of a language learned in childhood that is believed to have been forgotten (Fromm, 1970). It is possible also by these methods to cure long-lasting illnesses, sometimes even those of the somatic kind (see Barber, 1984).

To this category belongs, however, the so-called "miracle" cures which occur in the context of suggestive religious and magic rituals (see Benson & Stark, 1997; Frank, 1981; Marinescu, 1929; Stokvis & Pflanz, 1961). On the other hand, there are effects which progress in the opposite direction, such as illnesses caused by pseudopathogenic factors (e.g. poisoning after eating allegedly harmful food and drinks, and often accompanied by serious panic reactions). One of the most remarkable psychosomatic changes through complex suggestive processes of imagination, is the case of "false pregnancy" (Pavlov, 1927).

On 11th August 1999, the day of the total eclipse of the sun, and increasingly on the following days, hundreds of people in Romania visited eye specialists, eye clinics and emergency units with symptoms they said were caused by the effects of the eclipse. Prior to the eclipse, television and other media outlets repeatedly and persuasively pointed out to the public the dangers of watching the eclipse without proper protection. It was also stressed that not all the protective glasses on sale met the requirements. During the eye specialist's examinations, however, it turned out that only a small percentage of patients had damage to the retina caused by the eclipse.²⁾

As an expression of changes to the contrary which occur in stages, brain-washing effects with prisoners in the Korean War, are also relevant (Brown, 1968; Hunter, 1951). For related manipulative and affective restructuring, different training methods are used which are based on suggestion and persuasion techniques. The same applies to reprogramming carried out on persons who, partly also without their permission, undergo methods of dis-indoctrination, as for example, with former sect members (Hassan, 1993).

Not always as spectacular are the cognitive and emotional restructurings which are attained in the context of reframing strategy. These were first described in the literature on suggestion methods (among others, Baudouin, 1951/1972). To the public they became known as representative of so-called neurolinguistic programming (NLP;

Bandler & Grinder, 1975), as well as by some rather biased popular literature (e.g. Murphy, 1988), (maybe, even earlier, due to common reframing sayings, such as: "Every bad thing leads to something good", "To make a virtue out of necessity", "Broken crockery brings you luck" etc.). The possibilities and limitations of suggestive reframing methods are discussed by Gerl (2000), Milgram (1985), and Toennies, Boettcher & Schildt (1999).

2.3.5.6 Involvement Tendencies

One of the complex and heterogeneous occurrences which can be assigned to the above discussed category of transformation effects (co-)related to suggestion, can be summarized under the category "involvement tendencies". Experiential and behavioural aspects are induced which can develop while people carry out actions or participate in events. While creating and playing, reading, listening and watching, arguing or confessing, while holding monologues or dialogues, during concentration and relaxation, in processes of admiring oneself, other persons, works of art or nature, human beings are tempted to put themselves into actual circumstances or let themselves become involved.

Contexts of involvement are usually discussed in relation to suggestion influences, when situations are concerned which are directly induced with the help of suggestive or imaginative methods (e.g. hypnosis and relaxation conditions, or mental training). It were the hypnosis researchers who especially pointed out the interrelations between hypnotic involvement and other contexts of involvement (e.g. Sarbin & Coe, 1972; Shor, 1970).

However, one can assume that with any participation involving the inner world of the individual, favourable conditions for the formation of suggestive directedness are created. In the process of involvement cognitive and/or emotional associations can acquire supremacy. Contents of moods, imaginations, ideas, tend to become independent and develop. They acquire their own logic, to which conscious control systems have only limited access.

Thus, tendencies of inertia are encouraged and it often proves difficult to weaken involvement to activate a change over to other contexts of experience and behaviour. Accepting a certain kind of behaviour, when deeply involved, can lead to limitation or even loss of self-control (e.g. shown by the obedience experiments of Milgram (1985) or the Stanford Prison Study by Haney, Banks and Zimbardo (1973)). These developments are strongly dependent on (a) the circumstances which have caused or partly added to the involvement (e.g. mere participation, contagious factors or overpowering situations); (b) the motives encouraging and substantiating involvement (only superficial participation or passionate involvement, such as the state of falling in love, of which the relation to suggestion was pointed out by Freud (1963)); and (c) habitual factors or the novelty of the situation.

Furthermore, joining in, participating or putting oneself in a particular situation,

often takes place within certain role allocations which again, are embedded in conventions and rituals that exert their own suggestion influences (e.g. in therapeutic situations, and when participating in experimental tests or mass demonstrations).

3 Some Conclusions

The above description of suggestion effects was primarily an attempt to illustrate tendencies of reaction. It becomes clear that the demarcation line for the various suggestion effects discussed here has been extended much more than it is usually done in the current literature. This corresponds with the basic ideas already demonstrated in this chapter, and which will be completed in the chapters to follow. Moreover, this chapter has attempted to confront certain prejudices: Mostly under the influence of experimental and clinical studies - last, but not least from the field of hypnosis - the impression has emerged that suggestion necessarily needs a verbal form. It has been mistakenly assumed in the past that although nonverbal stimulants can participate, they can not act as carriers of suggestive contents on their own (Wallbott, 1992). Furthermore, opinion tells us that an incentive situation can only be seen as a suggestive situation, if suggestion stimuli are directly used. Unintended suggestions are only rarely taken into account (see Stokvis & Pflanz, 1961). Delusions of expectation that have been induced under experimental conditions are observed as phenomena of suggestibility, and clearly not as perceptive distortions which can also occur spontaneously in situations of everyday life. Even directly applied suggestion methods which are very similar to those applied under experimental conditions, but are made use of outside of the laboratory situation, are rarely discussed in the context of suggestion effects (e.g. different kinds of diversionary and deceptive manoeuvres, as used by mothers in order to calm their children, and those used by magicians).

A clear distinction between the main categories is not possible. The phenomena overlap and complement each other. The question of the psychological bases of suggestion could not and should not be discussed in this way. As not always mentioned, it must be pointed out that some of the illustrated tendencies will occur in the context of other influence processes. Other classification aspects of suggestion effects (e.g. axiological aspects), and different contexts in which suggestive attributions of direction and meaning develop must also be analysed.

Primarily, this chapter aimed to discuss the criteria of classification that could serve to operationalise suggestion occurrences, and to point out possible suggestion-related phenomena. The aim was to communicate an overall impression of quantitative and qualitative changes that illustrates the breadth and complexity of suggestion influences. Finally, the chapter aimed to produce a basis for discussing the many factors of suggestibility.

For a fuller understanding of the suggestive situation demonstrated in this chapter, we need also to understand the multiple components of the construct of suggestibility.

- 1) This article is based on further developed earlier contributions of the author (Gheorghiu, 1967, 1972, 1973, 1982, 1989a, 1989b, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1999 and Gheorghiu & Kruse, 1991).
- 2) Dr. Monica Pop, director of the Bucharest Eye Clinic, reported about this phenomenon on television. During a personal communication she reported the same information to the author.

Acknowledgements. The author expresses his thanks to his colleagues V. DePascalis, G. Milzner, B. Peter and P. Sheehan for their critical comments on the first draft of this article and to N. Zwanck for the translation.

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Suggestion and Suggestibility: Theoretical and Psychophysiological Aspects

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■ In the first part of the present chapter a short review of theoretical approaches is provided which is important for the development of a psychophysiology of individual differences in suggestion and suggestibility. In the second part of the chapter findings are described which are derived from a number of correlational analyses on suggestibility and other personality dimension; they evidence the multicomponential dimensionality of suggestibility and the difficulty to define this dimension in terms of other related personality variables. Correlational analyses have provided experimental evidence indicating that hypnotic susceptibility is a mediocre predictor of perceptual suggestibility and imaginative suggestibility by accounting for a modest portion of total variance. Finally, in the third part of this chapter, results from three psychophysiological studies on suggestibility, carried out in our laboratory, are reviewed and discussed in terms of physiological processes that may account for individual differences in suggestibility.

In the work of the Nancy School (Bernheim, 1888), suggestive phenomena were considered as the basis for the explanation of hypnosis; and the distinctive characteristic of hypnosis was the increase in suggestibility. If on one hand Bernheim's theory on suggestion produced a new perspective for the explanation of hypnosis, on the other hand the view of suggestibility as a medium for the induction of hypnosis has interfered with the growth of a psychology of suggestion.

In the beginnings of psychology as a science, suggestion phenomena were considered as important elements of psychology. Binet (1900) began the introduction of his book "La suggestibilité" by considering the individual suggestibility as independent from hypnosis. In contemporary general psychology, in contrast, the suggestion phenomena outside of hypnosis appear to be in large part neglected. Gheorghiu (1989a), in his critical considerations of suggestibility research, pointed out that suggestibility is the stepchild of psychological research. Current work in this area has confined sug-