

rectness of the distinction between "traditional" and "Ericksonian" hypnosis see Weitzenhoffer (1995). It is understandable that, when research into hypnosis was taken up again in this century, this assumed personality trait of suggestibility was investigated intensively in order to be able to (pre-)determine the "hypnotizability" of people - at least according to the then existing view (Hilgard, 1965; Weitzenhoffer, 1953). The fact that Weitzenhoffer (1980a) questioned this equating of "hypnotizability" and suggestibility will be only touched upon here; and, similarly, only short mention will be made of the significance of the fact that this enormous research activity occurred in a period when it was generally customary in the field of psychology to explore personality attributes; research into hypnosis was thus only following the general trend.

8 an neologism which, according to Weitzenhoffer (1980), he borrowed from Durand de Gros

9 To avoid misunderstandings: Constructivists do not deny the existence of an objective reality beyond and independent of human beings. They just deny that man can "perceive" it. That what we think of as reality is, therefore, always our construction of, but not the reality per se.

Differences between Direct and Indirect Hypnotic Techniques

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■ A growing number of clinicians emphasize the importance of hypnotic communication styles. They claim that indirect techniques are more effective than direct approaches. Other data, coming from experimental laboratories, point to the decisive role of the subject's hypnotic susceptibility. Namely, the more susceptible the subject, the more he/she will respond to suggestion, and the deeper the hypnosis will be. They claim that the hypnotic response level is a stable characteristic of the subject's personality (eg. Hilgard, 1986). The effects of the induction style on the hypnotic response level were investigated in a few experiments. Results revealed that indirect hypnosis can be more effective with subjects of low and moderate hypnotic susceptibility; for the highly susceptible group, however, the direct and indirect techniques provide similar altered experiences.

Data which support the idea that the induction style has no effect on the hypnotic response, namely that there are no differences between the effectiveness of direct and indirect suggestion or induction are coming from experimental laboratories (eg. Spinhoven, Baak, Van Dyck & Vermeulen, 1988; Matthews, Bennett, Bean & Gallagher, 1985; Maurer, Santangelo & Claiborn, 1993). Suggestions in these experiments were referring to the overt behaviour of the subjects who could perceive their own hypnotic behaviour. This could have an effect on the perception of their own subjective experiences. Moreover, the subject's hypnotic susceptibility was measured before the experiments, and that was known by the subject and the experimenter which could have an effect on their expectations.

Other data supporting the idea that indirect techniques are more effective, come mainly from clinical practice (eg. Barber, 1977, 1980; Erickson, Rossi & Rossi, 1976; Wester & Smith, 1984). In these therapies the hypnotic susceptibility was not measured before the therapy and sometimes not at all. Usually suggestions did not refer to overt behaviour, because the subject's not reacting properly to a suggestion could have

a negative effect on his/her perception of the reality of the hypnosis. In these cases the aim of the suggestions were healing, removing symptoms, making changes in the personality via the alteration of subjective experiences, called trance.

Method

In our experiment the effects of a direct and an indirect induction were compared. 44 subjects participated individually in a direct and an indirect hypnosis in counterbalanced order.

The indirect induction was an induction technique published by Bassman and Wester (1984). The concrete therapeutic suggestions were eliminated. Subjects were asked to raise their arms, clench their fists tightly, and stare at a point on their fists. They were told that they themselves would control the hypnosis by lowering their arms. They were told that the natural consequence of this position was to experience strain and that by lowering their arms the tension would begin to decrease and their eyes would blink, then close. This was followed by age regression suggestions and deepening. For further deepening, the "North Wind and the Sun" story was used. This story is about the North Wind and the Sun contesting which one is the more powerful. They wanted to decide the debate by trying to see which of them could make the traveller remove his coat. The North Wind blew a furious blast, but the traveller held his coat closer in desperation. After this the Sun followed with its warmth and refreshing rays upon the traveller's head ... neck ... shoulders, and so on, and at the end the traveller thought that this was a day to take the coat off.

The direct induction was the verbatim induction from the SHSS/A manual. To make it comparable to the indirect induction, at the end of the induction subjects were asked to imagine a sun covered by clouds and the wind beginning to blow so strong that their coat is nearly torn off. Then the clouds leave with the wind and the sun begins to shine warming all parts of their bodies.

After each induction procedure a 4-minutes rest and the dehypnosis followed. There were no suggestions involving overt behaviour. After each hypnosis the phenomenology of the experiences and the depth of the hypnosis were measured. Subjects were asked to rate the depth of their hypnosis, and to report about their subjective experiences on the Phenomenology of Consciousness Inventory (PCI; Pekala, 1985). For measuring subjective hypnotic depth, a 10 point scale was used, where 1 is "I was not in hypnosis at all," and 10 is "I was in the deepest possible hypnosis." Following the inquiries, the subjects were interviewed about their hypnotic experiences.

Results

The subjects' hypnotic susceptibility was measured with SHSS/B, after the second hypnosis. After the end of the experiment categories of subjects of low (0-4; n=14), moderate (5-7; n=14) and high (8-12; n=16) hypnotic susceptibility were formed for statistical analysis. Analyzing the depth data, the effect of induction was significant;

the subjective depth was felt to be deeper after the indirect hypnosis ($M=6.75$, $sd=1.92$) than after the direct induction ($M=5.8$, $sd=1.94$). A 3 (hypnotic group) x 2 (induction) x 2 (experimental order) repeated measures ANOVA was performed.

Main effect of induction: $F(1,38)=8.11$ $p<0.01$. But comparing the groups of different hypnotic susceptibility, it was found that the indirect hypnosis was felt to be deeper by the subjects of low and moderate susceptibility, whereas highly hypnotizable subjects reported comparable hypnotic depth following both kinds of induction.

The well-known hypnotic susceptibility effect was found, namely that the more susceptible the subject, the deeper the reported depth was. Depth correlated significantly with the SHSS/B data (in direct 0.59, in indirect 0.49).

The PCI measures the different dimensions of experiences on 7-point Likert-type scales. Subscales are: altered experience (body image, time perception, meaning), positive affects (joy, sex excitement, love), negative affects (anger, sadness, fear), attention (direction, concentration), imagery (amount, vividness), self-awareness, state of awareness, arousal, rationality, volitional control, memory, and internal dialogue. The data in the two hypnoses were compared by means of two sample "t"-tests. Results indicated that alterations in experiences induced by different techniques were very similar. Significant correlations were found between the data in the two different hypnosis procedures in nearly all of the scales. In addition to the great similarities, differences between the two procedures were found. As "t"-tests indicate, the subjects in the indirect hypnosis felt their experiences altered to a greater extent and they felt that they could understand the meaning of things better. They experienced this hypnosis as being deeper and more pleasant than the direct one.

To analyze the connection between the depth of hypnosis and the structure of experiences, stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed. This analysis indicates that the alteration in body image and the experience of time were greater with the direct induction, and the subjects felt more relaxed the deeper the level of hypnosis was. In indirect hypnosis hypnotic depth was associated with the meaning of things and more vivid imagery.

In indirect hypnosis the most important factor was "meaning," how much they experienced profound and enlightening insights into certain ideas or issues. One subject, e.g., said in the interview about indirect hypnosis: "In the hypnosis, suddenly I saw how I ought to behave with my girlfriend, how strong I must be, and how tender."

There were differences in the content of interviews concerning subjective experiences. In the indirect hypnosis, probably as a consequence of the associations and the age regression suggestion used in the induction, experiences were more personal, subjects were more involved in their imagery, their emotions were more real, e.g., some subjects were crying. It seems that unconscious processes, transference-like feelings were more important in the indirect hypnosis. One subject reported: "I saw my father who died. Until this I could never imagine his face, only his slippers and trousers, and now I saw him vividly. He was even wearing the spectacles he bought not long before he died." It seems that

in the exploration of the subjective experiences other factors than PCI scales are needed, e.g., archaic involvement like feelings or accessing to unconscious.

Discussion

There are two important aspects in the strategy of the inductions and the suggestions used in these experiments. One is that in the indirect hypnosis we tried to help the subjects to become more involved in their imagery. Because suggestions were formed indirectly the subjects could experience their own images. On the other hand, in direct hypnosis similar imagery suggestions were used, but the images were defined leading to less involvement. Probably those of lower hypnotic susceptibility perceived more discrepancies between the suggestion and the images they experienced.

The strategy of not using suggestions involving overt behaviour also reduced the possibility that subjects would perceive discrepancies between the suggestions and their hypnotic behaviour, so without these suggestions subjects of lower susceptibility could still perceive their trance to be deeper.

The initial question was: Which is more effective - direct or indirect hypnosis? I would pose two more questions: (1) In what respect can indirect hypnosis be more effective? (2) With what type of subjects can it be more effective? Firstly, indirect hypnosis is probably more effective in altering subjective experiences, inducing trance, consequently in helping the patient to access his/her inner reality, in the interest of change. Secondly, indirect hypnosis can be more effective with subjects of low and moderate hypnotic susceptibility. For the highly susceptible group the direct and indirect techniques provide similar altered experiences.

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