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## **FOUNDATIONS OF SUGGESTOLOGY**

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It would hardly be necessary to remind ourselves of the endless chain of dramatic discussions and struggle to explain the true role, significance and power of suggestion. Nevertheless it is worthwhile pointing out that the lives of many bright minds have been scorched and made shorter in these struggles. It is more than clear today that they were well aware that the capacity of suggestion was to blame for many victims and for much fallacy and misfortune to mankind. Instead of giving more brightness, more wisdom and more happiness to the people it erected stakes and humiliated them and was an obstacle to their advance. The suggestive capacity or suggestivity is a universal

quality of man's personality through which the unconscious interrelations take place between man and his environment.

Suggestivity has long been observed and looked for in its clinical manifestations only. In such cases it may appear as morbidly intensified, though with certain periodic negativistic counteractions, or morbidly suppressed – most frequently in combination with a trend toward showing wisdom and toward realization for part of the automated actions.

Our studies have indicated, however, that regardless of this morbid suggestivity every normal and sound human being is to a certain extent subject to suggestion. The question is, of course, whether this “certain” degree of suggestion is a small one or a large one. It seems at first glance that the suggestive interaction between the individual and the social or natural environment account for a very small percentage of the individual's activity. However, a series of studies have indicated that the elements of reasoning in the interrelations between the individual and his environment constitute an inseparable unity with the suggestive elements. Unfortunately, it is not as yet possible to determine with an absolute precision the suggestivity reason ratio in this complicated psychic process. Nevertheless, there are sufficient data which indicate that the unconscious psychic activity, on which the suggestive is based, plays an essential part in the interaction between individual and environment.

It should be pointed out in this connection that the particular scientific concepts of unconscious psychic activity, of “unconscious” and “subconscious”, should not be confused with the philosophical concept of “consciousness”. A number of methodological errors are frequently made unwittingly upon studying the problems related to the conscious and unconscious psychic activity. In the first place, it is necessary not to confuse the clinical, psychological and

physiological concepts of consciousness and subconsciousness with the philosophical concepts of consciousness and subconsciousness. T. Pavlov (1945) warns as follows: "... The physiological and psychological concepts about the brain and about consciousness should not be confused with the philosophical concepts about them." In this turn I. P. Pavlov emphasizes that he shall not deal with the philosophical views of consciousness, i.e. he shall not try to solve the problem "in what manner the matter of the brain produces the subjective phenomenon, etc." He defines consciousness in physiological terms as a mobile section of optimum excitability along the big hemispheres. The unconscious psychic activity, in its indissoluble link with the conscious activity of the individual, is the bearer not only of the darkest instinctive trends but also of the secondarily automated activities which condition any training and any development of man. Consequently, the unconscious psychic activity is an important carrier of the specific and individual memory.

It is still difficult to maintain today that the unconscious psychic activity is connected entirely and only with suggestion. Future studies will maybe come to this conclusion. We speak about suggestion when certain reserves of the individual are activated mainly on the basis of the unconscious psychic activity. *There are two basic aspects included in the term of suggestion, namely, unconsciousness and reserve.* The term of suggestion comes from the Latin verb of *suggero* – *suggessi* – *suggestum*, meaning to put under, i.e. imply, intimate. "Put under" in relation to what? Of course in relation to the conscious and reasoning activity of the individual, i.e. through the unconscious psychic activity. However, it is not always easy to detect immediately the participation of the unconscious psychic activity. Nevertheless, if we take a careful look even at the most typical instance of conscious activity, as is the case with well

substantiated speech, we cannot fail to ascertain that it is built on an innumerable number of unconscious elements. Which are these elements? In the first place they are the automation of speech itself, the automation of the grammatical constructions, the content of many of the concepts used, and a number of other features. Even argumentation itself is of particular suggestive significance in the case of logically substantiated speech. Sound argumentation satisfies the modern requirements for logic of speech, but by its authority it prepares the suggestive acceptance of the subsequent thoughts which may not be as well substantiated. Consequently, the unconscious and hence suggestive aspects in the activity of the individual may be found not only in the instinctive experiences or in the rich variety of the subsensory perceptions, but also in the imaginable stronghold of the conscious activity – the speech that is logically substantiated and motivated.

The inflow of information through intuitive, emotive and subsensory channels creates conditions of control and feedback which, in its turn, is reflected on the motivation, on the decisions adopted, and on the conscious activity of the individual. That which is unconscious is intertwined in a complex and inseparable manner into that which is realized and the suggestive *stands in a state of unity with that which is governed by reason*. That is why suggestology deals with the suggestive, in its more or less pure form only by way of experiment, while in actual practice it is interested in and utilizes the inseparable unity of the suggestive-reasoning complex.

### **Reserves of the Individual**

Inasmuch as the unconscious or insufficiently realized interrelations of the individual are not always easy to detect, suggestion as a concept is

historically related not only to them but to the ultimate result of its effect as well. This means that we can assume with certainty that suggestion takes place when the ultimate effect is the activation of a certain reserve of the individual.

What is meant by reserve of the individual? This comprises all those capacities familiar or not yet familiar – which do not constitute a habitual phenomenon for an average individual under particular conditions of time and place. Reserves of the individual are, by way of example, the phenomena of hypermnesia, of psychogenic anaesthetization, and other “plus” or “minus” phenomena. Some of them were known even to the ancient philosophical schools. Others have been found in the course of modern psychological and psychotherapeutic experiments and practice. These phenomena show that the individual is in possession of unusual capacities, but that the ways of their all-round utilization are still unknown. We may visualize the level of expression of the individual in the course of the different eras of man’s history as the result of a number of suggestive and to antisuggestive effects for given times and places. The capacity of the average, normal and healthy individual in regard to memory, to intellectual activation, to the mastery of unconscious corporeal functions, and to other phenomena is determined even by the existing social suggestive norm about the capacities of the human individual. The prestige and authority of society constitutes sufficiently powerful suggestive factor which is capable of changing the norms relative to the capacities of the individual under particular social and historical conditions. For instance, it had been accepted within the frameworks of the ancient philosophical teachings, of the yogis that the individual is capable of memorizing an enormous amount of material by using certain ritual and psychological factors. The most talented among the brahmins of that time were selected and were subjected since early childhood to

special instruction for the purpose of training their memory. This was necessary in order to memorize the vast ancient teachings of that time. There appeared students among the yogis, known as Stotrayas, whose only duty was to memorize these scriptures so that, even if all ancient books of India were destroyed simultaneously and even if only one of these men remained alive, the entire literature could be restored from memory. Capacities of this kind, inherent to the individual, were concealed from the masses behind the veil of mysticism and the latter were deprived of them. Later on these capacities succumbed to the dictate of the suggestive norms of society.

Each suggestive phenomenon manifesting one reserve of the individual or another immediately finds itself in collision with the suggestive norm adopted by the mass of the people. In this manner, the individual manifestations of the reserve, such as hypermnesia, anaesthesia, and the like, were considered as wonders by the dominant views of society and therefore remained inaccessible to the masses. Today, however, when the scientific outlook and scientific approach to all phenomena is being applied on an increasingly broader scale, there exist more favourable conditions for a large-scale utilization of the reserves of the individual. We say only “more favourable conditions”, because even today the experimentation with and the utilization of these capacities is in collision with the socially accepted suggestive norm which is to a large extent backed by conservatism, by fear of the mystic, by fear of the new, by incompetence and, unfortunately, by the lack of integrity prompted by personal interests. This is the only way in which we can account for the incredible difficulties encountered by suggestology in its attempts to tap the reserves enclosed in the individual.

Considerable results of memorisation were obtained at the Research Institute of Suggestology in Sofia under the conditions of a strictly organized suggestive experiment. The meanings of 1,000 foreign words were memorized in one session. Of course, this does not imply that suggestology will succeed in imposing this figure as the publicly accepted norm in the study of foreign languages in the near future; it is only indicative of the prospects for suggestology. The contradiction existing between the hypermnesic results obtained with more than 2,000 persons in the course of the suggestopaedic work carried out in Bulgaria, the U.S.S.R., the German Democratic Republic and elsewhere, and the existing accepted suggestive norm, will, in the final account, give birth to the new norm which will have to correspond to the needs of mankind under the new conditions of its development.

It could be assumed that suggestion takes place also within the frameworks of the social suggestive norm, although one is entitled to speak of suggestion with certainty when the results obtained are within the field of the “plus” or “minus” reserves of the individual. In our views the suggestology of today should deal mainly with the plus-reserves of the individual. In view of this consideration we proposed that the practical application of suggestology be directed toward pedagogical practice. This gave rise to the suggestopaedic trend in pedagogy. The transition of suggestology from medicine to pedagogy proved very favourable both to the development of pedagogy and to the experimental elucidation and specification of the problem of suggestion itself.

### **What Is Suggestion?**

The concept of suggestion remains not sufficiently clarified for a number of scientists. To some of them, as we have already pointed out, it remains a

phenomenon of clinical practice only; to others it is a form of hypnosis; to still others it is coercion over the individual; to some it is conformity; whereas to others it fuses with the concepts of setup and motivation, and there are scores of other definitions of suggestion. This fact indicates that there is still a great deal that awaits explanation in the field of suggestology.

On the basis of the data obtained from our experimental material we defined suggestion as a “form of psychic reflection in which, primarily through the unconscious psychic activity, a special setup is created for developing the functional reserves of man’s psychics”.

It becomes clear from the very definition and characteristics of suggestion which follow logically from our experimental results, that *suggestion and hypnosis are two different phenomena, no matter that they may be genetically linked*. Our definition does not relate suggestion to the behavioural sleep-like states such as hypnosis. The unconscious psychic activity within which suggestion take place is at hand during all and any states of the individual – state of wakefulness, sleep, hypnosis, gloom, etc.

Suggestion is a form of a dialectical connection and of reflection with minimum involvement of the conscious processes, whereas the clinical concept of hypnosis is related to a behavioural sleep-like state with changes in the conscience under an electively restricted capacity for communication with the outer world and under restricted volitional impulses.

Hypnosis differs from ordinary sleep in three essential criteria, namely: psychological, clinical and electrophysiological. The psychological criterion includes the characteristics of the rapport under hypnosis. It is not identical with the characteristics of the “waking point” during sleep. The clinical criterion embraces the variety of symptoms, manifested by hypnotized subjects, which



are not to be observed during normal sleep. The electrophysiological criterion shows differences between the EEG's during sleep and during hypnosis. In this connection it should be borne in mind, however, that these differences are eliminated to a certain extent when we compare the EEG under hypnosis with the EEG under paradoxical sleep. Consequently, if we want to determine the characteristics of hypnosis as compared to sleep we may have sufficient ground to define it as a behavioural sleep-like state. This means that further studies are necessary in order to explain the physiological character of hypnosis and of sleep, so as to be able to assess the extent to which these two states overlap one another and the extent to which they differ. Modern studies in the field of sleep indicate that a number of its aspects, such as paradoxical sleep, were quite unknown until recently. Therefore, it is not possible for us to compare the unknown to the unknown, and it follows that the physiological hypothesis about similarity of the mechanisms of sleep and of hypnosis can still neither be accepted nor rejected with sufficient grounds.

Probably in view of the fact that hypnosis still cannot be related to the state of sleep, and in view of the historical fact that the suggestive phenomena were first observed during hypnosis, the latter has very frequently been confused with suggestion. Hypnosis is usually obtained by suggestion, and this has largely contributed to the confusion of the two concepts. However, suggestion can be used to obtain various other changes of psychic or somatic nature. Their psychogenic-suggestive genesis does not entitle us to identify them with suggestion proper. A suggestively provoked alteration in the skin, for instance, though being the result of suggestion, nevertheless is no longer suggestion but something new. A suggestively obtained ulcer is considered an ulcer and not as "concentrated suggestion", although, of course, its description

may include information about its genesis as well. In this manner, too, a behavioural sleep-like state such as hypnosis, though most frequently obtained by suggestion, is described as a “state”. The result of a cause is to be described as a result, although it is possible to look for the cause in it as well. Nevertheless, there is still great interest in the problem as to whether with suggestion for sleep it is possible to obtain an approximation to the state of sleep. Otherwise we would have to assume that hypnosis is purely a phenomenon of conformity in which the subjects hypnotized sham sleep. If we assume, however, that they sham sleep, we cannot account for the appearance of a number of hypnotic phenomena which are not subject to simulation.

Recent studies have also indicated that not all hypnotic phenomena are obligatory to this state. It turned out that a number of the most characteristic symptoms are not obtained when the hypnotized had not been the object of suggestion or when he had not expected that they might appear with him. And it must be borne in mind that this expectation to obtain certain hypnotic phenomena can arise from quite indiscernible utterances and suggestions.

Due to the fact that hypnosis is usually obtained through suggestion it is frequently referred to as suggested sleep. However, hypnosis may arise without suggestion as well. The experimental hypnosis of animals, for instance, is usually obtained under laboratory conditions and without resort to the complex psychological methods of suggestion. Hypnosis may likewise arise in man without having been suggested beforehand. Hypnosis can be obtained under experimental conditions by purely mechanical means, such as acoustic or light stimuli. Of course, the discreet participation of autosuggestion cannot be completely ruled out in such cases. Many psychiatric patients are known to lapse spontaneously into a hypnotic state. However, absolutely healthy people

also reach a state of hypnosis in a spontaneous manner and without suggestion. For instance, when in the course of natural sleep a person unexpectedly begins to talk with people around him and to fulfil their orders without waking up, then he is in a state of hypnosis. This is so because hypnosis is a behaviourally sleep-like state with rapport. This rapport or connection to the environment during hypnosis is used for psychotherapeutic treatment.

Just as there can be hypnosis without suggestion, there can be suggestion without hypnosis as well. How can we refer to any hypnosis when by way of example, we administer a placebo to a patient who obtains curative effect with distilled water only?

In view of the fact that suggestion is frequently presented during a state of mental relaxation, which has been referred to in our suggestopaedic courses as “concert-like pseudopassivity”, some authors related this state to the Schultz’s autogenic training and to the relaxation involved in it. This was another attempt at relating suggestion to hypnosis again. True enough I. Schultz (1961) discusses the phenomenon of suggestion in the section dealing with hypnosis, but in this case he only has in mind suggestion during hypnosis. In his chapter dealing with psychotherapy in a state of wakefulness he again treats certain problems of suggestion and auto-suggestion. However, this does not entitle us to draw any definite conclusions about his concept on hypnosis and suggestion. This is what I. Schultz wrote in his report at the Third World Congress on Psychiatry in Montreal, held in 1961: “Furthermore, I hope it is quite clear that Autogenic Training is neither a simple relaxation technique nor a self-persuasive approach as applied by Coué.” Consequently Schultz does not relate the “passivity” in the suggestive atmosphere to the autogenic training and hence to light hypnosis. In this manner we again come to the concept that suggestion is primarily a matter

of connection, relation, reflection, approach and method, whereas hypnosis is primarily a state, i.e. that suggestion can participate not merely in a state of hypnosis but also in a normal state of wakefulness involving no hypnosis whatever. A similar concept has been expressed by D. N. Uznadze (1966) who wrote: "... there is a difference between hypnotic or post-hypnotic suggestion and the suggestion obtained in a state of wakefulness."

One of the principal fields in which hypnosis, sleep and suggestion met recently and engaged in an extensive and dramatic struggle to demonstrate their superiority was the problem of man's memory and of increasing its capacity in the process of study. The earlier studies of hypnotonic hypermnesia yielded no encouraging results. In the first place, the hypermnesic effect was not always at hand and, what is more, the reverse effect of hypomnesia was frequently obtained.

In view of the considerable practical difficulties involved, hypnopaedy (instruction during the night's sleep) was likewise abandoned. The experimental study of the process of instruction during the night's sleep showed a transformation of sleep into hypnosis. When no such transformation occurs there is almost no increase in the students' capacities of memorization. Or, if there occurs a certain minimum increase in memorization during the night's sleep, which is far from being on a hypermnesic scale, it can always be attributed to the higher degree of motivation. *On the whole, the hypnopaedic experiments failed to take into account, in all their modifications, two extremely important factors, namely, the factors of motivation and expectation. These factors, together with a number of other elements of the psychological environment used by the hypnopaedic method, such as authority, rite and pseudo-passivity, create a*

*considerably saturated suggestive atmosphere in the hypnopaedic process of instruction.*

In March 1965 we carried out an experimental check-up of these considerations of ours. In the case of one of the groups receiving instruction by the hypnopaedic method we did not present material during the night, though we left the students under the impression that they were to be given this material during their night's sleep. In actual fact, however, they remained only with the single reading of the material prior to its presentation during the night. The tests carried out on the following day showed that the students had memorized the material to the same extent as they had done before, when it had actually been read to them during the night. This was obviously the result of the suggestive effect of the expected presentation of the programme during the night.

According to T. Barber and to a number of other authors, the sound motivation in a state of wakefulness is sufficient to improve memorization and, there is no need of hypnosis to this end. The results of our experiments also lead to this conclusion. It must be pointed out, however, that the strong motivation may be direct or indirect, it may be conscious or unconscious, and that it is of suggestive significance when it is unconscious and is directed toward, the reserves of the individual. For instance, the very hypnotic state plays a motivation-hypnotic role because the subject hypnotized expects that he must demonstrate particular capacities in this special state. The increased susceptibility to suggestion which is sometimes observed in a state of hypnosis is probably due not only to the physiological and psychological characteristics of the hypnotic state but to the motivation as well: the hypnotized knows that he is in a particular state in which the phenomena ascribed to hypnosis are

manifested. Improved memorization can be included here as well. As for the failure to obtain always well-marked phenomena of hypermnnesia under hypnosis, this can be explained by the fact that the experimenter may have omitted to take the motivation-suggestive factors into account. These factors still come into play in a sporadic and uncontrolled manner.

The suggestive power of hypnosis as a form of expectation and of concentrated unconscious motivation is to be observed also in some experiments, with hypnosis itself. It has been demonstrated in the course of our experiments with age regression that the direct suggestion under hypnosis for the purpose of simulating phenomena of early age is not as successful as is the case when we first suggest a return of the individual to a certain past age. The phenomena then appear by themselves. The suggested age regression contains a great motivational suggestive force which is reflected in many functions of the individual. The suggestively changed individual appears in itself a suggestive-motivation factor.

The suggestive setup directed toward the tapping of qualitatively new reserves lies at the basis not only of suggestology but also of all successful experiments in the field of hypnosis, hypnopaedy, relaxation, etc. This suggestive setup is not created by just any authority or prestige, but by that authority which is directed toward the tapping of reserves; it is not created by just any motivation but by that which is directed toward the reserves. *Consequently, that which is of decisive significance are not the states of hypnosis, relaxation, etc. themselves, but rather the authority of the motivation borne by them.* Our experiments demonstrate precisely these basic principles in suggestology. All the rest seems to be primarily of a ritual significance. However, mastering the suggestive ritual complex and directing the authority toward the reserves is

to a large extent a matter of practical training which can be given by the appropriate specialist.

When the setup is directed toward the reserves of the individual, it becomes a suggestive setup. The same holds true of motivation as well. Obviously, such a formulation which has been substantiated by our results shows the intricacy of the problems related to the mechanisms and factors of suggestion. In this connection we would like to refer, by way of example, to our experiments on hypermemorization which we obtained not only upon behavioural pseudo-passivity, as is usually expected, but also under conditions of ordinary behavioural activity, as is the case with the first part of our suggestopaedic session for the purpose of raising the capacity of memorization. Numerous experiments carried out with only the active part of the session have proved that the creation of a setup of reserve, i.e. of a suggestive setup, is not necessarily connected with the states of behavioural passivity in its different forms. Or rather, inasmuch as it is related to these states, this attitude has been historically formed in the ideas of the people who related the state to the achievement, as had been asserted in the ancient practices of the yogis. It would be fair to assume that the relaxation exercises of the yogis, much like the modern relaxation-psychotherapeutic methods, owe their achievements not so much to these states themselves but to the latent suggestion borne by them.

### **Suggestion and Conformity**

Having differentiated between suggestion and the behavioural state – beginning from the relaxation and ending with deep hypnosis and sleep – we are likewise obliged to examine suggestion from its other aspect as well, from the point of view of conformity. Due to lack of terminological clarity certain

suggestive aspects are being attributed to conformity and, vice versa, there is the danger of the suggestive interrelations being reduced to conformity. Although the phenomena of conformity and suggestivity may combine and even become impregnated with one another in some cases, it is necessary to differentiate clearly between the intimate mechanisms and the manifestations of the two phenomena. Whereas in the case of the suggestive interaction we have in the first place a bilateral phenomenon with the tapping of reserves, in the case of conformity there is a conscientious adjustment and a retreat by the individual in the face of the pressure from the group. The independence of the individual is lost at the extreme degrees of conformity. A conformist behaviour may be only an external one when the individual is subjected to the standards and requirements of the group, though preserving his internal freedom. For instance, an individual may accept a certain fashion solely for the purpose of not differing from that which is universally accepted, and without his internal consent and persuasion. Of a more complex nature is the internal conformity, when the individual changes his attitude and views under the influence of the group – not because there are convincing arguments but because of fear of isolation due to insufficient criticism. One particularly vivid example of conformity has been described in Andersen's story about the new clothes of the king. No type of conformity, no adjustment to the authority of the group or of the dominant personality – regardless of the extent to which this can be rendered meaningful internally – can lead to the tapping of the functional reserves of the psychics.

### **Characteristics of the Suggestive Phenomena**



In order to bring about the control of the functional reserve of the brain, the suggestive phenomena must possess features distinguishing them from the familiar ordinary, non-suggestive psychic phenomena. The analysis of suggestotherapeutic practice, the results of experimental suggestology, and those of suggestopaedy indicate that the suggestive phenomena possess a number of salient characteristics. The most important characteristics of suggestion, which call for special discussion, are the following: *directness, automation, speed, precision and economy.*

*Directness* is one of the most important characteristics of suggestion: by its very nature it is a directly entering flow of information. In the case of suggestion the flow of information reaches directly the functional areas of the unconscious or insufficiently conscious psychic activity. The consciousness, inasmuch as it is indivisibly connected to that which is not realized, usually marks the ultimate results or certain major moments and stages.

*Automation* is another essential feature of the suggestive phenomena. A rapid and frequently even sudden automation accompanies these phenomena. Besides that, automation embraces easily both motor acts and psychic activities, the memorization of enormous material included.

*The speed* of the suggestive phenomena is not due merely to the general suggestive mechanisms which seem to follow abridged formulae, but it appears to be a consequence of the properties of directness and automation.

*The precision* of the suggestive reactions is also a very frequent phenomenon in suggestology.

*The economy* of the suggestive phenomena results mainly from their directness, automation, speed and precision. The suggestive activities consume a minimum amount of energy. One of the principal pseudoparadoxical

phenomena in suggestopaedy is that of hypermemorization without any fatigue, and even with a clearly apparent effect of rest.

These specificities of the suggestive phenomena make it easier to uncover and utilize the functional reserves of the brain. They demonstrate the considerable capacities of the unconscious psychic activity, which is the main direction of the suggestive effects.

The suggestion reaches the unconscious psychic activity and activates the reserves of the individual most frequently through the capacities of the

**non-specific psychic reactivity.**

In each thought, sentiment, perception, or mental activity there exists a central and most clear complex of experiences and increasingly peripheral, obscure and background experiences. This is the case with the perception of speech. Its content which bears its specificity, and also its basic idea, reaches the centre of one's consciousness where it is subjected to logical processing and obtains the adequate reasonable reaction. However, we react not merely to the strictly semantic content which is specific of the speech, but also to an entire complexity of concomitant stimuli which are in some cases preceding or succeeding non-specific stimuli for this speech. The number of these non-specific stimuli is very great. Here belong such factors as gestures, gait, mimics, expression of the eyes, articulation, intonation, certain ideomotor movements indiscernible to our consciousness, environment, the source of the speech and the degree of its authority, the physiological states of expectation, or the biological necessities of the perceptor and, generally speaking, everything which is related to the speech pronounced at the particular moment.

These factors, which are not carriers of any concrete semantic content, may accompany any speech.

The rich opportunities offered by the non-specific psychic reactivity are widely used in the different types of art. Harmony of shape and of hues, the language of music, rhyme and rhythm, they can all captivate the individual, and this takes place along much shorter channels than is the case with the logic of facts and with arguments. They reach man's mind as well. The great art acts directly through the non-specific psychic reactivity and evokes in us sentiments, thoughts and desire for action which are not always of the type processed in a conscientious and logical manner in advance. Suggestion reaches the unconscious psychic activity mainly, and this usually takes place thanks to the possibilities offered by the non-specific psychic reactivity. That is precisely why the study of this reactivity is of essential significance to an understanding of the mechanisms of suggestion in all fields particularly *in art as "the most powerful" suggestion.*

### **Antisuggestive Barriers**

As has already been pointed out, the organism is in a state of constant interaction with its environment. In the course of this interaction it obtains information which frequently enters it along the channels of suggestion – insufficiently realized, insufficiently substantiated, and frequently in a concealed amnesic manner or through direct subsensory channels. We may safely assume that if we really accepted and reacted unconsciously to so many and so different psychic effects from our environment, then we would have been the helpless toys of chance. However, we believe that, much like in the case of the biological means of protection, the individual is provided with worked-out psychic means of protection against harmful effects as well. These are the *antisuggestive barriers* which have been the object of our studies.

The first antisuggestive barrier is based, quite naturally, on conscious critical thinking. When a suggestion containing a certain conscious component, large or small, enters the field of consciousness and of critical thinking, it is carefully scrutinized from all angles before being accepted. The critical conscious assessment of a stimulus which shows a trend of turning into suggestion constitutes the first antisuggestive barrier. *The critical and logical barrier rejects everything which does not create the impression of well-intended logic.*

A thorough psychological analysis of a number of suggestive situations has indicated that outside the scope of conscious critical thinking there exists also an unconscious *intuitive-affective antisuggestive barrier* against suggestions reaching the psychics of the individual. This antisuggestive barrier stems from the inborn negativistic setup in every man. The intuitive-affective barrier is very strong in the little child, prior to the full development of conscious critical thinking. *The intuitive-affective antisuggestive barrier rejects everything which fails to create confidence and the sense of security.* The stimuli which reach this barrier remain without any effect, and the individual reacts to them even with such activity as is contrary to the one expected.

There is a third barrier in addition to the logical and affective one, and it is the *ethical barrier*. It has been demonstrated by means of experiments that *suggestions running contrary to the ethical principles of the individual do not come into effect.* Of course, the ethical barrier usually offers no obstacles to educational and therapeutical practices since they, as a rule, take account of the ethical make-up of the individual.

*Overcoming these barriers in actual fact means taking them into account and being in conformity with them.* Otherwise a suggestion is doomed to failure. *It*

*becomes clear from this complexity of the suggestive process that it is almost always a combination of suggestion and desuggestion.* The dialectical suggestive-desuggestive link comes into being thanks to the antisuggestive barriers.

The existence of the three antisuggestive barriers is a biological necessity, because otherwise the individual would have been easily accessible to all kinds of suggestions, and this would have meant dangers of a psychological and health character.

The numerous known methods of suggestion use the elements of the non-specific psychic reactivity. The latter are instrumental in overcoming the antisuggestive barriers and in realizing the unified desuggestive-suggestive process. In this manner it is possible to bring about a direct information algorithmic contact with the unconscious psychic activity. Of course, the ideal channel of directing the suggestive flow of information toward the unconscious psychic activity would have been that of the subsensory stimulation. In actual practice, however, this is still very difficult to achieve.

### **Possibilities of the Non-specific Psychic Reactivity and Means of Suggestion**

Among the numerous possibilities offered by the non-specific psychic reactivity we have so far investigated and used only several ones for the purpose of exercising suggestion. *We could outline them roughly as follows: authority, infantilization, two-plane setup, intonation, rhythm, and concert-like pseudopassivity.* The suggestive methods worked out by different authors incorporate, be it deliberately or by chance, some of these means or combinations of them. The suggestopaedic method also relies on these means, explaining the significance and impact of each one of them and looking for the

most efficient combinations and doses. The different kinds of art appear to be an irreplaceable source in this respect.

Almost every suggestive method relies on the element of *authority*. The role played by authority in bringing about suggestion today is absolutely clear. There are a number of psychological experiments which demonstrate the great significance of authority in increasing the suggestive impact of speech. This can be seen in both clinical practice and in social life. In the course of our experiments with the suggestopaedic method, we obtained a considerable intensification of the memory functions under the influence of authority. This became clear from the experiments in which all other elements of the method were eliminated.

The more authoritative the source of information, the greater the significance of this information for those receiving it, and the higher the percentage to which it is assimilated and utilized. People frequently fail to take account of this process of elevated receptivity due to the higher authority of the source of the information conveyed. The individual is usually unaware of the fact that at a particular moment these processes take place at a higher level in him, and that he perceives, understands and memorizes much more than he does normally because the source of information is one of greater authority and prestige. The suggestively active authority is one that is experienced emotionally in the first place, as is the case with the other elements of the non-specific psychic reactivity employed by suggestion.

When we speak about authority we mean the authority of the source of suggestion. This authority creates expectation and a higher informative value of the suggestive effects. At the same time, it arouses in the object of suggestion a feeling of confidence in the reliability of the expected results. This usually gives

rise to the beginnings of *infantilization* in the suggestive process. Such an infantilization can be seen at varying degrees and in various fields in every suggestive process. The suggestive infantilization creates a setup of confidence, calm, and receptivity. Thus suggestive authority is related to positive stimuli. Not an authority which oppresses and limits, but an authority which stimulates.

Infantilization does not imply a full-scale return to earlier age-periods, but rather a general psychic setup or frame of mind. It is precisely this fact which is of particularly great use, because the experience and the intellectual capacities of the individual are not unfavourably affected, while on the other hand it is possible to emancipate to a considerably extent the plastic characteristics of the earlier periods of life.

The means used to obtain high suggestive effects are of various kinds. One of the basic pertinent requirements, however, is to take account of “the second plane” in the suggestive atmosphere, i.e. to take account of its *two-plane character*. Herein lies the enormous signalization flow of a great variety of unconscious or insufficiently conscious changes of behaviour. These unconscious signals are frequently of great information value to the person receiving them. Unnoticeable changes in the mimic, gait, dynamics of the background and other factors play a decisive part in the formation of the suggestive result. This second plane in the behaviour is usually the source of our intuitive impressions which give the shape to many of the attitudes toward individuals and situations which are not understandable to ourselves. These are actually factors of the non-specific psychic reactivity. They can be harnessed and controlled to a certain extent according to the requirements of the suggestive situation.

*Intonation* is frequently one of the elements of two-plane behaviour. It also has its independent significance in the process of creating authority and suggestive connection.

Intonation will give the expected result when it appears as a signal for authority and motivation. Consequently, not any intonation, and not intonation under any conditions, is in a position to create suggestive atmosphere and to make available the reserve mechanism of the unconscious psychic activity.

From the point of view of suggestology, intonation is related mainly toward the psychological concentration and toward the two-plane intimation and direction. It can also be achieved with economy in language and is not always identical with the concept of intonation from a linguistic point of view. Inner intonation, the sense of significance, and an atmosphere of expectation may be created under conditions of hardly perceptible external acoustic intonation as well.

The results of the studies carried out by us have indicated that the interval between the separate fragments of the programme subject to memorization – *the rhythm* – affects the volume of the memory. This interval is better utilized in the course of suggestopaedic training which offers better conditions of filling the pause with psychological significance, authority and expectation. On the other hand, however, the significance of the duration of this interval is different in the suggestive process. This interval can be considerably shorter when an intense suggestive atmosphere has been created, without any adverse effect on the degree of assimilation of the suggestive programme. The suggestive rhythm goes in conjunction with the periodical lack in the rhythm.

Infantilization facilitates the overcoming of the antisuggestive barriers also by an additionally developing state of pseudopassivity. This is something



like the unstrained perception of the environment by the child. Pseudopassivity, however, can be created by additional means as well. Besides that, it is not necessary to undertake preliminary training in autogenic training, in relaxation, or in the savazana of the yogis. What is needed is simply a setup of a calm attitude and confidence in the suggestive programme offered – *a setup similar to that of attending a concert*. Under such conditions listeners are behaviourally passive, they make no intellectual efforts at memorization or at understanding, but simply commit themselves to a quiet and intuitive perception of the musical programme. Therefore we have not in mind the muscle relaxation, but mental relaxation. The physical and intellectual behavioural passivity, however, does not constitute real full passivity of the individual, because at the same time and in connection with the tones of the music there occurs a complexity of processes in the individual which include the generation of moods, the emergence of associations, and the flashing of ideas. Furthermore, all this causes no fatigue at this state of general physical and intellectual passivity. On the background of such concert-like pseudoactivity and under the suggestive setup of supermemorization it is possible to overcome the antisuggestive barriers much more easily and to assist the process of tapping the reserve capacities of the individual.

### **Suggestocybernetics and Suggestonics**

As was already pointed out, the means of exercising suggestion intermingle in practice and it is almost impossible to separate from one another and to present them in an absolutely pure form. They all make use of certain aspects of the non-specific psychic reactivity whereby it is mainly the marginal subsensoriness which appears as a basic internal mechanism for the time being, i.e. the

unconscious peripheral perceptions and mental activity in general. In the phylogenetic and ontogenetic experience an enormous number of stimuli are driven away, into the periphery of the individual's attention and consciousness. Their seeming de-actualization and their conversion into non-specific stimuli not only do not exempt them from participation in the interrelation between individual and environment, but in actual fact transform them into a most reliable feedback. The information borne by these stimuli through the channels of marginal (peripheral) subsensoriness constitutes a control for validity. The regulation of the flow of this unconscious information creates conditions for carrying out the processes involved on a suggestive level. In this respect, one of the most frequently applied diagrams of the suggestive process is the *conversion* of part of the marginal subsensoriness into a realizable one and the shifting of part of that which is realizable into the area of the marginal. In this manner it is possible to regulate the inflow of the controlling opposite information, which naturally assists the process of co-ordination with the antisuggestive barriers and the bringing about the suggestive process. One example of such conversion in the case of our foreign-language suggestopaedic courses is the practice of directing the attention of the students not toward the memorization of words and to the creation of the habits of speech, but toward the skills of speaking and toward the communicative act. The means of bringing about a creative act are not contained in the centre of attention and consciousness but are pushed toward the periphery where their assimilation actually takes place more quickly. At the same time the individual is engaged with the most complex creative stages of the process of study. It goes without saying, of course, that such kind of pedagogic activity calls for suggestopaedic qualifications of the teachers.

The control over the unconscious forms of information makes suggestology a science of considerable perspective. It should be borne in mind however, that in the case of man the information is always related to both the algorithms and to programming, the two being in a state of complex dialectic interaction with one another. It is not possible to relate the individual stages of programming in machines to living beings without taking precisely this specific characteristic into account. The biologically significant information carries also the relation toward the respective algorithms and the possibility of programming. From a suggestological point of view, the modern cybernetic concepts about man could be viewed in a somewhat different light. Inasmuch as suggestology deals with the entire psychics and its reserve capacities, in its complexity of conscious and unconscious interrelations as well, we could expect the development of new scientific branches as well, such as *suggestocybernetics* and *suggestonics*.

### **Prospects**

All historical and experimental experience has shown that the individual is in possession of far greater capacities than the one he uses in everyday life. Consequently, it would be quite appropriate from a pedagogical point of view to raise the question of creating a new method that would be in a position to activate these untapped capacities to a certain extent and to make them fully reliable. Under such conditions pedagogy will abandon its traditional slow development and will be able to take the required, big stride forward.

Solving the problem of memory and automation, without any neglect of consciousness, is a most essential prerequisite for the creation of a new pedagogic system. Suggestology can obviously be useful in this respect.

It turned out that the reserves of human memory could be activated in the practice of training by the utilization of a number of psychological aspects which, in their entity, could be assessed as means of suggestion. Thanks to an organized utilization of the suggestive factors it becomes possible to uncover and utilize in instructional practice the reserve capacities of the memory and the intellectual activity of the all-round personality. In view of the fact that suggestive hypermnesia in an ordinary and normal state of wakefulness is obtained, as a matter of principle, with all healthy people – provided the necessary conditions have been duly observed – it is only too natural that it is of a considerable interest to practice.

The utilization primarily of suggestive hypermnesia and habilitated automations for the purposes of instruction have led to the creation of the *suggestopaedic system* which has successfully been used in foreign-language training and in the teaching of other school subjects. This is not a passive system. Quite on the contrary, it involves the activation of the intellectual processes and of creative skills.

It became increasingly clear in the process of experimentations with suggestopaedy that it is not merely a system of accelerated instruction, but rather a new *trend* in pedagogy.

Suggestopaedic instruction proved to be not only many times more efficacious than the different variants of modern pedagogy, but also appreciably more humane and unburden some to the individual undergoing training. The humanistic principle in suggestopaedy stems in the first place from the appreciably higher capacities of memorization and automation of the programme of instruction at a higher combinatorial level in practice – something which in itself tends to encourage and elate the students.

The humanization of the process of instruction is largely due to its very organization which takes account of the requirements of suggestology for the unloading of the individual, for his emancipation from various discreet micropsychotraumas, for de-suggestion from accumulated inadequate ideas about the limits of man's capacities, etc. This psychologically substantiated organization may be applied to any process of instruction, taking into account the specific characteristics of the concrete subject studied. Nevertheless, the training of specialists is of decisive significance to the efficacy of the process of instruction.

Suggestopaedy avoids the behavioural pseudoactivity which tends to bring fatigue to the individual while on the other hand it does not accelerate the assimilation of the new material. It relies on the internal activity – on the activity stemming from a well-motivated favourable attitude toward the concrete process of instruction.

The suggestive principle is based on a number of small and at first glance imperceptible aspects of the pedagogical process. It is necessary not only to learn them but also to use them correctly in practical work. Besides that, it is not only the conduct of the teacher that is important for obtaining a high mnestic effect. Highly significant, too, are the all-round conditions of study, the arrangement of the programme of instruction, the character of the textbooks used, and a number of other factors, all of which are subject to a basic reassessment and rearrangement in accordance with the specific characteristics of the different school subjects.

Suggestopaedy organises and carries out an accelerated process of training which involves a fuller utilization of the capacities of the higher nervous activity, without any risks or damages to the health of the students.

Suggestopaedy applies and offers such an organization of the process of instruction and education in which it is possible to tap the reserve capacities of the brain in an atmosphere of confidence toward the individual. This is something which is in line with the principles of humanism and with the higher requirements now being placed before the system of instruction.

The suggestopaedic system, in the light of the problems brought up for discussion here, should be assessed both in terms of the results already achieved and as a route already traced for further experimentation and for mastering the reserve capacity of man's psychics. In view of the fact that these reserves actually exist and that their harnessing is an essential problem, each attempt or experiment undertaken in this direction will be both valuable and promising.

The achievements of our Institute in this very important field justify the great interest shown in our work. The fact that many executives in the field of public life and culture, many individual scientists and institutions are seeking our aid in the solution of a number of theoretical and practical problems which have a bearing on suggestology, have made the Research Institute of Suggestology the centre of this developing science.

We believe that the time has come when the historical necessity compels us to turn our eyes to the unexplored resources of the individual.