SUGGESTIBILITY AND FALSE MEMORY

Donatella Mancini, psychologist, prof., Independent Researcher, Italy

Suggestibility: the quality of being inclined to accept and act on the suggestions of others, it is a pshychological trait which can vary from a person to another, it defines a vulnerability which influences people's behaviour. Actually what surrounds us, our everyday experiences and activities can be affected by our level of suggestibility. Advertising companies, media, politicians, communication experts

may be able to mold our ideas, consequent attitudes and behaviour.

Memories: As to our memory , it seems that among all information getting to our brain, only 1% gets stuck in it. Moreover it has been proved that our memories are strictly connected with emotions, feelings, levels of suggestibility which strongly affect it, thus creating false memories.

Personality: A research by Frost, Sparrow and Jennifer has investigated whether some personality traits can be related to false memories by using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator. The results have shown that people with personality traits subject to false memories are related to the dichotomous dimensions: extrovertion/ introvertion, reasoning / sentiment.

Testimony in court. False memories and confabulations that is the replacement of a gap in a person's memory by a falsification that he or she believes to be true, play a very important role in court as they affect the veridicity of a witness.

Research: I have carried out a reasearch on two samples of subjects of different age to see a possible correlation between age, personality, memories and possible false witnesses in courts.

The study has shown that in young people the distortion of memories is caused by an attempt to simulate reality; for older people, who may suffer from memory blocks, reality distortions and confabulations represent ways of filling memory lapses with false memories.

Therefore, confabulations, reality distortions and inventions may derive from different features depending on the age of a witness.

Key-words: *suggestibility, people's behaviour, false memories, confabulations, person's memory, reality distortions*