
IN MEMORIAM OF VLADIMIR GHEORGHIU

VILFREDO DE PASCALIS*

University of Rome

Vladimir Gheorghiu died on 20 May 2010 at the age of 84 following a prolonged illness. He was acknowledged as the instigator of modern research on suggestion and inspired an international symposium series on the topic. He also contributed to the hypnosis scientific community as a co-founding member of the International Society of Hypnosis in 1973 and the European Society of Hypnosis in 1978, for which he became a board member. He was a member of various national societies of hypnosis, including the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis, and was an honorary member of all five professional German hypnosis societies. In 1998 he was awarded the Milton Erickson Prize from the Milton Erickson Society for Clinical Hypnosis in Germany.

Vladimir Gheorghiu was born in Berlin in 1926 of a Romanian father and German mother; following the rise of Hitler the family moved to Romania. In 1955 he was awarded a degree in psychology from the University of Bucharest, later becoming head of research at the Psychological Institute of the Romanian Academy of Sciences in 1964. In 1969, as a Humboldt Scholar, he was awarded a PhD from the University of Mainz, Germany on hypnotic hypermnesia and amnesia, followed in 1973 by a postdoctoral dissertation entitled 'Investigations on Sensory and Motor Suggestibility'.

On returning to Bucharest his scientific work was hampered by political repression, and in 1982 the Psychological Institute was dissolved and the academics forced to take menial work, often separated from their families. In July 1982 his application to emigrate from Romania was rejected and he was deprived of citizenship. However, with the assistance of foreign colleagues including Ernest Hilgard and Peo Wikström, he was allowed to depart for Germany in 1983, where at the age of 54 he became a visiting professor in the Psychological Faculty of the University of Giessen, a post he held until his retirement in 1991.

The first international symposium on suggestion and suggestibility became a benchmark for the field and was published in *Suggestion and Suggestibility* (1989), co-edited by Petra Netter, Hans Juergen Eysenck, Robert Rosenthal, Klaus Fiedler, William Edmonston, Ray Lundy, and Perry Sheehan. In 1994 the second symposium took place in Rome organized together with the writer. The third was held in Munich in 2000, the fourth in Crakow in 2003, and the fifth during the annual congress of the Milton Erickson Society for Clinical Hypnosis in 2010 in Bad Kissingen, Germany.

I met Vladimir Gheorghiu at the first symposium at the University of Giessen, Germany in 1987. In 1983 I had read the paper on his sensory suggestibility scale (Gheorghiu &

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Reyher, 1982) and had set out to replicate his findings (De Pascalis & Caddia, 1985). I consider Vladimir one of my mentors regarding the methodology of suggestion and suggestibility phenomena. He had a brilliant mind and was very active and creative in the field of suggestive processes and hypnosis. Each time I met him I was flooded with new suggestions and ideas for studies.

He was very emphatic in separating the domains of suggestion and hypnosis, although, of course, there are commonalities between the two. These concepts are well presented and discussed in his chapter of the book published as a result of the second symposium on suggestion and suggestibility (Gheorghiu, 2000). He defined suggestion as 'the Cinderella of psychology' since it was not well studied or well considered in cognitive psychology. This is because the general question of what suggestibility actually is still remains unresolved, despite the increasing use of the concept of suggestion to explain a number of different phenomena such as memory distortion, placebo response, hypnosis, pain, and perception.

After my participation at the fifth congress on suggestion and suggestibility in 2010, I was honoured to visit him at his home. He was very excited about expounding his thinking on how to improve suggestion and suggestibility research in the near future. His wife Ursula and daughter Cornelia were astonished because the day before he had been in a comatose state, and both believed he was no longer capable of such lucid discussion. This demonstrates just how great was Vladimir Gheorghiu's interest, motivation, and responsibility for the scientific study of suggestion phenomena—and his consequent loss to the field. He leaves two sons in Romania from his first marriage and his second wife and daughter in Germany.

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Correspondence to Vilfredo De Pascalis, Department of Psychology, University of Rome 'La Sapienza', Piazzale Aldo Moro 5, 00185 Rome, Italy
Email: Vilfredo De Pascalis (v.depascalis@caspur.it)
Phone: +39 06 4991 7643