

Letters to the Editor

Jonathan Lang's Hallucinations

Sir,

An intelligent schizophrenic whose fictitious name was Jonathan Lang hallucinated for more than 8 years. His coping behaviour included analysing the aspects of hallucinations, analysing the inter-relation between varieties of hallucinations, studying the relations of hallucinations to environmental variables, physiological states and psychological factors, experimenting on the production of hallucination and reading relevant literature (Lang 1938, 1939).

His hallucinations emerged without antecedents. The conscious self neither produced nor anticipated them. The sensory modality and location were determined before they appeared. Hallucinations blocked actual environmental stimuli in the concerned sensory modality. E.g. words actually spoken by others were substituted by hallucinated words. The relation between varieties of hallucinations in time and content convinced him that there was only one controlling agent behind them.

Lang reported that thoughts-out-loud were accompanied by minimal tonus of vocal muscles. This was quoted by Gould (1948) in support of "sub-vocal speech" in auditory hallucinations. Lang found out the correlation between arterial pulse and pressure vibrations in the head. There was a temporary cessation of one variety of hallucinated pain on rubbing or violently moving the concerned part of the body. Hallucinatory pain was an obstacle to his coping with psychosis. (Could the removal of such obstacle make rehabilitation effective?)

Destruction of perceptive process and specific lesions of brain were not evident in his case. The content of thoughts-out-loud

changed with suggestions. Lang thought that the content of hallucination was independent of its underlying mechanism. Lang believed that a predisposing psychophysiological state, release of energy and stimulation of nervous system were required for the production of hallucinations.

Patients of the calibre of Lang can be engaged in collecting their own data for our research.

References

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