

Hallucinations - What They Mean

New York (NAPS) - Many a motorist driving at night has suddenly jammed on his brakes because he was positive he saw a child crossing the road. What he saw was probably an optical illusion. But it may have been a genuine hallucination, because nearly all of us have had them in one form or another, whether it was something we saw, heard, or smelled.

Actually, hallucinations can be induced in many ways - by drunkenness, over anx-

ety, or mental disorders. But it is the latter that is most serious and therefore has received the closest attention of psychiatrists who are groping for rational explanations for these hallucinations.

Before examining some of the findings, however, let's first define hallucination and see how it differs from an optical illusion. An optical illusion is a visual misinterpretation of an object. For instance, how many times have you thought you were going to drive right into a puddle.

In reality there is no puddle. But there is a reflection from the sky that produces the optical illusion of a puddle.

An hallucination, on the other hand, is a perception which does not come either from external cause or stimuli. For instance, if a drunk sees a crocodile chasing him and calls for the police, he is hallucinating. There is no crocodile, no chase, and no misinterpretation of an object. Generally, a good night's sleep will put the drinker's mind in order.

However, if there is a constant repetition of an hallucination - either visual or oral - then the visions are the symptoms of a mentally disturbed person. A distinguished protestant theologian, Dr. Ernst Benz, professor of Christian Dogmatics at Marburg University, Germany, has made an interesting analysis of such phenomena mentioned in the Bible and in the annals of science (Dreams, Hallucinations, Visions, Swedenborg Foundation, New York 1968). Interestingly, some studies written over two hundred years ago have proved quite helpful to psychologists in treating these individuals. Recently, the chief psychologist at Mendocino State Hospital and currently Director of Drug Control in the California State Department of Mental Hygiene, Dr. Wilson Van Dusen, noticed that his clinical findings on the subject of hallucinations conformed to those of the 18th century scientist-theologian,

Emanuel Swedenborg (Van Dusen: The Presence of Spirits in Madness, Swedenborg Foundation, New York 1968).

Dr. Van Dusen found that Swedenborg's insights actually delineated and defined many typical responses and patterns of behavior in cases where hallucinatory "voices" were heard by their victims. Swedenborg actually indicated the intervention of Spirits acting through the subject-displacing his own personality and possessing him. Such was the case when Dr. Van Dusen interviewed the mentally disturbed about their hallucinations. He found two categories of these voices: lower order and higher order.

The lower order voices (which closely resemble Freud's id) generally tease, torment, threaten, cajole, and entreat. For instance, they tell a victim to raise his right hand in the air, and then if he does, they tease him for being so stupid. Dr. Van Dusen found the limited vocabulary and range of ideas of the lower order to be quite striking. A few ideas can be repeated endlessly. One voice just said "hey" for a few months, while the patient tried to figure out what "hey" or "hay" meant.

In direct contrast stand the rarer "higher order" hallucinations. The higher order is much more likely to be religious, supportive, and genuinely instructive, and communicate directly with the inner feelings of the patient. In one encounter with "higher order" voices, a lovely woman entertained a male patient while showing him thousands of symbols. Though the patient was only a high school educated pipe fitter, his female vision showed a knowledge of religion and myth far beyond the patient's understanding.

All of Swedenborg's observations on the effect of evil spirits entering man's consciousness conformed to Dr. Van Dusen's findings. Swedenborg also went on to say that spirits could impersonate and deceive. This accounted for the puzzling fact that patients said the voices could shift sound and identity as

they spoke, making it impossible to identify them.

It is rather remarkable that in over two centuries of time, men of very different cultures, working under entirely different circumstances, on quite different people could come to such similar findings.

Yet even today, the cause of a patient's hallucination is still considered beyond the knowledge of psychologists. For although researchers have made definite progress in correlating information about patients and about hallucinations, and in comparing patterns of behavior and pinpointing problem areas, they still have not been able to agree on what triggers the mind to hallucinate. They debate whether the problem is a psychological or physiological one.

They do stress, however, that hallucinations embrace all five of the senses: auditory (hearing), visual (sight), olfactory (smell), tactile (touch), and gustatory (taste). And they do remind us that while repeated hallucinations are often the symptoms of a mentally disturbed person, it would be totally irresponsible to classify as mentally ill all those who experience hallucinations, whether they are chemically or drug induced, occur under emotional stress, during deep concentration, or profound meditation.

Cuba & Sugar

Miami - In a speech, which was monitored in Miami recently, Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro reports his goal of 10 million tons of sugar in the 1970 harvest despite efforts by "imperialists" to drain his technicians. He was addressing a graduating class of farm technicians in Santa Clara.

Army To Make Test

Sunnyvale, Cal. - The Twister, a new cross between a Jeep and a tank, will soon get its first test by the Army. The eight-wheel vehicle can

attain a speed of 65 miles an hour with a smooth ride over rough terrain, according to the Lockheed Missiles & Space Company

Embezzlement Bonanza

NEW YORK - Sticky-fingered employees are costing American businesses an estimated \$1.8 billion a year or \$5 million a day in embezzlement losses, according to the Insurance Information Institute.

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