The art of hallucinations
WHY PSYCHOETRY?

Going into this project we were shocked by the nature of auditory verbal hallucinations. The swearing, the commands, the overall negativity. After a while we started to notice that hallucinations can have a poetic character if you consider them each individually. By giving auditory verbal hallucinations a poetic form, we hope to provide a new perspective on hearing voices. It allows a focus not only on what the voices say, but also on how they say it; and perhaps we can discover something beautiful in it.

CONTENT

* 3 ABOUT
* 4 AUDITORY HALLUCINATIONS
* 6 TAKE CONTROL
* 8 METHODOLOGY
* 10 EXAMPLE POEMS
* 11 ABOUT US

ABOUT

Psychoetry is a dynamic interactive poem based on auditory verbal hallucinations (voices). The lines of the poems contain actual hallucinations as reported by forty people who hear voices on a regular basis.

For a full experience of the project, please visit the project website: www.psychoetry.com / www.psychoezie.nl.

Since only a handful of hallucinations in our data-set were in English, we were unable to provide a functional version of this project in English. Please visit the Dutch website instead.
Auditory verbal hallucinations are the most common feature in psychosis

Auditory verbal hallucinations, hearing voices, is a cardinal feature of psychosis. Auditory hallucinations are the most common symptom in schizophrenia, with a one-year prevalence between 64 and 83 percent.

They also occur in individuals who do not experience any psychiatric or neurological disorder, with reported prevalences ranging from up to 84% (median: 13.2%).

Hallucinations in nonpsychotic and psychotic individuals are similar in terms of loudness, personification and number of voices heard, but the emotional content differs with a preponderance towards negative valence content in patients.
Make some noise
If you sing or shout or make any loud noise, the ‘voices’ stop briefly and the poem is shortened. The website provides feedback on your sound level.

Move your mouse
If you move (the mouse cursor), the voices become more positive in sentiment. The faster you move, the more positive the poem becomes. The final sentiment score is visible on screen when the poem ends.

Turn audio on
You can turn on the audio of your computer to experience what it is like to hear voices all the time.

Psychoetry allows people to influence both the amount and the content of the hallucinations.

Generate poems online
www.psychoetry.com

Take Control

Hallucination-art
The emotional content of the hallucinations was quantified using sentiment analysis.

Recordings
A total of 40 participants with auditory verbal hallucinations were included. 21 participants with a psychotic disorder and 19 nonpsychotic individuals. All participants were native Dutch speakers.

The participants were instructed to literally repeat their hallucinations directly upon hearing them during one minute, with the same intonation, loudness, and pronunciation as the voice they perceive. The verbatim responses were recorded using a voice recorder. This shadow procedure was repeated three times per participant.

The recorded utterances were transcribed manually.

Sentiment analysis
The transcribed utterances were analyzed for emotional sentiment using pattern.nl. Pattern is a web mining module for the Python programming language.

It has tools for data mining, natural language processing, machine learning, network analysis and visualization.

Its sentiment analysis was used, which returns a polarity score based on a lexicon of affective words. Polarity is a value between -1.0 and +1.0, +1.0 indicating highly positive and -1.0 highly negative sentiment.

Poem generation
The website generates poems based on several algorithms.

Visitors influence the generation of poems by making sounds and by moving (on their mousepads).

Poems can be saved into the website gallery.

The lines in the poems were made anonymous where necessary (all names have been replaced by the most common first names in the Netherlands: Sophie, Emma, Tess and nd Finn, place names and other retraceable elements and other retraceable elements and other retraceable elements and other retraceable elements and other retraceable elements).

Psychoetry
FOUND POETRY IS A TYPE OF POETRY CREATED BY TAKING WORDS, PHRASES, AND SOMETIMES WHOLE PASSAGES FROM OTHER SOURCES AND REFRAMING THEM BY MAKING CHANGES IN SPACING AND LINES, OR BY ADDING OR DELETING TEXT, THUS IMPARTING NEW MEANING.

Vuile

hey, dikke, spring van het dak af
het heeft toch geen zin allemaal joh
vies wijf
gaat ze dood?
dezo meneer is op zoek naar zijn vrouw en dat ben ik
...... ik stink
het is toch niet te geloven dat je je hier voor laat vangen
ik mis je moeder, jongen

Waar ze gelukkig van worden

dat je, dat je dat nou toch te horen krijgt
zij zeggen ook nee doe maar extra lief
dat je toen moest
want mijn brein werkt echt totaal anders.
mensen die goed, op een goede manier met die stemmen om kun-
nen gaan
nou, mooi
drie kleine kleutertjes boven op een hek
nou, mooi
je bent lekker schatje

Gaag het goed met je?

laat maar zitten
godverdomme, waarom geef je geen antwoord?
ik loop niks vies te vertalen
het gaat goed
pak die poen
als je maar niet zegt dat Sophie dat is
... heel erg groot
daar leer je wel verandering in te brengen
ik ben blij dat Emma meewerkt aan dit onderzoek

HALUCINATIONS CAN BE POETIC IF YOU CONSIDER THEM INDIVIDUALLY
ABOUT US

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK ALL PARTICIPANTS FOR THEIR BRAVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS PROJECT.

FRANK GERRITSE
RESIDENT PSYCHIATRY

Frank started his residency in psychiatry at the University Medical Center Utrecht in 2017. He is a columnist for the young psychiatrist (‘de jonge psychiater’), and is head of the Dutch association for psychiatry residents.

JANNA DE BOER
RESIDENT PSYCHIATRY

Janna started her residency in psychiatry at the University Medical Center Utrecht in 2018. She has a background in linguistics and is currently working on her PhD on language in psychosis. She is one of the KNAW’s faces of science.

Contact us
Feel free to contact us with questions, comments or suggestions via info@psychoetry.com