

Sexual Synaesthesia – The influence of synaesthetic perceptions on sexual experience

Diplomandin:

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The perceptual phenomenon of genuine synaesthesia describes a rare neural condition which appears approximately in 1 of 2000 cases (Baron-Cohen, Burt, Smith-Laittan, Harrison und Bolton, 1996). Synaesthetes show an automatically induced linkage between two or more of their senses, e.g., colour perception when looking at letters or numbers or coloured forms when listening to music.

But the perceptual phenomenon synaesthesia does not only contain common forms such as grapheme-colour-synaesthesia. As shown in many case reports there appears to be existing forms which are associated with tactile perception as well. This includes synaesthetic experiences through touches, physically inflicted pain and furthermore sexual stimulation. This tactile form of synaesthesia seems to be related with the emotional form which consists of synaesthetic perceptions induced by different moods and emotions (Emrich, 2009).

Although many synaesthetes report on such experiences this form has not been yet investigated in detail which is why the presented project can be considered a pilot study.

Several questionnaires will be employed:

The **KFSP** (Kurzfragebogen zur Erfassung sexueller Probleme) originally was conceived to inquire sexual problems and dissatisfactions. In this case it will be employed to detect sexual behavior, preferences and potentially existing dissatisfactions to show whether or not there are any differences in the general sexual experience between synaesthetes and non-synaesthetes.

The subsequent interrogation focuses on special aspects of the synaesthetic perception during sexual states of excitement. The questionnaire **OAVAV** was conceived to detect perceptual deviation during altered states of consciousness in general and should be filled out about fifteen minutes after the consciousness-changing event (which– in this case – will be the sexual experience).

The third instrument will be the **“Fragebogen zur Erfassung sexueller Erlebnisformen”**- a questionnaire especially conceived to detect alterations in the sexual experience. It will be employed to supplement the **OAVAV**.

Additionally, personal interviews will be conducted to go beyond the capacity of the quantitative questionnaire-interrogation.

Literatur:

Baron-Cohen S., Burt, L., Smith-Laittan, F., Harrison J., Bolton P.(1996). Synaesthesia: prevalence and familiarity. *Perception*. 25: 1073-1079.

Emrich, H.M. (2009). Was bedeutet Gefühlssynästhesie? In J. Sinha (Hrsg.). *Synästhesie der Gefühle. Tagungsband zur Konferenz „Die fröhlichen Sieben“: Synästhesie, Personifikation und Identifikation* (S. 15-18). Hannover. Luxemburg: Synaesthesia.