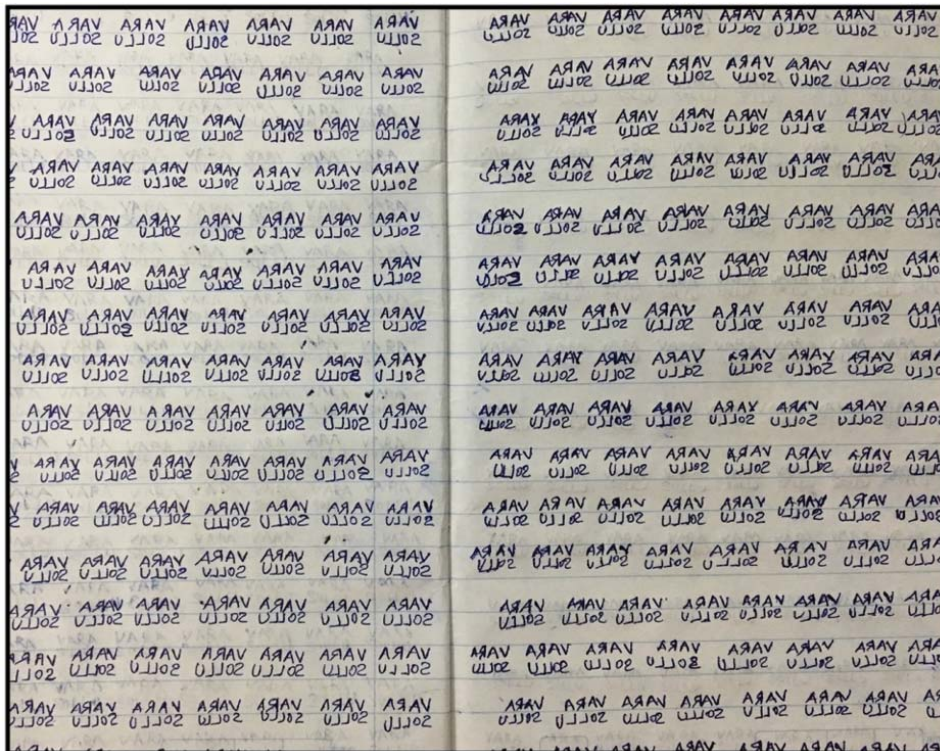


Mirror writing – A case of dissociative (conversion) disorder

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Case history

A university student in her twenties had attempted to take her life by overdosing when her boyfriend of ten years broke off with her. In failing the attempt, she had gradually regressed into childlike behaviour in a dissociative state. She had spent her day doing nothing but persistently writing in English letters what could be read in the mirror as “varasollu” which when translated to Tamil means “ask to come”; a request for her parents to

bring her lover. As this situation persisted for more than a week she was brought to the psychiatrist.

Discussion

Sigmund Freud stated that stress caused by an unbearable internal conflict can be alleviated by repression. Yet as a constant level of psychotic energy should be maintained; the remaining energy left by repressed impulses in here had gained its outlet in the

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form of this rarely encountered phenomenon of “mirror writing” in a dissociative state. She had not demonstrated this skill beforehand in life and had complete amnesia of it when she recovered with hypnotherapy.

Case reports on mirror writing are available in cases of dissociative identity disorder (DID) [1]. Deliberate mirror writing has been practiced by notable individuals such as Leonardo da Vinci as an adept deliberate activity [2]. For everything we perceive an engram is being stored in left hemisphere while its mirror image is saved in the right resulting in the latter being evident in brain damage involving focal deficits of left hemisphere [3].

We were unable to identify any literature on mirror writing in dissociative states other than in DID, which is not evident here. Thus, the inference was when she

regressed into a childlike behaviour in the dissociative state, she gained this dexterity, which is a common spontaneous occurrence in children.

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