

A 'Scene—Change Phenomenon' in Externalized Imagery

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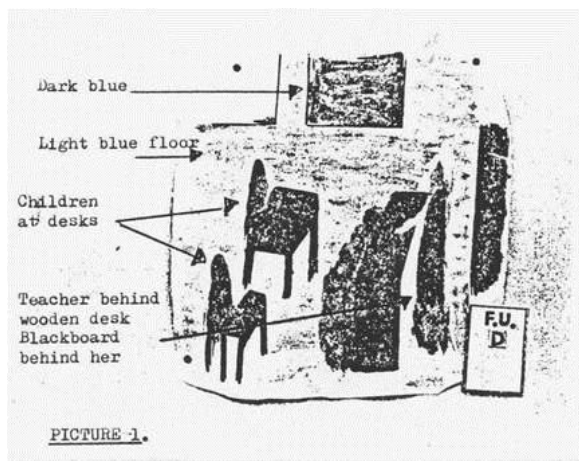
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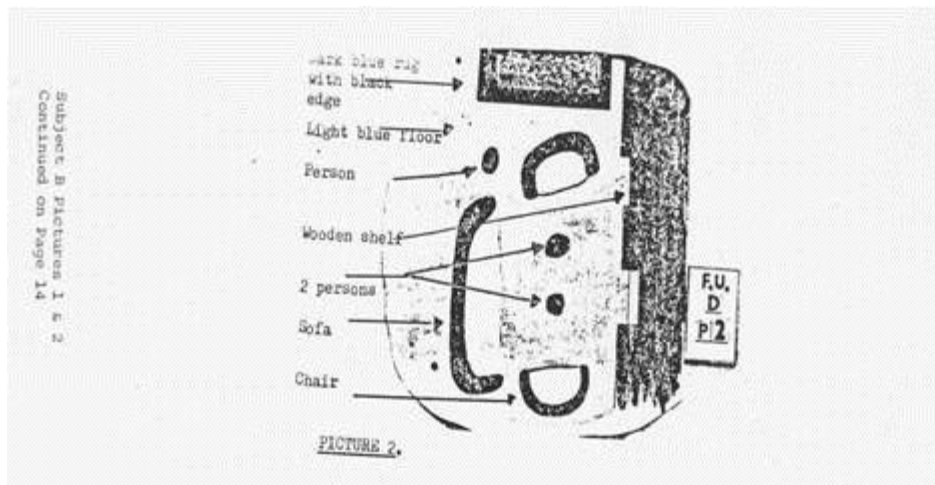
Reported here is another apparent constructional characteristic of the visual—imagery process. It is becoming established that dream imagery has to operate within certain limitations.^{1,2} The new effect shows that, at least in some cases, pictures immediately before and after a drastic scene—change in waking imagery are pictorially similar in shapes and colours, yet totally different in setting. The effect was originally discovered by the author in 'hypnotic' dreams,³ but it later transpired that these subjects simply had very good imagery and that the effects could be produced without the notion of 'hypnosis.'⁴ Since it seems likely that the same imaging apparatus is employed in waking imagery and dreams, the effect may also be universally observable in lucid dreams. A study is to be made in this area, but colleagues are requested to seek similar information from lucid dream subjects while they are still naive. Using the unique ability within the lucid dream to manipulate the course of events, and carefully observe what transpires, many such valuable in-sights into the dream process are bound to be revealed.

The method originally employed was as follows. In subdued light, the exceptional imager was instructed to begin a 'dream' and freeze the image on demand. That image was then 'projected' onto a drawing board, and the subject traced the picture's outlines and described colours, textures, etc., for later completion by an artist. When the picture was finished, the dream was allowed to proceed, and the next picture obtained few seconds later. Eventually, a cartoon-like progression of images from the dream resulted. Pictures immediately before and after a scene—change could be specified.

Examples, from two female subjects, are displayed below.

SUBJECT A





Subject: A

Picture 1 shows the subject teaching a class of children -two of them are actually visible
Picture 2 is a birds—eye view of the sub-ject’s sitting—room at home. Three people are present.

There are similarities in: the number of per-sons present; the number of items of furni-
ture; the general size of the items of furni-
ture; the general arrangement of
the picture; the colours of the two pictures.

Subject: B

Picture 3 shows a snake wrapped around a tree trunk. In its mouth is a carrot.

Picture 4 represents an incident that really happened to the subject. She fell down a
manhole (top right picture) and found herself in a bricked corner, with a pipe nearby. She
crawled through a gap by the corner and climbed a ladder to a door.

Similarities are: the green snake and the green pipe; a central brownish/red shape.

It is obvious in these cases that although the setting changes considerably, there
are certain definite links between the scenes. The effect is rather like a re—arrangement
of pictorial elements. An analogy may be drawn perhaps between this phenomenon and
changing key in music, where ‘pivot’ chords and notes, common to both keys, are
included to smooth the transition. The ‘pivot shapes’ and ‘pivot colours’ in scene—
changes may serve some similar process of visual ‘harmony.’ Certainly, the scene
transforms by pictorial association.

It should also be noted that other characteristics found were: the frequent appearance of faceless persons, or persons having partial features; a tunnel vision effect (the images being restricted in area), with the area possibly varying positively in relation to the significance (to the subject) of the scene.

References

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3. Hearne, K.M.T. (1973) Some investigations into hypnotic dreams using a new technique. Unpublished B.Sc project. University of Reading, England.
4. Hearne, K.M.T. (1982) A cool look at nothing special. *Nursing Mirror*, 154(3): 26—28. (January 20)

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