

Compelling demonstrations

"Here we show that...observers use perceptually interpolated contours to recognize objects and illustrate a powerful new technique for constraining models of visual competition." [1]. *

Yes indeed! provided the Authors are the Compelling Constrainers [1]. But KAS just looked at their Fig. 1 very hard and carefully for some ten minutes on three occasions separated by some hours of sleep and feeding, and this is what he saw:

ILLUSORY ROW: The popularly accepted 'illusory' white squares at Left & Right, both the same in their illusory contours until he read the Authors' legend about them; it took some five minutes to IMAGINE their 'Thin & Fat' stimuli. In any case, as always with this overfamiliar psychotrick, he got the olde Neckercube oscillations every few seconds, between seeing four funny black country cheeses with symmetrically opposed and oddly similar helpings removed on the one hand, and on the other a faint flicker of those 'psychocompelled' white squares. These data held for many varied viewing distances, with and without his glasses.

OCCLUDED ROW: Just four symmetrically arranged black balls with meaningless white segments and nothing else, UNTIL he then read our Good Authors' legendary Instructions. Even then, he could HOLD the occluded white square illusion only for seconds and with lots of 'psychoeffort'.

TEXTURED ROW: The same as the occluded; perhaps harder to hold on the Authors' compelling virtuality.

FRAGMENTED : An immediate and spontaneous illusion of one thin horizontal black line joining the 90° cuts in the two top black cheeses; a fainter & flickering one for the two bottom cheeses; nothing else. This illusion did not oscillate and refused to go away. It was not Neckercubish.

All that may well be simply the result of poor reproduction; nevertheless KAS has no intention of a 100% fMRI Gnosscience Test at taxpayers' expense.

QUESTION: Where is the evidence for generalization of any of these effects -- least of all our Authors' psychoarchetypes -- to the daily survival experience of any First, Second, or Third Chimps? Fortunately, few of us Thirds are yet COMPELLED to survive in the Constrained Virtual Reality of traditional experimental psychologists. KAS made his decision 52 years ago, when he declined to pursue a doctorate in a well-known British Department of Cognitive Psychology (where, luckily for him, the Chairman's wife was then a distinguished biographer of William James). [2]

Even in this unpleasant year 2000 of Globville & Natternet it's worth recalling that CONTEXT -- the entire sensorimotor-behavioral input/output at the time -- used to be a significant variable in the determination of the probabilities of animal BEHAVIOR. This may soon cease to be so, when a majority of our Six-to-Ten Billions are COMPELLED to spend their waking hours pointing'n'clicking myopically at our Psycho Powers. William James, together with a majority of the Real Neuroscientists, would have opted for a global All American NUKULATION.

1. Current Biology 10 (2000) 663-6. 2. Knight, M. Penguin Books (1950-70).

* "Smoothed classification images" may have been patented by Pythagoras & Euclid, if not also by Plato, around 2000 ybp. See: Hogben L. Math for the Million. 1936.

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