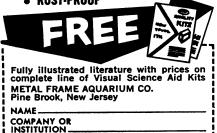


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others besides Professor Zhdanov might be interested in these reasons.

"I am honored to have your invitation and would normally have been delighted to attend the Congress, to visit some of the cancer research laboratories in the U.S.S.R., and to participate in your program. However, the resumption of the atmospheric bomb testing by the U.S.S.R. some 2 months ago has caused me deep concern, and this has given way to indignation within the past week, when it was announced that a bomb of about 30-megaton size was first exploded, and then, in direct defiance of an urgent plea signed by 87 members of the United Nations, a second bomb estimated at about 60 megatons was exploded on October 30.

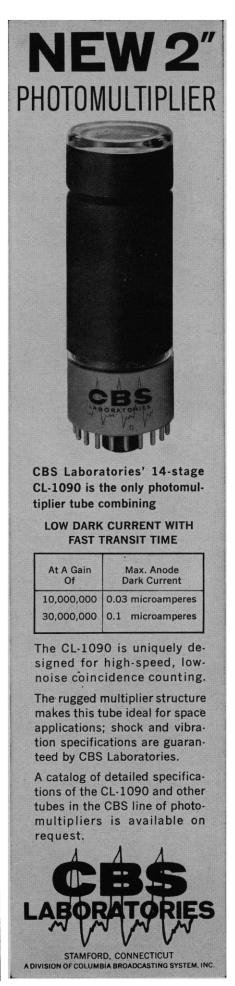
"I am convinced that this series of explosions, culminating in this latest one of frightful magnitude, will cause the premature and unnecessary death of at least a few individuals in the world from leukemia or bone cancer and must therefore be considered an outrage against society. In protest, I must forego attending the VIII International Cancer Congress and am therefore forced regretfully to decline your kind invitation."

HENRY S. KAPLAN Department of Radiology, Stanford University School of Medicine, Palo Alto, California

Auditory-Oculomotor Reflexes at Birth

Wertheimer has made an interesting and significant discovery in finding that the newborn infant will move his (or in this case, her) eyes toward the side on which auditory stimulation is received [Science 134, 1692 (1961)]. But he then goes on to say: "This finding is not compatible with the view that space perception, and particularly crossmodal spatial coordination, is based upon a long and arduous learning process." In saving this he either attacks an enemy who no longer exists or he goes way beyond his data.

If Wertheimer means that not all aspects of perceptual organization involve learning, I can agree without reservation; but this has been shown repeatedly, and no one now holds this view (it has not been defended in the past 30 years). Alternatively, however, showing that there are reflexively coordinated and unlearned components obviously does not show that the full



ADDRESS.

normal development of space perception is independent of the stimulation normally received from a varied environment.

It is apparently still difficult to escape from the false dichotomy of an extreme nativism versus an extreme empiricism. Neither view can be taken seriously today.

D. O. HEBB

Department of Psychology, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

I must agree with Hebb: the demonstration that a human neonate was able to turn her eyes to the side on which auditory stimulation was produced does not in any way exclude the possibility that space perception in the human adult is greatly influenced by experience. But one need not share his optimism—much as one might wish to—about the demise of extreme views.

In his stimulating *The Organization* of Behavior (Wiley, New York, 1949), Hebb himself concludes that all that is present perceptually at birth is discrimination of the "primitive unity" of figures, not their shape or identity as distinctive wholes—these, and by implication other aspects of adult perceptual performance, are "slowly acquired through learning." My little experiment demonstrates that, without learning, more is present than primitive unity: primitive space perception.

MICHAEL WERTHEIMER

Department of Psychology, University of Colorado, Boulder

Scientific Consultants

Your item in "Science and the news" on scientific consultants [Science 134, 1739 (1 Dec. 1961)], their high pay, their conflicts of interest, and so on, neglects a point.

The highly paid employees of the nonprofit corporations can also be fired without regard to Civil Service regulations. They can be promoted and shuffled around, likewise. Their work is subject to the criticism and approval not only of congressional committees but of the Service and Civil Service employees of the Department of Defense. The impending investigation, so long as it avoids excesses and abuses, is merely a normal exercise of prudence that should be welcomed by all.

WILLIAM GEORGE MACKENZIE Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

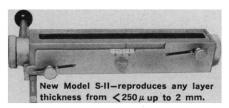
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by Klaus P. Brinkmann

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