

SCIENCE NEWS®

The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

Science Service Publication
Volume 149, No. 8, February 24, 1996

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SCIENCE NEWS (ISSN 0036-8423) is published weekly on Saturday, except the last week in December, for \$49.50 for 1 year or \$88.00 for 2 years (foreign postage \$6.00 additional per year) by Science Service, Inc., 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Second-class postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing office. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to SCIENCE NEWS, P.O. Box 1925, Marion, Ohio 43305. Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice is required — old and new addresses, including zip codes, must be provided. Copyright © 1996 by Science Service, Inc. Title registered as trademark U.S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Printed in U.S.A. on recycled paper. ♻️
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Cover: This image shows a member of a newly discovered group of very young, very distant galaxies that date from the era in which star formation began. For nearly 2 decades, astronomers have struggled to find such a population of primeval galaxies. Now, using a simple color criterion, researchers have found 23 such bodies and have imaged another 120 galaxies that may turn out to be just as young and just as distant. (Image: Mauro Giavalisco, Charles C. Steidel, et al./NASA)

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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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Letters

Back and forth on EMDR

The first thing to come to mind when reading the article on eye movement desensitization and reprogramming ("EMDR: Promise and Dissent," SN: 10/21/95, p. 270) is the similarity between it and REM sleep, when the mind writes its own scenario in a random dream. If EMDR shows any promise, it may be greatest in sleep research.

On the other hand, most of us do what is fundamental to this therapy every day—we read! Our eyes sweep back and forth over the page, and it conjures a picture. We escape this way and feel better afterward. Young people do a similar thing when playing video games.

With a little thinking, many other analogous situations come to mind, though watching a Ping-Pong match may be too much.

Robert H. Gentry
Knoxville, Tenn

Groups spread rules for success

"Ultrasocial Darwinism" (SN: 11/25/95, p. 366) states that the "roots of cultural group selection theory extend back at least 15 years." Economist F. A. Hayek wrote on selection theory as far back as 1952 in his book *The Counter-Revolution of Science*.

In his last book, *The Fatal Conceit*, he further analyzed social institutions as evolving "between instinct and reason." Hayek theorized that successful groups spread the social rules that contribute to their success, and he noted a conflict between the rules of small groups and those of mass societies.

Fred Foldvary
Berkeley, Calif.

Meditations on a better baseline

In "Brain scans set sights on mind's eye" (SN: 12/2/95, p. 372), Kosslyn notes that "[f]or reasons still unclear, the resting baseline task also activated the visual cortex." Even after

brief relaxation, most minds still contain images. Thus, when volunteers "imagined complete darkness" during the setting of the baseline, they were involved in an active visualization task, the creation of darkness.

A better baseline might be attained by using a technique taught to most beginning meditators. In the early stages of meditative practice, one is told to let thoughts and images drift past the mind's eye while trying not to attach, react to, or modify these images. This provides what might be called a random white noise state of mind and possibly a lower activation state.

On the other hand, skilled meditators could provide darkness through relaxation, not active imagination.

It seems that these subjects would provide excellent baselines and better results during the imagery tasks.

Dean L. Waters
Saratoga Springs, N.Y.