

"Outline pictures for the sighted and the blind"

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A theory of outline pictures in vision and touch claims they chiefly depict surface edges, but not all perceptible boundaries. Also, both visual and tactile pictures use projection. Further, besides surface edges, visual and tactile pictures can offer other sensory, psychological referents in metaphoric extensions.

This theory is illustrated by drawings from the blind. For example I will show 4 pictures from a blind woman, EW, who began making raised-line drawings as an adult. Notably, she drew pictures representing breezes, calls, thoughts and impressions. One picture depicts a desert plain filled with pinnacles, trees and bushes. It also contains lines standing for occasional winds. Another depicts sounds – frog calls. A third uses a trail of small sinusoids to represent an impression -- the atmosphere of a beach scene, being carried around by a moving observer. A fourth shows a cup drawn in outline. It contains horizontal wavy lines. Obliques are attached to the brim. The interior lines depict coffee and the obliques heat. The cup is flanked by zig-zag and curving lines. The zig-zags stand for sighs. Of importance, the curves stand for meandering thoughts.

In the art of illustration, line has usually stood for surface edges using true form and projective shapes. Depiction of motion, sound and mental states is recent. By analogy with literal and metaphoric language, it is suggested that lines depict surface edges literally and realistically, and metaphoric devices can depict motion, sensory effects, impressions and thoughts.

Keywords: Blind, metaphor, outline, pictures, surface edges, metaphor.