COGNITIVE PSYCHOLOGY: PERCEPTUAL CONSTANCY AND ORGANISATION

LIGHT HITTING THE RETINA CREATES A RAPIDLY CHANGING, COMPLEX SENSORY IMAGE, BUT WE PERCEIVE THE WORLD AS RELATIVELY SIMPLE AND STABLE.

HOW?

WHILST THE SENSORY IMAGE OF

DIFFERENT OBJECTS ON THE

DISTANCE AND ANGLE OF VIEW, WE PERCEIVE OBJECTS AS

STAYING THE SAME SIZE AND

SHAPE AS WE AND THEY MOVE

RETINA CHANGES WITH

AROUND.



RATHER THAN PERCEIVING THE WORLD AS A COLLECTION OF DIFFERENT, UNCONNECTED FEATURES (LINES. TEXTURES, SHAPÉS) OUR MIND COMBINES THESE FEATURES INTO PERCEPTUAL OBJECTS.

THE COLOUR OF THE SENSORY IMAGE VARIES WITH THE ILLUMINATION OF THE OBJECT BUT WE PERCEIVE THE OBJECT AS KEEPING THE SAME

COLOUR (COLOUR

CONSTANCY).

THE SIZE OF THE SENSORY IMAGE VARIES WITH THE DISTANCE OF THE OBJECT BUT WE PERCEIVE THE OBJECT AS KEEPING THE SAME SIZE (SIZE CONSTANCY).

THE SHAPE OF THE SENSORY IMAGE VARIES WITH THE VIEWING ANGLE BUT WE PERCEIVE THE OBJECT AS KEEPING THE SAME SHAPE (SHAPE CONSTANCY).

PERCEPTUAL ORGANISATION IS OUR TENDENCY TO COMBINE SENSORY INFORMATION INTO MEANINGFUL WHOLES.

THE GESTALT THEORY OF PERCEPTUAL ORGANISATION SUGGESTS THAT OUR BRAINS AUTOMATICALLY ORGANISE SENSORY INFORMATION, GROUPING SOME FEATURES AND SEPARATING OTHERS IN PREDICTABLE WAYS.

WE WILL ALWAYS PERCEIVE THINGS IN THE SIMPLEST, MOST 'COMPLETE' WAY POSSIBLE (THE GESTALT LAW OF PRAGNANZ).

MANIFESTS ITSELF THROUGH A NUMBER OF **GESTALT** PRINCIPLES OF PERCEPTUAL **ORGANISATION** THAT PREDICT HOW SENSORY FEATURES WILL BE COMBINED.

PRAGNANZ

PROXIMITY

SIMILARITY

CLOSURE

CONTINUITY

FIGURE-GROUND

SYMMETRY

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Aidan Sammons

PERCEPTUAL CONSTANCIES ARE THE WAYS OUR MINDS INTERPRET CHANGING SENSORY INFORMATION

TO GIVE US PERCEPTS

OF STABLE OBJECTS.