

# Drawing the Representation<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This is a somewhat hesitant, exploratory comment on the creation of the Representation. I hope that the reader will forgive the many omissions. My motivation is, simply, to put some of my thinking onto paper. Hopefully, these will be developed further at a later time. The direction of my thinking should be clear.

It is often argued that the Representation arrives at the visual cortex complete, it having been constructed by the visual processing system. Afterwards, the simple action of looking is sufficient for the seeing of Content. However, an explanation of this type assigns no role, in the construction of the Representation, to the perceiver.

In this paper I will argue that the perceiver 'creates' the Representation. That, during psychological development, the naïve infant learns to 'read' the pre-Representation. I will argue that, if the pre-Representation contains coloured data only, then it cannot also contain the pre-formed Content that the perceiver is dependent on for the shaping of his factual knowledge of the real world.

All of the 'information' carried to the retina is of the same type, and is unalterable by the perceiver. Also, the visual processing system is a fixed mechanical system: therefore, as the perceiver is far removed from the data that passes through it, it is also beyond his reach.

The newborn is an ideal example of a 'new' perceiver. He enters the world virtually naïve, both visually and experientially. The newborn's visual-processing system requires several months of growth and development before it is able to process information maximally: to the same level as a normal adult.

In the first day or two of birth the newborn has a visual range of only eight to 12 inches. More important, in the first week or two of life, babies don't see much detail: their first view of the world is in shades of grey. This, then, is the first visual field. As that world is in grey, there can be no colour. As the perceiver cannot make colour, then the transition to it is due to changes in the chemical and mechanical structure of the visual processing system.

Even at two-or-three weeks of age the infant is either unable to see hues or they must be large to be observable. If he initially perceives large, single-colour discrete patches only, then there can be no detail. Therefore, there can be no Content. If what the infant is initially confronted with is greyness, and then coloured patches, then it is likely that the transition to seeing Content in the round would not happen in a single step.

As those early colours are simple, perhaps a constantly-changing kaleidoscope of increasingly smaller patches, then early sight would be concerned with looking only. The newborn, naïve of what the patches are and represent, would not know what he is required to do with them: therefore, he looks only.

With experience, and greater physical development, a few isolated patches, possibly on a background of grey, become the focus of visual attention. More and more colours appear until the greyness is completely overtaken by his

first all-colour, visual field. As it is his only visual field, he would have no choice but to explore that. Every time he opens his eyes, he is confronted by it. However, that new, all-colour visual field would contain nothing recognisable as Content. The journey from a field of simple colours to a field of Content would be part of the long-road to visual perfection.

At this point it is necessary to diverge momentarily: would it be necessary for the newborn to have a complete, full-colour, visual field prior to extracting one or more Content? It is reasonable to surmise that the first colour patches appear randomly, perhaps a blue over here and a red over there. Over time, it might be realised that a few patches form a unity of colours, as they are combined to form a complex unity. With more experience he perceives a contour, and so discrete 'patches' now have shape.

Coloured patches are prior to Content. Content, an extremely complex grouping, must be consistently perceivable, repeatable and stable. The first 'content' would be simple, perhaps an isolated 'something different' among the coloured patches and, possibly, among the remaining greys that, on later looking are not content at all but, perhaps, a segment of a larger Content, such as a face.

The newborn would be slow to recognise unified patches as Content. That skill would demand the recognition of colours, contour, form, shape, extension, the individuation of Content and, probably much later, spacial isolation. Drawing the Representation becomes a long and complex journey. Many Content would continually recur then stabilise to become part of a visual world of things. That journey would take much time.

The general direction of newborn sight is towards perception: perhaps defined as looking from an understanding of Content. But, he does not know what that is. It is not until six-months of age that infants can see as clearly as adults do. At this point, he looks out at his first Content-laden, visual field.

Perceivers of the phenomenal 'world' – irrespective of how remote it might be – accumulate experience during the looking and the perception of it. With experience, the infant assigns new meanings to his constantly changing, phenomenal world. More important, as the newborn begins to work his way into that world, he knows nothing of what he sees: he looks out at visual Content but cannot know what Content is. Prior to his 'knowing' of that phenomena, it would be perceived as little more than a 'something' to look at. For infants, more and more experience of the Representation would make it appear 'real'. As visual acuity improves, colours are unified into Content, and they acquire a contour: shape and then form appear.

This paper argues that Content is extracted from among the colours of the pre-Representation. The fullest structuring of the Representation happens

along with the maturing of the perceiver. The Representation is not pre-constructed. It's possible that, as more and more colour is laid down in the pre-Representation so, in the later Representation, more and more Content become possible. That process would continue until three-dimensional Content, each piece located in space, would have increasing significance. Seen on a daily basis, Content become familiar and, finally, are thought of as 'real', as objects in the world: but, only until he develops an interest in philosophy!

Although the Mind of the Perceiver works to draw-out Content, what arrives ahead of those processes, beyond the realm of the perceiver – emittance from objects, light rays, and the visual processing system – determine colour, and placing of coloured data in the pre-Representation. What happens then – the drawing of the Representation – is perceiver oriented. Although the visually mature infant constructs and perceives their own Representation, what is genuinely remarkable is the near identity of it from person to person and.