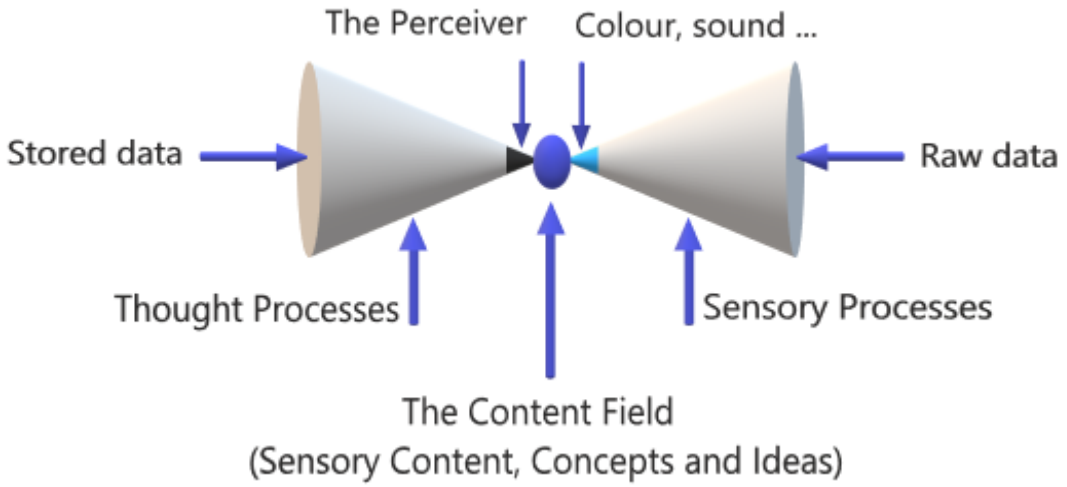
Four Thoughts on Perception

A. Halliday

Raw data—also known as neuronal signalling—is Given to the Perceiver as the pre-Representation. When drawn it forms the Content Field; it is also known as Phenomenal Content. The Perceiver sees the Content Field only. Therefore, that field is both his 'window' onto 'the world' and his Perceptual limit. The general belief is that Content is oriented correctly. Therefore, the following points can be made.

First, if Colour precedes the drawing of Content, it follows—and this assumes a conceivable pathway—that the Perceiver is more 'remote' from the real world than Colour and raw data are. If Thinking on what is perceived happens only after the drawing of Content, and happens independently of Perceiving, then the Inner Mind is remoter still and, it could be argued, that it is also separate from the Perceiver. Could they be the same, if they have different roles? Therefore, the initial context is: the Thinking Mind, the Perceiver and then the Content Field, the three, primary areas of the Mind; thoughts, Memories and the Inner Voice have their origin there. Givens from the remote senses, such as Colour, have their origin at the surface of the physical body. The physical senses transmit 'inward', while the Perceiver looks 'outward' from within the Mind. The Content Field, in the Mind, is separate from body. The cognitive and physical Givens, such as Colour and the Inner Voice, respectively, are Phenomenal and are outwith the control of the Perceiver; they, simply, arrive. Therefore, Givens are the interface that separate the Perceiver from his Thinking Mind and his physical Body.

Second, and considering the above, it should be possible to construct a graphic—a general, conceptual picture of the locations of the Givens, the Perceiver, within the context of the Content Field, and of the two Processing systems. Therefore:



It can be explained as follows: raw data from the real world enters the sensory processing systems via the eyes, ears, nose, mouth and skin. It is processed to such a high degree that output, the Givens are phenomena. Stored data, such as

memories, arrive as a result of Rational and Cognitive processes. Two or more Givens—such as a memory and a sound—could arrive simultaneously and are drawn to become a part of the Content Field. An important point is that, although Cognitive and sensory processing occupy separate regions, all Givens form the foundation of the Content Field. Therefore, conceptually, I have set the Content Field between the Inner Mind—where thought happens and ideas are generated—and the sensory processing systems. The Inner Mind is, for the Perceiver alone, not unlike sensory processing; they are a source of raw data. The Perceiver is at the edge of—in the doorway to—the Thinking Mind. This is necessary, as a general belief is that Perception happens prior to the laying down of memories. This, naturally, is a complex area. It is not impossible that fully-drawn Content is not stored as memories, but only raw data prior to Perception. However, in either case, the results should be the same; the drawing of the Content Field. Three examples of objects in that Field would be: visually, a Colour; aurally, a Sound; olfactorily, a Smell. Under the perceptual abilities of the Perceiver, basic Content is drawn; that Content represents objects, conceptual or real, and present the basic structure of those. They become a table; a bell; the aroma of coffee. These can be refined further into, for example: a wooden table; a door-bell; a chocolate-flavoured coffee. Cognitive raw data and Sensory raw data have similar functions. Recallable data can be manipulated, temporarily. Raw data is fixed, but plastic. All data are Givens for the Perceiver. Raw data is not perceived, and is of no use to the Perceiver until drawn and is Perceivably understandable.

Third, it is often believed that, during visual perception, we look out at light; that light is visible. W. T. Stace wrote that, ‘When a child is born, it turns its eyes to the light which is an external physical thing.’[1] Although light waves are external physical things, light is not perceivable. Light waves, the leading point of each arriving light wave, end at the retina. Because they have no effect after that, light waves cannot be perceived. They are external, while the Perceiver is locked, so to speak, inside the Mind. They are opposites and they occupy discrete spheres. Visual Content is visible not because light itself is perceivable, but because visual Content is made Perceivable by the brightness of its Given, perceivable Colour, which is separate from the natural colour of the Perceiver’s ‘empty world’, its blackness. We can hear, even if we cannot see.

Fourth, it is known that the retinal ‘image’ is inverted by the lens’ of the eyes. But, at Perception, Content appears to be oriented correctly. How might that happen? A suggestion might be that during the process, over eons, of repeated folding of the cortex of the brain, some nodes might have been moved from one location to another. The analogy is what could happen during a landslide, where

[1] Stace W. T. *A Critical History of Greek History*. Macmillan & Co., Limited. Glasgow. 1920.

a tree is ‘dragged’ down a mountain side to another location or is upended, buried under masses of soil and rock. The question is: as folding of the cortex happened, were the perceptual nodes and, or, the image ‘screen’—if there are such structures—moved from one location to another prior to the settling of the physical brain? If either was inverted, and/or reversed, might that simplify, and speed, orientation to upright of Perceivable images? Are we an upside-down, reversed Perceiver? If we don’t know then it doesn’t matter.