

## ii[e] The Visual Field

An inhomogeneous field is represented by a patch of one solid colour surrounded by another colour. Figure and the ground areas do not appear juxtaposed in a common plane, as in a mosaic, but stratified in depth -dominant tendency is to perceive the figure as positioned in front, and the ground as a depth plane, extended behind (and occluded by) the figure. The separating border perceived as part of figure as opposed to the ground. Contour, the articulation of its shape is irrelevant to the shape of the ground. Bi-stability occurs, figure perception can alternate with ground. A smaller region surrounded wholly by a larger plane, allows the first to appear either as figure or hole, the second as ground.

Gestalt qualities rely on sense data. A whole is more than the sum of parts (von Ehrenfels, 1890)<sup>1</sup>. However. The parts are the foundation “Grundlage” of the whole. Contrasting Ehrenfels’ theory, Max Wertheimer (formal founder of Gestalt psychology)<sup>2</sup> claimed that functional relations determine reciprocal dependency -what emerges as the whole or as parts. The whole grasped, prior to individual parts entering consciousness. Contents of awareness is not additive but possess characteristic coherence as structures segregated from background fields with an inner centre, to which all parts are related hierarchically. These “Gestalten” differ from the sum of their parts. Arising from continuous global processes in the brain they are more than combinations of elementary arousal.<sup>3</sup>

Corporate Identity Design is based on the above explained ordering principle. Its most disturbing exponent to this day remains: the articulation and gestural usage of Germanies National Socialistic Party. May 10 1933, the collective book burnings aimed to synchronize professional and cultural organizations with Nazi ideology and policy (Gleichschaltung) represent a censorship tool

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<sup>1</sup> *On Gestalt qualities* (1890)

<sup>2</sup> Wertheimer, M. (1923/1938). *Untersuchungen zur Lehre von der Gestalt II*. *Psychologische Forschung*, 4, 301-350. (Excerpts translated into English as 'Laws of organization in perceptual forms' in W.D Ellis (Ed.), *A source book of Gestalt psychology*. New York: Hartcourt, Brace and Co., and as 'Principle of perceptual organization' in D.C. Beardslee & Michael Wertheimer (Eds.), *Readings in Perception*, Princeton, NJ: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc.).

<sup>3</sup> A Century of Gestalt Psychology in Visual Perception I. Perceptual Grouping and Figure-Ground Organization Johan Wagemans et al. Published online July 30, 2012

against individual freedom of thought imposed to evoke collaborative acceptance of an ideological opposition towards the idiosyncratic nature of written material expeditiously labelled subversive.

Wartime censorship on idiosyncratic thought brings me back to my moment in *Artis* with the boy and his dismissive mother, where I was confronted with a similar cognitive shift. The blue-eyed child, entwined in intrinsic imaginary, open eyed gaze through extrinsic stimulates, all senses animated directed towards connecting to his origin, denied access to an understanding of linguistic parts (words) within the whole of his mothers' tongue. *Mata*: in her womb, he imbibed the melodic secrets of her tongue's pitch. Discovering nativity cry is expressed in his mother's tongue teaches us he must be receptive to receive and become part of her language system.<sup>4</sup> Her rejection making him dependent on third parties for language development.

The film *Arrival* demonstrates the moment of "contact" created by immersion, by folding one system into another and letting the permeable boundaries intra-act as in osmose. Letting the individual parts intra-act into becoming whole (s). Unconscious assimilation of ideas and knowledge, introduce the possibility of circular, holistic thought. Why would this young mother choose to nullify the weight implied by her child's fundamental wish to connect his observations to articulated utterances...to words? Are her little boy's questions (through gesture and rudimental speech) - uttered so urgently - not anything less than a request to be nominally introduced into the linguistic system of representational objects in the space surrounding us? And if so, why would she deny him to learn from her own denotative and connotative skills? What is her reason to expel him from the Lacanian space of symbols we nominate into being "our" world? What is our world and what is theirs -outside its boundaries we still own their space by naming it. Human imaginary is without restriction and can be explored into infinity. For centuries, although we state neither to expect nor desire individuals or society to converge on one -particular- narrative, our actions are in contradiction.

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<sup>4</sup> *Newborns' Cry Melody is Shaped by Their Native Language*. Birgit Mampe, Angela D. Friederici, Anne Christophe, and Kathleen Wermke (2009)

Obligatory to others (or visa-versa) should never transcends an Others' right to continue their own path unless it is imperative to the dominant socio-political system.