

Perception

Gestalt Principles

Psy 120

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Gestalt Theory

- First arose in the 1890s in reaction to *atomism*
 - Atomism examined parts of things with the idea that these parts could then be put back together to make wholes.
 - Atomists believed the nature of things to be absolute and not dependent on context.

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Gestalt View

- Gestalt theorists were intrigued by the way our mind perceives wholes out of incomplete elements
- To the Gestaltists, things are affected by where they are and by what surrounds them
 - Things are better described as "more than the sum of their parts."
 - The Gestalt Effect refers to the form-forming capability of our perceptions

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Gestalt Principles

- Figure and Ground
- Similarity, Proximity, and Continuity
- Closure, Area, Symmetry

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- What is figure, what is ground? Why?

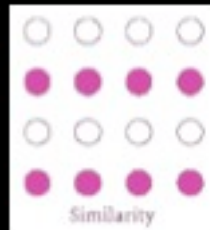


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Similarity

- Things that share visual characteristics such as shape, size, color, texture, value or orientation will be seen as belonging together.
- In the example to the right, the two filled lines gives our eyes the impression of two horizontal lines, even though all the circles are equidistant from each other.



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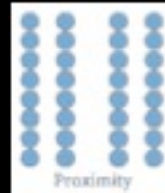
- In the example to the left, the larger circles appear to belong together because of the similarity in size.



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Proximity

- Things that are closer together will be seen as belonging together.



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Continuity

- Predicts the preference for continuous figures.



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Closure

- We tend to see complete figures even when part of the information is missing.
- Our minds react to patterns that are familiar, even though we often receive incomplete information.
- This is a survival instinct, allowing us to complete the form of a predator even with incomplete information.

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Area

- The principle of area states that the smaller of two overlapping figures is perceived as figure while the larger is regarded as ground.

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Symmetry

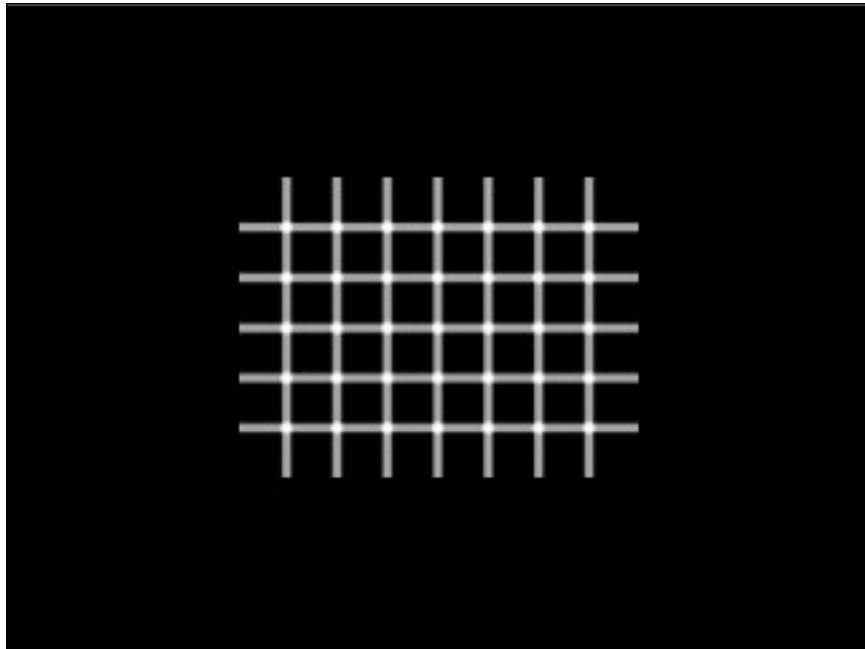
- The whole of a figure is perceived rather than the individual parts which make up the figure.
- What do you see to the right?
- Symmetrical images are perceived collectively, even in spite of distance.



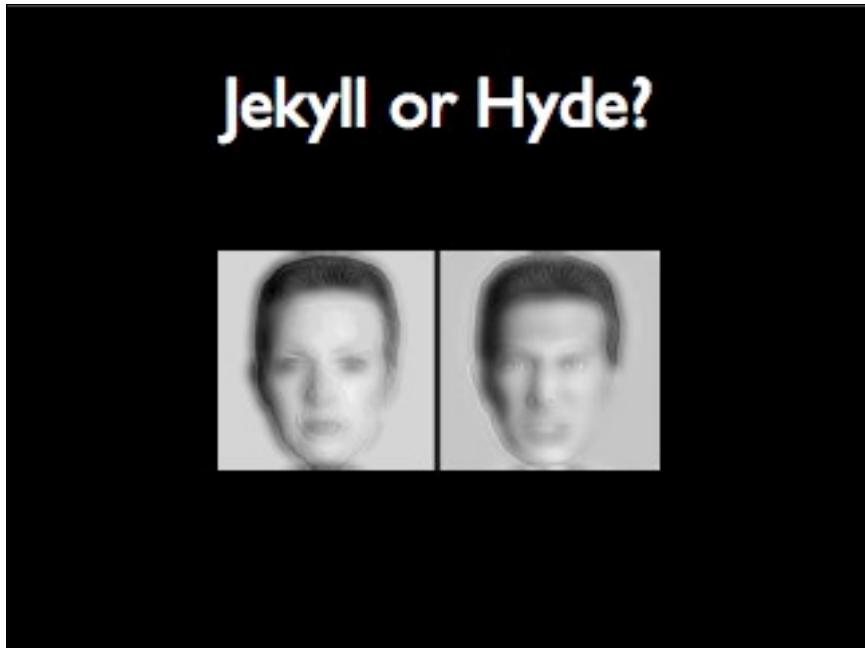
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Fun With Illusions

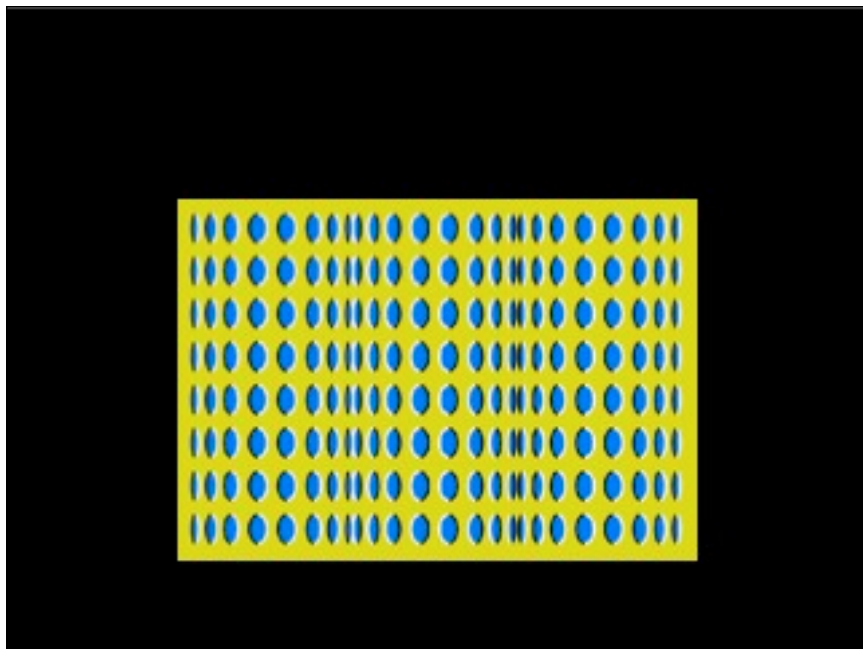
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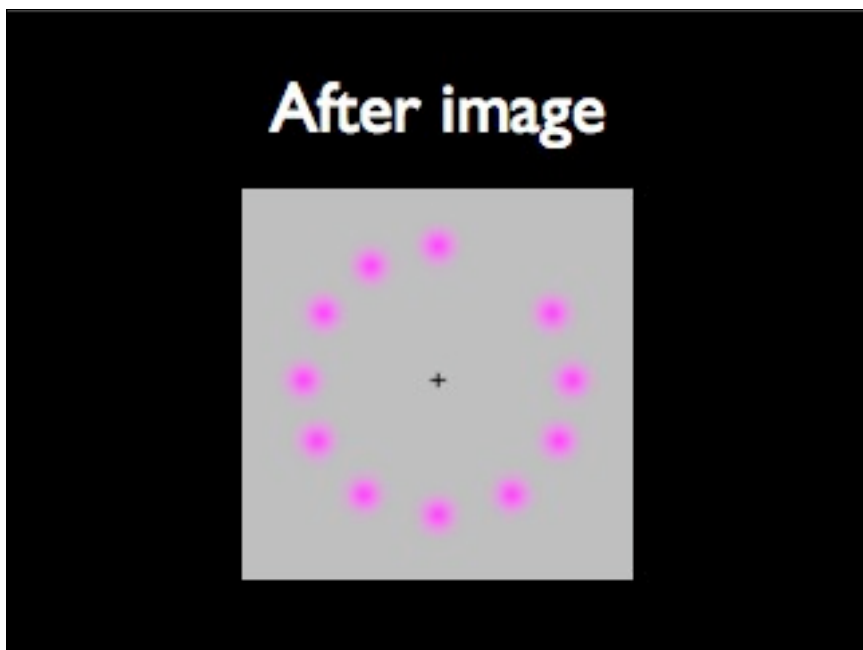
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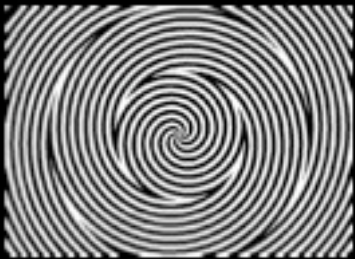
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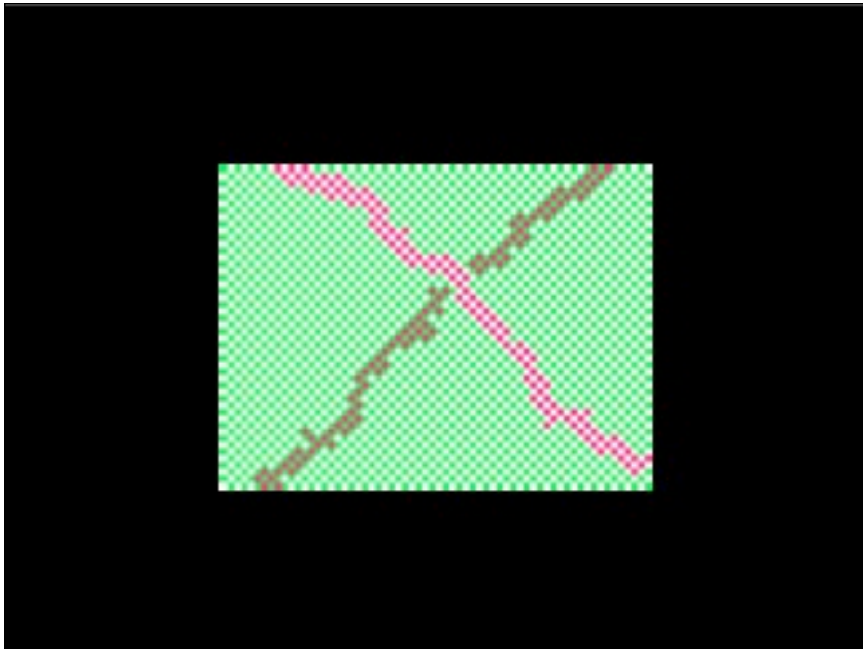
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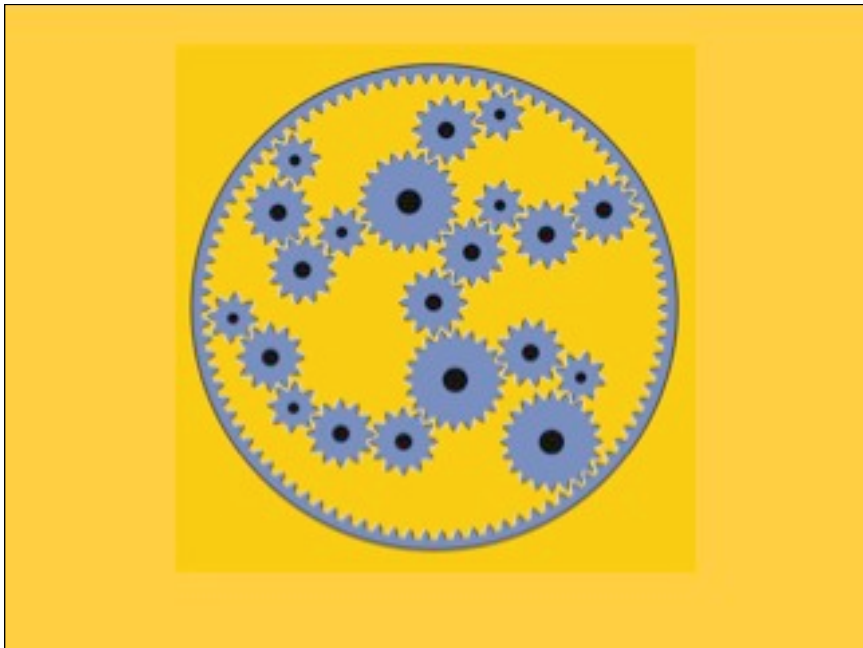
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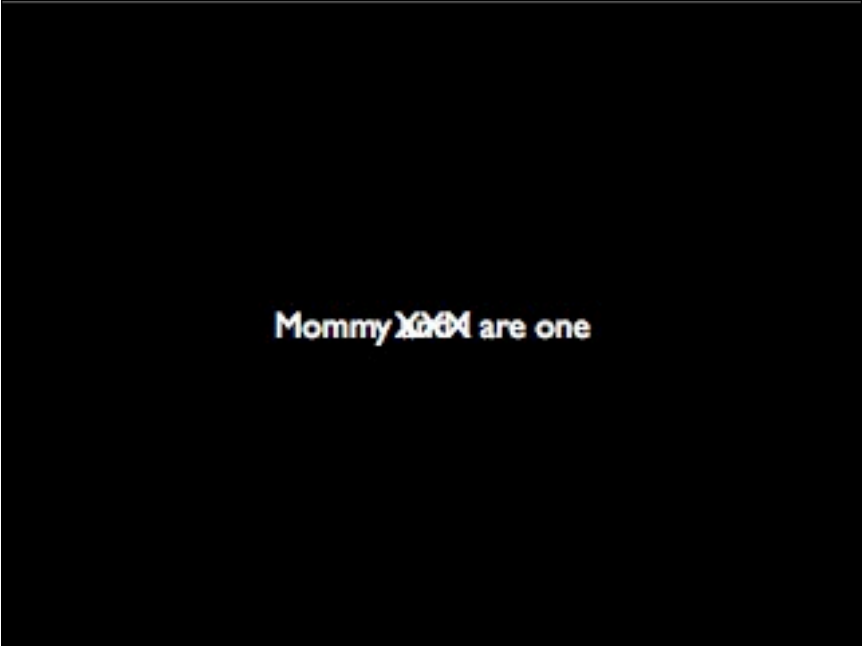
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The FedEx logo is displayed in a white rectangular box. The word "FedEx" is written in a bold, sans-serif font. "Fed" is in blue and "Ex" is in orange. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located at the end of the word.

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A solid black rectangular box contains the text "Mommy ~~XXX~~ are one" in white. The text is centered horizontally and vertically within the box. The word "Mommy" is followed by a white "X" and a white "del" symbol, which is a redaction mark, followed by "are one".

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For one exam question related to the discovery of the boundary conditions and functions of the café wall illusion, go here:

http://www.settheory.com/Glass_paper/cafe_wall_study.html

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