

# Vantage Theory in Outline

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The article was written in August 1999 and made available on the author's website at the University of Pennsylvania, <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~maclaury>, inactive since 2003. A portion of a larger work, never finished, it ends with the following note: "This work is unfinished with sections remaining to be written on applications of vantage theory beyond color ... and on implications of vantage theory ...".

**Abstract.** Vantage Theory holds that people categorize by performing a subconscious, instinctive analogy to spatiotemporal orientation. Spatial coordinates plus the temporal coordinate manifested as relative motion translate, respectively, into fixed and mobile coordinates in categorization. The former depend on the domain to which categorization pertains (hue, brightness or saturation in the color domain), the latter are always, regardless of domain, reciprocally balanced degrees of attention to similarity or difference. Depending on whether the conceptualizer emphasizes similarity or difference, a category may be viewed (and termed) differently: the distinct points of view on the category are called vantages. Vantage construction involves "best examples" and the cognitive processes of zooming in and out. Vantage Theory capitalizes on but extends beyond prototype theory.

**Keywords:** Vantage Theory; categorization; color; similarity; difference; space-time