

QUOTATION

E. C. TOLMAN ON CONSTRAINTS ON LEARNING

[The Law of Fusibility states that] . . . certain characters of signs, means-end-relations and significates will undoubtedly fuse together into single sign-gestalt wholes more readily than will others. It appears, in short, that there will be stronger dispositions toward gestalt-formation when the characters of the parts have certain relations to each other than when they have other relations. Some characters will organize themselves into gestalt wholes more readily than will others.

In the case of the conditioning of simple physiological reflexes, this would mean, say, that certain types of to-be-conditioned stimuli, perhaps odors, should come to evoke salivary secretions, *i.e.*, become a sign for coming food, and more readily than will others. Whereas other types of stimuli—say, perhaps, noises—will more readily come to evoke avoidance responses. And, in the case of rats learning mazes, it would mean, perhaps, that it should take fewer trials to establish the running-on response to food than, say, to acquire the response of merely waiting in a detention-chamber for food or the like.

E. C. Tolman, *Purposive behavior in animals and men*. New York: Century, 1932. Pp. 380-381.
Contributed by E. A. Wasserman, Department of Psychology, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242.