

Psychological Research on Perception of Symmetry

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The paper presents a brief review of psychological research on perception of symmetry and includes some recently obtained data.

It is argued that the perceptual effects of symmetry cannot be simply explained by considering symmetrical patterns as highly redundant (since one enantiomorph predicts fully the other), when compared with asymmetrical figures having the same number of cells. Symmetry it is claimed to bestow is a special perceptual attribute.

The role of this special attribute in perception of flat patterns and of patterns which although flat are seen to have depth, is examined. For the 'flat' patterns new empirically obtained data describing the relationship among the enantiomorphs of a pattern is adduced and their relevance to perception of symmetry of patterns and confusability of symmetrical patterns, such as letters b, d, p and q is considered.

The role played by symmetry of those patterns which although flat are seen as three-dimensional is analysed with special attention being paid to data obtained from pictorially relatively unsophisticated cultures.