

How alien are concepts to perception? Contrasting the symbolic with the emulative view of concepts.

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A widely held view of concepts is that they are essentially symbolic and compositional. This doctrine alienates concepts from perception and establishes a divide between perception and cognition. A central argument is that perception can hardly be construed as symbolic. I will counter this argument with a non-symbolic, but still compositional view of concepts. Based on psychological and neuroscientific evidence, a well-developed theory of concepts and concept composition is presented that regards concepts as emulations grounded in sensorimotor processes. Emulation is here taken as a relation of isomorphism between a neuro-representational structure and a reality model. Concepts are not at all alien to perception, but succumb to the very same underlying processes.