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Editors' Introduction

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Volume 9: *Perception and Concepts*
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EDITORS' INTRODUCTION

The relation between concepts and perception has been a central issue in the philosophy of mind and cognitive science for a few decades, and it has recently been rejuvenated by research on concept empiricism and on cognitive penetration. Research on the relation between concepts and perception in philosophy and in the cognitive sciences focuses on several distinct issues. Of particular interest are the following three:

- *What is the content of perceptual states?* Some philosophers of mind (e.g., John McDowell) argue that the content of perception is conceptual, while others (e.g., Gareth Evans) insist that it is non-conceptual. Still others philosophers, such as Robert Stalnaker, have raised questions about the very terms of this debate.
- *Is perception cognitively penetrable?* In the 1950's and 1960's New Look psychologists defended the view that beliefs and desires directly influence perception, a view that came under attack in the 1970s. In his book on modularity, Fodor enshrined what had then become a consensus in cognitive science: Perception cannot be penetrated by mental states outside of perceptual systems.
- *Are concepts amodal?* Empiricists, such as David Hume and John Locke, traditionally held that concepts are stored records of perceptual states. In contrast, amodal theorists (such as Jerry Fodor) hold that concepts are represented in a format that is distinct from the format of perceptions.

These long-standing controversies continue to animate debates in philosophy and cognitive science. Since the 1990s, a group of psychologists (e.g., Lawrence Barsalou, Arthur Glenberg, Michael Kashak, Diane Pecher, René Zeelenberg, Rolf Zwaan), neuroscientists (e.g., Alex Martin, Friedemann Pulvermüller), and philosophers (e.g., Jesse Prinz) have defended, theoretically and experimentally, contemporary versions of empiricism, and evidence seems to have accumulated in support of a form of *Neo-Empiricism*. For instance, actions seem to interfere with our capacity to entertain concepts, while thinking about colors elicits activation in or near brain areas involved in color perception. Some philosophers (e.g., Guy Dove, Edouard Machery) and cognitive neuroscientists (e.g., Marina Bedny, Alfonso Caramazza, Bradford Mahon, Rebecca Saxe) disagree. At the same time, research in social psychology (e.g., Emily Balcetis, Dennis Proffitt) has provided some striking novel evidence suggesting that beliefs and goals influence the content and phenomenology of experience. According to experimental reports, people perceive a slope as more slanted when they wear a heavy backpack, and their experience of a fruit (for instance, of a banana) is influenced by their knowledge of its typical color. Philosophers have picked up on this *New New Look* in psychology to defend the cognitive penetrability of perception (e.g., Susanna Siegel, Fiona Macpherson, Jesse Prinz, Dustin Stokes, Wayne Wu). There too, the debate is raging: Some psychologists (Chaz Firestone, Brian Scholl) and philosophers (Ophelia Deroy, Steven Gross, Edouard Machery) demur.

In light of these recent developments, we (Edouard Machery and Jesse Prinz) felt that time had come to convene a conference on the relation between concepts and perception in order to assess the on-going controversies. This project led to the 9th International Symposium of Cognition, Logic and Communication held at the Center for Cognitive Sciences and Semantics in Riga, Latvia in June 2013. Many of the most active contributors to the recent debates attended this conference — including David Chalmers, Alva Noë, Fiona Macpherson, Ruth Millikan, Steve Gross, Michael Devitt, Kathleen Akins, Andy Clark, Rob Goldstone, Casey O'Callaghan, and Diane Pecher — and numerous excellent contributed papers were submitted. This Symposium was an unmitigated success, and we need to thank the local organizers for their work: Jurgis Šķilters, Signe Mežinska, Kristīne Ante, Signe Cāne, Līva

Brice, Līva Raita, Jānis Pencis, Marta Selecka, Krista Leškēviča, Signe Sproģe, Andrejs Vojevoda. We would also like to thank the rector of the University of Latvia, Prof. Mārcis Auziņš for his support. In this 9th volume of The Baltic International Yearbook of Cognition, Logic and Communication, we present a selection of invited and contributed papers that were given at this remarkable symposium.