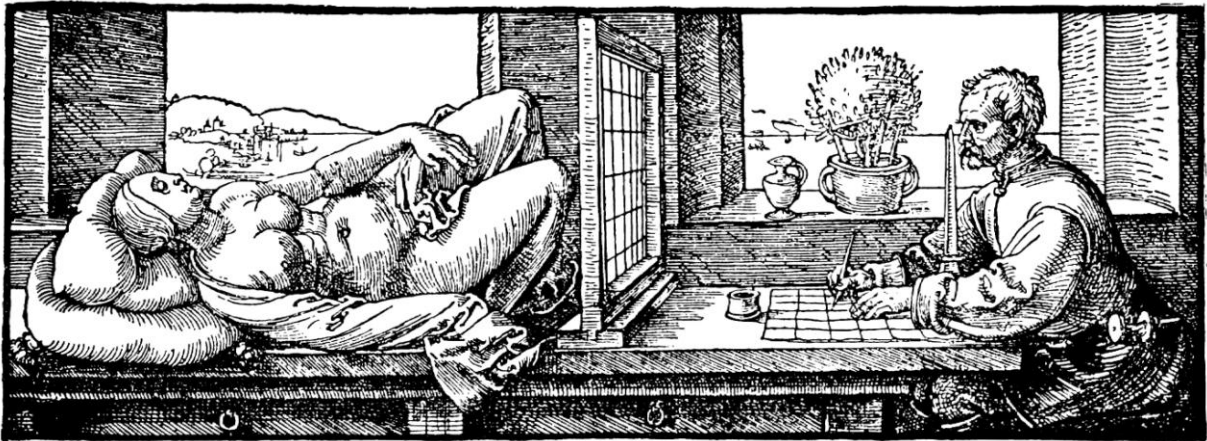


# Presence to Mind

## Representation and Perceptual Awareness



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Thesis presented for the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

Supervised by Professor Carsten Hansen

IFIKK, Faculty of Humanities

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But now that I've got close to what we're saying, Theaetetus, as if it were a picture with shading, I simply can't understand it, not even a little; whereas so long as I was standing some distance away, it seemed to me that there was something to it.

Plato, *Theaetetus*, 208e<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tr. by McDowell, ed. 1973 (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

**Jørgen Dyrstad**

# **Presence to Mind**

**Representation and Perceptual Awareness**

*Abstract*

Current orthodoxy in the philosophy of perception is that perceptual states have representational content. Though it is surprisingly difficult to find explicit arguments for the view, one common way to motivate it is by way of reflection on what it is like to perceive objects – in particular, on how perceived objects are presented or *appear* to the perceiver. The present work attempts to get clearer on this way of motivating perceptual content. Following the lead of C. Travis, one of several philosophers who have recently argued against the representational view from the standpoint of naïve realism, I argue that reflection on how objects appear in perception does not support the conclusion that perception is representational. In fact, such reflection seems to support naïve realism. Though this conclusion surely doesn't prove the representational view wrong, I hope the present work may contribute to the current debate between adherents to the representational view and naïve realists.

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## **Preface**

The following presents the result of an attempt to understand perception. The topic has interested and puzzled me for many years, since long before I started studying philosophy. And clearly, I am not yet done thinking about these issues. This has only become clearer in the course of writing. One has, though, to draw a line. At least, I have deepened my understanding of this terrain – and of its difficulties.

I warmly thank my supervisor, Carsten Hansen, for illuminating discussions and comments on several drafts. Huge thanks also to Anders Nes for reading through and discussing the first section of Ch. 4 – I sincerely hope my criticism of his view in a later section is not too unfair. Thanks also to all Leidensgefährten in Room 109 who have made the writing process enjoyable.

There are many people beyond the narrow context of writing the thesis that I would have wanted to thank individually. Again, one has to draw a line. I single out Kjetil Almås, Erlend Bergsås Mikkelsen, Mons Andreas Nyquist, and Kjell Sindre Schmidt for many conversations, philosophical and otherwise, over the years.

Finally, my greatest debt is, as always, to my family: Thank you.

J. D.

## **Note on the Published Version**

This thesis is made public through the University of Oslo Library. Still it remains to a certain extent work in progress; I am not finished thinking about these topics. I therefore kindly ask that no parts of it be quoted without my approval. I can be reached at [jbdyrstad@gmail.com](mailto:jbdyrstad@gmail.com). Of course, any other comments are deeply appreciated as well.

J. D.

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## Introduction

It is common among philosophers of perception to say, as does Schellenberg, that ‘perceptual experience is a matter of a subject representing her environment as being a certain way’ (2011, 715). Philosophers who speak of perception and representation in one breath this way include Burge, Byrne, Chalmers, Crane, Harman, McDowell, Peacocke, Searle, Siegel, and Tye. Though they differ on a variety of issues in perception, this much is common ground among them – and a large number of other philosophers.

I will refer to the position they thereby represent as *intentionalism*.<sup>1</sup> This label may not be entirely happy, since it is also used to denote various other positions in the philosophy of mind and perception, but at least it makes explicit that the position understands perception along with other intentional phenomena, such as believing, wanting, and intending. It also makes explicit an historical connection. The position is also commonly referred to as *representationalism* or *the content view*.<sup>2</sup>

Intentionalists often establish the connection between perception and representation by reference to the way things appear or are presented to a perceiver in visual experience. Sometimes, this is done by discussing how experience is shaped by the perspective of the perceiver, how properties figure in experience, and so on. More typically, however, philosophers are content with giving what one might call ‘suggestive examples’, inviting the reader to do the relevant reflection herself. This more casual form suggests that it should be a relatively obvious exercise. Here is a representative example:

Our experience of the world has content – that is, it represents things as being in a certain way. In particular, perceptual experience represents a perceiver as in a particular environment, for example, as facing a tree with brown bark and green leaves fluttering in a slight breeze. (Harman 1990, 34)

Descriptions like these can be found in a large number of writers. Reflection on what it is to have a scene presented to one in experience suggests that the experience has a certain content – for instance, the content that the tree has this brown bark and these green leaves. In a slogan, presentation gives representation.

In the following, I discuss this way of motivating intentionalism from reflection on ordinary experience of objects. In particular, I discuss Travis’ argument against the idea that the way things appear or look in experience determines a certain content for the experience to have (and hence that experience has content at all). Travis refers to the idea as ‘looks-indexing’: The content of a given experience reflects or is determined by the way things appear in that experience. For instance, when the tree appears green to you, then your experience has the content that the tree is green.

In the Introduction, I mainly aim to bring intentionalism into clearer view. I do that in part by contrasting it with naïve realism. Getting naïve realism on the table is also relevant in light of my defence of the view in the later chapters. Another aim is to bring out the background issues concerning perception as yielding knowledge of one’s environment (representation) and as providing awareness of it (presentation).

I note that some core terms (such as ‘intentionality’, ‘content’, ‘representation’) are left unexplained. I have found it inconvenient to spend time explaining the terms at this stage. Readers familiar with the branches of philosophy just mentioned will know these terms. I provide a

<sup>1</sup> In the philosophy of mind, ‘intentionalism’ is often used to denote the claim that all mental phenomena exhibit intentionality. In the philosophy of perception, there are at least two other uses: First, it can stand for the claim that perceptual phenomenology supervenes on its content. I will sometimes refer to this position as ‘pure’ intentionalism. Second, as I return to, it can refer to a position that not only posits perceptual content, but also a ‘common factor’ between veridical perception, illusion, and hallucination, so as to contrast with disjunctivism.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Representationalism’ parallels ‘intentionalism’ in being used to denote all the positions listed in the previous note. In addition, it can denote classical ‘representative’ view, which is clearly unfortunate. ‘The content view’ is to my knowledge only used to denote intentionalism in my sense. It is also used by many of the participants of the debate, such as Brewer, Byrne, Siegel, and Schellenberg. As such it is perhaps better than the other two, but I’ve stuck with ‘intentionalism’ for the reasons given.

detailed explanation of the terms in Ch. 1. As a consequence, this Introduction is slightly more difficult than what follows it. Readers fully unfamiliar with the terms may be encouraged to start with Ch. 1 and then go back to the rest of the sections of the Introduction.

### *Intentionalism*

Intentionalism has a long history. Brentano – who brought the topic of intentionality (or, at any rate, the term ‘intentionality’) back to philosophical foreground – traced it back to Aristotle’s doctrine that the senses take on the ‘form’ of what is perceived.<sup>1</sup> The Scholastics – from whom Brentano took the term – were concerned with the reference to objects and properties in language and thought, and probably thought of perception in representational terms too.<sup>2</sup> In the modern period, many philosophers have claimed that perception presents ‘ideas’ or ‘representations’ of things in the world. It is often unclear, however, whether these philosophers should be thought of as early intentionalists. Descartes probably should.<sup>3</sup> Berkeley clearly shouldn’t. Reid is sometimes praised for distinguishing clearly between sensational and intentional aspects of perception.<sup>4</sup> Kant may be the first philosopher to present an elaborate theory that shares many features with modern intentionalism.<sup>5</sup> Husserl, once Brentano’s student, presents an equally elaborate and more clearly intentionalist view.

My concern in this thesis is not history. It is, to echo a philosopher just mentioned, the things themselves (Husserl, not Kant). That is not to say that there is nothing to be learnt from history on these questions, still less that one can approach the issues from a vantage point outside history. In fact, my concerns are very much shaped by historical context – only it is relatively recent context. It is fair to say that intentionalism is currently the standard view in philosophy of perception.<sup>6</sup> It has been more or less orthodoxy for about three decades, a relatively long period in this tumultuous part of philosophy.<sup>7</sup>

As intentionalists describe their position, ‘perceptual experience is a matter of a subject representing her environment as being a certain way’; Schellenberg’s formulation is echoed, with minor variations, in many writers. One must add to the characterization that the representing in question is not believing. Belief theories of the kind developed by Armstrong and Pitcher around 1965-70 also count as intentional, since beliefs clearly have intentional content.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Brentano’s ‘non-literal’ interpretation of Aristotle’s claim is disputed, still has adherents. For some discussion and further references, see Shields 2000/2010. The idea of taking on a form is older than Aristotle, though perhaps more as a metaphor than a literal claim (compare Plato’s wax tablet model in *Theaetetus* 191<sup>a</sup>-195<sup>b</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Many of these philosophers, like Avicenna or Aquinas, were of course heavily influenced by Aristotle. For an introduction to medieval theories of representation, see Lagerlund 2004/2011.

<sup>3</sup> I think here in particular of the way Descartes takes over the Scholastic term ‘objective reality’ – a term Brentano, frustrated by how his term ‘intentional inexistence’ gave rise to confusion among his followers, actually considered replacing it with (as the story is told in Moran 2000, 48).

<sup>4</sup> Thus, Peacocke (1983, 6) thinks of Reid as an early belief theorist (and notes that the last step toward intentionalism is thus still not taken). Siegel, by contrast, thinks of Reid as a pure qualia of ‘raw feel’ theorist (2010, 21).

<sup>5</sup> The following famous passage clearly suggests an intentionalist picture:

Dieselbe Funktion, welche den verschiedenen Vorstellungen in einem Urteil Einheit gibt, die gibt auch der bloßen Synthesis verschiedene Vorstellungen in einer Anschauung Einheit. (1781/1956, B104-5, 117-8)

Roughly: ‘The same function that gives unity to the various representations in a judgement gives unity also to the mere synthesis of various representations in an intuition.’ Schellenberg writes:

The thesis that perceptual experience is fundamentally representational can be traced back to Kant. With few interludes, it has been orthodoxy in philosophical views about perceptual experience ever since. (2011, 1)

<sup>6</sup> Some works that set the agenda for the current intentionalist hegemony are Evans 1982, Peacocke 1983, and Searle 1983. The rise of functional and representational theories of mind in the preceding decades probably did much for the popularity of the view as well.

<sup>7</sup> The only comparable period is perhaps the sense datum hegemony England in the first half of the previous century (though I think this was less of a hegemony than current intentionalism), and perhaps the intentionalism of the early phenomenological period from Brentano to Husserl (though if this was a hegemony, it was because it shared intentionalist assumptions Neo-Kantianism). In using the term ‘tumultuous’, I refer to the quick demise of the sense datum hegemony after the 1940s, followed by a time of local and more shortlived reigns (Wittgenstein, Ryle, Austin, Strawson, Ayer, Quine, Sellars, Chisholm; direct realists, adverbialists, belief-theorists, intentionalists, sense datum survivors, eliminativists), as well as Heidegger’s break with Husserlian phenomenology.

<sup>8</sup> More properly, belief theories should be referred to as belief *acquisition* theories, since the claim is that experience a matter of acquiring a belief, not a state of believing. Yet more properly, they might be referred to as belief acquisition *disposition* theories, since they do not hold that there need not any *actual* acquisition of belief; one can fail to acquire the belief because one already has it, or because background information tells against it (see Armstrong 1968/1988, 139-42).

For a general introduction to belief theories, see Fish 2010, ch. 4. As I note in Ch. 3, sect. 2.1, Davidson can be considered a belief theorist (1983/2001). He is followed by, among others, Stroud (2002) and Glüer (2004, 2009). Recently, Byrne has tentatively converted from intentionalism to an Armstrong-style belief theory (2009, 450-1).



But belief theories are normally discussed apart from intentional theories proper, and I will follow this practice. I will refer to belief theories from time to time, mostly as a foil for intentionalism. Belief theories have never been very popular (but nor have they disappeared); it is the ‘belief-independent’ form of intentionalism that developed into the standard view of perception during the 1980s.

There are other restrictions one might place on the use of ‘intentionalism’. For instance, one might reserve it for positions that think of veridical and non-veridical perceptions as forming a ‘common kind’.<sup>1</sup> At this point, I choose a more inclusive usage: If disjunctivists posit (belief-independent) representational content, they straightforwardly count as intentionalists in my sense.<sup>2</sup> Below, I discuss yet other qualifications that serve to distinguish intentionalism from other positions.

Being representational, perceptual states have representational content, much in the way beliefs have representational content. Byrne, for instance, thinks ‘[p]erception constitutively involves a propositional attitude rather like the ... attitude of believing’ (2009, 437). As Byrne is well aware (2001, 2011; 2005, 232), many intentionalists think of the representational content of perception as non-propositional and non-conceptual; if so, it cannot be the content of belief.<sup>3</sup> There may be various other differences between perceptual states and paradigmatic propositional attitudes.<sup>4</sup> For instance, perceptual states are occurrent, phenomenally conscious, and so on. But perceptual states will still be analogous to propositional attitudes in having veridicality conditions. Thus, however the details are spelled out, we can accept Martin’s description:

An intentional theory of perception claims that visual experiences have an intentional content that represents the world as being some way. This is to see experiences as akin to propositional attitudes such as beliefs. (1992, 745)

I discuss intentionalism in more detail below. I will let this suffice as an initial characterization; the view should be relatively familiar.<sup>5</sup>

As I said, Intentionalism is current orthodoxy in the philosophy of perception. It is accepted from the outset in a vast amount of books and articles on perception since the 1980s. Many of the important debates in the philosophy of perception have simply been debates within intentionalism – for instance, about the nature of perceptual content, or about the relation between content and phenomenology.<sup>6</sup> Even the question of disjunctivism has usually been posed in terms of whether an intentional theory should accept the ‘common kind assumption’ or not. One is thus often left with the impression that intentionalism is just obvious. Peacocke, for instance, opens the discussion of perception in his important *A Study of Concepts* simply as follows:

A perceptual experience represents the world as being a certain way. What is the nature of the content it represents as holding? (1992, ch. 3, 61)

Of course, one cannot always defend views of which one wants to discuss specific features or variants. Peacocke had given some suggestive examples in earlier work on perception.<sup>7</sup> Still,

<sup>1</sup> Thus, I follow, for instance, Martin (1994, 466; *forth*, ch. 3, 42).

<sup>2</sup> In fact, most disjunctivists since Snowdon have posited intentional content, as Campbell points out (2002a, 123), though Hinton did not.

<sup>3</sup> There are various questions about what ‘propositional’ and ‘conceptual’ can come to here. It isn’t important here, but I return to it in Ch. 1, sect. 3.1.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, while Searle says that ‘[t]he visual experience has conditions of satisfaction in exactly the same sense that beliefs and desires have conditions of satisfaction’ (1983, 39), he also says that it is ‘related to its conditions of satisfaction in a way quite different from beliefs and desires’ (1983, 45-6).

<sup>5</sup> For good introductions to intentionalism, see Martin 1994 and Fish 2010, ch. 5; beware, though, that both use the narrower definition of ‘intentionalism’ as excluding disjunctivism.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, there have been large debates whether perceptual content is conceptual or non-conceptual, whether it is thin or rich, whether it contains singular elements, and so on. The relation between content and phenomenology has in particular concerned whether one determines the other, where ‘pure’ intentionalists have held that representational properties can do all the work of ‘qualia’ or ‘intrinsic’ properties.

<sup>7</sup> He also provides arguments against sensationalist theories. As compared to these positions, of course, reflection on experience should come down in favour of intentionalism. I think this is one reason for the widespreadness of the idea that is my focus in the present work. For instance, Evans (1982, 122-4) motivates intentionalism by contrasting it with sensationalist theories on one hand and belief acquisition theories on the other. Naïve realism, by contrast, is often not considered.

Siegel seems fully correct when she says that ‘many philosophers have regarded the idea that experiences can be accurate or inaccurate as a background assumption that is too obvious (or at least, too reasonable) to require much explanation’ (2010, 5). Similarly, Schellenberg says that ‘the content thesis is typically taken for granted and rarely argued for’ (2011, 719).

Only recently has there been some opposition to intentionalism.<sup>1</sup> Still more recent are arguments in favour of it.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it was not ignorance Travis reported when he opened ‘The Silence of the Senses’ (2004) as follows:

Perhaps the most common of perception today is that it is representational: that in perceptual experience – in our seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, what we do – the world is represented to us as being thus and so... In no case I am aware of is this view argued for. Rather it is assumed from the outset. (2004, 57)

Like Siegel and Schellenberg, Byrne agrees. Commenting on Travis, he writes:

Perhaps surprisingly, explicit arguments for [the content view] are rather thin on the ground. It is not hard to sympathize with Travis’ complaint. (2009, 438)

Yet only eight years earlier Byrne had written:

The notion that a subject’s *perceptual experience* represents the world to be a certain way – the way the world *perceptually seems* to the subject – should be no more controversial than the notion that a subject’s belief state represents the world to be a certain way – the way the subject takes the world to be. (2001, 201)

Despite the recent opposition to intentionalism and the corresponding defences of it, the view expressed in Byrne’s later passage still seems the dominant view. That perception is a matter of representation is taken to be scarcely more controversial than that a belief is. The same seems to be true of the idea that perception represents the way the world perceptually seems, appears, or is presented to the subject; what Travis calls looks-indexing is quite generally endorsed.<sup>3</sup> As I have said, the main project in the following is to understand and evaluate this intentionalist move from presentation (appearance) to representation (content).

### *Presentation and Representation*

The main question in the thesis is whether (and if so, how) the way things are presented to a perceiver determines a content for her experience to have. Is it the case that the way things look in experience indexes the content of that experience? More generally, the question is just whether the fact that things necessarily appear a certain way in experience means that experience has content. In order to get the question into view, it is obviously necessary to get clearer on what it is for objects to be *represented* and *presented* in experience respectively.

What is it for things to be represented in experience? Since knowing is a form of representing, it is already clear that perception is intimately related to representation. Perception allows us to know about our surroundings. More generally, the ability to perceive as such may depend on the ability to represent. Can we conceive of perceivers with no abilities to represent their environment? Intentionalism clearly gives a negative answer to this question.<sup>4</sup> But one can answer in the negative without accepting intentionalism. A negative answer doesn’t say very much about the relation between perception and perceptual representation. One might, for instance, hold that all representation in perception is a matter of perceptual belief. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> There has been sporadic opposition from sense datum, adverbial, and qualia theories. The recent opposition comes from naïve realists, like Travis, Campbell, Martin, and Brewer. A critic who is more difficult to place is Gupta, who is exclusively concerned with the epistemological aspects of experience.

<sup>2</sup> Recent defences of intentionalism are given in Nes 2008, Byrne 2009, Siegel 2010 and Schellenberg 2011.

<sup>3</sup> At any rate, the responses to Travis I am aware of either defend the view that how things appear or are presented in experience determines the content of that experience (Nes 2008, Siegel 2010, Schellenberg 2011) or at least thinks that perceptual appearance is best explained by crediting experience with perceptual content (Byrne 2009). The responses are considered detail in Ch. 4, sect. 2.2, with the exception of Siegel’s, which is considered briefly in Ch. 2, sect. 1.1 and in Ch. 5.

<sup>4</sup> There is, of course, a converse question: Representation may depend on the ability to perceive. Can we conceive of a being capable of representing – not to representing its environment – that has no form of perception? It seems reasonable that any thinker of any kind must have perception (at least inner perception, but even that seems insufficient). In fact, it seems that any *mind* as such must have perception. The interesting further question, of course, is why. But all of this lies outside the scope of the present work.

one might hold that whereas the ability to be aware of the world depends on an ability to form perceptual beliefs, particular cases of perceptual awareness need not involve representation. Or again, one might hold that whereas any particular perceptual state must involve some representation, not all objects perceived have to be represented. And so on. There is, then, a substantial need to say more about the relation between representation and perception. For the present purposes, the need is to say more about how the intentionalist construes perceptual representation. I turn to this in the next subsection.

What is it for things to be presented in experience? In Crane's words, 'perception somehow makes the *world itself* manifest to mind' (2006, 138). Perception is a matter of awareness of what one has in front of one – or at least, it makes the world present to mind in a way thought or imagination cannot (it is important to note that in speaking of 'awareness', I do not imply 'conscious awareness'; see the Appendix for some discussion). In a sense, though, all representational states can be said to present us with objects. In thinking of an object, I have the object 'in mind'. Moreover, if we follow Frege, the object will be thought of 'under a mode of presentation'. So it will be 'present to mind' in a certain way. As we will see in Ch. 1, intentionalists often think of perceptual presentation in analogy with Frege's idea. Still, however, it is clear that the way perception presents us with objects is quite different from the way 'mere' representational states like beliefs and hopes do. Even quite vivid states of imagination do not make 'the *world itself* manifest to mind'.<sup>1</sup> One general question, then, is what it is for objects to be perceptually presented to the perceiver, or, conversely, what it is for the perceiver to be *aware* of those objects. A more specific question is what it is *like* to be presented with objects, or *how* they are present to us. Though the line between these questions isn't razor-sharp, intentionalists have been more concerned with the second. In particular, they have been concerned with how things appear or look from a certain perspective, under certain lighting conditions, in light of past experience, and so on – as well as with the various other features that shape the phenomenology of experience, such as properties of the visual field, sensational properties, attention, blurred vision, and so on. They have been less concerned with what it is for the perception to bring the world into view in the first place (again, I should have liked to say much more about this).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Imaginings are similar to perceivings in that they have a phenomenology that is closely mirrored by what is represented. Of course, this is no accident. Various philosophers have argued that imagining something (visually) is to imagine seeing something (see Martin 2002, 402ff).

<sup>2</sup> One way to see the difference by noting that intentionalists have often focused on what is supposed to be in common between cases of, say, really being aware of the scene in front of one and a subjectively indiscriminable case of hallucinating it. In general, they have been less concerned with asking what it is to really be aware of the scene. This is particularly clear, I think, for 'common factor' versions of intentionalism. Hallucinations are mere representational states, more alike with imagination than perception. Holding that hallucinations and perception are of the same fundamental kind will easily lead to the suspicion that we are never really aware of our environment.

It is important to be clear that the difference between hallucination and perception is not that the former are unveridical. For hallucination can be veridical. We can conceive of beings that have very vivid imaginations that 'match' the external environment. So the difference between perception and hallucination is that these states are not cases of genuine awareness of the world. I think the combination of the common factor assumption and the intentionalist picture of experience gives a dizzying picture of experience. At one point, Campbell writes:

[O]n the common factor view, all that experience provides you with is a conscious image of the object, the image which bears the representational properties' (2002a, 121; see in particular 116ff).

When one reads the intentionalist literature, it is easy to feel the worry that he may be right.

Perhaps the worry that perceiving is a matter of constructing a conscious image is misplaced. But it is strange that intentionalists do not say more to dispel it. That is particularly striking when one considers their response to the problem of veridical hallucination. They usually say one of two things. First, they may hold that perceptions differ from hallucination by being more sensitive to the facts in the environment (Lewis 1980/1988). Second, they may say that since perception has singular, demonstrative content, hallucinations cannot be fully veridical after all (Burge 2010, 382-3). The first response seems merely to say that perceptions *are* conscious images, but that there is no reason to worry, since the images are reliably connected with the environment. The second response seems better, since it is clear that (successful) demonstratives promise awareness of their referents. But the response seems unclear. Demonstratives in thought depend on awareness of their referents – in other words, on perception. Perceptual demonstratives cannot depend on such further awareness. It is good to hear that perceptual demonstratives must be successful to bring us in contact with the environment, but it is harder to see what can make them successful. Thus, it is also hard to see how perceptual demonstratives can secure awareness.

While they are keen to stress that we are not aware of representations, then, intentionalists do little to dispel the worry that all we are ever aware of in perceptions is objects 'in' a conscious image, in the way we can be said to be 'aware' of objects 'in' a vivid state of imagining (Harman 1990, 34-6 is particularly striking).

Now, as I have said, there are disjunctivist versions of intentionalism. Disjunctivists can hold that representation in hallucination and perception have a quite different structure: Where one provides a 'conscious image', the other genuinely brings objects to mind. It is striking that even disjunctivists often think of perception as demonstrative representations. McDowell, for instance, thinks that perception involves object-dependent propositions. In that sense, the object is a 'constituent' of the perceptual state (see, for instance, his 1986, 138ff). That secures disjunctivism. However, object-dependence as such doesn't amount to awareness; we can have object-dependent thoughts even about

The two general questions I have posed in this section correspond to two very general features of perception: On one hand, perception gives us awareness of our environment (or at least makes it present to the mind), on the other, it gives us knowledge about it. These are features that any theory of perception has to respect.<sup>1</sup> Intentionalism can be seen to make a particular claim about the second aspect: It is not just that perception enables representation, and is intimately intertwined with it; perceptual states *are* already representations. In that sense, it can also be seen to make a particular claim about the first: It is representation that brings the world to mind in perception. In the next section, I discuss what it thus means for experience itself to represent the environment.<sup>2</sup>

### *What is it for Experience to Represent the Environment?*

This section attempts to give a closer characterization of intentionalism. What does it mean to say that perceptual experience represents one's environment as being a certain way?<sup>3</sup> I will start out by contrasting intentionalism with what I will call 'the simple view' of experience. I will then discuss how intentionalism differs from it.

The basic elements of the simple view are two features just noted: Perception affords us awareness of our environment and vast amount of knowledge of it. The simple view simply states this: Perception is (normally) awareness of our environment; it also (normally) gives knowledge of it (allowing us, for instance, to move smoothly among the various objects we are aware of). One might add that we know about the environment *in virtue* of being aware of it.<sup>4</sup> For the present, not much more should be said. I want to keep the simple view simple; its role in this section is merely to serve as a foil (I note some complications in the footnotes, though).

As I have stressed, it is obvious that awareness is very closely linked with representation. This is abundantly clear from psychology, but also from ordinary reflection. For a start, it is not accidental that perception gives rise to and grounds knowledge about the environment. In ordinary life, perceiving an object and having knowledge about it – for instance, perceiving *that* it is there – seem to be just two sides of the same coin. And this seems to be true not just for cognitively sophisticated creatures like us, but for any animal to which we are willing to ascribe perception.<sup>5</sup> The relation is still closer. For instance, to make us aware of objects, perception requires constant focusing. We have to keep track of what is around us in order to bring them into view at all.<sup>6</sup> We also discriminate objects from their surroundings. If the object doesn't 'stand out' from its background, then we are perhaps not aware of it at all. If so, awareness of an

objects we have never encountered. Being a 'constituent' of a perception doesn't entail being present to mind in any way beyond the way one is present to mind in veridical hallucination. One might even think that representation *must* take the form of an 'image' and thus 'occlude' our environment. Either way, there is clearly one motivation less for thinking of perception in terms of representation once the common factor assumption is rejected.

<sup>1</sup> In saying that any theory will have to respect them, I do not mean that they have to accommodate them. For instance, it is in principle open to deny that we are ever perceptually aware of our environment. My claim is just that any such denial has the burden of proof, and that some substitute must be offered.

I should also note that in speaking of perception giving knowledge, I do not mean some high-level brand of it. For present purposes, nothing prevents us from speaking with the vulgar – and with much perceptual psychology – and allow that simple animals have ample knowledge of their environment.

<sup>2</sup> In saying that 'experience' represents the environment, I do not mean that it isn't the *perceiver* who represents. In experiencing, the perceiver represents the environment in the same sense as she does in believing; hence, experience represents in the same sense as her belief does. However, this intentionalist claim is still stronger than saying that the perceiver represents 'in' perception when she gains knowledge from it: The latter claim wouldn't have to say that experiences themselves are representations in the sense beliefs are, it need only say that they are states 'in' which their owner can represent things. The issue is somewhat delicate; I return to it below.

<sup>3</sup> That is, what does it mean when it does *not* mean that perception is a matter of producing a 'conscious image' of it, as if we would very vividly imagine our environment (as discussed in the long note above)?

<sup>4</sup> As I said, there may be a converse relation: We may be aware of the environment in virtue of having knowledge of it.

<sup>5</sup> Of course, if one wants to reserve terms like 'belief' and 'knowledge' to higher-order states (roughly, propositional attitudes requiring concepts in a demanding sense), then one will resist this claim. For present purposes, no demanding conception of belief and knowledge is needed. The claim is merely that common sense may ascribe knowledge to an animal coping with its environment. For instance, the cat notices (or fails to notice) the hole in wall and jumps through it (or fails to). Since it is the whole animal that behaves, moreover, common sense would ascribe the representing to the animal as such, not to its subsystems.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, this is not to say that unfocused awareness isn't possible. Most objects of which we are aware at any instant is not just unfocused but perceived doubly. Focus normally follows attention. There are exceptions to this (as when you see someone 'in the corner of your eye'). But my main point is that even unfocused vision of the sort bad-sighted people when they take off their glasses normally requires constant adjustment to their environment.

object may require that I *make* it stand out from its background for me.<sup>1</sup> But discrimination seems to be a case of representing.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, awareness and representation seem intimately related. The simple view can certainly allow for this. Nothing prevents it from acknowledging that perception and representation go together. But even if awareness and knowledge go together, the simple picture holds that they are categorically different things. Awareness of objects is merely having them in view; though it may require representing them, it *is not* representing them.<sup>3</sup> The awareness is responsible for what it is like to have the experience. The ‘core’ properties we are aware of in perception are simply the perceptible properties of the objects themselves.<sup>4</sup> Representation, on the other side, is a matter of, for instance, coming to know what one is facing, where it is, how big it is, and so on. It is not role to provide properties of which we can be aware. That, of course, isn’t to say that representation couldn’t influence phenomenology.<sup>5</sup>

Now, the reason I describe this simple view is that it, too, may satisfy the description of perceptual experience as a matter of a subject representing one’s environment as being a certain way (the further reason is that the view will matter later). For as I suggested above, the view is compatible with holding that awareness is possible only if there is representation. The simple view is close to the view that Travis holds, and that he argues Austin holds:

Austin’s idea is that, rather than *representing* anything as so, our senses merely bring our surroundings into view; affords us some sort of awareness of them. It is then for us to make of what is in our view what we can, or do. (2004, 64)

But whereas this view can sound very different from intentionalism, Travis allows that representation may be constitutive for perception:

Perceptual experience is a form of awareness of our surroundings. Perhaps we cannot have that without registering at least some of what is around us. Perhaps to do that is just to autorepresent things as so. I take no stand here. (2004, 82)

For present purposes, Travis’ term ‘autorepresent’ could simply be replaced with ‘represent’ (I return to it in Ch. 3). Now, Travis’ view is not an intentionalist view; his article is a head-on attack on intentionalism. But is the difference merely that Travis thinks perceptual representation is belief, while intentionalists think it is belief-independent? That seems wrong. Travis wouldn’t reasonably be classified a belief theorist either. And one might, in principle, hold that perception depends on belief-independent representation, such as hypothesizing or imagining (though this fits less well with talk of ‘registering’). Would that turn one into an intentionalist?

It should not. I think it is characteristic of intentionalism that it thinks of representation as somehow responsible *both* for awareness of objects and representation of them. This is also characteristic of belief acquisition theories. For both views hold that perceptual awareness of objects and properties is a matter of representing them; perceiving one’s environment *is* representing it as being a certain way.<sup>6</sup> On the simple picture, by contrast, awareness of the envi-

<sup>1</sup> A white plate in front of a white wall may be impossible to discriminate. In another case, the plate is discriminable from its background, but not therefore actually discriminated. Is it seen before it is actually discriminated? If so, then a black plate has to be discriminated from the white wall as well. One may reasonably doubt these considerations. I think there are several interesting questions here. But my intention here is just to brush the topic.

<sup>2</sup> In the simplest case, discriminating A from B may be seeing that A and B are distinct. One may doubt this analysis of discrimination, and no doubt complications arise, but the example is meant only as a gesture anyway.

<sup>3</sup> One point is that these features of perception can come apart. I am aware of the item in front of me; but I bump into it because I think it is an object twenty meters away and not merely a patch on the glass pane in front of me (which I again didn’t *notice*, whether or not I saw it).

<sup>4</sup> It should be clear that the simple view is a version of naïve realism. Compare, for instance, the views defended in Brewer 2007 and Campbell 2002, ch. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Again, it is clear from ordinary experience that representation changes the way things are experienced. For instance, things suddenly ‘fall into place’ when we see what they are, how they are located, and so on. Similarly, when we correct our beliefs about what we see, things again may look quite different. But such representation does no more than ‘modify’ the way we experience the properties we have in view simply by being aware of them. Accepting that representation affects phenomenology doesn’t commit one to intentionalism; it is also something that sense datum theorists, for instance, accept. This will be discussed further in Ch. 4, sect. 3.

<sup>6</sup> This is not to say that intentionalists and belief theorists must hold that phenomenology supervenes on, or is determined by, content. They may well hold that converse view. But if so, content supervenes on *intrinsic* properties of the experience, not on the properties of the object perceived. This is particularly clear for ‘common factor’ versions of the views. (I am not aware of disjunctivist versions of belief theory, but it seems fully coherent. For instance, one might

ronment is a more primitive relation. This relation constitutes the core phenomenology of perception. Correspondingly, no *further* representing grounds beliefs and hypotheses.<sup>1</sup>

It is also useful to contrast intentionalism with another and quite different view. In defending his view of perception as fundamentally a matter of ‘acquaintance’ or awareness of sense data, Price writes:

Now we must admit that if a datum A is reflected upon and described, it is no longer *merely* a datum. For the sake of argument we will go even further, and allow that everything which can be said to be given to a mind is also ‘judged about’ by that mind, i.e. recognized to have certain qualities and relations. (1932/1950, 17)

But, Price argues, even if all sense data are represented, we must still acknowledge a more primitive, non-representational relation of ‘givenness’ or ‘acquaintance’:

Knowledge about is the usual, perhaps the inevitable, companion of acquaintance, but it is not its executioner. (1932/1950, 18)

Like Travis, Price could accept that ‘knowledge-about’ is necessary for awareness; one can only have a red patch in one’s visual field by representing it as being red. And again, the representing could in principle be belief-independent. Thus, a sense datum theorist too can accept that perception is ‘a matter of representation’ (although it is representation of mere sensory items).<sup>2</sup> But like Travis, Price theorist insists that perceptual awareness is utterly different from (and in a sense more fundamental than) representation of them: While necessary for it, representation is not the ‘executioner’ of our awareness of presented objects.<sup>3</sup>

The question, then, is how we should understand the intentionalist’s characteristic claim that experiences are ‘a matter of a subject representing her environment as being a certain way’ (Schellenberg) and thus ‘akin to propositional attitudes such as beliefs’ (Martin). How can we exclude Price’s sense datum theory and Travis’ simple view from counting as intentionalist? Perhaps we need not exclude Price; we might accept sense datum versions of intentionalism.<sup>4</sup> More reasonably, though, we can exclude such views by holding that theories that accept ‘inner’ items as objects of perception (represented or not) are not to be counted intentionalist.<sup>5</sup> Excluding the simple view seems more problematic. Given Travis’ staunch opposition, it should not be accepted as a kind of intentionalism. However, I think some features already mentioned should suffice to set it off against intentionalism:

First, the simple view, like the sense datum view, regards representation as a *response* to experience. The former views regard experience as a mere presentation of objects. By contrast, intentionalism regards it as *already* a representation of those objects. While experience is itself a response to the environment, the former views thinks there is a response *in* experience.<sup>6</sup> More

build on Williamson’s knowledge disjunctivism to understand perceptual states as either being a matter of seeing that one’s environment is a certain way, or else merely believing that it is that way.)

<sup>1</sup> In this respect, the simple view is like belief theories. I should perhaps note that such view can posit a kind of representation to form ‘input’ to beliefs by holding that they are based on noting similarities: By noticing that it looks as if there is a tomato in front of me, I (normally) come to believe that there is one. This is still not (in itself) intentionalism, since noticing is believing (knowing). I discuss this in Ch. 4, sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Price accepts that awareness (Price says consciousness) of environmental objects is a matter of representing them. In this case he is clear that the representing isn’t knowing (1932/1950, ch. 6, 139ff).

<sup>3</sup> There is also an interesting parallel in how sense datum theorists and naïve realists may argue for their views. Campbell (2002a; 2002b) defends naïve realism on the grounds, roughly, that grasp of a concept of an object must depend, at least in part, on a more primitive relation of awareness of it; in other words, there must be a more fundamental relation of ‘acquaintance’. In fact, Campbell traces the argument to Berkeley, who is reasonably seen as a precursor for sense datum theory (2002b, 127–30). Price, similarly, asks ‘how we can think without having something to think about’ (1932/1950, 7):

This subject or subject matter about which we think must be somehow brought before the mind, if we are to think about it, and it cannot always be brought there by previous thinking, or we should have an infinite regress. This means that something must be given. (1932/1950, 7)

<sup>4</sup> For discussion of sense datum theories positing an intentional content, see Fish 2010, 23–7.

<sup>5</sup> For instance, we might lay down that, on intentionalism, any object of awareness must be represented (at least referred to), and then add, with Peacocke(1983, 9), that all perceptual representation ‘concerns objects external to the perceiver’.

<sup>6</sup> Realist versions of sense datum theory must hold that there are *two* responses: one to outer, another to inner objects. The latter are the object we in fact experience; thus, the response to outer objects is blankly ‘external’ to experience itself. This, of course, is why sense datum theories threaten to cut us off from the world, and why it is tempting to deny the ‘external’ response – that is, accept an anti-realist version.

basic than representation is a mere confrontation with objects. No further representation provides input to belief (or hypothesizing).<sup>1</sup>

Second, the objects we are presented with in experience determine the basic phenomenology of experience; it is given by their visible properties. The simple view regards the phenomenology of experience as constituted by objects and their properties (but unlike sense datum theory, it holds that these objects are 'outer' objects). Intentionalism, by contrast, regards phenomenology as constituted by represented properties – perhaps together with intrinsic properties of the experience (qualia, sensations – or even sense data, as noted above).

Third, the former views will reasonably consider representation in perception to be mainly belief and knowledge, whereas intentionalism, crucially, regards it as belief-independent. In particular, in a way that will be clearer in Ch. 3, the former views regard any *commitment* in perception as a commitment of the perceiver.

The line between the views may still not be very clear. The intentionalists can claim that in veridical experience, their view is identical to the simple view with respect to the two first points: In good cases, we are simply presented with our environment, whose properties determine the phenomenology by being (correctly) represented. And while one may point out the difference that the simple view is committed to disjunctivism, the intentionalist may respond by committing herself to disjunctivism, obliterating that line as well. In response, one may say that despite appearances, there is a structural difference in how we are presented with objects, in that the simple view will hold that representation is a response to objects (anyway) presented, and that the phenomenology is *not* constituted by this response. But the intentionalist may say that this structural difference is hard to see, given that the simple view may also, as discussed above, accept that presentation depends on representation.

Anyway, there is the third point: The simple view (like the sense datum theory) denies that perceptual representing is belief-independent – at any rate in the sense that there can be 'committed' perceptual representing that isn't a commitment of the perceiver. I think there is a sufficient gap between the simple view and intentionalism on the two first points as well. In a way, intentionalism (like belief theories), *merges* the two features of perception: It holds that representation *both* brings the mind in perceptual touch with the world *and* provides the basic form of representation of it (representation that serves as 'input' to belief and knowledge).<sup>2</sup> Thus, intentionalists are in a sense 'reductive'. Paraphrasing Price's claim above, while all parties agree that representation is 'the usual, perhaps the inevitable, companion' of perceptual awareness, what intentionalism (and belief theories) accepts, and the former views deny, is that representation is in fact the 'executioner' of presence-to-mind in perception.

In fact, I think we might say that, according to intentionalism, presentation *is* representation. Belief theories provide an interesting comparison here. Our having an object in view is due to the phenomenology of such responses. Thus, like intentionalism, belief theories provide a 'one-layered' view of perception. One might think that the views are nevertheless quite different, in that intentionalism holds that perceptual representing is belief-independent (and occurrent as opposed to dispositional, and so on). However, as compared with the simple view and sense datum theory, intentionalism and belief theories share a common structure. The latter hold that experience gives access to the world merely by representing the environment as being a certain way; the former views do not. It would be quite misleading to hold that Travis and Price are belief theorists, even if they agree with the belief theorist that perceptual (committed) representings are beliefs and that perception depends on such representing in one of the various ways sketched above.

<sup>1</sup> Thus, unlike intentionalism, these views give a 'two-layered' view of experience. This can be obscured if they claim that the 'response' of representing isn't really part of perception. However, it seems reasonable usage to say that *seeing that* is 'part' of perception; it is representing 'in' experience.

<sup>2</sup> One might say that since perceptual representation isn't belief, perceptual representing is only meant to bring the environment into view. However, perceptual representing seems much more apt to provide input for knowledge than to provide awareness, as the example of veridical hallucination shows. In fact, it is very hard to see how representation as such can present with the object itself, as opposed to merely 'presenting' us with it 'in an inner image'.

### *Is There a Problem with Intentionalism?*

Although intentionalism can initially seem both attractive and relatively straightforward, I have never been fully able to endorse it. In particular, I have found it hard to square the claim that perceptual is representation with the common sense picture of perceptual awareness of our environment. I have also found it hard to understand the intentionalist picture of perceptual representing itself, both with respect to its content (especially demonstrative contents) and in particular the ‘commitment’ such representing expresses (as I turn to in Ch. 3).

This is not to say that it is hard to catch on to talk about representation in perception. All one has to do is imagine a certain state that is ‘says’ that things are a certain way, a kind of ‘perceptual belief’ that is phenomenal. It is also not hard to get at a reasonable idea of what the states represent; they represent the ordinary things around us.<sup>1</sup>

More generally, I have found it hard to see what the arguments for intentionalism are. In particular, I haven’t really been able to see why the way things are presented in experience should lead me to the conclusion that experience has content.<sup>2</sup> This, of course, is the topic of the present thesis.

While I have found it hard to understand the intentionalist picture, and still harder to endorse it, intentionalism has long been dominant in the philosophy of perception, and many authors think it is just obvious.<sup>3</sup> Hence, it was a relief to come across Travis’ ‘The Silence of the Senses’ (2004), in which I for the first time found ‘my’ issues addressed. This is not to say that I found Travis’ views unproblematic. I think there may be serious problems with his position, or with any naïve realist position. Some of the considerations that can lead one to intentionalism are quite ‘deep’ – especially, I think, certain epistemic considerations.<sup>4</sup> I am quite convinced, though, that Travis asks the right questions; he is just right to question the relation intentionalists see between how things appear in experience and the alleged content of experience. He is also right to stress that intentionalism, too, faces epistemological difficulties.

As I have said, this work follows up on Travis’ works, and tries to relate it to some natural objections, in part raised by recent defenders of intentionalism. In Ch. 5, and at the end of Ch. 4, I defend a version of naïve realism – the ‘simple view’ discussed above, with support from Travis, Brewer, and Martin. This is somewhat bold and speculative, but I think it is worth trying to state an alternative to intentionalism – if only to see where it fails.

### *Structure of the Thesis*

Ch. 1 provides a simple introduction to intentionalism, attempting to follow the intentionalist’s own preferred ‘route’ from ‘appearance’ to content. Ch. 2 follows up on Ch. 1 by noting various ways intentionalists motivate content by reflection on how things look. The first section contains four broad arguments, which will be considered in the last chapter. I also explain Travis’ idea of looks-indexing in some more detail. (I apologize for a certain overlap between Chs. 1 and 2; in a better possible world, I would have avoided this.) Ch. 3 delineates four ‘elements’ of the intentionalist picture, in order to get its structure into view. In the latter half of the chapter, I raise a worry concerning the force of perceptual representing. Ch. 4 constitutes the heart of the thesis. It could, in principle, be read on its own. The first section of the chapter sets forth Travis’ criticism of the idea of looks-indexing. The second and third sections look at attempts to avoid that criticism; the second by considering whether there is a specific non-comparative notion of ‘looks’ to index content, the third by considering whether reports of the phenomenal effects of (belief-independent) representation in perception can index content. My answer will

<sup>1</sup> Though of course intentionalists discuss just which of these objects count as represented by perception ‘proper’ and which only by subsequent belief.

<sup>2</sup> At least, I find it hard to see why the conclusion should follow in the absence of a further argument that the only alternative is a purely sensationalist view – that is, that naïve realism is untenable.

<sup>3</sup> It is a relief, though, to remind oneself that philosophers have, in periods, been equally taken in by the sense datum theory and other ‘sensationalist’ doctrines – once-orthodoxies that are now often met with incredulous stares.

<sup>4</sup> For instance, I think of the problem of combining an abstract possibility of radical hallucination with our ordinary robust knowledge of the environment. Some of the epistemological issues are considered in Ch. 4, sect. 3.



be negative. I think the considerations rather support a naïve realist view of perception, which I go on to defend – if, as noted, in a somewhat speculative manner. Ch. 5 sums up Ch. 4, and finally comments on the arguments delineated in Ch. 2.

There is an Appendix; this is an attempt to state more clearly what it is to have objects ‘present to mind’ in perception. I originally included complete a chapter on this, but the thesis is more than long enough already. I also note that the following (like this Introduction) contains a mass of footnotes. I urge the reader not to read all of them. They provide backing of claims made in the text, and further discussion. They should be conferred, then, only when the reader feels the main text is either (particularly) unsatisfactory or (perhaps) interesting.

## Ch. 1 Intentionality, Content, and Representation

The first chapter presents the main ideas of intentionalism, and explains the basic terms. I start with the idea of perception as an ‘intentional’ phenomenon, initially explained merely by reference to the fact that experience places objects in view. I proceed to the notion of content and representation by reflecting on how objects are presented to a subject, thus following what I in the Introduction called the ‘route from appearance’. Tracing the steps along this route also provides a first understanding of the idea of ‘looks-indexing’, which I explain in Ch. 2.

Before I start, I should note that I proceed at a very slow pace. In particular, I attempt to introduce basic terms like ‘intentionality’, ‘content’, and ‘representation’ in the course of describing the perceptual phenomena themselves. The motivation for this is to try to understand the intentionalist picture of perception from ‘below’, presupposing as little as possible and allowing the ideas to grow in a controlled fashion. I am not sure how well this motivation is served. My worry is that a philosophically informed reader will run ahead of the text, assuming that I have said more than I have in fact said, thus finding herself confused as to how I use the terms. As I said, I introduce the notion of intentionality merely by reference to the fact that perception relates us to objects. This is a platitude. It is important, then, not from the outset to import more into the notion of intentionality as I introduce it (I will later establish the essential connection with representation). In the same way, I introduce the term ‘content’, following S. Siegel, merely by reference to the idea that something is ‘conveyed’ in experience – as various theories of perception would agree. With this warning in place, I will proceed.

### 1 Intentionality: Perception as Perception of Objects

The starting point of intentionalism is, of course, that perceiving is an ‘intentional’ phenomenon. As the phrase is standardly used, it entails representation. But it is possible to use it in a broader sense, as merely involving the presence of objects to mind. For instance, one sees a green bottle and feels it with one’s hand. As Martin puts it, perception has a ‘subject matter’ (1998, 172). It is a platitude that perception relates us to objects in this sense, a platitude to which most theories of perception attempt to pay due respect.<sup>1</sup> When one perceives, one perceives something – an object is present to mind.<sup>2</sup>

To accept that perception involves awareness of and relations to objects and as such is an ‘intentional’ phenomenon is not as yet to accept intentionalism. On the notion developed so far, many views that are usually contrasted with intentionalism will count as intentional too. For instance, sense datum theories conceive of perception as a relation to sense data. One might rule out such views by stipulating that the objects one is intentionally related to should be mind-independent, or at any rate ordinary physical objects like bottles and butlers, but that still leaves naïve realist views.<sup>3</sup> In short, all ‘act-object’ conceptions will count as intentional.<sup>1</sup> To arrive at intentionalism, we need a narrower notion.

<sup>1</sup> It is tempting, but potentially misleading, to invoke Brentano’s claim that there is an object ‘in’ the act of perceiving:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the Scholastics called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object (eines Gegenstandes), and what we might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content (einen Inhalt), direction towards an object (ein Objekt) (which is not here understood to mean a thing (eine Realität) or immanent objectivity (die immanente Gegenständlichkeit). Every mental object includes something as an object within itself, although they do not all do so in the same way. (Brentano 1874/1924; translation adapted from Moran 2000, 47)

Brentano has more in mind than the trivial claim that perception is perception of objects: First, he thinks *all* mental states are of objects, while in the trivial sense it may be that *only* perception is. Second, his objects need not exist for us to be directed at them. In other words, his ‘of’ is the ‘of’ of representation – and his objects are reasonably *intentional* objects in the technical sense. Brentano is clear that ‘content’ and ‘object’ are not used ‘wholly unambiguously’. As the story goes, Brentano unsuccessfully struggled to settle the ambiguity; it was up to Twardowski and Husserl to draw a clear line between content and object (Moran 2000, 48–59; compare Føllesdal 1969, 680–1).

<sup>2</sup> At any rate, one *seems* to perceive something – a qualification that will become clearer as we proceed. Admittedly, one can, in some cases, perceive without even *seeming* to perceive some *thing*. For instance, one can be blinded by strong light or try to focus on the space behind one’s closed lids. Whether it is still useful to say that one perceives *something* is a perhaps not too interesting question. More interesting is the question of whether one can be said to see something without any ability to discriminate it; for a brief discussion, see Warnock 1954/1965, 66–7.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, many broadly physical objects are less ordinary than these medium-sized dry goods. But crashes, flashes, rainbows, holes, shadows and so on are still much more ordinary than sense data – whether these latter are construed as mind-dependent or mind-independent (which was a matter of dispute among early sense datum theorists).

This doesn't mean that a broader notion cannot be useful in discussing perception. As Crane points out, some views will count as non-intentional even on the broader notion (2001, 138). For instance, adverbial theories do not explain perception in terms of (seeming) relations to objects, but rather in terms of ways of perceiving or sensing (for instance, sensing blue-ly). Certain 'qualia' or 'raw feel' views may also fall within this group.<sup>2</sup> One may question to what extent these views respect the platitude with which I started. A broader notion of intentionality might also be of interest in the philosophy of mind generally. As I return to in sect. 3.2, however, it is a common view that having an object present to mind – at any rate, when the object is an ordinary mind-independent one – is a matter of intentionality in a narrower sense.<sup>3</sup>

## 2 Content

To arrive at the relevant narrower conception of intentionality, we have to introduce the term 'content'. This term will be definitive of intentionalism that it involves content – as the second label, 'the content view', makes explicit. Again, however, I will begin by using it in a broader sense.

The term 'content' is often used in various ways in the philosophy of perception. Many things can be 'contained' in a perceptual state.<sup>4</sup> In a survey article, Siegel (2005/2011) starts by defining 'content' as 'what is conveyed to the subject by her perceptual experience'. This is deliberately unspecific. As Crane (*forth*, 8) comments, 'what is conveyed' sounds close to 'what is given' and, like that phrase, can be used in various ways:

On some views what is conveyed to the subject is something sensory ('qualia' or what Moore called content) on some views something representational (an intentional content) while on some views what is conveyed to the subject is simply one's visible surroundings. (*forth*, 8)

Siegel similarly distinguishes between two senses of 'contents of perception', one analogous to 'contents of a bucket', the other to 'contents of a newspaper', noting that '[m]ost contemporary uses of 'contents of perception' takes such contents to be analogous to the contents of a newspaper' (2005/2011, §2).<sup>5</sup> In the 'bucket' sense, the contents of perception would be its objects, the visible surroundings of the perceiver. In that case it is hard to see how adding that perception has 'content' changes anything in the initial characterization of perception as being of objects – and so how there could be any disagreement about it. In the following, 'contents of perception' will never denote objects of perception (whatever these are thought to be), and, again, this will be taken as definitive of intentionalism.

While this characterization makes it clearer what content is not, we are not much further toward understanding what it is. For instance, we have not yet said anything to distinguish

<sup>1</sup> The following passage from Crane may be useful here – if only to show that I do not invent the broader notion:

Now there is a sense in which the Direct Realist theory and the Sense-Data theory are also intentionalist theories: each of them holds that the mind is directed on real objects in acts of perception. The Direct Realist holds that this is a fact about only genuine perception, while the Sense-Data theorist holds that it is a fact about all perceptual experience, 'genuine' or not. So each of these theories accepts that perceptions have a relational structure: in fact, perception in one way or other relates the mind to real objects. (2001, 138; compare his 1998, 233n15)

<sup>2</sup> Crane continues the passage quoted in the previous note as follows:

This might raise the question of whether, on my view, the intentionality of perception is a trivial matter. However, despite the (admittedly very general) conception of intentionality with which I am working, there is an approach to perception which is not intentional in even this very general sense. This is the adverbial theory, which holds that visually experiencing a blue object is a matter of *visually experiencing blue-ly*. (2001, 138)

For adverbial theories of perception, see Fish 2010, ch. 3. Qualia theories go naturally together with adverbial theories, though whether an adverbial theory commits one to the existence of qualia is a disputed matter (see Fish 2010, 38-9). At any rate, there is no entailment the other way round.

<sup>3</sup> Given that 'intentionality' is normally used only in the narrower sense, many philosophers will deny that perception is intentional while clearly straightforwardly that perception is a matter of objects being present to mind. Travis, for instance, holds that perception is 'not an intentional phenomenon' (2004, 93). It is not a substantial issue whether one would express the broader notion of object-relatedness by the term 'intentional' or not.

<sup>4</sup> Intentionalists, too, sometimes choose a more general use of 'content', for instance when they distinguish 'phenomenal' from 'representational' content. When they speak indiscriminately about 'content', however, they usually mean the latter. It is interesting to note that historically, the situation was the reverse; 'content' was contrasted with 'form'.

<sup>5</sup> A similar ambiguity is present in Martin's notion of a 'subject matter' of perception noted above.

between the first two uses listed by Crane. In fact, it used to be quite common to speak of the ‘content’ of perception as ‘something sensory’. On this use, ‘content’ contrasts with ‘form’, the ‘structuring’ elements in perception – reasonably, representational elements. In other words, the old contrast between ‘content’ and ‘form’ reappears as ‘sensation’ and ‘content’. This contrast is important for modern intentional theories as well. Intentional content must not be confused with sensory elements in perception.

In the following, I will introduce the notion of ‘representational content’ in two steps. I do not imply that the steps are clearly identifiable in intentionalist theories. As I have already complained, intentionalists are usually not very explicit about why they thinking of perception in terms of content. My purpose is to sketch an entrance to the notion through reflection on how objects are presented in perceptual consciousness.

The first step starts with the point that mere reference to objects perceived and their properties will not do justice to the way objects are present to mind. What is present to mind is always presented in a certain way. Objects seen appear some way to their perceiver, depending, for instance, on the angle from which they are seen. How things appear is a result not just of how they are, but also of the perspective of the perceiver. To capture the way things appear to a perceiver, the thought goes, we have to think of her perception as ‘containing’ more than just the objects and properties perceived.

The second step brings in the notion of representation. The notion of content involved in intentionalism is, crucially, a semantic or representational notion – as made explicit by the third label, ‘representationalism’. Of course, the idea of perceiving as representing is natural once one thinks of perceiving in analogy with other paradigmatically (narrowly) intentional states, such as believing and hoping, which are straightforwardly representational. I am more interested in the way the second step follows from the first. The main idea is that when things are presented to the mind, they are not merely presented a certain way, but presented *as being* a certain way. Further, one may note that when something looks a certain way, it may or may not be the way it looks. Sometimes things look quite different from what they are. A natural reaction is to say that perception is accurate or inaccurate: It is accurate when things are as they look, inaccurate when they aren’t. The notions of accuracy and inaccuracy, however, seem to be semantic notions.<sup>1</sup> In other words, perception ‘says’ something about the world, something which can be correct or incorrect. This is implicit in the main idea as well: When something is presented as being a certain way, it can be or fail to be as it is presented. These considerations lead to two more general points. The first is that we when we things aren’t as they look, we naturally speak of illusions. Illusions are naturally described as cases where what the senses ‘tell us’ doesn’t correspond to how things are. The second is that perception gives rise to and grounds belief. Again, this suggests that the senses ‘tell us’ something.

### **2.1 First Step: Presentation**

What I call the first step toward positing content comes from reflection on what it is like to perceive an object – what it is to have an object ‘in’ one’s perceptual state. What is it like to see, for instance, a dark green bottle on the table in front of you? Of course, the question could be understood in various ways, but the answer we are after is that the bottle will be ‘presented’ in a certain way. For instance, I not only perceive the bottle; I also perceive its dark green colour, its shape, and various other features, as they look from my perspective.<sup>2</sup>

This may seem too obvious to mention – but that’s not an objection to its truth. Of course, intentionalists would be happy to concede that their view follows from trivial observations. One

<sup>1</sup> What does it mean to say that accuracy and inaccuracy are semantic notions? The question will be given a detailed answer in sect 3. For the present, we can note that accuracy and inaccuracy are analogous truth and falsity in that what is accurate presents things as they are, what is inaccurate presents them as they are not (echoing Aristotle). Now, what is evaluable in such terms seems to have (some sort of) ‘meaning’; in other words, it represents something.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, ‘dark green’ captures only a small facet of the way the bottle looks to me. It doesn’t even do justice to the various shades that all the shades of dark green. Intentionalists agree content is too fine-grained to be specifiable in general terms (whether conceptual or not). I trust the reader’s imagination here.

might think, though, that the way the bottle is presented to me already is conveyed by my statement that I am looking at a dark green bottle. Perhaps it is, in some sense of ‘convey’, but the properties of the bottle do not as such determine the way the bottle is presented to me.<sup>1</sup> My statement that I look at a green bottle might suggest or convey that it looks green, but it doesn’t have to look green to me. My experience will necessarily be shaped not just by the properties of the object perceived, but by my *perspective* on the object.<sup>2</sup>

The notion of a perspective is not very specific. It may include much more than literally seeing something from an angle or under certain lighting conditions. For instance, one’s expectations and background knowledge may shape the way something is perceived, thus being part of one’s perspective on it (as Husserl emphasised).<sup>3</sup> In Nagel’s phrase, a view on something is never a view from nowhere; and the point of view shapes one’s relation to an object. The fact that perception is perspectival means that it won’t suffice to state which object I look at, even if I mention the properties it has. Under certain circumstances, the dark green of the bottle will not be ‘part’ of my experience at all. Light can make it look more yellowish than it really is. Or I may have defective green vision.<sup>4</sup> This points to another feature of a perspective: It is always *partial*.<sup>5</sup> Things are always seen from a particular angle, under certain conditions, and perhaps with certain expectations, thus leaving properties (and parts) of the object out of view.

The idea that objects presented in perception are always presented a certain way seems unobjectionable. An object seen through green glasses will appear green. Now, being presented a certain way as such doesn’t seem to involve representation. When I give you a present, I will necessarily give it a certain way, but there is nothing representational about giving as such. Similarly, the ‘content’ of perception – what is ‘conveyed’ or ‘given’ in perception as over and above the object itself and its properties – might be just the way the objects and its properties are perceived. However, at this point philosophers move quickly to the idea that perception is representational. Crane, for instance, speaks of ‘two features of perspectives – that a perspective is a perspective on things, and that from a perspective, things are presented under a certain aspect’ (2001, 7; cf. 18-20; 28-30). The notion of being presented ‘under an aspect’ is close in meaning to the notion of being presented under a ‘mode of presentation’ – which is a representational notion.<sup>6</sup> Yet, as I said, it seems a further step to move from the idea that objects are presented a certain way to the idea that perception represents those objects a certain way.

## 2.2 *Second Step: Representation*

It seems unproblematic to think of perception as presentation. Perception is perception of objects; thus, objects are presented to the subject. It can seem more problematic to think of perception as representation – at any rate, it is not clear why we should think of it that way.

This section presents the second step from presentation to representation. As I shall present it, it consists in four ‘moves’ or substeps. The substeps will be examined in more detail in the next chapter, where I will provide more examples from the literature and attempt to give slightly more principled arguments. These arguments will be evaluated in Ch. 5. In the present

<sup>1</sup> Nor, of course, are all properties visually relevant. Hence I can say that I look at a Spanish bottle without conveying that there is anything specifically ‘Spanish’ about the way it is presented to me.

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Burge 2010, 36-8.

<sup>3</sup> The view an intentionalist thus takes on perspective may well shape her view on perceptual content. Philosophers who think expectation, background capacities and the like informs perception will be more likely to think that perceptual content is rich.

<sup>4</sup> In the following examples, I always suppose that colour properties are objective properties of things. Even if colours shouldn’t be objective properties, it is still true that things can look to have a different colour than they have. Things don’t *change* colour when the light changes. How to think of colour blindness and objectivity may be more delicate. In any event, the reader can always construct her own examples based on shape instead of colour (the main reason I use colour examples is that visual shape is harder to describe in words).

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, Crane 2001, 20; Burge 2010, 36-7. Strictly, the claim that perspectives are partial is perhaps distinct from the main claim that perspectives always present things a certain way. It seems logically possible that there could be a perspective which were impartial, yet presented an object a certain way.

<sup>6</sup> In short, modes of presentations are ways of representing things. The term ‘mode of presentation’ obviously falls very naturally in the present context. Frege’s term was ‘Erscheinungsweise’, way of appearing. The classical illustrations are also perceptual, like the one of Hesperus and Phosphorus.

context, I will set forth the considerations in a cursory manner, simultaneously giving an initial characterization of the idea of intentional content as representational content. The idea of intentional content, and the related conception of perception as representational, will be developed in a more principled way in the last section of the present chapter, and taken up in Ch. 3.

### *First Move: Appearance*

The first move can seem a trivial continuation of the first step. It says that perception not just presents an object a certain way but *as being* a certain way. We might start by noting that when the dark green bottle appears dark green, then it also appears *to be* dark green. The problem with this is that it isn't clear that the consequent adds anything to what was already said in the antecedent. The same can seem to be the case with the claim that things are presented as being a certain way. However, there is a difference, potentially important. As we will see in later chapter, much may hinge on how it is unpacked.

Roughly, though, the idea is that experience not only presents us with objects, but also with *how* things are with these objects. If we are careful, we might say that experience 'tells us' that things in our environment are a certain way – for instance, that the bottle is green. This is echoed in Siegel's above definition of 'perceptual content' as 'what is conveyed to the subject by her experience':

For instance, suppose you are looking into a piano at the array of hammers and strings. There will be a way these things look to you when you see them: they will look to have a certain shape, colour, texture, and arrangement relative to one another, among other things. Your visual experience conveys to you that the piano has these features. (2005/2011)

This might get us a little closer to the idea. When the piano looks to have certain features, experience 'conveys' to me *that* it has these features. In other words, 'conveys' means something like 'informs'. This should give an idea of what it means to speak of perception as presenting an object as being a certain way: We are presented with the (putative) fact *that* things are a certain way. This, finally, also gives us the right notion of 'content'. That things are a certain way is a representational content; it is also what experience 'tells me'. In other words, experience presents us with *how* things are. How things are is something one can represent – for instance, know, or tell someone. So if experience presents us with how things are, it involves something that can be represented. Now, as will become clearer in a while, what can be represented is a representational content.<sup>1</sup>

There is a problem with formulating the first move in terms of perception 'presenting' us with how things are. The problem is that that phrase might easily be taken to say that perception allows us to *know* how things are. As I have stressed in the Introduction, ordinary perception involves not just awareness of objects of properties, but also a great deal of knowledge about them. This is a uncontroversial. Clearly, we can *see* how things are. But seeing how is seeing *that* such and such – which means coming to know that such and such. It is crucial, then, to distinguish the claim that experience presents us with objects as being certain ways from the claim that perception gives us knowledge of objects being those ways. Knowledge – having information about one's environment – is a matter of the perceiver's *taking* things to be a certain way. Perceptual representing, by contrast, *serves* that information (or knowledge) by conveying it to us.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The notion of 'representation' and 'representing' here are hardly pre-philosophical. It is a term of art, though an old one. For present purposes, it is sufficient to note that representational states are simply beliefs, hopes, desires, and so on. Such states have contents – for instance, one can hope that it will rain. I go in more depth in sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, Crane is a little too quick when he writes:

[I]t is ... plain that perceptual experiences ... have propositional content: one sees that a bus is coming, smells that someone is cooking goulash, or hears that the glass broke. So it seems that perceptual experiences are propositional attitudes. (2001, 75)

It is plain that we can see that something is the case. It is far from plain that the content involved in seeing that something is the case is perceptual content, as such content is construed by the intentionalist.

All of this fit well with Siegel's 'newspaper sense' of perceptual content. A newspaper conveys that things are a certain way – it, too, purports to convey how things are. The content of the newspaper is that the world is such and such. As in the case of knowing, that gives us a straightforward notion of representational content. What is said and written are propositions (expressed by sentences). Propositions are paradigmatic kinds of representational content. Though it not clear that perceptions have propositional content this sense, we can at present work with the assumption that they are. As I will describe in sect. 3.1, I think there is a straightforward (if perhaps uninteresting) sense in which it should be unproblematic to speak of perceptual content as propositional; but for present, I note merely the connection between the idea of conveying *how things are* and propositions. For *how things are* is something that can be expressed by a proposition, as opposed to merely described. Although I can describe a green bottle by means of proposition, I cannot express the bottle. What is readily expressed, however, is how things are – for instance, that the bottle is dark green.<sup>1</sup>

As I noted, it seems natural to say that when things appear a certain way, then they appear to be a certain way. In so far, the second step can seem trivial. For if an object appears to be a certain way, then it seems that it looks as if it *is* that way; in other words, the content that things are a certain seems to be 'contained' in the look. We specify the look by reference to a way of being, the way things will be if things are indeed as they look. However, and as I will explore in depth to in Ch. 4, I think there is an important ambiguity in the way we speak of the way things look.<sup>2</sup> This means that we cannot move straight from the present grammatical claim to the philosophical claim that things are presented as being a certain way. The philosophical claim needs both unpacking and defence. Again, this is my topic of Ch. 4.

Before I leave the topic, I will note how the idea of things being presented as being a certain way brings us back to the idea that objects are perceived under an aspect or mode of presentation. Aspects or modes of presentation are ways things are represented. In the classical example, a planet is represented *as being* Hesperus, as a matter of one's cognitive relations to it – or perspective on it. Though he built his notion on a perceptual metaphor, Frege applied it at the level of thought, not at the level of perception. As intentionalists see things, however, perception no less than thought presents objects under aspects or modes of presentation.

In the following, I look at the three further 'moves' contained in the second step, thus attempting to get clearer on the idea of presentation as representation. Thinking of the step as a whole as a movement, we might think of these moves as 'parts' of it. Thus, it is hard to say where the second takes over from the first, and where the last begins. But it should be clear that there is indeed a movement here. Since I will return to the considerations in the next chapter, however, I will be a little less elaborate.

### *Second Move: Accuracy*

The observation of the second move is that we can ask whether things are as they appear. First, as noted above, appearing a certain way seems equivalent to appearing to *be* a certain way. And when we ask whether things are as they look, we have that way of being in mind. This brings the suggestion that perception can be more or less *accurate* with respect to the objects and properties it presents. Again, this could seem present already in the first step, when we noted that a bottle can appear to be more yellowish than it is. The present idea, however, is that accuracy is a semantic notion and that what is accurate a representation. For instance, a map can represent accurately or inaccurately what it is a map of, and a statement can be true or false.

<sup>1</sup> Again, I set apart the fact that how things are is much more fine-grained than what we can express through words. My point is that *how things are* belongs seem to belong in the right category – the category of things that can serve, for instance, as premises and conclusions of inferences, as opposed to the category of objects.

<sup>2</sup> Briefly, it is true that 'appears green' is indeed equivalent to 'appears to be green', and also that the claims 'contain' embedded claims in the way suggested. But this fact doesn't in itself support a straightforward move from the idea that experience presents thing a certain way to the present idea that it presents them *as being* a certain way.

If perception presents us with how things are, and how things are can be expressed by a proposition, then accuracy might simply be truth. Perception would present us with truths when it presents us with how things are, falsities when it presents us with how things are not. But like the notion of a proposition, the notion of truth again serves more as an analogy. Accuracy may be distinct from truth, just as perceptual contents may be distinct from propositions. The point of the analogy is merely that contents are evaluated with respect to accuracy, an evaluation that yields one of two semantic values. Again, I return to this in sect. 3.1.

In the description of the first move, I remained neutral on whether one can be presented with inaccurate contents as well as accurate ones. However, as the reader may have noted, the examples I used were not strictly neutral. When experience presents how things are, we must assume that things are as they are presented. How things are cannot be inaccurate.<sup>1</sup> Similarly when I speak of seeing *that* something is a certain way. But if experience can be inaccurate, it is open to hold that it can present what is *not* the case.<sup>2</sup> This should suggest more clearly that what experience presents is something representational, something that may or may not express how things really are, like a map or statement.

### *Third Move: Illusion*

The second move suggested that experience can be inaccurate, and that accuracy is a semantic notion, like truth. The third move is closely related to the second. An illusion is naturally thought of as a false perception, one in which what is 'presented' to the subject isn't so. The reason I have identified it as an independent move is that the phenomenon it plays such a large role in the philosophy of perception. Compare how Siegel continues the passage quoted above:

Your visual experience conveys to you that the piano has these features. If your experience is illusory in some respect then the piano won't really have those features; but even then, there will still be something conveyed to you by your experience' (2005/2011)

What is conveyed is that the hammers and strings are a certain way. They need not be that way; if so, I am presented with an illusion.

There are several ideas in play here. One idea is that when something appears other than it is, there is a need to explain the character of the experience. There is a need to explain how 'what is presented' can be identical in, say, the case of seeing a dark green bottle (in strong light) and in the case of seeing a yellowish bottle (in normal light). Of course, one just might state the illumination differences, but part of the idea was to explain how things strike the perceiver. How can things appear the same, have the same phenomenal character? Notoriously, sense datum theories explain the sameness of appearance by reference to one's being related to something which *is* yellowish in both cases. The problem for sense datum theories, of course, is to say what kind of objects that is. The intentionalist has a simple alternative: The intentional content of the perception (the content that something is yellowish) is the same, while the objects differ. Thus, intentionalism can preserve the idea that there are no other objects involved than the bottle seen (whatever colour it is).<sup>3</sup>

The example given is quite simple. One might think that one could do without the explanation of the 'internal' character of the experience by citing the light. However, more problematic cases are easily imaginable. For instance, the yellowness of the experience might be due to the perceiver's having taken a drug. Yet more problematic are cases of hallucination. It can appear as if a certain object were present even if there is none in the scene in front of her, as in a hallucination of a dark green bottle. In such cases, we cannot merely refer to environmental factors. Nor, reasonably, will it suffice to refer to the physiology of the perceiver. We should be able to

<sup>1</sup> It may also be unclear that *how things are* is accurate. However, it follows given that we can know how things are and that what can be known are propositions: 'I know how the people are over there – they are friendly.'

<sup>2</sup> One might, of course, hold that perception can only present *how things are* – in other words, only accurate contents. It is less clear what the motivation for such a view could be, at least if it isn't embedded in a disjunctivism where perception can *seem* to present a 'fact' that such and such when not such and such.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, there are other accounts of illusion. Qualia theories may give rise to similar worries as the sense datum theories in positing 'inner objects'.



explain how things seem as they do to the subject; what it is like for *her*. Sense datum theorists argued something were green and bottle-shaped in your visual field. Intentionalists seem to give a better answer. One of the most familiar facts about representation is that it can be of what doesn't exist. One can believe, for instance, that there is a green bottle on the table when there is none. According to the intentionalist, we can similarly be perceptually directed at a dark green bottle simply by representing that there is one. This avoids the worries one might have about how to understand the illusion. There seems to be nothing very problematic about representing what isn't the case.<sup>1</sup>

There is also a need to explain how illusion and hallucination gives rise to beliefs. One important consideration is that these beliefs may be blameless on part of the subject. False beliefs can be due to epistemic irresponsibility or intellectual misbehaviour, in which case the subject is at fault, but they can also be blameless, even justified – as they will easily be when, say, an expert on a subject matter tells you something false about it (and there is no reason for suspicion).<sup>2</sup> The idea is that perceptual beliefs can be blameless in a similar way. Given that there were no way to detect (or reason to suspect) that the light was abnormal, the belief that the bottle is yellowish was the 'right' one. A belief to the contrary was an irrational guess. Again, the simple explanation presented by the intentionalist is that the content of the experience was that the bottle was yellowish; your belief simply 'takes over' what is represented in experience.

#### *Fourth Move: Justification*

The fourth move generalizes the previous idea that misleading experience can render false beliefs blameless. If the senses can justify false beliefs, then surely it can also justify true beliefs. Such beliefs are not normally true by accident. In short, if perception can mislead, that is because it will, normally, 'lead'.<sup>3</sup> Perceptual beliefs do not merely 'occur'; they are not formed 'blindly'.<sup>4</sup> Most perceptual beliefs are cases of knowledge. In representing our environment, the experience provides us with the materials that ground our beliefs.

It can seem backwards to describe this move as the last of the four. Epistemology might well be part of the motivation for endorsing the first move already. When then dark green bottle is presented to me as being dark, I will (normally) come to know that it is a dark green bottle.<sup>5</sup> Seeing *how things are* requires not only that the proposition seen is true, but also that I am justified in taking it to be true. Again, it is important to distinguish being presented with how things are from seeing how things are. Seeing that something is a case is a matter of taking it that it is that way. It is also a matter of being justified.<sup>6</sup> Being presented with something does not entail taking it to be that way.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps it entails a *prima facie* justification for believing it.

<sup>1</sup> This also respects the sense in which we will say that *nothing* is seen in cases of hallucination, as Crane points out (2001, 135).

<sup>2</sup> I mention blamelessness because it is a convenient way of making the point. Several authors stress that perception can render perceptual beliefs blameless – for instance, in rather different ways, McDowell (1995/1998, 395-7) and Burge (2003, 518). I do not here take a stand on the relation between blamelessness and justification. Blamelessness in itself seems insufficient for justification, but the converse may hold. For more discussion, see Pryor 2001, 109-118.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, the point here is not really that we happen to 'follow' the senses, perhaps by natural inclination. Descartes was (for a moment) able to convince himself that he might be better off resisting the natural inclination and disregard what the senses 'told him'. The point is, first, that perception gives us something to believe – that there is something like the 'testimony of the senses'; second, that we are justified in believing on the basis of it (whatever skeptics think; though even they may exculpate us for believing what the senses tell us).

<sup>4</sup> Of course, perceptual beliefs can be true by accident. This is what Burge calls 'brute truth' (2003, 507), which provides for Gettier cases. One example is that of coming to believe that it is a certain time of the day by looking at a stopped watch that nevertheless happens to show the correct time.

<sup>5</sup> It is possible, of course, to have a dark green bottle look green without one's belief that it is green being a case of knowledge. Background information might have made it rational to believe that it was yellow. Or a drug could have made it look dark green to me where the illumination would make it look yellow to normal perceivers.

A somewhat interesting case is that of seeing (or perceptually believing) that the bottle is dark green *by its looking yellowish*. In some cases, this can lead to a phenomenological tension. In one sense, the bottle looks dark green, in another sense, it looks yellowish. But both senses can be 'phenomenal'; it is not merely that one is 'presented with' the yellowish colour and infers that the bottle is dark green. Its dark green colour is presented, so to speak, 'through' the yellowish colour, usually without one's even noticing it. I will not try to solve this tension here.

<sup>6</sup> Seeing that P requires epistemic conditions to be satisfied. According to Williamson (2000, 38), it requires coming to know that P; according to McDowell (1982/1998, 390) it only requires being in a position to know that P.

<sup>7</sup> As I will discuss in Ch. 3, the idea is that perception has a 'face value' at which it can be 'taken'. For instance, when the dark green bottle looks yellowish, the face value will (usually) be that the bottle is yellowish.

But even so, it doesn't entail that if one believes what one is presented with and the belief is true, then one sees how things are.<sup>1</sup> The idea of presentation is merely that perception *presents* us with truths as well as falsities, and thus it gives *grounds* for believing what it presents.<sup>2</sup>

Intentionalists concerned with the phenomenological character of experience will naturally attend more to the first move, reflecting on the way things are presented in the full richness of their properties. Intentionalists more concerned with the epistemological role of experience will be more focused on the way perception justifies and gives rise to belief. One thing that appears attractive about the intentionalist conception is that phenomenological and epistemological motivations dovetail; what is required to serve both purposes, according to the intentionalists, is to realize that perception has intentional content. Perceptual content explains the phenomenology of illusion and hallucination, and it also explains how perception can serve as the basis for knowledge about the world.

As I have indicated in the introduction, I think things are less simple on a closer look. In Ch. 3, I discuss what I take to be some puzzling features of the epistemological parts of the intentionalist picture. On the phenomenological side, I find the quick move from the first step to the second more puzzling than I have (I hope) presented it here (where I have tried to make it look natural). Although looking a certain way reasonably means looking *to be* a certain way, I do not find that the ideas of being presented a certain way and being presented *as being* a certain way are equivalent. Evaluating this idea is the focus of Ch. 4. For the present, however, I hope that the two steps and the considerations they contain have an initial plausibility. I return to them in Ch. 2, where I also give more examples from the intentionalist literature. Before I do that, it is necessary to say more about the notions of content and representation arrived at.

### 3 Representation

The second step makes it clear that the notion of content invoked by intentionalists is a representational notion. The notion of content thus fits with the notion employed in the description of other intentional states, such as belief, as when we speak of the content of a belief. The proposition that the bottle is green can be the content of a belief. It – or something like it – can also be the content of a perception. The next subsections attempt to get clearer on intentional content and representation respectively.

#### 3.1 Content

I have introduced the notion of intentional content in part by reference to the notion of a proposition. Propositions are perhaps the paradigm examples of contents. But propositions are only one form of content. While many intentionalists will agree that the content of perception is a proposition, others will deny it. As I will show, much of this depends on just what one means by the term 'proposition'. In a narrower sense, the idea that content is propositional is not essential to intentionalism as such (though it may be to some views of the epistemology of perception). In a broader sense, a propositional conception of content is, if not obligatory, at least very common.

I begin this section by defining a general notion of content. I then go on to define a more specific, but still very broad 'propositional' notion of content. In the course of doing so, I consider two objections to thinking of perceptual content as propositional. The issues raised by the first are irrelevant for present purposes, and the definition I give is specifically designed to

<sup>1</sup> For instance, one doesn't see that there is a barn in front of one when one is in Goldman's barn façade country, even if one happens to believe it and it in fact is one.

<sup>2</sup> So on many views, justification and truth combine in all four ways. Perhaps, though, perception always gives 'positive' justification in the sense that if there weren't reasons to disbelieve what is presented, one would be justified in believing it. If so, there would be *some* justification (however defeated) for believing that the mountains are red when they look red at sunset. Note further that there are further dimensions to the epistemological picture as well. For instance, seeing that something is the case is epistemic in the sense that it fails in Gettier-cases. And one might distinguish between 'subjective' and 'objective' justification – perhaps one could never be 'objectively' justified in believing a falsity. And so on.

avoid them. The second objection, however, is correct in pointing out that my definition is not general enough to apply to all forms of intentionalism.

The general notion of content that I propose cannot be understood apart from the notion of representation. This presupposes that one has a preliminary understanding of what a representation is. I mentioned that philosophers often consider thoughts to be representations.<sup>1</sup> But the range of things that can count as representations is much wider. It includes paintings, maps, symbols, models, texts, sculptures, and much more. Many of the things listed are much more naturally considered ‘representations’ than thoughts. The philosopher’s talk of mental states as ‘representations’ doesn’t correspond to pre-theoretical usage. Perhaps it isn’t even a very useful term. I think various views in the philosophy of mind suffer from uncritical use of the term ‘representation’. For immediate purposes, however, no specific understanding of the term is needed. We can leave the notion of representation, as R. Cummins defines it in an *Oxford Handbook*, as ‘just about anything that can be semantically evaluated’, where what can be semantically evaluated is ‘evaluable in terms of notions such as truth, reference, or satisfaction’ (1994/2010, 699).

With this general, if somewhat empty, notion of representation in hand, we can define content as ‘whatever it is a representation has that makes it semantically evaluable’ (1994/2010, 699). I will let this suffice for a generalized definition:

*General Notion of Content*

A content is anything that makes something (a representation) semantically evaluable.

Of course, this doesn’t say much. The notion depends on the notions of representation, which in turn depends on that of semantic evaluability, which was defined in terms of a ‘notions such as truth, reference, or satisfaction’. What does ‘such as’ mean? Cummins gives two examples: ‘a statement is sometimes said to have a proposition as its content; a term is sometimes said to have a concept as its content’ (1994/2010, 699). The simplest case is probably that of a statement. In this case, the content is simply what is said – for instance, that the bottle is green. It is something that can be true or false, and thus it is what makes the statement (the act of saying it) true or false as well. In other words, it is a proposition.<sup>2</sup>

Contents are themselves semantically evaluable. A proposition may make a statement true or false, but a proposition can (perhaps must) itself be true or false. Indeed, since they are what *make* other things semantically evaluable, contents are the ‘primary’ bearers of semantic properties.<sup>3</sup> Normally, such bearers are themselves called representations. They are representations in what we can call the logical a ‘logical’ sense, as contrasted with the ‘non-logical’ sense in which the things that *have* contents are representations. For our present purposes, it is useful to contrast representations in the logical sense (contents) from representations in the ‘psychological’ sense (mental representations such as the propositional attitudes). In this way, the distinction between logical and psychological representations corresponds roughly to that between contents and acts (or states). Psychological representations are thus a subset of non-logical representations – which, as we saw above, come in a variety of forms.

As before, it is important to distinguish between content and object. The content of a statement is what is said (that the bottle is green), the object of it is what it is about (the green bottle). I cannot *express* or *say* the things I am talking about. I can only refer to them, or describe them.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I do not mean that they subscribe to a representational theory of mind. The claim is merely that it is standard usage to refer to propositional attitudes and other intentional states as ‘representations’.

<sup>2</sup> Actually, I am not entirely convinced that *statements* considered as *acts* are true or false. I agree, though that they ‘aim at truth’, and thus are evaluable in terms of truth. But it seems to me that it is only the contents themselves that are literally true or false. But this does not matter here. I take up this briefly in ch. 3.

<sup>3</sup> At least, I think this is the natural way to think of it. It also appears to be current orthodoxy.

<sup>4</sup> As discussed briefly by Crane (*forth*, 3-4), there is not always a single answer to the question of what a statement is about. The statement that the bottle is green can be about the bottle, about its colour, about what I see, or about the (alleged) fact that the bottle is green. Not all of these things are things in the environment (for instance, a fact has no spatial location). I think this makes it more unclear just how contents ‘determine’ objects in the environment. Objects

It is perhaps natural to ask what such things as contents are. For our purposes, however, the question isn't that important. What is needed is that one accepts that there are contents, in the sense that there is something which is believed when someone believes something (which should be trivial).<sup>1</sup> There are various metaphysical worries about the existence of contents, but I will not consider such worries here.

Given the natural idea that statements express beliefs, and that what is stated can be what one believes, it is natural to think that a belief and a statement can have the same contents. Beliefs are considered propositional attitudes. If perceptual states have contents of the kind that can be believed, it will be propositional. But as I mentioned, many intentionalists protest.

One protest against thinking of perceptual representing as propositional comes from Fregean and other 'fine-grained' theorists of propositions. Often, the claim is that propositional contents are conceptual contents. Conceptual contents can be the contents of beliefs, for beliefs require the possession of conceptual capacities.<sup>2</sup> Perception is thought to be a kind of state that requires much less on part of the perceiver; in particular, it doesn't depend on concepts.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, it may be too fine-grained to be captured in terms of concepts. Thus, they claim, its content cannot be propositional.

There is an important debate within intentionalism about whether perceptual contents are conceptual or not.<sup>4</sup> For our purposes, though, these issues don't matter. Accordingly, as I will speak of 'propositional content', it is not part of it that it should consist of concepts, or be individuated at the level of sense.<sup>5</sup> Nor is it a constraint that a proposition should be apt to be the content of belief.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps beliefs require a particular kind of propositional contents.<sup>7</sup> This may

are normally 'determined' by singular concepts – 'parts' of contents. Whole contents do not determine things in the environment in the sense of referring to them (arguably, they do not 'refer' at all, pace Frege, though they do, of course, determine truth-values). Many philosophers have thought that contents 'refer' to facts or states of affairs, but I find such views murky.

Searle (1983, 13) writes of the 'process-product' distinction between 'requirement' and 'thing required' for the conditions of satisfaction of perceptual contents (the distinction is endorsed by Burge 1991, 196). The distinction is not clear to me. One might think that the *requirement* is that the proposition be true, the *thing required* its truth. This is a distinction one can draw, but it seems to be of little use. Alternatively, the requirement for the experience that it's raining may be that it's raining, the thing required the state of affairs of its raining (or that the state of affairs exists). It is clear that Searle means the requirement to be a truth condition (the condition that has to be satisfied if the proposition is to be true) and the thing required an 'existing' state of affairs (1983, 40; I take him to mean 'exist' in the same sense as 'obtain'). I doubt that this distinction makes sense. Reasonably, facts or obtaining states of affairs are just true propositions; the distinction collapses. At any rate, the 'counterparts' to true propositions are not part of the perceiver's environment. As such, they ought not to be 'objects' of perception; they belong on the 'content' side. But Searle speaks repeatedly of states' being directed at 'objects and states of affairs in the world' (e.g. 1983, 1). Though it would lead too far afield to argue the matter here, this seems confused.

The metaphysics of these issues may matter. McDowell has long argued that in perception we are open to 'manifest facts'. In his 1994/1996 (ch. 3, §2), he argued that the world just *is* the totality of facts (true Fregean thoughts). Many reacted to that claim. In a way, though, McDowell just follows up on Searle's idea that perception places facts in view – the difference between them is that McDowell holds that true contents *are* facts.

<sup>1</sup> One can compare the question of what contents are with the question of what numbers are. Are there numbers? They don't have a spatial location, and they are not material objects. However, it seems hard to deny that there are numbers. On a standard view, numbers and contents are both abstract entities, though the nature of contents is inessential for our purposes here. What is required is that one recognizes that in *some* sense contents exist, just as numbers do. For discussion of the existence of propositions, as well as a view I find attractive, see Dummett 2006, ch. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Burge is one example; see, for instance, his 2010, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Sometimes, the idea is that perception cannot be conceptual since concept acquisition requires perception. If perception in turn requires the possession of concepts, we have a circle. There need be nothing wrong with a circle. And for the intentionalist, the question reappears in the question of how pre-conceptual representings get their contents. Campbell (2002<sub>a</sub>, 2002<sub>b</sub>) argues against intentionalism on the grounds that the circle is unacceptable.

<sup>4</sup> The main proponent of the thesis that perceptual content is conceptual is McDowell (1994/1996), who argues mainly against Evans (1984). Peacocke (1992, ch. 3) holds that perception has non-conceptual content, having formerly (1983, ch. 1) held that perceptual content is conceptual. From my perspective, the debate isn't too clear. One point of unclarity, as Heck (2000) pointed out, is whether the question concerns the states or the contents of the states (though arguably, the nature of the content of a state is given by the nature of the state). Another point of unclarity is just what it takes to possess conceptual capacities. McDowell defends a demanding conceptions of conceptual capacities (see his 1994/1996, 47), but it is open to hold that less demanding conceptions can still count as conceptual (for example, McDowell accepts that animals have representational perceptual states; someone might hold that these states are 'conceptual' in a less demanding sense).

<sup>5</sup> Of course, that is not to say that I disagree with Fregeans. On the one hand, propositions are the object of thought. On the other hand, they are what can be the case. These facts must be balanced against each other. The former recommends a finer-grained theory of propositions, the latter a more coarser-grained theory.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, the first protest depends on a 'rather demanding conception of a proposition' (Byrne 2001, 2015).

<sup>7</sup> As I noted in connection with the fourth 'move' of sect. 2.2, most philosophers would want there to be some form of rational relation between the propositions presented in perception and the propositions that can be the objects of beliefs. Some philosophers motivated by epistemological considerations argue that if perception and belief stand in genuinely rational connections, then the content of perception should be itself conceptual. But most philosophers reject this constraint, arguing instead that there are rational relations (such as logical incompatibility) between con-

lead one to think that the notion I propose is useless. As I will go on to show, however, not all notions of content fall under the notion I have proposed. Moreover, it makes clear the common structure of most understandings of perceptual content – namely thus that share a recognizably propositional structure.<sup>1</sup>

Keeping in mind that contents themselves are no less semantically evaluable than the things they make semantically evaluable, the rather loose definition I will use is the following:

*Propositional Notion of Content*

A content is a proposition if and only if it is semantically evaluable in terms like ‘accurate’, ‘correct’, or ‘true’.

This is too thin to stand on its own. I will note three features that should make it clearer what the definition is meant to say: First, although I cannot provide clear criteria for which terms are and which are not included in the list of terms that semantically evaluate a content, one can get a feeling for by noting that these terms have obvious contraries – ‘true’ pairs with ‘false’, ‘correct’ with ‘incorrect’, ‘accurate’ with ‘inaccurate’, and so on.<sup>2</sup> They also have a certain ‘normative’ ring to them – as is most clearly the case with ‘correct’, of course.<sup>3</sup> Second, a propositional content satisfies the condition that if and only if it is correct, inaccurate, and so on, then the world will be a certain way. In other words, it draws a line between sets of possible worlds, one with which it is consistent, another with which it is inconsistent. In other words, it determines a possible world truth condition.<sup>4</sup> Third, it should involve an element akin to the copula ‘is’ and elements joined by it. In its basic form, a proposition has the form ‘this-is-so’.<sup>5</sup> In other words, it exhibits a ‘structure’ and a ‘unity’ analogous to, for instance, what is expressed by a sentence. Arguably, the three features are internally connected. Strictly, though, the third is optional, in the light of unstructured conceptions of propositions.<sup>6</sup>

Burge is an example of someone who thinks perceptual content non-propositional in the narrower sense. On the present conception, though, his contents would reasonably come out as propositional.<sup>7</sup> Most intentionalists will accept the view that perception is propositional on this notion. However, some arguably will not. That brings me to the second protest.

The second protest starts from noticing that not all forms of intentional states or (attitudes) are readily described as a state that take propositional contents – contents evaluable as accurate or inaccurate. For instance, in hating someone, one is intentionally directed at the person in

ceptual and non-conceptual contents; conceptual states can arise by a rational process of ‘conceptualisation’ from non-conceptual states.

<sup>1</sup> It is a substantial discussion within intentionalism what kind of representational contents are had by perceptual states, but for the purposes of this thesis, these discussions do not matter. Hence, I will generally speak of content as propositional. Byrne’s brief discussion may be instructive:

Contents are *propositions*: abstract objects that determine possible-world truth conditions. Three leading candidates for such abstract entities are Fregean Thoughts, Russellian propositions (structured entities with objects and properties as constituents), and Lewisian/Stalnakerian propositions (sets of possible worlds). Sometimes ‘proposition’ is reserved exclusively for the contents of the traditional propositional attitudes like belief and hope; in this usage, if these contents are Thoughts (for example), then Russellian ‘propositions’ are not propositions. In the terminology of this essay, ‘proposition’ is used more inclusively: in this usage, Russellian propositions might not be the contents of the traditional attitudes. (2005, 232)

As is clear from what I say just below, Byrne’s usage is adopted here as well.

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps ‘successfully refers’ forms a pair with ‘fails to refer’ in the same way ‘veridical of’ pairs with ‘unveridical of’. I do not want ‘refers’ to appear on the list for propositional evaluatives, though. It evaluates a subpropositional content.

<sup>3</sup> In this way, the terms on the list may be said to be ‘evaluative’ in the further sense of being ‘normative’.

<sup>4</sup> I take it that mere sets of *things* cannot be consistent or inconsistent with each other. So perhaps worlds are sets of ways for things to be, not just of things that are certain ways. This is related to the third point. I will not, however, take a stand on the structure of possible worlds.

Another point concerns deflationary conceptions of truth or veridicality. I take it that these approaches will still accept that contents *are* characterizable as veridical, perhaps even necessarily so. If so, then even deflationarily construed contents *have* veridicality conditions. It is only that these veridicality conditions play no explanatory role; giving the truth condition of a content is just another way of asserting the content.

<sup>5</sup> This is not to say that the sentence must have subject-predicate form, though of course that is the natural model.

<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Carsten Hansen for emphasising the need to clarify the use of ‘content’ and ‘propositional’.

<sup>7</sup> Burge gives a detailed exposition of perceptual contents as evaluable in terms of accuracy and as involving referential and attributional elements in his 2010, ch. 2. He does not, however, say that the contents contain a copula. Later in the work, he suggests that perceptual content may be more like a map, and has a ‘singular, noun-like structure’ (2010, 540). As a map both is assessable in terms of accuracy and determines a possible world truth condition, however, it should come out as propositional on my account.

question, but it is unclear that this can be analysed in terms of something that is accurate or inaccurate. Given that the state still involves a content, it is perhaps most naturally thought of as subpropositional, analogous to a singular term standing for the person hated. As such, it will be evaluated according to whether it successfully refers or not. Perception can seem to fit with these ‘object-directed’ attitudes; perceiving an object seems structurally more like hating an object than like believing or regretting that something is the case. It seems less apt to underwrite the epistemological role of perception, though.<sup>1</sup> If perceptual content is of this kind, then it may fail to be propositional even on the sense I have set forth.<sup>2</sup> There are other ways of rejecting the propositional approach, based on various conceptions of content. There is little use of enumerating them all.

On the main, I will assume that the content of perception is propositional in the sense given. To most of what I will say in the following, this will not matter; in the cases where it does, I note it. I now turn to the psychological notion of representation.

### 3.2 Representation

As I noted at the beginning of sect. 2.2, it seems pre-philosophically unproblematic that perception is, in some sense, a matter of having objects presented to one. It seems more problematic to describe it in terms of one’s representing these objects. In perception, the objects in our environment are simply in view; why should we think of this in terms of representation? We have, of course, just given a number of reasons for this. But to get clearer on what the claim amounts to, I will say a little more about the notion of representation.

As mentioned in the previous subsection, there is a basic distinction between representations in the logical sense and representations in the non-logical sense. Representations in the logical sense are contents. There are all kinds of representations in the non-logical sense. In the context of perception, the relevant kind is representations in the psychological sense – mental states.<sup>3</sup> The standard example is beliefs, hopes, occurrent thoughts, and other propositional attitudes. From common use, it would not be clear why such mental states should be counted as representations. By now, however, it should be clear why philosophical usage considers them to be so. Propositional attitudes essentially have content (namely, propositional content).<sup>4</sup> But what has content is itself a representation.

There are all kinds of differences between mental states, whether contentful or not. I use the term ‘mental state’ broadly, so as to cover not only states, but also acts, events, processes, or other categories which one might find useful. There are a number of problems about the individuation and character of various mental states.<sup>5</sup> Perceptions are no exception, though I don’t think the problems matter for our purposes. Hence, I speak freely of ‘perceptual states’, ‘perceptions’, and so on.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that the understanding of propositional attitudes as representations is in a certain sense a stipulation. The claim that beliefs are representations means nothing more than that they involve semantically evaluable contents (propositions, which are evaluable as

<sup>1</sup> To secure the epistemological role, one might, of course, ascribe *both* propositional and (free-standing) subpropositional content to experience.

<sup>2</sup> One philosopher who argues that we must acknowledge the existence of more generally ‘object-directed’ attitudes in addition to propositional attitudes is Crane (2001, §34, 112-4). For more general discussion of ‘object-directed’ intentional states and the understanding of reports of such states, see Forbes 2004/2010.

<sup>3</sup> The categories of states, acts, events, and so on will not matter here. I find it most natural to think of perceptions as states, though I assume one can also think of perceptions as events or processes. In contrast to perceptions, I think of them as essentially ‘occurrent’, though again there are all kinds of difficulties of precise qualification (for instance, as concerns whether perceptions are essentially ‘conscious’)

<sup>4</sup> I mean here that a belief cannot exist without having content. As in the quote from Brentano, one cannot *merely* believe, in the sense of believing without believing *something*. Moreover, beliefs are individuated in terms of their content. A state of believing that it is raining cannot be the same belief as one that it is snowing.

<sup>5</sup> An important question is whether the state is conscious, on various notions of ‘conscious’. For further discussion, see Crane 2001, §21-3, 70-7. Another important distinction in our case is that between ‘occurrent’ and ‘dispositional’ states. Reasonably, perceptions belong to the former, beliefs to the latter.

<sup>6</sup> For discussion of the category of ‘experiences’, see Byrne 2009, 431-5. In many cases, references to experiences can be rephrased. For instance, instead of asking whether S’s perceptual experience has content, one can ask whether, if S perceives O, she perceptually represents O.

true or false). Hence, unless we are eliminativists about things like beliefs, there is no question whether there are representational states. In particular, accepting that there are representations does not require commitment to something a ‘representational theory of mind’.<sup>1</sup> It is also consistent with various forms of ‘anti-representationalism’. Davidson, for instance, thinks that ‘[i]f we give up facts as entities that make sentences true, we ought to give up representations at the same time, for the legitimacy of each depends on the legitimacy of the other’ (1990, 304). But we have defined representation with reference to semantic evaluability, not to the idea that propositions or the sentences expressing them refer to, stand for, or ‘mirror’ items in the world. In rejecting correspondence theories, Davidson is obviously not opposed to the idea that beliefs can be true or false.

As we saw above, it is not clear that all representational states have propositional contents, even on the undemanding notion I have employed. Some representational states may have subpropositional contents. The question is whether perception is representational.<sup>2</sup> I claimed at that it could seem problematic from a pre-philosophical or commonsensical point of view to think of perception in terms of representation. But from the same view it would, arguably, also be problematic to count beliefs, thoughts, hopes, or regrets as representations. Once we see that the notion of representation is to an extent a stipulation, it becomes unproblematic to count beliefs, hopes and the other state as representation. Hence, the pre-philosophical worries about perception former could seem to wane too. When beliefs, hopes and the others are representations, why shouldn’t perceptions be as well?

To my mind, there are still enough differences between perceptions and thought to warrant skepticism about the idea of perception as representation. Some worries have been pointed to in the Introduction. They remain to be developed. I will look closer at some worries one can have in Chs. 3 and 4. For present, I hope that the route to intentional content which I have presented seems relatively straightforward. In the next chapter, I discuss further the idea that perceptual content captures the way things appear to the perceiver.

<sup>1</sup> Proponents of these theories will of course think it does. But at least it requires argument.

<sup>2</sup> A broader question is whether all cases of having an object present to mind is a matter of representing it – that is, whether the broader notion of intentionality of sect. 1 coincides with the narrower one.

## Ch. 2 Looks-Indexing

The previous chapter gave a picture of how many intentionalists move from the idea that perception makes objects present to mind to the idea that perceptual states represent the environment as being certain ways. The route had two steps. The first step noted that perceived objects necessarily appear a certain way, a way determined by the features of the object and the perceiver's perspective. The second step proceeded from this observation to the claim that objects are presented *as being* a certain way, and hence that they are represented a certain way.

As I said initially, intentionalists are rarely explicit about how they proceed from appearance to intentional content. More often than not, it is gestured at in what I called suggestive examples. Sect. 1 will look at some such passages. In doing so, I look at various considerations at play in the route from appearance, and delineate four broad arguments, based on the four 'moves' identified in Ch. 1, sect. 2.2. Sect. 2 provides a brief statement of 'looks-indexing'.

### 1 Perception, Phenomenology, and Presentation

Motivations for intentionalism from how things appear in experience can have a broader or a narrower focus. A broader focus is on the overall phenomenology of experience – on what it is like to perceive an environment. Here are two examples:

When you look at the page in front of you, the scene before your eyes looks some way to you. The most natural way to describe what it is like to be looking at a book, introspecting one's current evidence, is to employ the very same vocabulary as one would use to describe the scene perceived. (Martin 1994, 464)

Already contained within the idea of how things seem to the subject is the idea of a perspective or point of view on 'things'. The same is true for the idea of what it is like to have an experience. A description of what it is like to experience something visually is inevitably a description of what it is for this thing to be experienced. If you leave this out, you leave out part of what it is like for the subject, part of what makes the experience have the phenomenal character it does. (Crane 2011, 485)

It is generally agreed that there is a close relation between the content of experience and its phenomenology, but it is a matter of dispute what the relation is or how close it is. There is not, then, a straightforward route from overall phenomenology to content.<sup>1</sup>

The narrower focus is on the 'world-involving' aspects of perceptual phenomenology. I think this is how talk of how things appear is most commonly understood.<sup>2</sup> How things appear ought to be an important bit of the 'overall' phenomenology of experience as well: Experience presents itself as awareness of objects. This is something intentionalists not just acknowledge but give a prominent place.<sup>3</sup> Most intentionalists hold that there is a close correspondence between the content of experience and the way objects are presented in it.

In another way, though, the focus on how things appear is actually broader than what it is like to have an experience. For it is not clear that things don't appear a certain way in unconscious experience. Of course, philosophical *reflection* on experience will start with consciously

<sup>1</sup> One can reject supervenience one way or both. Many have followed Peacocke (1983, 8-26) in arguing that perception has 'intrinsic' or sensational properties that affect phenomenology. That obstructs a simple route from content to phenomenology. In so far as phenomenology still supervenes on content, this is not a challenge to looks-indexing. However, there are also arguments the other way. One well-known example is Block's argument from the possibility of spectrum inversion (see Fish 2010, 70-1 for a simple presentation). If intentionalists accept Block's argument, they may reject looks-indexing. However, if they think that there is still a sense in which things appear to have the same represented properties across spectrum inversion, they will be committed to looks-indexing. Another potential counterexample to looks-indexing is given by content externalism. Putnam's standard example involves environments containing properties and substances with the same appearance, yet different intrinsic constitution. Once again, however, the intentionalist may well want to say that there is a sense in which the substances are presented differently – as water to Oscar, as twater to Toscar. Recalling that intentionalists often posit modes of presentations in perception as well as in thought, we have should have different modes of presentation (given that we accept that the same mode of presentation cannot determine different referents) and hence, presumably, different presentations.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, things can look blurred. This is not supposed to index content. For present purposes, then, I will assume that this is not part of the 'world-involving' parts of phenomenology. This also seems to be the assumption among intentionalists (see, for instance, Brogaard *forth*, §4, 1). I myself am less clear that one can draw a clear line this way. Blurred print can look like of blurred vision, and vice versa.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, this is true for those who stress the 'transparency' of experience, whether as the claim that experience *primarily* is awareness of 'outer' objects and properties, or as the claim that it *exclusively* is such awareness.



accessible states. And it seems that the states that are accessible to consciousness are also phenomenally conscious, whether this is as a matter of fact or of necessity (there is more discussion of these issues in the Appendix).<sup>1</sup> But the fact that reflection must start with these states doesn't mean that things couldn't be presented a certain way in unconscious perception. In fact, it seems reasonable to suppose that they would, given that the beliefs acquired from such states will be dependent on the observable properties of the object, the perspective from which it is viewed, and the states of the perceiver, just as in ordinary perception.<sup>2</sup> In the following, I set aside unconscious perception and how one is to think of it.<sup>3</sup>

As I said, intentionalists generally think the way things look reflect how they are represented in experience. In other words, content is determined by how things look. They may also hold that there is a two-way relation; how things look may be determined by how they are represented.<sup>4</sup> For our purposes, the former direction is the interesting one. I have already quoted various statements to this effect in the Introduction (Harman, Byrne) and in Ch. 1 (Siegel). Here are some others:

[T]he notions of how things seem to the subject and how an experience represents the world to be are intimately intertwined. Suppose I am asked how things perceptually seem to me now, and I give a description of this. Then suppose I am asked how my perceptual experience represents the world to be. It is reasonable to expect that I might give the same or a similar description... After all, how things seem to me in perceptual experience is at least a matter of how the world around me is experienced, and it is plausible (though not mandatory) to think of this world as *represented* by my experience. (Crane 2011, 484-5; I have supplemented from his *ms*, 20 because of an obvious error in the published version)

On an intentional theory of perception how things appear to a perceiver is a matter of how things are represented as being by her perceptual experience, it is the intentional content of her experience. (Martin 1993, 71)

In having experience the world seems to us to be a certain way; it presents itself to our experience as containing various objects and properties. Experience, we may say, *represents* the states of affairs so presented (or apparently presented): perceptual representation is the converse of perceptual presentation. The way in which experience represents the world constitutes its *content*, the way it makes things seem. The content of an experience determines what it is *as of* – how the world *would* actually be presented *if* the experience were veridical. (McGinn 1989, 58)

The most colourful expression is surely McGinn's; it is the most unclear, too. What does it mean to say that perceptual representation is the 'converse' of perceptual presentation? I will not comment on it (though it is a nice passage); the point it makes explicit is that representation should reflect presentation. Like the other quotes, it also makes explicit that how things are presented to the perceiver in experience is a matter of how they appear or seem to me. As I have made clear already, however, intentionalists normally don't say more than this. Instead,

<sup>1</sup> Of course, one may hold that even abstract thoughts have phenomenology. In fact, I think this is plausible. There are many ways there can be something it is like to be in a certain (mental) state. But the phenomenology of perception is quite special, constituted, as it seems to be, simply by the properties of what one represents. If beliefs have phenomenology, it is not, I think, constituted by its content. Thus it contrasts with imagination.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, it seems plausible that altered colour perception can give rise to illusion in blindsight just as well as in ordinary perception. I also suppose that if interests, expectations, and so on affect ordinary perception – as it surely does at *some* level – then it could also affect blindsight. Again, then, such perception is dependent on the perspective of the perceiver.

<sup>3</sup> While I think we must accept unconscious and subconscious perception, I am more skeptical of subindividual perception. Can *parts* of a perceiver perceive? It seems to me that what can perceive are subjects, things that have a mind (of some sort). I will leave the question aside, but I note that the considerations that suggest that things appear a certain way in unconscious perception also suggest that they will appear a certain way in subindividual perception. If a part of me can perceive, then things should appear a certain way to it. (Thus, on the hypothesis that there are two visual systems, one keyed to real-time action, one to recognition and identification, things may appear differently to various parts of the perceiver, since only the latter system is susceptible to some familiar illusions such as the Ebbinghaus – or, since only the latter system yields conscious perception, that things appear differently to the perceiver and to her action-guiding parts. See Palmer 1999, 635 for the 'two visual systems hypothesis', Fish 2010, 131-2 for discussion of its philosophical significance and Byrne 2001, 201-2 for the natural claim that intentionalism is about how things consciously appear to a subject.)

<sup>4</sup> Philosophers who think phenomenology supervenes on content will reasonably accept this. If they do, then how things look and how they are represented may even be 'identical' (Tye 1995, 137; compare the quote from Martin just below); one way of arriving at pure intentionalism is to hold that phenomenology after all is exhausted by how things appear (Crane 2011, 479-80 contains useful discussion of 'strong' and 'weak' pure intentionalism).

they offer what I have called ‘suggestive examples’. I have already quoted some (Harman, Siegel, Martin). One of the more elaborate examples is provided by Peacocke:

A visual experience enjoyed by someone sitting at a desk may represent various writing implements and items of furniture as having particular relations to one another and to the experiences, and as themselves having various qualities; a sensation of small, by contrast, may have no representational content of any sort, though of course it will be of a distinctive kind. The representational content of a perception has to be given by a proposition, or set of propositions, which specifies the way the experience represents the world to be. To avoid any ambiguity, I will use the phrase ‘the content of experience’ only for the representational content of an experience, and never for a type of sensation. (1983, 5)

This is relatively elaborate. However, what the example doesn’t explain is why we must understand how things look in front of one in terms of *content* – why we should specify it in terms of a set of propositions instead of simply in terms of a set of objects. In other words, why should we specify the experience by reference to ‘items’ like *there is a pencil beside the book* and not simply to items of the sort *the pencil beside the book*? Now, one might think that this should make no difference; these items are after all closely related. However, it should be clear that while related, they belong to very different categories. For instance, only one of them can be used as a premise in an argument; only one of them (the other) can be used to write down an argument. The difference between the suggestions is just as categorical.

I have, of course, already suggested some answers in Ch. 1, sect. 2.2. For instance, only the former item can function as a premise in an inference. Thus, it can straightforwardly serve as ‘input’ to a belief. And reasonably, it makes a phenomenal difference to one’s experience whether one recognizes what one sees as a pencil and as being at the relevant location or not. However, I still think the question is a good one. In the following, I will once more discuss the ideas in play in the intentionalist’s route from how things are presented in experience to how experience represents them. The discussion will involve some overlap from the previous chapter; I apologize for this.

### 1.1 *From Presence to Presentation*

The first step on the route from appearance consists in noting that an object is perceived will invariably look or appear a certain way. To be perceptually present, it has to be presented some way or other, depending on its properties, the perspective it is perceived under, and state of the perceiver. This seems uncontroversial, and is clearly something that not only intentionalists should accept. A clear statement is found, for instance, in Chisholm:

From the statement

He sees a boat

we may infer

A boat appears some way to him. (1957, 151)

Like all other philosophers I am aware of who mention the idea, I think it is undeniable.<sup>1</sup> But accepting it doesn’t in itself commit one to content – or if it does, it is because the second step follows from it. But though it could seem natural to think that it does, it requires argument. Thus, I will not spend more time on the first step. The interesting issues concern the second.

### 1.2 *From Presentation to Representation*

The crucial step, then, is the second. As I have said, intentionalists generally proceed in a relatively intuitive way from how things are presented in an experience to its representational content. In the previous chapter, I identified four ‘moves’ that might bring one from perceptual presentation to perceptual representation, while remaining at a fairly intuitive level. In this

<sup>1</sup> Compare, for instance, Vesey 1955/1965, 83; Schellenberg 2011, 719; Tye *forth*, 2, 11.

section, I look more closely at what various philosophers have said. I have also attempted to replace the four ‘moves’ with more principled ‘arguments’ – which will be finally evaluated in Ch. 5.

### *Arguments from Appearance*

As we have seen, most intentionalist move directly from how an environment looks when it is perceived – or, more broadly, from the phenomenology of the experience – to how the environment is represented. Sometimes, the first step from the look of things is left for the perceiver to make, as when, in the ‘suggestive examples’ from Harman or Peacocke, one moves directly from a description of an experience of a certain environment to its content.<sup>1</sup> I have already provided various examples from the literature. As I noted in the Introduction, however, only in the last few years have intentionalists provided arguments for the idea – mainly in response to Travis’ criticism.

One argument, due to Siegel, should immediately remind one of the first ‘move’. Its first premise is the following: ‘All visual experiences present clusters of properties as being instantiated’ (2010, 45). Siegel’s argument as a whole consists of four premises, but this premise is its starting point. It is hard to understand what it is for a property to be ‘presented as being instantiated’ except as saying that it figures in experience in a way that will make it figure ‘other than it is’ if it isn’t instantiated. This will reasonably lead to a notion as accuracy, as I discuss in the next section. But how does one arrive at the premise? Reasonably, one can arrive at it by reflection on how things are presented, as in the previous chapter.<sup>2</sup> One may also try to arrive at it by an argument starting from the uncontroversial premise that when things are presented to mind in perception, they are also presented a certain way. The second premise would be the one we looked at in the previous chapter, that when things are presented a certain way, they are presented *as being* a certain way. One might then arrive at Siegel’s premise by reflection on what it is to be presented as being certain way.

Granting the first premise, what supports the second? I have already suggested one idea. When things appear a certain way, they also appear *to be* a certain way – and if so, it reasonably appears *that* they are a certain way. Now, if being presented a certain way is understood as appearing a certain way (or in analogy with it), then it is natural to think that being presented is also being present *to be* a certain way, more idiomatically expressed as being presented *as being* a certain way. And now the way seems short to Siegel’s claim that properties are presented as being instantiated. For instance, if a shirt is presented as being yellow, then it appears that it is yellow, and so the property of being yellow figures in experience as being instantiated. And this could seem quite obvious from reflection on experience. The properties in experience aren’t ‘neutral’ with respect to whether they are instantiated or not.<sup>3</sup> What would it be to be aware of a property as being uninstantiated? One might know that a property isn’t instantiated, but if one is aware of it, it is after all ‘right there’. For instance, when I see snow-capped mountain glooming red at sunset, the property of being red is presented as being instantiated.<sup>4</sup>

Now, it is not clear that the analogy with appearing to be a certain way holds. Words like ‘appear’, ‘looks’ and ‘seem’ are ordinary words, a word like ‘presented’ is not (in this context).<sup>5</sup> It

<sup>1</sup> Another clear example is Strawson 1979/1988, 94-5.

<sup>2</sup> Siegel arrives at it, roughly, from the premise that we never perceive anything as a bare particular (2010, 46). Properties clearly figure in experience. Siegel thinks any view that accepts this commits itself to intentionalism. She thus argues against non-intentionalist versions of naïve realism as either committing themselves to a ‘bare particular’ view or (implicitly) to intentionalism (2010, 64-70). She then argues that when properties figure in experience, experience is not ‘neutral’ on whether the properties are instantiated (2010, 47). That fits with what I say below.

<sup>3</sup> The idea that experience isn’t ‘neutral’ with respect to the properties presented is further developed in Ch. 3, sect. 1.1, when I discuss the idea that perceptual representing is ‘committed’.

<sup>4</sup> One might also compare with the sense datum theorist’s ‘phenomenal principle’ that when something appears red in experience, then some (immediate) object *is* red (compare Robinson 1994, 32, Fish 2010, 3). Though most other theorists deny this principle, it seems reasonable that properties appearing in experience appear to be instantiated.

<sup>5</sup> One might note that ‘presented’ is also close to ‘given’; as in Ch. 1 sect. 2, how things are presented to mind is how they are given (or give themselves) to mind. But we cannot analogously move from ‘given a in certain way’ to being ‘given as being in a certain way’.

is uncontroversial that when things appear a certain way, then they appear to be that way. But though one may accept a similar inference from being presented a certain way to being presented as being that way, the further idea that this properties is presented ‘as being instantiated’ remains unclear. Still, Siegel’s premise can seem intuitive.

#### *Arguments from Accuracy*

The idea that experiences are inaccurate or inaccurate is also, reasonably, implicit in Siegel’s idea that experience presents properties as being instantiated. If they are presented as being instantiated, then something goes wrong if they aren’t instantiated. Thus, Siegel follows up her first premise by two further premises: First, if experience presents properties as being instantiated, then things are as the experience presents them only if the properties presented are instantiated. Second, if things are as the experience presents them only if the properties are instantiated, then the experience has corresponding accuracy conditions, which are conveyed to the subject (2010, 45; I have simplified slightly). From the premise of the previous subsection, it follows that experiences have accuracy conditions. Siegel offers the following characterization of a variety of intentionalism which she calls ‘the property view’:<sup>1</sup>

All experiences involve relations to properties presented in experience, and are accurate only if those properties are instantiated. (2010, 71)

While Siegel’s considerations are based on what it is for properties to be ‘presented’ in experience, most intentionalists prefer a more direct route to establish that appearing a certain way to a perceiver can be evaluated in terms of accuracy:<sup>2</sup>

Often the way something appears is the way it is. The red, round tomato looks red and round; the sour milk tastes sour. But the senses are fallible. Sometimes the way something appears is different from the way it is. Appearances can fail to match reality. (McLaughlin 1998, 276)

Similarly, Tye develops ‘the simple observation that if I see an object, it must look some way to me, and if an object looks some way to me, then intuitively it is experienced *as* being some way’ (*forth*, 2) as follows:

In cases of illusion, the perceived object appears other than it is. In such cases, intuitively, the perceptual experience is inaccurate. And it is so precisely because the object is not as it appears to be. (Tye *forth*, 2; compare 11)

I think there are three broad assumptions in play here. First, things can be or not be as they look. Second, being (or not) as one looks has to be explained in terms of accuracy (or inaccuracy). Third, the notion of accuracy in play here is a semantic notion. This can all seem unproblematic. Again, however, I think there are problems under the surface. For the present, though, I simply note the considerations; I return to them in Ch. 5.

#### *Arguments from Illusion*

The idea that experiences are accurate or inaccurate is closely linked to that of perceptual illusion. Illusion is often defined in terms of how things look:

An illusion here may be defined, with A.D. Smith, as ‘any perceptual situation in which a physical object is actually perceived, but in which that object perceptually appears other than it really is’. (Crane 2005/2011, §1.2; the quote is from Smith 2002, 23)

Sticking with vision for simplicity, one veridically perceives an object iff one sees it, and it is the way it appears or looks. One non-veridically perceives, or is illuded by, an object iff one sees it, and it is not the way it appears or looks.’ (Byrne 2009, 436)

<sup>1</sup> The reason there is only an ‘only if’ is that the possibility of veridical hallucination means that the properties presented as being instantiated can be instantiated without the perception being fully accurate (2010, 37-8).

<sup>2</sup> More often, intentionalists just assume that experiences are accurate or inaccurate. For instance, in setting forth the sense datum theorist’s ‘phenomenal principle’, Fish ‘begins with the observation that different perceptions can be more or less *correct* or *successful*’ (2010, 3). What he says at other places suggests he doesn’t speak on his own behalf when he uses the word ‘observation’ here, though (nor, of course, does he endorse the ‘phenomenal principle’).

As noted in Ch. 1, there are two sides to the arguments from illusions. The first is that there is a need to explain the phenomenology of experience in illusion and (in particular) in hallucination. The second idea is that illusion and hallucination can mislead us, rendering our beliefs blameless. Both ideas are related to the look of things. Quite different objects can look just the same – and given a clever set-up, things can look the same to you even if there is no *thing* there to be seen. Suppose that, while you are looking at a grazing deer through the window, someone – an evil scientist, to be sure – gradually and very ingeniously replaced the blank glass with a picture of grazing deer instead. She might even use a computer to directly stimulate your retina in the as before (suitably connected with your movements, of course). We cannot merely cite the deer viewed from a specific angle. There is no deer to be seen and shape the phenomenology of your current experience. And unless you possess information to the contrary, the experience will mislead you: You will still innocently believe that there is a deer in front of you.

This dramatizes one important idea behind the claim that experiences have accuracy conditions. Your experience remains the same, at least qualitatively the same. It is easy, and tempting, to say that the experience remains *numerically* the same, or at any rate of the numerically same (basic) *kind*.<sup>1</sup> In other words, the idea is that we must understand the experience according to what is in common between the cases; this ‘common factor’ describes the fundamental nature of the experience.<sup>2</sup> If the experience is of the same kind, then we can seem forced to say that it, strictly speaking, consists merely of the results of stimulus on your retina (or on items still further inside your head) – ‘sensation’ of some form. This is all that is present in the ‘bad’ case. The liberating alternative is to say that while your experience no longer relates you to the deer, it still *represents* the deer: It appears to you that there is a deer in front of you. Experience remains basically the same across the cases, but in one case it is inaccurate, in another, it is accurate.<sup>3</sup> This is clearly an important motivation for intentionalism, as Crane notes:

The basic idea behind intentionalism ... is that experience could be essentially the same way without the objects of experience being the way they seem to be. Or: concrete reality need not be the way it seems to be in order to be experienced as being this way. It is this simple idea – the idea which lies behind the arguments from illusion and hallucination – which motivates intentionalists to treat experience as essentially representational. Experience may not seem like a representation, they say, but *if* an experience can be essentially the same despite the change or absence of its objects, then a theory of perception should recognize that this is what it really is. (*forth*, 21)

The intentionalist’s account of illusions and hallucination seems both phenomenologically and epistemologically apt: Phenomenologically, nothing *else* has to be present to mind; you’re not related to a sense datum or some configuration in your visual field. The phenomenology of your experience is constituted by your still representing the environment as being the same way as it was a moment earlier. Epistemically, there is a simple explanation of how experience misleads. You simply take the experience ‘at face value’; unsuspecting, you merely let the content of your belief be determined by the content of your experience. A sense datum theory, by contrast, faces problems in accounting for the acquisition of beliefs in both ‘good’ and ‘bad’ cases.

As before, I will not raise doubts about the argument. I think there are several reasonable worries, but I also think that the account of illusion is one of intentionalist’s main strengths. The worries mainly concern what it is for experience to represent things as being a certain way.

<sup>1</sup> What does ‘basic’ mean here? This is not the place to get into discussion. I restrict myself to two notes, just to avoid initial misunderstanding: First, there *is* of course a difference between the cases: One is veridical, one falsidical. So at some level, the states are of different kinds (at least on a liberal policy on the conception of kinds). The claim is that this difference doesn’t affect ‘what the states are’: For instance, we could accept that lefthanders and righthanders are different in kind, but being right-handed, as opposed to being human, does not belong to one’s very identity – ‘that which one is’, as we could say (though not without metaphysical problems lurking around the corners). Second, a ‘basic’ difference between two things doesn’t mean that they cannot be species of a genus. Cats and dogs are of different basic kinds, though clearly, from a different perspective, they are of the same kind – they are, for instance, mammals (and from some perspectives, being a mammal will be more ‘basic’ than being a cat).

<sup>2</sup> Reasonably, this is the main argument against the simple view sketched in the Introduction. As a form of naïve realism, it is committed to denying that the cases form a common basic kind, thus accepting disjunctivism.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, the ‘simple view’ described in the Introduction is inconsistent with the present considerations. Clearly, it must deny the ‘common factor’ view of experience.

For present purposes, the point is just that the argument from illusion can be located along the route from appearance.<sup>1</sup>

### *Arguments from Epistemology*

The other main argument for intentionalism is the argument from epistemology. This is present in a number of writers. Obviously, perception is a main source of knowledge – perhaps the only source. Intentionalism seems well equipped to accommodate this. As Siegel puts it, ‘the notion of content can straightforwardly accommodate the idea that there is such a thing as the “testimony of the senses”’ (2005/2011, §2); that experiences ‘serve as input to belief’ (2010, 27). More generally, perception seems a prerequisite for contentful thought at all.<sup>2</sup> Thus we have:

[P]erception plays a critical role in enabling us to find out about and navigate our environment. How could it do this if it were not the case that it carried information about our environment? (Fish 2010, 8)

We can explain why the subject’s perceptual beliefs have the content that they do, and why her intentional actions are performed in the way that they are, by positing a corresponding content to the perceptual states which give rise to those beliefs and control those actions. (Martin 1994, 464)

Much can be said about the way intentionalists conceive of the relation between experience and belief.<sup>3</sup> I will be brief, and focus on relating the epistemic issues to the ideas of presentation and appearance. The main point was already in play in the foregoing: Things’ being represented as being a certain way is a matter of their looking a certain way. When we base our beliefs on experience and ‘take over’ the content of it, we base our beliefs on how things look. The idea, then, is that we base our beliefs on ‘appearances’.

We have to take as our epistemological starting point the way things are presented to us. So stated, the idea seems rather trivial. A more interesting aspect of it is the way it captures the ‘passivity’ of experience. We are not responsible for how things are presented in experience. Things merely appear a certain way to us. Belief, by contrast, is ‘active’; it is a response to how things appear, a response that (to some extent) lies within the domain of our responsibility. McDowell, who has long stressed the epistemological role of experience, writes:

Having things appear to one a certain way is already... a mode of actual operation of conceptual capacities.

This mode of operation of conceptual capacities is special because, on the side of the subject, it is passive, a reflection of sensibility... What is needed is that the very same capacities can also be exploited in active judgments. And what secures this identification, between capacities that are operative in appearances and capacities that are operative in judgments, is the way appearances are rationally linked into spontaneity at large: the way appearances can constitute reasons about objective reality. (1994/1996, 62)

In experience, according to McDowell, one is simply ‘saddled’ with content (1994/1996, 10) – the content that serves as reasons for belief.<sup>4</sup> For many epistemologists, especially those with a bent for internalism, such considerations are important.<sup>5</sup> Pryor is another example:

Your experiences represent the world to you as being a certain way, and the way they represent the world as being is their propositional content. Now, surely, *it’s looking to you as if the world is a certain way* is not a kind of state for which you need any justification. (Pryor 2001, 101n10)

<sup>1</sup> For instance, it is not clear how the phenomenology of ordinary experience can be grounded in representation. Nor is it clear what it means to for experience to have a ‘face value’. More fundamentally, it can seem that a ‘common kind’ threatens to cut the mind off from the world: It is not reassuring to hear that our normal perceptual states are of the same basic kind as it would be in mere hallucination.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, McDowell stresses that when he is concerned with ‘how experience can function as a tribunal’, he is not just concerned with empirical knowledge, as ‘a particular verdict ... that reaches some high degree of favourableness’, but by ‘how experience can return any verdict on experience at all’ (1994/1996, xiii; compare 3-7, 14-8).

<sup>3</sup> In particular, there has been a large debate about whether experience should be credited with conceptual content in order for them to serve as ‘reasons’ or ‘grounds’ for belief, as McDowell 1994/1996 famously argued. For useful discussion, see Brewer 2005 and Byrne 2005.

<sup>4</sup> Clearly, there is more to the passage. In particular, McDowell demands that perceptual representational capacities must be conceptual for appearances to constitute such reasons. As before, I set such issues aside.

<sup>5</sup> For similar ideas, see Martin 1993, Steup *ms*, Pryor 2005; compare also Fish 2010, 81.

In the brief, we base our beliefs on how things look. How things look serves as the relevant input to belief. Such looks can be inaccurate, and in such cases, we have perceptual illusions. This may provide us with (subjective) warrant for mistaken beliefs. But there is no use asking for further reasons for perceptual representings; they merely reflect the ways things look to us, when we face them.

Again, I refrain from commenting on the picture just sketched. The epistemological considerations will concern me at length in the rest of the thesis. Initially, the epistemological picture of intentionalism can appear quite attractive.<sup>1</sup> An immediate question, however, is how the content of perception can have a *force* capable of justifying belief. This is the topic of the next chapter.

## 2 Looks-Indexing

As I noted in the Introduction, the idea that the content an experience is given by the way things look in it is the focus of attack in Travis' article. He calls the idea 'looks-indexing':

The idea is that one could tell the representational content of an experience by the way, in it, things looked. I will call such content looks-indexed. (2004, 63)

The foregoing should give a clear illustration of the main idea. Intentionalists generally proceed naturally from the way things look to the content of experience, or at any rate move quite freely between talk about how things look and talk about such content. In particular, content is determined by how things appear to the subject. As I have also indicated, the relation may go both ways; how things appear to a subject is determined by how she represents it to be.<sup>2</sup> For our purposes, it is the former relation which matters. Content is determined by appearance; 'the representational content of an experience can be read off the way, in it, things looked' (2004, 69). If we have a specification of how things look to a perceiver, then we can also specify the perceptual content of her experience. Now, though it follows from that claim, the idea that looks determines content should perhaps not be identified with it, since it may be held that neither how things look nor perceptual content can be fully specified in words (not even demonstrative words). A simpler route, taken by many of the authors above, was to give a rough outline of a perceptual scene, leaving it to the reader to imagine how things might look to the perceiver and arrive at the intuitive content of such a perception for herself. The content would be how things would have to be in order to be as they look.

Travis suggests that intentionalists think looks-indexing is what makes perceptual content 'recognizable' by the perceiver. The idea is not clear, and though some intentionalists may have something like it in mind, it will not figure in my discussion. I will explain this briefly in Ch. 3, sect. 1.4, in the context of discussing the relevant idea that content is 'recognizable'.

I will not give a more specific characterization of 'looks-indexing'. For my purposes, it is simply a variant of the idea that presentation determines representation. This is not a very clear thesis; it is more a guiding idea in standard forms of intentionalism, playing an important role in several lines of reasoning leading up to it – as this chapter has given various examples of.

<sup>1</sup> In particular, it seems attractive as compared with sense datum theories. But it also compares favourably with belief acquisition theories; beliefs are not merely formed 'blindly' in response to stimulus. Relatedly, the view can preserve a modest foundationalism, where experiences provide a defeasible ground for our responses to them.

<sup>2</sup> As before, this will require either a 'pure' version of intentionalism or a notion of appearing that is restricted to 'world-involving' aspects of phenomenology.

## Ch. 3 Perceiving as a Propositional Attitude

Broadly, intentionalism understands a perceptual experience as ‘akin to propositional attitudes such as belief (Martin 1992, 745); it is ‘a matter of a subject representing her environment as being a certain way’ (Schellenberg 2011, 715). In this chapter, I have a closer look at the propositional attitude or (more broadly) representational state involved. In particular, much time will be spent on discussion the *force* of perceptual representation. While previous chapters have aimed at presenting a relatively attractive picture, the question of the force of perceptual representation is the expression of a worry. The intentionalist picture can appear innocent, especially as compared with the more contentious pictures presented by sense datum or belief acquisition theories. However, I think some of its features are more puzzling when viewed up close.

The chapter has two main parts. The first part elucidates four ‘elements’ of intentionalism, as Travis describes them, thus bringing the structure of perceptual representing into clearer view. The second section raises the worry mentioned. The discussion will not be conclusive. My aim is merely to point to what I think are puzzling features of the intentionalist picture.

### 1 Four Elements

This section sets forth and discusses four ‘elements’ that Travis identifies as ‘non-controversially part’ (2004, 58) of standard intentionalism. Strictly, not all intentionalists will be committed to these elements, but I think Travis is right that they are uncontroversially part of all standard forms of intentionalism. The elements mark general features of the standard intentionalist picture – its ‘structure’. Philosophers committed to the broad picture can fill in the details in a variety of ways, but such more specific features will not be my topic.

The elements mark necessary conditions on standard intentionalism. A position that lacks one or more of them will at best count as deviant. (I will use ‘element’ and ‘condition’ interchangeably, while sometimes preferring one or the other for emphasis.) The main case of a deviant view is one that denies that content is propositional even in the broad sense given in Ch. 1, sect. 3.1. Such views may deny that perception represents something as being the case in the first place, since they may deny that perceptual contents have accuracy conditions. It should also be noted that belief theories are not committed to the elements – though as noted in the Introduction, such theories do not count as intentionalist on my usage.

The elements are not independent of each other; as such, the term may be slightly misleading (if ‘elements’ must be capable of independent existence). One might group them differently, and perhaps regard one as an aspect of the other. I will, however, stick to Travis’ useful exposition.

I spend more place on the elements than Travis does. That is in part because I think some of his claims can be put more clearly, in part because I think the issues they raise are complex and interesting. Slightly rephrased from Travis’ summary (2004, 63), the elements are the following:

- (1) Perceptual experience represents something as being the case
- (2) Perceptual experience has a face value
- (3) Perceptual representation is not autorepresentation
- (4) Perceptual content should be conveyed to the perceiver

In the next four subsections, I discuss the elements in turn, still following Travis’ main order, though diverging from his presentation at some points.

#### 1.1 First Element: Perceptual Experience Represents Something as being the Case

In setting forth his first element, Travis first discusses the relevant notion of ‘representation’, setting aside some notions that are irrelevant. He then goes on to discuss the qualification that the representation in question is of something as being the case.



### *Representation as Propositional*

As I noted in Ch. 1, there are many forms of representation – in Travis’ words, “[r]epresents”, and “representation”, have many uses’ (2004, 58). Not all forms or uses require content. What kind of representation is involved in perception, on the intentionalist picture?

A person can represent another at a meeting. She can also (and simultaneously) represent a firm, a firm also represented by the logo on her suit. Such examples can be set aside. While many philosophers have construed perception as involving ‘representations’ in ways that may fit such examples (say, as awareness of inner objects that ‘stand for’ outer objects), it is not the way modern intentionalists construe them. As I have made clear, the contents of perception are not among its objects.

Travis notes another form of representation: what Grice called ‘natural meaning’. An example is tree rings ‘representing’ the age of a tree. The 24 tree rings mean that it is 24 years old. Such forms of representation can seem more unproblematic. First, natural meaning is everywhere and seems – at least in contrast to other forms of representation – relatively unmysterious.<sup>1</sup> For that reason, philosophers keen to ‘naturalize’ meaning and intentionality have looked to it – philosophers of perception are no exception. Second, and more relevantly, natural meaning allows us to know things in a way that may seem partly analogous to the way perception allows us to know things. The tree rings ‘inform’ us that things are a certain way. As we have seen, one broad motivation for intentionalism is that our senses should ‘inform’ us as well. This potential analogy may be one reason why Travis mentions natural meaning. Travis sets natural meaning aside because it is factive (2004, 66). Another reason for setting it aside is that it isn’t ‘conveyed’ to the perceiver, as I will return to in discussing the fourth element.

Instead of thinking of perceptual representations in terms of ‘inner’ items standing for ‘outer’, or of facts naturally meaning other facts, perceptual representations should, as we have seen, be thought of as the states themselves: Perceiving *is* representing (thus, it is a representation in the psychological sense). For it to do that, it must have a certain content (a representation in the logical sense). In this, perceivings are analogous to believings and sayings. They have contents akin to what we can believe or say. By now, this should be exceedingly familiar. Perceptual states are propositional, in the broad sense of ‘propositional’ defined in Ch. 1, sect. 3.1. As I have stressed, it doesn’t matter much what kind of content perception is taken to have beyond this (such details belong to the optional ways of filling in the intentionalist picture). What matters is that the perceptual content is representational content with accuracy conditions – in other words, that the contents, and so the states that have them, are semantically evaluable.

### *Representation as Stative*

The comparison with believing and saying provides the material for spelling out the idea that perception represents something ‘as being the case’. The analogy between perception and belief consists not just in their having representational content. In that respect, perception is analogous to all representational states, also hopes, intentions, desires, and regrets. The second idea implicit in the analogy with belief is that perceptual representings are what we, following Martin, can call ‘stative’. Martin introduces the distinction with reference to a ‘possible ambiguity in the way that philosophers talk about representation’ (2002, 386):

On one way of talking about representation, beliefs and judgements both count as representational, while such states as hopes and desires do not...

But in talking of representational or intentional content, one might have a broader sense of the notion in mind. One on which desires, hopes, and nonindicative sentences all count as representational as well, since they are all about (or of, or involve reference to) objects, properties and states of affairs, even though they do not present anything as

<sup>1</sup> Roughly, there is natural meaning wherever there are causal, or more generally counterfactual, relations. Perhaps there is natural meaning even in quite unnatural realms, such as mathematics. One might well say that the fact that the number 1 is odd means that it is even.

being the case. Let us call this the *semantic* conception of representation, and the narrower conception of representation we can call the *stative* conception. (2002, 386-7)

The idea of intentional states that represent the world ‘statively’ is best brought out by considering intentional states that don’t.<sup>1</sup> One example is hoping. Just as one can believe that it will rain, one can hope that it will rain. But unlike believing it, hoping that it will rain doesn’t represent it ‘as being the case’ that it will. What is hoped can of course be the case, but the hope doesn’t as such ‘say’ that it is the case. By contrast, perception is clearly thought to ‘say’ that what it represents is the case. We might perhaps even say that perceptual representing ‘presents’ what it represents.<sup>2</sup>

The distinction between ‘semantic’ and ‘stative’ representation is still merely intuitive – it is much clearer what beliefs and hopes are than what stativeness is.<sup>3</sup> When one hopes that it will rain, one clearly hopes that it will be the case that it will rain.<sup>4</sup> In that sense, even a hope represents what it represents ‘as being the case’. Nevertheless, there clearly is some distinction here to be drawn. One way of making the intuitive contrast somewhat clearer is to say that beliefs and perceptions are of a ‘truth-evaluable kind’ (cf. Nes 2008, 68). Siegel explains:

In the case of belief, there are two things that can be true or false: the belief state, and the belief contents. Contrast the case of hope. If you hope that winter ends soon, your hope itself is neither true or false, but the content that winter soon ends is. According to the Content View, experiences are more like beliefs than hopes, in that they involve two things that can be free of error: the experience itself, and its content. (2010, 33)

Siegel thinks that belief states are literally true or false.<sup>5</sup> Whether one accepts that claim or not, it seems clear that they are truth-evaluable in the sense that they miss their ‘aim’ if they are false. In a familiar slogan, ‘belief aims at truth’.<sup>6</sup> Various intentional states (though not all) ‘aim’ at something. Thus, they have ‘conditions of success’, the fulfilment of which is a requirement for the state to count as successful. Another way of putting it is to say that they have ‘direction of fit’.<sup>7</sup> Perceptual states have a ‘mind-to-fit-world’ direction of fit.<sup>8</sup> Like beliefs and assertions, the perceptual state is successful if the world is as it ‘says’ that it is.

Perhaps such ways of talking do not bring us much further from the intuitive contrast between hopes and beliefs. Either way, talk about perceptual states as ‘aiming’ at truth brings out another dimension of the distinction between ‘stative’ and merely ‘semantic’ representation.

### *Representation as Committed*

Contrasting perception with hopes brings out the ‘presentational’ character of perceptual representation. However, there are states that represent things in a ‘presentational’ manner without being ‘stative’ in the sense Martin intends. In imagining something, for instance, I clearly imagine what I imagine as being the case. And in that sense, the state can be said to exhibit a kind of

<sup>1</sup> I think ‘stative’ and ‘semantic’ applies to states rather than contents. The question here is how to think about force and content. I’m not entirely sure about this, but it is at any rate safer to think of the difference as one in the state, since even if the difference should in the first instance be one in content, it would carry over to the states individuated by them.

<sup>2</sup> Heck (2000, 509) uses this term. A belief thus ‘presents’ something as being a certain way; a hope does not. There may, perhaps, be a temptation to think that the present formulation that ‘experience presents X as being a certain way’ is parallel with that of the route from appearance. Perhaps it is, but then it is clearly not parallel to the simpler formulation ‘experience presents X a certain way’. Again, both the locutions and the issues are unclear.

<sup>3</sup> For more discussion of (what is in effect) the distinction between ‘semantic’ and ‘stative’ representation, see Heck 2000, 507-11, Pryor 2005, 187-8, and Glüer 2009, 306-7. Unlike Martin, Pryor, and Heck, Glüer goes on to argue that stative representations can only be beliefs (2009, 317-21). In this, she follows Davidson, discussed in sect. 2.1 below.

<sup>4</sup> This should be so even if the propositions that it will rain and that it is the case that it will rain should be distinct.

<sup>5</sup> As before, this should be understood broadly, so as to include other notions of semantic evaluability.

<sup>6</sup> Not everybody accepts the idea that belief aims at truth, and even if it is true, it is a substantial issue how to interpret it. My discussion remains at the surface. In particular, I do not aim to convince those skeptical of the idea.

<sup>7</sup> I take it that whatever has conditions of satisfaction has direction of fit, and vice versa (Searle 1983, 10-11, 35).

<sup>8</sup> Again, unfortunately, that term also is not all too clear. It is often explained along the lines of Anscombe’s example of a shopper and a detective (1957, §32, 56-7). The shopper has a list telling him what to buy. The detective stalking on him, on the other hand, has a list on which he notes what he buys. Now, there will be a marked difference in the conditions of success of their respective endeavour. The shopper is successful if he gets what his list says. The detective is successful if he manages to list all and only the things the shopper bought. Intentional action(‘making true’) has a world-to-fit-mind direction of fit. Belief (‘taking true’) has a mind-to-fit-world direction of fit. Only when there is a mind-world direction of fit can there be a mistake in the representing.

mind-world direction of fit. It is less clear, however, that we can say that it has conditions of satisfaction. When we imagine that things are a certain way, we in a way ‘say’ that things are that way – we ‘present’ them as being that way. Thus, imagining ‘aims’ at truth in a sense hoping does not. But it is a weak sense. States of imagination do not purport to ‘say’ how things are, though things are a certain way ‘according’ to them. In Travis’ terms, what is missing is a *commitment* to things being that way (2004, 61).<sup>1</sup>

In other words, a belief has what Velleman calls a ‘double relation to truth’ (1992, 13). It is not only that the belief represents in a way that ‘presents’ things as being the case; it also ‘commits’ to things’ really being that way. If things aren’t that way, the state undergoes some form of failure. Again, the point is intuitive, but harder to pin down.<sup>2</sup> This is how Velleman explains it:

The double relation between belief and truth can thus be expressed, somewhat obscurely, in the thought that believing a proposition entails regarding it as something that one is right to regard as true... Belief can thus be conceived as having a constitutive predicate that expresses its own correctness. (1992, 15)

Whether this expresses it well or not, the present point is that the double relation to truth is characteristic of perceptions as well as beliefs. Perceptions do not merely represent things in the ‘passive’ manner in which imagining does. So Martin’s ‘stative’ implies ‘committed’, as when he says that we must ‘construe “representational” in the narrower, stative, sense which applies to states such as beliefs and judgements which involve taking things to be a certain way’ (2002, 391). It is noteworthy that Martin expresses the idea of commitment with reference to *taking* things to be a certain way. Though this is indeed natural, it doesn’t fit readily with perceptual representing. Perceptual representing is not a matter of taking things to be a certain way. It is supposed to provide ‘input’ to such taking. For all that, however, it must be committed.<sup>3</sup> As Travis says:

Only where there is committed representation can one be represented to. Only then can one have it on any authority that things are thus and so... With uncommitted representation, there is nothing either to accept or reject; nothing purportedly so. (2004, 62)

Though it is possible confuse imagination and perception, and thus come to believe that things are as one imagines them to be, that is not ‘acceptance’ in the perceptually relevant sense; it is rather like believing one’s wish in giving in to wishful thinking.<sup>4</sup> The idea of committed states that are not committed to by their owner will be of importance in the following.

#### *Are Intentionalists Committed to the First Element?*

A few detractors aside, intentionalists generally accept the idea that perceptual representing is propositional (in the broad sense I delineated in Ch. 1). When they agree that content is propositional, they will also, generally, accept that perceiving is ‘stative’. Could one accept that perception were only weakly ‘presentational’, like imaginings? That seems unlikely. It seems that perception must involve some kind of commitment. First, it is quite unclear how perception can ground belief if it doesn’t ‘say’ that things (really) are the way they are represented to

<sup>1</sup> Compare also Burge 2003, 542 – though he speaks of commitments of the *visual system* (compare his 2009, 295).

<sup>2</sup> Another attempt to make the point is to consider the different roles of premises and assumptions in reasoning. A premise expresses not just a content but a *commitment* to that content on part of the reasoner. An assumption does not mark such a commitment. It is, of course, *assumed*, thus fit for figuring in reasoning, in contrast to hopes, say. In other words, it is weakly stative. But I cannot argue from a mere assumption to a conclusion. That would be to proceed to a commitment from something that is not committed.

<sup>3</sup> Yet another comparison is with (realistic) paintings. A painting represents things as being a certain way. The picture ‘presents’ things as being that way. Yet nothing in the painting makes it *fail* if things aren’t as painted. For there to be such failure, I must at least treat the painting as purporting to report how things are. Many contexts make that intelligible. For all that, the picture doesn’t by itself ‘say’ anything.

<sup>4</sup> One may perhaps still doubt Travis’ claim. Cannot, for instance, *what* pictures or maps ‘tell us’ be accepted or rejected, even if they don’t ‘say’ it? I think Travis is absolutely right here, though the point is left intuitive and not easy to express. One problem about maps and pictures is of course that they are ‘outer’ items, having ‘derived’ intentionality. But the real problem is deeper. One cannot accept or reject even ‘inner’ images; they do not ‘say’ that things are a certain way. While one can, for instance, use imagination to find out things, such as when one imagines a scene and ‘notices’ that X must have property F, the ‘image’ (if there is such a thing) is not in itself something that can be accepted or rejected, no more than an outer image can. Everything hinges on how I *treat* it.

be. Imaginings do not ground beliefs. Second, it seems that phenomenology demands stative representing. If experience is representation, it is quite unlike imagining in that it isn't 'neutral': It *purports* to reveal the environment.<sup>1</sup> One detractor, however, is Pautz, who in a recent article suggests that perceptions may lack mind-world direction of fit:

As I have formulated intentionalism, it would be a mistake to say that intentionalism entails that experiences themselves can be accurate or inaccurate, because it says nothing about 'direction of fit'. Intentionalism says only that experiences are relations to contents. But some relations to contents, for instance *desiring* and *entertaining in thought*, do not have a mind to world direction of fit. So even when they have a false content, one cannot say that the states themselves are inaccurate or in error. Maybe it is the same with experiences. They tend to induce beliefs because they have a rich phenomenology. But maybe, unlike beliefs, they themselves do not have a mind to world direction of fit. Certainly, on standard explications of mind to world direction of fit in terms of sensitivity to evidence, they lack a mind to world direction of fit. In that case, even when they have false contents, experiences themselves cannot be said to be literally false or in error. Error only enters the picture when the subject takes the experience at face value and forms a false belief. (2009, 498; I have omitted a subscript on Pautz' term 'accuracy')

This is interesting, but radical. I doubt that many intentionalists would agree that perceptual representations of one's environment are like mere entertainings, not to mention hopes. While Pautz is right to point out that experiences fail the test for mind-world direction of fit in terms of sensitivity to evidence, experiences are normally supposed to 'track' facts in the environment. In that sense, experiences seem to be sensitive to the facts in much the way beliefs are. Either way, it seems phenomenologically and (in particular) epistemologically problematic to say that perception doesn't represent what it represents as (really) being the case: Even if I can come to believe that things are as I merely entertain that they are, it is doubtful that the relation can be rational.<sup>2</sup> A related point is that it is hard to see what it could mean to 'take the experience at face value' in such cases: There is nothing to accept or reject. But this leads me to the second element.

### 1.2 *Second element: Perceptual Experience has a Face Value*

The second element is perhaps more a phrase than a well-developed idea. But as a phrase it is quite common. And again the idea is intuitive. As we have seen, experiences are stative in that there is a way things are 'according' to it. This gives us a first understanding of the second element: The face value of an experience is how it presents things as being. In one sense, the content of a state can be said to be its face value. But it is not *merely* that content. We only get a face value when the state 'says' that things are that way.<sup>3</sup> Hoping has no face value; neither has imagining.<sup>4</sup>

It is part the idea of a face value that one can accept it or reject it (or remain agnostic).<sup>5</sup> This is how McDowell expresses the idea:

*That things are thus and so* is the content of experience, and it can also be the content of a judgment. It becomes the content of a judgment if the perceiver decides to take the experience at face value. (McDowell 1994/1996, 26; quoted in Travis 2004, 59)

Thus, perception also contrasts with belief, the paradigmatic committed state. Beliefs do not have a face value; in this respect, they are like hopes and imaginings. In other words, while a

<sup>1</sup> Or could one hold that the only difference them lies in the vivacity of the phenomenology? It seems not. Even very faint experiences have the phenomenology of really presenting the environment to the subject (cf. Glüer 2009, 307).

<sup>2</sup> Of course, it can be rational to base a belief on the fact (belief) that I entertain something. It cannot be rational to base a belief that P on an entertaining that P, as it would be in the case of perception.

<sup>3</sup> As Travis says, 'only a committed representation can have a face value' (2004, 62).

<sup>4</sup> Metaphorically, we can say that while imagining has a 'face' but no 'value', hoping lacks both. A value requires a commitment, a face requires a 'presentation'. Now, we can certainly use the phrase 'face value' in a way that would fit hopes and entertainings as well as beliefs. As we just saw, Pautz does. But it seems far removed from how most intentionalists have used the phrase to suggest that one can 'take a hope at face value'.

<sup>5</sup> What is it for someone to take an experience at face value? The idea is simple:

In particular, we have a reasonable grip on what it is for a subject to *take an experience at face value*, yielding a perceptual belief. In such a case, we can say that the perceptual belief *endorses* the perceptual experience. (Chalmers 2010, 376)

state must be committed to have a face value, it cannot be committed in the way a belief is. A face value must be committed without being committed to by the perceiver.

This is at the core of the standard intentionalist picture. Perception provides information about the world. But to play this grounding role for belief, it ought not itself be one, on pain of regress.<sup>1</sup> So my representing things as being a certain way in experience cannot be *my* 'saying' that things are that way. However, it must have a face value: Something must 'say' that things are that way. Only that way can the experience be accepted ('at face value') or declined by the perceiver. Of course, belief acquisition theories dispense with this feature of perceptual representing. But they thereby also break with a core epistemological motivation for intentionalism.<sup>2</sup>

### *Are Intentionalists Committed to the Second Element?*

One may perhaps doubt that intentionalists are committed to the idea of a face value. It can seem that experience will present a face value only to creatures who are able to 'step back' from their experience.<sup>3</sup> We cannot attribute a reflective stance to mere animals (this is why there are no skeptics among them). For mere animal perceivers, there will be no 'gap' between the commitment of perception and the commitment of the animal, a commitment expressed, say, in action.<sup>4</sup> If so, there seems to be little room for a face value. Perhaps, then, intentionalists are only committed to face values for human and other reflective perceivers.

This seems a reasonable objection, but I think it is mistaken. The environment is presented a certain way to animals as well as to humans. As intentionalists understand this, perception will represent things in a way that reflects the angle from which objects are perceived, the lighting conditions, and so on – in other words, the perspective of the perceiver. But the idea of a face value seems present in the very idea of having things perceptually represented a certain way. If perception is an 'input', it has a face value; the alternative, from an intentionalist perspective, is a belief acquisition theory, where commitments are arrived at directly. In other words, there should be a face value even if it is always 'accepted'.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.3 Third Element: Perceptual Representation is not Autorepresentation**

The third element states that perception is not a matter of one's representing something oneself. It is representation by something else – what Travis calls 'allorepresentation' (2004, 62). This can appear puzzling. The main idea, however, is straightforward, and has already been stated: Perceptual representing is not a matter of the perceiver's commitment, of her taking it that things are a certain way. The face *value* of an experience should not be a reflection of the perceiver's evaluation. In other words, and as it is often put, perception is belief-independent. To this extent, the third element follows from the second.

However, Travis has more in mind when he says that perception must be allorepresentation. What that is, however, is not entirely straightforward. One way of getting at it is that if perception is commitment, but not a commitment of the perceiver, then something else will have to confer the commitment to the representing. Perhaps it can only do so by itself committing to it. And perhaps it can only do so by itself representing it – just as the normal way of committing to

<sup>1</sup> Thus, belief theories may easily lead to coherentism (as in Davidson) or an infinite regress ('infinetism').

<sup>2</sup> Another feature of face values is that they seem to be what perceptual illusions are made of. A perceptual illusion 'says' that things are a certain way – but they are not. In other words, its face value is deceptive. Now, it may be that one can resist this. Perhaps Pautz can provide a story about illusion – at least its phenomenology (its misleading character might be harder to account for).

<sup>3</sup> If I understood him correctly, Carsten Hansen raised this worry.

<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps the animal could act *directly* on perception, without going 'via' a commitment of the whole animal? I think this is counterintuitive. Insofar as it is the whole animal which acts (as opposed to a part of it), the information on which the actions are based should also be committed to by the whole animal. If not, it can seem that we must say that a part of the animal acts (a part that moves the whole body).

<sup>5</sup> Philosophers who accept that there is a face need not hold that there is always a 'second' step involved. They usually hold that accepting the face value is a kind of default. Perhaps animals always accept the face value (though perhaps they can also be presented with conflicting information, thus forcing them to 'disregard' the information presented in, say, one sensory modality).

something's being the case simply is to represent it in belief. That would give a straightforward understanding of the term 'allorepresentation'. This is how Travis explains the idea:

To take things to be thus and so just *is* to represent them to oneself as that way. Such representing is *all* there is in the attitude. It does not consist in producing ... something which represents things as that way, and which one can, or does, then take as doing that. I will call representing something to oneself as so *autorepresentation*.

Autorepresenting contrasts with another phenomenon which is also representing things as a certain way. Representing in this way means producing, or arranging for, or simply being, something which represents things as being a certain way, and is so to be taken. I will call this second form of representation *allorepresentation*. (2004, 60-1)

The representation that is 'produced' in allorepresentation cannot be a mere content. Such representations are 'produced' in any representing.<sup>1</sup> Neither can it be a state. Again, such representations are, trivially, 'produced' in any representing.<sup>2</sup> Now, while it is certainly strange to suggest that perception produces another representer, this was what I suggested above: Something has to confer a commitment on the representing. However, while intentionalists often say that the *experience* represents the environment, they do not mean that it isn't the perceiver that represents in experience.<sup>3</sup> Neither does it seem to be what Travis has in mind. What he has in mind is rather something that *bears* the content – in other words, a vehicle for it.

Travis' example is that of using a sentence to assert something. The sentence has an assigned meaning. In asserting, then, I can be said to 'produce' a representation, a sign. For instance, I use the sentence 'the pig is on the sofa' to assert (of some pig and some sofa) that the pig is on the sofa. This gives an alternative to the above suggestions, but it is not clear to me what the idea is. Clearly, intentionalists are not committed to some sentence-like item being produced in the mind or in the perceptual state.<sup>4</sup> As I have stressed, intentionalists are emphatic that they do not think of perceptual representations in terms of 'intermediaries'. Travis makes the accusation that intentionalists are committed to intermediaries at several points (2011, 554-6). I think there is something right in this accusation, but I do not think it is well put by saying that intentionalists conceive of perceptual states as producing an item that bears the representational properties – certainly not an object of awareness.<sup>5</sup>

One objection Travis raises against the idea that perception produces a sentence-like item is that it doesn't make sense to say that such representations are *committed*.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps this can bring Travis' concern into line with the interpretation I sketched above. Sentences, or for that matter pictures or maps, cannot be committed to things being a certain way. First, of course, such representations have derived intentionality. They do not mean anything in themselves.<sup>7</sup> More to the point, though, even when the sentence represents (of the pig and the sofa) that the pig is on the sofa, it cannot *itself* be committed to the pig's being there. Only the asserter of the sentence can be committed to that. Similarly, a picture showing a pig on a sofa doesn't say that there is a pig there. That would depend on what the picture is *meant* to say. It could, for instance, say that the pig is not allowed to sleep on the sofa. Again, only a representing with a

<sup>1</sup> Of course, 'produced' is the wrong word. Reasonably, contents are abstract, hence timeless, entities. But even if they are time-bound or concrete, they are obviously not brought into being by being represented.

<sup>2</sup> This time, the word is odd, but not, perhaps, wrong. A state is trivially 'produced' in representing something, since it is that representing. So it is the production of a representation in the way my dancing produces a dance.

<sup>3</sup> As I will return to below, though, intentionalists sometimes say that experiences represent the environment *to* the perceiver, a claim that clearly cannot be understood in the trivial way of the previous footnote. Experiences may *be* representings, but a state of representing cannot represent anything *to* their owner.

<sup>4</sup> They may, of course, think that perceptual representational states have vehicles. But Travis cannot mean to argue against that thought, since that would target the idea that beliefs have vehicles as well.

<sup>5</sup> The better way of putting the worry about intermediaries is to say that intentionalists understand perceptions along what should be *responses* to awareness of things in the world, namely, along with beliefs and judgments (this is indeed how Travis puts it in the later work quoted).

<sup>6</sup> As Travis puts it:

An English sentence is not in any way committed to things being some one way rather than another... It would be a gross misunderstanding to see *English* as thus saddled with such a preposterous collection of contradictory commitments (2004, 61)

<sup>7</sup> One might protest that whereas most such representations have only derived intentionality, not all of them need to. Philosophers committed to a language of thought will say that there are items in the brain that possess original intentionality.

certain *force* can represent that things are a certain way by ‘saying’ that they really *are* that way – as perceptual states have to. Pictures and sentences seem incapable of carrying such force.

Now, part of Travis’ point is of course just that it is hard to see how one should think of experiences as representational states. In particular, it is hard to see how one is to conceive of the commitments of perceptions, and how these states are supposed to justify beliefs. How can the perceiver represent something in a committed manner without herself committing to it? And what is it to ‘accept’ what one represents perceptually? For the present, I will follow the suggestion made above and understand the idea of allrepresentation according to the idea that something else than the perceiver has to confer the relevant commitment to perceptual representations. Without such a commitment, perceptual representings cannot have the right force.

While I do not think this captures exactly what Travis has in mind, I think it points to an important ingredient of the third element of intentionalism, and one that is well expressed by saying that perception is ‘allrepresentation’. I will return to these issues in sect. 2. For the present, we can note merely that perception must be ‘allrepresentation’ in the sense that while committed, it is not a commitment of the perceiver. In other words, perception is belief-independent.

#### *Are Intentionalists Committed to the Third Element?*

Setting aside how we should understand the further ingredients in the idea of allrepresentation, it is constitutive of intentionalism that it is belief-independent. The commitment of perceptual representing is not a commitment of the perceiver; holding that it is would be to revert to a belief theory. In this sense, the third element should be straightforwardly part of standard intentionalism. Even a view that doesn’t accept the first element, such as Pautz’, will accept that perception is belief-independent.<sup>1</sup>

#### **1.4 Fourth Element: Perceptual Content is Conveyed to the Perceiver**

As I have formulated it, the fourth element states that the content of perception must be ‘conveyed’ to the perceiver. Travis formulates it differently. He says that perceptual content must be ‘recognizable’ by the perceiver. In his terms, the fourth condition is as follows:

[W]e should be able to recognize, where needed, of particular ways things may or may not be, whether that is what the experience represented to us as so – whether that is what one would take to be so in taking the experience at face value – whether, for example, the experience is one according to which a certain stick is bent, or rather one according to which that stick is straight. The core idea is: you cannot represent things to people as so in a way they simply cannot recognize as doing that. (2004, 62-3)

It is important to focus on the ‘core idea’ here. Talk of ‘recognizing’ the what is represented has led to protests that Travis places too heavy cognitive demands on the perceiver. Travis’ formulation suggests that his claims that perceptual states must be self-consciously accessible to her. The ready response to that is that many perceivers – children and animals – do not have such capacities.<sup>2</sup>

Such a response is clearly reasonable. However, I don’t think the claim it is a response to is one Travis makes. Though Travis himself invites the strong interpretation, he should not be read as demanding cognitive access to one’s perceptual states and their content.<sup>3</sup> His condition that contents must be recognizable to the perceiver can be taken in a much weaker sense. I have rephrased it so as to correspond to a constraint Siegel lays down on perceptual content,

<sup>1</sup> Pautz will reasonably be innocent of the further aspects of allrepresentation, though. But as I have said, it is hard to see how it can work.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, Nes asks:

Are we always capable of recognizing what the contents of our beliefs and desires are? Small children, as well as cats and dogs, plausibly have beliefs and desires; do we really want to say that they can recognize the content of their beliefs and desires? (2008, 70)

<sup>3</sup> There are intentionalists who would think that (human) perception requires such capacities. For instance, some internalist ideas about the way we ‘base’ our beliefs on perception might require that we are able to consciously recognize the contents.

‘the constraint that contents are conveyed to the subject by her experience’ (2010, 43). She describes three ways in which contents can be conveyed to the perceiver:

We can distinguish between three ways in which a content can be conveyed to the subject by her experience. First, a content is conveyed by experience if it would be a content of explicit beliefs that are natural to form on the basis of visual experience. Second, a content is conveyed to the subject by her experience if it enables the experience to guide bodily actions. Finally, a content is conveyed to the subject by her experience if it is manifest to introspection that it is a content of experience. (2010, 51; compare *forth*, 1)

The strong interpretation of Travis’ fourth condition would correspond to a demand that content must be conveyed in the third way mentioned by Siegel.<sup>1</sup> It seems more reasonable to understand the ‘core idea’ of Travis’ demand that content be ‘recognizable’ as saying that it is conveyed to the perceiver – in one of the ways mentioned by Siegel.<sup>2</sup> While it is not wrong to say that Travis demands that content be ‘cognitively accessible’ to the perceiver, it is not to be understood as a demand for conscious access. It is merely the claim that the content be accessible for the perceiver to, for instance, believe and act on.

A comparison with natural meaning may also bring out the relevant idea. Although seeing the tree rings can seem to be a straightforward case of being ‘informed’ by states in the world, the age of the tree is not something that is conveyed to us.<sup>3</sup> The tree rings represent – contain information about – the age of the tree, but someone with no knowledge of that fact won’t be in a position to form a belief about the age of the tree or let her actions be guided by it by seeing the rings. Again, this means that perceptual representation cannot be a mere matter of natural meaning.<sup>4</sup> In contrast to things natural meaning and information-carrying, perceptual representation must be conveyed to the perceiver.

#### *Are Intentionalists Committed to the Fourth Element?*

Once the associations with self-conscious access and control are put aside, the fourth constraint should appear uncontroversial. It would be of little use for a perceiver if her perceptual representings were not available to her act or form beliefs on. It is a core motivation for intentionalism that perception should provide input for belief and action. Perhaps one could, in principle, deny the fourth constraint, but the resulting picture would be very strange and I see no motivation for doing so.

#### *Conveyability and Looks-Indexing*

As I mentioned in Ch. 2, sect. 2, Travis introduces the idea of looks-indexing by saying that the way things appear to a perceiver is what makes the perceptual content recognizable to her (2004, 63). In the usage I adopted from Siegel, it ‘conveys’ the content to her. In Ch. 2, I suggested that we could dispense with this idea; untying the connection with conveyability gives a more general idea of looks-indexing. It is not that my suggestion is particularly significant. As I said, intentionalists will gladly commit themselves to the fourth element. They might perhaps dissent to idea that the content is ‘conveyed’ to the perceiver *by* things looking a certain way,

<sup>1</sup> It is at any rate safe to understand Travis’ fourth condition as making the weaker claim. Nothing in his argument requires him to make the stronger claim. While Travis’ wording can suggest the stronger interpretation, then, I see no reason for attributing it to him.

<sup>2</sup> At a later point, Travis’ says that one recognizes the content of one’s experience in ‘grasping when the experience would be veridical, when not’ (2004, 82). Once again, worries may be raised about a need for an explicit or at least conceptual grasp of the veridicality conditions of the content of the experience. However, a weaker reading is possible. It would be strange if a creature could represent something of which it had absolutely no grasp – as if a dog would represent that there were an obstacle in front of it, but, lacking any understanding of what it represented, continued to run right into it. It seems a near constitutive condition on representing that the content of the representing must be grasped in some way by the representer. (This also, in a way, answers Nes’ question above. In the action-guiding sense, even small children and cats and dogs *are* able to ‘recognize’ the content of their beliefs and desires.)

<sup>3</sup> Thus, while it can seem to provide a simple model for claim to the effect that one is ‘being represented to’ in perception (and thus perhaps also of ‘allorepresentation’), it is in fact very unlike ‘being informed’ about something.

<sup>4</sup> Of course, I take no stand here on projects that may try to explain perceptual representing in terms of some notion of information-carrying. Peacocke 1983, 6-8, 10 has some useful discussion of the relation between information-carrying and perceptual representation. Burge 2010, ch. 8 contains sharp criticism of attempts to explain perceptual and other representation in terms of information-carrying, lawlike connections, or biological function.



but I don't think such dissent will matter much. It is not clear what exactly it means to say that looks 'convey' contents, but neither is it very important.<sup>1</sup> Intentionalists generally accept that the content is a matter of how the environment appears to a perceiver – or, conversely, of her perspective on these things. But this may be just what Travis has in mind when he says that contents are conveyed by how things look. A dissent may well be merely verbal.

## 2 Discussion: Commitment in Perceptual Representation

As I have tried to show, the four elements hang together (in particular the first three), and are uncontroversially part of the general structure of the standard intentionalist picture. When something is represented perceptually, it is represented as being a certain way, and as *really* being that way – in other words, committedly. That it is that way is the face value of the perception. A face value is something the perceiver can accept or reject (if she is capable of that kind of reflection). This means that perceptual representation is (in principle) belief-independent. Finally, it means that things' being that way is conveyed to the perceiver: It is recognized by her, thus potentially influencing her behaviour and beliefs.

While the four elements go naturally together, I think the resulting picture is puzzling. I find it hard to get a firm grip on what perceptual commitment is, and what it is for experience to have a face value at which it can be accepted. In other words, I find it hard to understand how intentionalists conceive of perceptual representation as an 'input' to belief. The following will attempt to articulate these worries. This will involve a second look at the idea of allorepresentation.

### 2.1 Perceptual Representation and the Grounding of Belief

The following seems a natural thought: When something is represented in a committed manner by a representer, then the commitment is a reflection of a commitment of the representer. In particular, when a subject represents something in a committed manner, then that commitment is a commitment by the subject. Now, of course, this simple line is in tension with the intentionalist construal of perceptual representing.

Travis characterized perceptual representing as 'allorepresentation', representation by another. While the characterization seemed to point to something important, it wasn't entirely straightforward to get a grip on. I tried to develop it by discussing how a perceptual representing can be committed to something's being a certain way.<sup>2</sup> In believing something, the believer commits herself to things being thus and so. In perceiving it, she does not. Yet her state is committed; it still exhibits the 'second' direction of fit Velleman pointed to. The question is how this second direction of fit is bestowed on perceptual representing. How can the perceiver represent her environment in a committed manner without herself being committed? How can a mental representing that isn't committed to by the perceiver have the kind of *force* that lets it justify commitments by the perceiver?

One way of articulating the problem is to consider Davidson's response to McDowell's version of intentionalism. Some stage-setting is necessary, but since this should be familiar terrain, I'll be brief and reserve discussion to the footnotes. In response to Quine, who argued that empirical belief is ultimately justified by the stimulation of one's 'nerve endings', Davidson argued that we must reject the idea that belief is justified by sensory stimulation, since such stimulation will inevitably form 'intermediaries between our beliefs and their objects in the world'

<sup>1</sup> Might the idea be that looking a certain way to someone is an event, as light hitting the eye is an event? But it is wholly unclear what it would mean to speak of looking as an event. Might the idea be that X conveys a content to a perceiver by appearing, in the sense of *making an appearance* – that is, by coming into view? If this idea is in play, it will easily lead to confusion. This notion of 'appear' doesn't fit with 'look' and 'seem'. For instance, it can stand alone: X appeared. We cannot say that X looked (except when X looks at something). When X appears a certain way in this sense, the way it appears must be expressed by an adverb.

<sup>2</sup> Again, it should be kept in mind that this cannot be the general idea of allorepresentation that Travis has in mind, however, since he allows that there could be committed allorepresenting. Still, discussing commitment in perception seems to be a useful way of developing the idea.

(1983/2001, 144).<sup>1</sup> But he didn't merely reject that belief should be grounded in sensation; he rejected the entire idea that experience justifies our beliefs.<sup>2</sup> On Davidson's picture, the relation between perception and belief is merely causal: Perception causes one to form certain beliefs.<sup>3</sup> This removes any epistemic intermediaries between mind and world; once we give up the idea that experience should ground belief, Davidson claims, we can 'restore unmediated touch with the familiar objects whose antics make our sentences and opinions true or false' (1974/2001, 198). Importantly, Davidson held that sensation anyway *could* not justify belief; 'the relation between a sensation and a belief cannot be logical, since sensations are not beliefs or other propositional attitudes' (1983/2001, 144). As he famously put it, 'nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief' (1983/2001, 141).<sup>4</sup> For our purposes, Davidson can thus be classified as a belief theorist: All perceptual representations are beliefs.<sup>5</sup>

Famously, McDowell protested that Davidson's theory could not allow beliefs to be rationally grounded by how things are, making it hard to see how they could have empirical content at all.<sup>6</sup> Though perceptual beliefs could ground *other* beliefs, McDowell argued that perceptual beliefs must themselves be grounded in something that is not a belief: Beliefs must be 'answerable, for their rational acceptability, ultimately to the facts themselves' (1999, 95). His answer was that in perception one merely 'finds oneself saddled with content' (1994/1996, 10) – content it is then be up for one to accept or reject.<sup>7</sup> In other words, instead of Davidson's belief theory, McDowell offered an intentionalist theory according to which representational (McDowell argued conceptual) capacities were already 'passively operative' (1994/1996, 29) in perception, thus providing both a ground and a constraint on 'active' thinking, such as judgment. In this way, McDowell argued, we can preserve the main insight of Davidson's slogan that only a belief can justify a belief. In a revised form, the slogan would say that 'nothing can count as a reason

<sup>1</sup> Compare:

The stimulation of his sensory receptors is all the evidence anybody has had to go on, ultimately, in arriving at his picture of the world. (1969, 75; for some similar passages in Quine, see Davidson 1983/2001, 143n5)

Davidson directs his criticism not just at Quine but at any view according which holds that beliefs are justified by 'sensation', whether it is construed as mere 'stimulation', or as 'inner items' of some sort. Davidson argues that thinking of perceptual justification in this way leads to skepticism; 'we can allow no intermediaries between our beliefs and the usual objects our beliefs are about' (1983/2001, 144).

<sup>2</sup> The premise seems to be that Quine's conception of 'experience' is the only possible; the only 'objects' experience can give us access to is the 'internal happening of which we are aware' (1983/2001, 144). So if sensory stimulation cannot ground our beliefs, nothing can. In particular, outer happenings are 'outside our skins' and thus cannot be grounds.

<sup>3</sup> Compare:

I suggest we give up the idea that meaning or knowledge is grounded on something that counts as an ultimate source of evidence. No doubt meaning and knowledge depend ultimately on experience, and experience ultimately on sensation. But this is the 'depend' of causality, not of justification. (1983/2001, 146)

It is easy to sympathize with the worry that this throws out the baby with the bathwater. In particular, shouldn't there be intermediate positions between Davidson's coherentism and the foundationalism that sees justification as grounded in 'ultimate sources of evidence'?

<sup>4</sup> Thus, whereas in the previous remark he leaves it open that 'other propositional attitudes' can justify beliefs, the slogan says that only beliefs can. By 'other propositional attitudes', Davidson can only mean representational states with *some* subjective probability, as will be clear below.

<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to compare Davidson with Armstrong here:

Our perceptions do not stand between our mind and physical reality, because they *are* our apprehensions of that reality. (Armstrong 1968/1988, 144)

The difference between Davidson and the classical belief theorists is that where the former think that perception has content, Davidson does not; perception merely causes belief. For present purposes, the difference is insubstantial. As McDowell notes (1994/1996, xvii-xviii, 139-46; 2008, 10-12), Davidson can accept that there are 'appearances' with perceptual content – it is only that these 'appearances' are perceptual beliefs.

<sup>6</sup> In McDowell's terminology, the 'friction' between mind and world – between what one believes and what one ought to believe – is lost in Davidson's picture:

Davidson recoils from the Myth of the Given all the way to denying experience any justificatory role, and the coherentist upshot is a version of the conception of spontaneity as frictionless, the very thing that makes the idea of the Given attractive. ...

Such theories express precisely the unnerving idea that the spontaneity of conceptual thinking is not subject to rational constraint from outside. (1994/1996, 14-5)

McDowell thus wants to preserve Quine's empiricist thought that our beliefs are rationally answerable to a 'tribunal of experience' (McDowell 1994/1996, 129; compare Quine 1951/1953, 42). At the same time, he follows Davidson in rejecting Quine's position as being a version of what Sellars (1956/1963) called 'the Myth of the Given' – if clearly a sophisticated version.

<sup>7</sup> In other words, of course, the way things appear in perception gives it a face value:

How one's experience represents things to be is not under one's control, but it is up to one whether one accepts the appearance or rejects it. (1994/1996, 11)

for holding a belief except something with believable content'.<sup>1</sup> Perceptions (as such) have representational (conceptual) content, allowing them to stand in rational relations to thought, but this content is not believed.<sup>2</sup> That experiences can justify beliefs in the way McDowell suggests is generally agreed on by intentionalists (as the parallel with the argument from epistemology in Ch. 2 should confirm).<sup>3</sup>

Davidson, however, remained unconvinced. He thought representation thus construed could not ground anything. His response was brief:

I do not see how the (propositional) content one takes in can be evidence for a belief, since it does not, in itself, have any subjective probability (if it did, it would be a belief). How can an attitude that assigns no probability to a proposition convey a probability (positive or negative) of, or provide positive evidence for, a belief? (1999<sub>a</sub>, 135)

In other words, Davidson could not understand 'why an attitude with no subjective probability whatever can provide a reason for a positive belief' (1999<sub>b</sub>, 107). Davidson thus held that McDowell's proposal didn't preserve enough of what is expressed in the slogan that only a belief can justify a belief: While part of the point was that only something with a propositional structure could ground a belief, an equally important part was that only something with a subjective probability could. A state must not only have the right *content*, but also the right *force*.<sup>4</sup> The content of my hope that it will rain entails the content that it will rain or snow. But these 'rational relations' between the contents are wholly insufficient to ground a belief that it will rain or snow in a hope that it will rain. Of course, Davidson didn't think McDowell understood perceptual representings as mere 'entertainings'. He nevertheless couldn't see how McDowell could hold them apart from them, at least as far as their justifying role was concerned, given that they had no subjective probability.

In response, McDowell retracted parts of his position – the bit about perceptual content's being propositional in form (2008<sub>a</sub>, 3-12; see 10-2 for discussion of Davidson).<sup>5</sup> While his revised position isn't clear to me, it seems clear that he denies that perceptual content is veridical or unveridical (2008<sub>a</sub>, 9).<sup>6</sup> The content of perception, as McDowell now understands it, is 'intuitional'.<sup>7</sup> Unlike McDowell, however, most intentionalists find Davidson's objection unpersua-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Brandom's presentation of what he takes to be a main idea in Sellars' 'Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind':

The conclusion of Sellars's critical argument is that ... only what is propositionally contentful, and so conceptually articulated ... can serve as (or for that matter, stand in need of) a justification, and so ground or constitute knowledge. Davidson expresses a version of this thought with the slogan, 'Nothing can count as a reason for a belief except another belief.' Sellars's thought is better captured by changing this to 'Nothing can count as a reason for endorsing a believable except another believable,' where believables are the contents of possible beliefs, that is, what is propositionally contentful. (Brandom 1997, 122-3)

It is not clear that Sellars would endorse the revised slogan; Gupta (2006, 126n28) argues that Sellars would probably accept it, but that he ought not. Either way, it fits well with McDowell's line.

<sup>2</sup> To bring the considerations brushed here into their proper context, one would have to consider the foundationalist views both Davidson and McDowell reject: 'the Myth of the Given'. Both argue that (awareness of) non-representational sensations and other inner items cannot ground belief about the world. What neither of them seriously considers is whether (awareness of) non-representational *outer* objects might – though McDowell makes it clear that he thinks Travis' (2006/2008) attempt to do so falls prey to it (2008<sub>b</sub>, 266-7).

<sup>3</sup> More explicit endorsements can be found in Martin 1993, Pryor 2001; 2005, and Steup *ms*.

<sup>4</sup> Having set forth the revised slogan in the note above, Brandom notes that it allows that *facts* might serve as reasons for beliefs. Again, that fits with McDowell's idea that 'manifest facts' can ground empirical knowledge. One way of posing Davidson's question at this point is to ask: What makes a fact manifest? Perhaps manifestation requires perceiving that the fact obtains? But if so, we may have a circle; for, reasonably, as I have noted, seeing that P reasonably is a way of coming to know that P. McDowell disagrees; he thinks seeing that P only requires being in a position to know that P (1982/1998, 390; for helpful discussion, see Ginsborg 2006, 298-300). It is interesting here to compare with Williamson's position. Williamson accepts that seeing that P requires knowledge, not just being in a position to know (2000, 38). More generally, he accepts Davidson's point and holds that evidence is not just propositional but committed. Nevertheless, the position Williamson ends up with is close to McDowell's, in that evidence is *known* (2000, 194-203). In other words, Williamson can preserve an important part of the idea that 'manifest facts' should ground belief.

<sup>5</sup> That is not to say that McDowell retracted it overnight (see his 2004, which responds to Glüer 2004, which presses what is essentially Davidson's objection). The details of McDowell's revised position remains unclear to me, though I think it is clear that he rejects the idea that perceptual content has veridicality conditions (2008<sub>a</sub>, 9).

<sup>6</sup> As I understand him, he thus rejects the propositional conception of content, as I defined it (Ch. 1, sect. 3.1): Perceptual content does not have the characteristic 'unity' of a proposition. He still holds that perceptual content is *conceptual*, however (2008<sub>a</sub>, 7) – even 'all but propositional' (2008<sub>b</sub>, 200, 260). Thus, his content still satisfies the generalized definition of representational content given in Ch. 1, sect. 3.1.

<sup>7</sup> It doesn't represent anything as being a certain way; while one can 'exploit' intuitional content in discursive activity, 'one needs to carve out that content from the intuition's unarticulated content before one can put it together with other bits of content in discursive activity' (2008<sub>a</sub>, 7). While interesting, I find it quite unclear McDowell now thinks of

sive.<sup>1</sup> Hence, they retain the idea that perceptual content has propositional unity (in my broadly defined sense). While they will (with the exception of Pautz) agree that only a representing with a certain force can justify, they will reject the crucial premise of Davidson's argument, that nothing can have this justification-bestowing force without itself being a belief.

Thus, intentionalists deny the 'natural thought' with which I began this subsection, which is closely related to Davidson's premise. The natural thought was that a (psychological) representing of things as being a certain way can only be committed to their being that way if the subject commits herself to their being that way.<sup>2</sup> Put more simply, it was that a representing can only 'say' that P if the *representer* 'says' that P. I think the 'natural thought' is still quite natural, and I don't see why intentionalists think it isn't. For they rarely find it worth commenting on it.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, I cannot give much more by way of argument here. I find the thought natural, and I cannot see how the alternative is supposed to work; these psychological facts won't impress someone who finds the commitment of perception straightforward, as intentionalists seem to. The issue will thus easily end in a stand-off. In the next section, I try to work my way at the issue from another direction.

## 2.2 What Represents in Perception?

Some forms of representation can seem to exhibit a requisite 'authority' without being the expression of a 'commitment'. In noticing the tree rings, I come to believe that the tree has a certain age. Tree rings have a certain authority when it comes to deciding the age of the tree. They can be said to 'represent' the age by indicating it – tree rings usually carrying natural meaning about the age of their owner.<sup>4</sup> For all that, such representing isn't committed. Its authority is just a matter of my taking it that the number of tree rings correlate with the age of the tree.<sup>5</sup>

Now, natural meaning wasn't a good candidate for perceptual representation anyway.<sup>6</sup> More to the point, perhaps, is the way pictorial representation can inform about how things are. For

the relation between perception and belief. The idea of carving out content from perception is a fine metaphor for making out what one sees in seeing it, but McDowell intends more than that. Either way, it is better than the following, which is supposed to make vivid how propositional content was conveyed to the perceiver on his original, propositional conception:

A seen object as it were invites one to take it to be as it visibly is. It speaks to one... 'See me as I am', it (so to speak) says to one; 'namely, as characterized by *these* properties' – and it displays them. (1998a, 468)

Of course, perception of the environment should straightforwardly allow us to know about it, but the analogy with testimony is rather too vivid – and potentially disturbing, as I will touch on in sect. 2.3.

<sup>1</sup> This may be because they think perception anyway has non-conceptual content, but I don't really see that it diminishes the force of the objection. It still seems that non-conceptual content must be committed to justify belief. They may also object that not all justifications are *reasons*. Now, one can surely work with various notions of reasons and entitlements. I still don't see that this avoids the problem – it is, after all, the *content* that is supposed to warrant the belief.

<sup>2</sup> This leaves room for the idea that *other* peoples' beliefs can justify my beliefs, in testimony. But this is clearly not how it is in perception. I return to testimony below.

<sup>3</sup> Heck is aware of the worry:

I take it to be a well-established, and familiar, point that perceptions are not beliefs. This is unfortunate, for if they were, we would have a relatively easy answer to the question how experience justifies beliefs about the world... Though one can certainly raise questions about how some beliefs justify other beliefs (how the beliefs we now hold give us reasons to hold other ones), these sorts of questions seem relatively tractable – much more tractable, anyway, than questions about how perceptions justify beliefs. (2000, 507)

His answer, however, is the one we have seen, that perceptions have 'assertoric' force (2000, 508). What he doesn't explain, is how I can represent something in an assertoric way without asserting it.

<sup>4</sup> Here I use 'indicate' in Travis' sense:

Where A might reasonably, or rightly, be expected factively to mean B, I will say that A indicates B. (2004, 67)

<sup>5</sup> It can be subjectively irrational to believe that things are a way they are factively meant to be. Perhaps experts have told me that tree rings have no connection with the age of the tree; or perhaps I have inductively 'established' that there is no law-like connection by carefully investigating a species of trees which develop rings only every third year. The tree rings still mean that the tree has a certain age. But they don't mean that to me. (What about *objective* irrationality? The only rational thing to believe upon seeing the glass fall from the 10th floor onto the street is that it will break. Once more, however, the objective reasonableness of this belief won't have authority for a being that has just arrived to earth from a previously weightless life.)

<sup>6</sup> Again, that is not to deny that an invocation of something like natural meaning might be relevant at *some* level of explanation. At the surface level, however, it is difficult to see how one could even come to think of perceptual representing in such terms. Which state of affairs should represent which other state of affairs in perceptual representation? Such models seem only appropriate only for theories, like sense datum theories, where an experiential item means that some outer item is present. Even here, for the information carried to have any authority on the perceiver, she would have to know that inner item has the significance it has. In other words, the significance would have to be

instance, my surveillance camera informs me about the happenings outside my door by representing it on a screen. Isn't this a matter of being 'informed' by something that doesn't itself commit to the information? Again, however, the representation can only have the authority it has for me by my treating it to have that authority. I know that this is reasonable to believe – from having set up the connection, from my knowledge of such screens – and hence forms the beliefs.<sup>1</sup> Besides, of course, it is once more a form of representing that it is very awkward to apply to perception. Even if we could be aware of the items 'in' the image without being aware of the image itself, the image would still be an intermediary.<sup>2</sup>

I think it is very hard to come up with examples of mental representings that can support beliefs while not being the expression of commitments on part of some representing subject. All other states seem either to have a subjective probability or be uncommitted, thus unable to provide rational support for belief.<sup>3</sup> Now, there is one obvious candidate so far unmentioned of a mental representing grounding my belief without being an expression of my commitment: The representing in question could be the commitment of someone else. In testimony, someone (literally) says something to me. This, then, is clearly a case of committed representing where the commitment is not my commitment. On the other hand, it is not my representing either. It is my being represented *to*, the expression of the mental state of someone else.<sup>4</sup>

This is once again a clearly inappropriate model for perception. On the other hand, the analogy with testimony is striking in the way intentionalists often speak. In fact, they often say that experience represents what it does *to* the perceiver:

[T]his content is something intrinsic to the experience itself – any experience which does not represent to the subject the world as being the way that this content specifies is phenomenologically different (Peacocke 1983, 9)

Perceptual states represent to the perceiver how her environment and body are. (Martin 1994, 464)

[W]e have immediate *prima facie* justification for believing those propositions that our experiences ... represent to us. (Pryor 2001, 539)

It also seems intuitive that objects could, in principle, be visually represented to [animals] in the same way as they are to us, including in all spatial aspects. (Price 2005, 370)

Though one shouldn't read too much into such formulations, it may be worth exploring testimony as a model for perceptual representing.

As before, I take it that the *literal* representer in the case of perceptual representation can only be the perceiver herself – and intentionalists often speak that way (like Schellenberg in the Introduction). But they are even more fond of saying that *experience* represents in perception (like Harman).<sup>5</sup> Now, the latter need mean no more than what it means to say that X's belief

conveyed to her, as stated in the fourth condition. The same goes for what a perceptual *state* might carry information about. Granting for the present that the representing could be relevantly circumscribed (so as to prevent my present state of seeing a pig from representing the temperature of the sun, for instance), I have to know what the perceptual state means for it to have authority on me.

<sup>1</sup> This is not, of course, to deny that someone looking at the screen *would* see (though not 'with her own eyes') the relevant things outside the door, even if she believed she were watching fiction.

<sup>2</sup> Mental images or imagination cannot place objects in view, however phenomenally vivid it is. This was part of the point in my long footnote in the Introduction (see also the Appendix). As I noted, intentionalists sometimes seem to think of perception along with imagination. But imagination and other 'merely representational' states seem utterly unable to provide anything more than 'veridical hallucination'.

<sup>3</sup> It matters that I speak of *representational* states here. For one might hold that non-representational states can ground beliefs. For instance, reliable dispositions to form beliefs can be said to support the beliefs they produce. But this is an altogether different form of rational support. It also matters that I speak of representational states of the individual. Perhaps sub-individual representational states can support beliefs. I think, again, that this is a very different kind of support. My claim is only that perceptions as construed by intentionalists are quite unique: No other states (hoping, imagining, intending, regretting on the one hand; knowing, believing, presuming on the other) are committed without being committed to by their owner.

<sup>4</sup> It seems a natural thought that beliefs based on testimony are based on the mental representings of someone else. It seems attractive to think that 'in communication knowledge merely rubs off on others' (McDowell 1981/1998, 336n51); on such a picture, I simply 'take over' the commitment of someone else. Of course, I do not mean to put forth any view of testimony; there may well be complications.

<sup>5</sup> The reader should also have a look at back the various passages quoted in Ch. 2.

represents that P.<sup>1</sup> However, as I said, it is striking that intentionalists often say that experience represents something *to* the perceiver. That is not something one could say about belief.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps it is not just due to a slightly unusual usage that intentionalists attribute the representing to the experience.

I think it is fair to point out that the four elements of Ch. 3 fall squarely into place as characterising the state of being told something. First, testimony is clearly stative. It is the expression of the commitment of the testifier. Second, it presents a face value. The face value is how the world is represented to be. If I believe what I am told, I will take the claim at face value. Third, being told is obviously not a case of autorepresentation. It is allorepresentation. It is a representing by someone else. Telling is the paradigmatic of representing *to* someone.<sup>3</sup> Finally, telling is clearly the paradigmatic case of conveying something to someone.<sup>4</sup>

Their ready application to the case of testimony may explain why the four elements have such a natural unity. I won't speculate whether this has played in the back head of intentionalists when they have proposed their model of perception – though Travis clearly insinuates that intentionalists take the phrase 'the testimony of the senses' too literally (compare the title of his article). He approvingly quotes Austin:

We recognize, it is said, that 'people are sometimes deceived by their senses', though we think that, in general, our 'sense-perceptions' can 'be trusted'.

Now ..., though the phrase 'deceived by our senses' is a common metaphor, it is a metaphor; and this is worth noting, for ... the same metaphor is frequently ... taken very seriously. In fact, of course, our senses are dumb – though Descartes and others speak of the testimony of the senses, our senses do not *tell* us anything, true or false. (1962, 11; partly quoted in Travis 2004, 65)

It is striking how structurally similar the intentionalist picture of experience is with a natural picture of being told. For instance, testimony provides a natural model for how intentionalists think of the rational transition from experience to belief. For while a belief may well have the *same* content as the experience that grounds it, intentionalists don't want the relation between experience and belief to be indefeasible.<sup>5</sup> Thus, the transition from experience to belief cannot be an inference.<sup>6</sup> It must be something 'weaker'; the experience that P should provide only defeasible warrant for the belief that P.<sup>7</sup> This fits well with the case of being told; your telling me that P will normally provide me with good reason to believe that P, but on a natural construal, it isn't an inference (though I take no stand on the structure of testimony). You may be mistaken or unjustified, or intent to deceive me. Still, the transition is from being told that P to believing that P. From the perspective of the hearer, it is a transition from (allorepresented) 'P' to (autorepresented) 'P'.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I take it that this can only mean that the believer represents that P in belief – in other words, believes it. Intentionalists sometimes say that the perceiver represents *in* perception. They cannot as easily say that the perceiver perceives that P – since this would carry the normal implications of factivity (and, arguably, taking) carried by the perceptual verbs. One cannot see or hear that P unless P (nor, arguably, unless one knows that P).

<sup>2</sup> One may, if one likes, say that the perceiver represents things to herself *in* belief. But one cannot say that one's belief represents to one that P.

<sup>3</sup> Moreover, testimony provides a clear instance of Travis' idea of allorepresentation as the production of a 'representation' in the sense of a sign or vehicle.

<sup>4</sup> One might perhaps object that testimony doesn't always satisfy the fourth condition. I can tell someone something without conveying it to her, as when my audience doesn't hear what I say. However, it is at least pragmatically implicated in 'I told X that P' that X got the message (this is one difference between 'tell' and 'say'). The semantic overlaps between 'convey' (in the perceptually relevant sense) and 'tell' should be confirmed by any dictionary.

<sup>5</sup> Now, most intentionalists will think that the content is non-conceptual, and hence not identical to that of beliefs. But the point will still hold insofar as the non-conceptual content will *entail* the conceptual content of the belief. Another point is that many perceptual beliefs will not be entailed by corresponding experiential contents. My point is just that those that do – 'the object over there is red', perhaps – are still not indefeasibly warranted by the corresponding experiential content, as it would if the transition between them were one of inference.

<sup>6</sup> The inappropriateness of the 'stuttering' inference has been stressed by McDowell (for instance, 1998b, 405). It is, of course, quite unclear what it would be to let a mere *experienced* content figure as a premise; premises have the (implicit) force of assertions or beliefs.

<sup>7</sup> In saying that the transition must be 'weaker', I do not just mean that it must be 'non-deductive'. It cannot be an inference at all. Inductive or abductive inferences too proceed from premises with assertoric force too.

<sup>8</sup> As on the intentionalist picture of perception, one would hold that the transition will not normally be conscious or reflective; it will proceed by a kind of default (compare McDowell 1998a, 439).

Certainly, the idea that the senses ‘tell’ or ‘inform’ us about the layout of our environment fits with the four elements.<sup>1</sup> But perception while it is unproblematic to use locutions like ‘what the senses tell me’, ‘deceived by my senses’ or ‘the testimony of the senses’, perception is not testimony. Whatever parallels there are between perception and testimony, representation in perception cannot be parallel to being told. There is nothing there to tell us, and hence nothing to commit to things being a certain way or other. Again, then, I cannot see how testimony can illuminate perception. This brings me back to the problem of the previous section: I cannot see what, apart from the perceiver herself, can confer a commitment to perceptual representing, and I also cannot see what the transition from experience to belief is supposed to be like. While the four elements make out a coherent picture, I find it hard to see how it can really be a picture of perception.

No conclusions were drawn in the present chapter. Instead, I have aimed in sect. 2 to drag the reader with me into what I think is a natural puzzlement when presented with the picture delineated in sect. 1. I am well aware that she may resist the invitation; as I have said, many philosophers find the intentionalist picture just obvious. At any rate, the next chapter will provide more by way of arguments; it should also shed some light on this chapter’s puzzlement.

<sup>1</sup> As I said in the Introduction, it is easy to catch on to the intentionalist talk. At this point, we see one clear reason for this: All one has to do, is think of perception as a matter of being told that things are a certain way.

## Ch. 4 A Closer Look at Looks-Indexing

Intentionalists generally introduce the content of perception by reflection on how things appear or are presented in experience. In Ch. 1, I attempted to delineate a 'route' from appearance – from how things are present to mind in experience – to the alleged representational content of such experiences. In Ch. 2, I followed up by looking more closely at how various philosophers have rested their claims on the idea that content reflects appearance, ending by stating Travis' idea of 'looks-indexing', which states that the content of experience reflects and is determined by how things look in an experience. In this chapter I set forth and develop Travis' argument against that idea.

Intentionalists conceive of experience as a representational state – a relation to a proposition, on my broad definition of that term. In Ch. 3, I had a closer look at the propositional attitude involved. Though my discussion was inconclusive, I found it hard to get a grip on the committal nature of perceptual states. While the present chapter returns to the issues of Chs. 1 and 2, it should also go some way toward explaining this puzzlement. Ch. 4 constitutes the core of the present work. It is very long, almost a thesis within the thesis; as I noted in the Introduction, it could be read alone. It will be useful, then, to give a sketch of the road ahead.

The first section sets forth Travis' argument against looks-indexing. Travis argues that the idea of looks-indexing is a mistake. In outline, his argument is simple. He starts by noting two basic notions or uses of 'looks'. He then proceeds to demonstrate that none of them can index perceptual content. On the first notion, the way things look 'point[s] in no one direction' (2004, 72): There is no particular way things have to be in order to be as they look. The way things look on second notion does yield a particular way for things to be, but the content it indexes is believed content. The last and critical claim of Travis' argument is that there are no other notions of 'looks' for the intentionalist to appeal to (2004, 67): 'The crucial point, though, is just that there are these two notions.'

Schematically, we can set up the argument as consisting of three premises. The first two claim of the two notions respectively that they are unable to index content, the third says that there is no further notion to appeal to. The conclusion follows straightforwardly that the way things look to a perceiver cannot index perceptual content. Since the argument is clearly valid, the focus of this chapter will be on the premises. The first section sets forth Travis' two notions and the corresponding premises. In the rest of the chapter, I focus mainly on challenges to the third premise. In introducing these sections, it will be useful to cast a preliminary glance at the two notions.

Travis doesn't name his two notions; he refers to his 'first' and 'second' notions throughout. I have chosen to refer to them as the 'non-epistemic' and 'epistemic' notion respectively. The main reason for this choice is that on the second notion, but not on the first, a claim that things look a certain way expresses the belief that there is evidence that things are that way, as will be clear as we proceed. The further reason is that the terms are familiar from Chisholm's and Jackson's 'classical' three-fold distinction of uses of 'looks', a distinction that will concern us at length. The 'classical' distinction consists of two nested distinctions: first, between 'epistemic' and 'non-epistemic' uses; second, within the latter, between 'comparative' and 'non-comparative' uses. Several authors have pointed out the relation between Travis' distinction and that of Chisholm and Jackson. In my choice of terms, I identify Travis' distinction with the former. Some philosophers, however, interpret Travis' distinction as corresponding to one between the epistemic and the comparative. Thus, Byrne writes:

It might be too obvious to mention (perhaps this is why Travis does not mention it), but his two 'notions of looks' correspond to Chisholm's 'comparative' and 'epistemic' uses of 'appear words' (of which 'looks' is an example). (2009, 439)

If this is Travis' distinction, then he must either deny that there is a non-comparative use or reduce it to one of the other two. If there is a third, non-comparative notion in addition to the



two he identifies, his third premise obviously fails. The idea of a non-comparative notion is the topic of the second section. As I have drawn Travis' distinction, the third premise is in a trivial way safe (since all uses of 'looks' are either epistemic or not epistemic). But that clearly doesn't solve the problem; the second premise will now seem endangered. If Byrne is right, Travis' conclusion that the non-epistemic use cannot index content would rest upon the assumption that the non-epistemic notion is comparative.

The questions here are *not* how to draw Travis' distinction or which premise may be threatened. Rather, the questions to be asked are whether there is a non-comparative sense of 'looks', and, if so, whether it can index content. These questions will occupy a central section of the chapter. I will argue that it is quite dubious that there is a non-comparative use, and that, even if there is, it is equally dubious that it can index content.

Determining whether there is a non-comparative use of 'looks' requires me to go in some detail about the contrast people have drawn between comparative and non-comparative uses. As will emerge, I think the way the contrast is often drawn is unclear. In particular, I think Byrne's construal of the non-comparative isn't clearly distinct from the comparative, on a reasonable construal of the latter. It is still open, however, that there is another way of understanding the non-comparative, more in keeping with Jackson's construal of it as 'phenomenal'.

Jackson thinks terms for certain properties (such as colour, shape, and distance) describe the way things look 'directly', since they characterize the look itself: He thinks such properties are 'intrinsic' to the experience of having something look a certain way. By contrast, the comparative use picks out the way things look 'indirectly', by characterizing the way something might *be* in order to look that way, rather than the look itself. I do not reject outright the idea there may be 'intrinsic' features of experience in Jackson's sense, though I am skeptical that there is a distinct 'phenomenal' notion of 'looks'. However, at this point, the semantics of 'looks' are less interesting than the metaphysics of what it is to have things look to one, as we can know it by reflection.<sup>1</sup> I also argue that one can accept something like Jackson's idea while denying that there are non-epistemic senses distinct from the comparative. Either way, it remains to determine whether such 'phenomenal' looks can index content. Again, I do not reject the idea outright. But I argue that it is of little interest; the content indexed by such looks (or descriptions of such looks) will be too thin. In particular, the considerations leading to the idea of 'phenomenal' looks in the first place suggest that they cannot index depth properties. Hence, content indexed by such looks will be too thin.

The last section of the chapter discusses a different way one might argue from how things look to representational content. Reflection on what it is like to have certain experiences may indicate that there are other ways of describing the 'intrinsic' aspects of experience than that suggested by Jackson. The familiar phenomenon of 'Gestalt switches' is a case in point. What looks like a duck can in one sense look exactly like a rabbit, yet at the same time look quite different. Reflection on such cases, as well as on familiar visual illusions, may well point to a sense of 'looks' that can determine content. The question is whether the familiar facts of how the phenomenology of experience is 'shaped' by representational content shows that there is content indexed by how things look.

Though this is the natural question to ask, in particular because Travis says relatively little about it, my answer is negative. I do not think the fact that there is such belief-independent 'phenomenal' representation can carry the weight of the intentionalist position. More positively, I think reflection on the way representation 'shapes' the look of things suggest that there is a layer in perceptual phenomenology that is not a matter of how things are represented to be. Thus, the last part of the chapter also develops a tentative defence of the simple view sketched in the Introduction.

<sup>1</sup> Compare Martin 2010, 195. Martin's paper has been helpful for my understanding of these issues, though I read it after I had written the main bulk of the chapter.

## 1 Two Notions

The idea of perceptual presentation is often cashed out in terms of how things appear or look. When we perceive, things appear or look a certain way to us. While this is right, it is less clear that it is a reason for positing perceptual content. Why should the fact that things look certain ways in an experience lead us to think that the experience has content? The more interesting question, then, is how statements involving 'looks' is supposed to index content.

Before I start, I will mention two 'linguistic' points. First, to arrive at perceptual content from how things look, one must first arrive at content. In *one* way, this is easy: One may, for instance, just take a statement about how X looks and replace 'looks' with 'is'. Thus one will arrive from 'X looks F' to 'X is F'. (The real question, of course, is why the latter statement should be the content of the experience of having X look F to one.) In other cases, statements about how things look already 'contain' statements about how things are. In 'it looks as if X is Dutch', the content 'X is Dutch' is already embedded within the longer statement.<sup>1</sup> Often, perhaps always, we can replace a statement 'X looks F' with 'it looks as if X is F' or 'it looks that X is F'.<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps most obvious in phrases such as 'looks as if ...' and 'looks that ...', which are followed by complete statements, but it also seems to be correct for phrases such as 'Pia looks angry'. This easy route between statements about how things look and how they are is perhaps one reason why intentionalists have supposed there is such an easy route from looks to content.

Second, it is sometimes thought that different surface structures mark different senses of 'looks' and its cognates. I think there is little support for this assumption.<sup>3</sup> For all that, there may, as we have seen, be different senses in play, identifiable by closer reflection on the way we use these statements. Many philosophers have assumed that there are such senses.<sup>4</sup> While Travis thinks there are two basic senses, none of which supports looks-indexing, other philosophers have thought that a third sense might index content. My interest in the following is whether this is true. It is not to develop a semantics of constructions involving 'looks'. Nor is it Travis' interest. His main claim is that whereas philosophers are right that there is a sense in which reports about appearances 'contain' statements (contents) in the way indicated, it is a misunderstanding to think that this suggests that having things look one involves this content. I will return to some issues in relation between linguistic and philosophical considerations later. I now turn to Travis' two notions.

### 1.1 The Epistemic Notion

Travis contrasts his two notions as follows, where the relevant 'looks'-statement is 'that painting looks like a Vermeer':

The first may be true by the painting looking as it does – by its being much the same in looks as, or hard to distinguish from, a Vermeer. The second ... is never made true just

<sup>1</sup> There are minor problems here, in that the subject term might be 'external' to the indexed content: For instance, it may be that X looks red to me without 'X' figuring in my content. However, some other concept referring to X reasonably must.

<sup>2</sup> This also seems to be supported by syntax. I touch on this in my discussion of Brogaard in sect. 2.2.

<sup>3</sup> For instance, we can say that it looks as if Pia has been in a fight, that Pia looks as if she has been in a fight, that Pia looks like a dancer, that Pia looks angry, or that Pia looks to be Dutch. There is a wealth of other constructions. I will not try to assemble a list. It is sometimes claimed that various surface constructions mark different senses of 'looks', but I think it is hard to find clear examples of this. There are clearly different surface structures, but it is not at all clear that they mark out different senses of their constituent 'looks', or make statements not expressible by sentences of the other surface forms. In the following, I will not assume that surface forms indicate any interesting deep forms, nor will I assume anything about the sense of their constituent 'looks' verb. I will return to the issues, however.

There are also various 'looks' verbs, such as 'appears' and 'seems'. Again, it is sometimes thought that there are important differences between what these words express. There are some differences between them, in that there are contexts where one word can be used and not the other, but it is unclear whether this amounts to anything of importance for present purposes. Again, I will not assume that anything interesting can be read off the use of 'looks' as opposed to 'appears' or 'seems' or the other way round. For simplicity, I will stick with 'looks'.

<sup>4</sup> Travis speaks of 'notions' where others speak of 'senses' or even 'uses' of 'looks'. The difference between a pragmatic distinction of uses and a semantic distinction of notions or senses is potentially important, and would have to be considered in a fuller treatment. It should not matter here, though. In a few places, I will also for convenience talk of *kinds* of looks; thus, the non-epistemic notion identifies a non-epistemic kind, and so on. Not much will hinge on this, though. Finally, I will not pay strict attention to whether the word 'looks' itself or rather the construction 'X looks F' is ambiguous. Thus, I will not clear distinguish between a non-comparative sense of 'looks' and a non-comparative sense of 'X looks F'; the latter can clearly be ambiguous without 'looks' being, if there are different underlying logical forms in play. Again, not much should hinge on this; I will speak of notions of 'looks' for simplicity.

by that, and it is *not* true where there is no reason to suppose the painting to *be* a Vermeer. (2004, 75)

Travis' first (non-epistemic) notion will concern us during most of the chapter. I start, however, with his *second* (epistemic) notion. When I say that things look a certain way, on this notion, I express that there is reason to take it that things are that way. What I mean when I say that the painting looks like a Vermeer is that it is reasonable to believe that it is a Vermeer, or at least that I, if perhaps only tentatively, believe that it is one. This fits well with Chisholm's description of his epistemic use of 'looks':

If I say that the ship 'appears to be moving', or that it 'looks as though' or 'sounds as though' it were moving, using the appear words in one familiar way, then it may be inferred that I believe, or that I am inclined to believe, that the ship is moving. (1957, 43-44)

In other words, when I say that something looks a certain way, on this notion, I express a (tentative) belief. Correspondingly, when I say that it looks a certain way to someone, I 'credit [her] with a certain view of the matter' (Travis 2004, 78).<sup>1</sup> At a minimum, she must regard it as epistemically possible that things are as they look, as Martin says (2010, 164).<sup>2</sup> I will follow Travis and Chisholm in speaking of (tentative) beliefs, though little hinges on this. Even on Martin's definition, the statement expressed by 'it looks like P, but non-P' would be a Moorean paradox.<sup>3</sup> This is all that is needed for Travis' purposes, and we might think of it as a criterion for the epistemic sense.

There is a line to be drawn between the simple 'it looks as if P' and the self-attributed 'it looks as if P to me' (Travis 2004, 77). The former is reasonably taken to express a claim that there is reason to believe that P, as a matter of objective fact.<sup>4</sup> The latter might express only the weaker claim that I think there is reason to believe it. While one can understand 'it looks as if P' as always already involving an implicit relativization to the subject, one might hold that epistemic looks can be perfectly objective: If things look as if P, then (probably) P. The painting looks as if is a Vermeer; one can conclude that it is one; if it isn't one, my claim is mistaken (Travis 2004, 77-8).<sup>5</sup> Things are not straightforward here. It seems to me that there are various uses of 'looks' here, and there is at any rate a variety of problems pertaining to the nature of reasons.<sup>6</sup> For instance, there are also cases where the only reasonable belief is false.<sup>1</sup> I will return to the epistemic issues at various points later; for now, this will have to suffice.

<sup>1</sup> Chisholm thinks that not only should there be evidence and belief grounded in it but the evidence should also be *adequate*; 'it looks like P' is appropriate only where it is *evident* that P. This can seem wrong – but see below.

<sup>2</sup> I note that we might express this in terms of subjective probability – what Davidson found missing in McDowell's proposal in Ch. 3, sect. 2.1. I should also note that my 'epistemic' notion corresponds to Martin's 'evidential' notion, the point of which, in a conversational context, is to 'put into play a proposition, indicating that there is visual evidence for it' (Martin 2010, 164). Martin also distinguishes an 'epistemic' notion which, he claims, it is not evidential. This is Jackson's 'counterfactual' epistemic notion, on which I note below. Martin assimilates it to the comparative notion. Though I find Martin's discussion of non-epistemic notions excellent, I find his discussion of the 'epistemic' notion somewhat unclear. I return to Martin's views in sect. 2.4.

<sup>3</sup> This is not to say that there must be something wrong with 'it looks like P, but I believe that non-P'. I can have contrary inclinations and regard both P and non-P as epistemically possible, though opting for non-P. Compare sect. 3.3.

<sup>4</sup> I will not here take a stand on whether there are objective reasons. Accepting such reasons would amount to accepting that there are objective epistemic norms, which some philosophers will find problematic. I think it is more problematic to deny it.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Travis' discussion:

Suppose, now, that I say simply 'It looks as if Pia will sink the putt' (or whatever). To being with, that is properly understood as (inter alia, perhaps) an expression of my own – perhaps tentative and hesitant – view of the matter: I think, or am inclined to think, going on the fact in hand, that she will sink it... I may have done no more than say how things thus seem to me; in which case I could have spoken more explicitly by saying 'It looks to me as if Pia will sink the putt.' ...

But there may be more to an 'It looks as if P' than that. If I say, 'It looks as if this car has been repainted', I may be saying that, again going by the looks – by what is observable, or perhaps more generally, by all the facts in hand – one can conclude with some, though perhaps not complete, certainty, that the car has been repaired. That, according to me, is what the looks ... indicate. I am mistaken if they do not indicate that. (2004, 77)

A potential problem with the idea of 'objective' epistemic looks is that evidence for all (empirical) claims is both context-dependent and subject-relative. So the barn doesn't look objectively as if it is a barn if one is in barn façade county. Nor does it look objectively as if it is a barn to a subject who is from barn façade county and never has seen a real barn. This can seem to lead to the conclusion that epistemic looks are after all always relative to a subject. See also next note.

<sup>6</sup> For instance, when, in believing that P, I express that there is reason for me to believe that P, then I seem to express that there is such reason for *anyone* in my situation. In that sense, even 'subjective' looks have an 'objective' dimen-

It has been doubted that there is a distinctively epistemic use of ‘looks’. I think it is plausible that we often use such locutions to convey both (tentative) perceptual belief and (thereby) what there is reason to believe. However, there is no need for us to go into the reasons for this doubt: If there is no epistemic sense, then the first premise of Travis’ argument is either vacuously true or redundant.<sup>2</sup>

A for our purposes more relevant doubt is whether how things look epistemically to me must always be a matter of what I am inclined to believe. McDowell has long argued for a notion of seeing that P which implies that the perceiver is entitled to believe that P, without her thereby necessarily taking it that P (I noted this in Ch. 3).<sup>3</sup> If so, epistemic looks aren’t a matter of (tentative) belief.<sup>4</sup> Jackson (1977, 31) claims that I can say that it looks epistemically as if P without being inclined to believe it because I may thereby only say that there is evidence conditional on certain other facts: In saying that it looks as if P, I say that I *would* have believed that P if such-and-such had been the case.<sup>5</sup> I will return to both McDowell (sect. 1.3 and 3.4) and Jackson (sect. 3.3); for the present, I will assume that epistemic looks entail at least an inclination to believe.

### *Can the Epistemic Notion Index Content?*

It is perhaps obvious that the epistemic notion cannot index content. As we saw in the previous chapter, intentionalists construe perceptual content as independent of the perceiver’s commitments. I will nevertheless elaborate briefly.

It follows straightforwardly from Chisholm’s characterization that although this notion is fit to index content in the sense that there is a single way things are ‘according’ for things to be to be as they look in experience, the content indexed won’t satisfy the third condition of the previous chapter, that perceptual content should be belief-independent:

Suppose I say, ‘It looks to Sid as if the painting is a Vermeer’ or again, ‘as if Pia will win the tournament’ ... I thus credit Sid with a certain view of a certain matter. I say him to take it, perhaps tentatively, hesitantly, with some uncertainty, that, for example, Pia will win the tournament ... I will not speak *truly* if Sid does not think the painting is (even probably) a Vermeer. (2004, 77)

As we saw in the previous chapter, the condition that perceptual content is belief-independent was an important element in the intentionalist picture – and one which has already caused some puzzlement. Of course, one might reject this element and opt for a belief acquisition theory, but that means rejecting intentionalism as I have defined it.

sion. This means that there is an asymmetry in third person uses; ‘it looks as if P to X’ isn’t true when X is fully irrational in that belief, even when she believes that she goes by the look of things. But this asymmetry can seem to hold for the first person use as well. If so, then I never, in saying that it looks as if P, *merely* express that I believe that P; I say that there is reason for me to believe that P. If that is false, then my claim that it looks to me as if P is also false. By contrast, my claim that I believe that P will still be true, even if it, too, *expresses* that I take it that there is reason for me to believe that P.

<sup>1</sup> In such cases, then, my claim that it looks like a Vermeer might be true, even if it isn’t a Vermeer, even in an ‘objective’ sense: I wasn’t just right about my belief that P; I was also right about what there was reason to believe. If you thought it looked differently, you were wrong, even in an ‘objective’ sense (holding background information fixed, of course). Your being right was pure luck.

<sup>2</sup> Breckenridge thinks that there is just one notion of ‘looks’, corresponding to Travis’ non-epistemic notion. On Breckenridge’s picture, the epistemic ‘notion’ is pragmatic. We may well *give* evidence by saying how things look (since things’ looking that way may *be* evidence), but we don’t thereby *say* that we believe that things are as the evidence indicates (2007a, 27-8).

<sup>3</sup> This is a persistent theme in McDowell’s epistemology. See, for instance, his 1982/1998, 390, 390n37. For excellent discussion of McDowell’s view that there can be ‘external’ perceptual reasons, see Ginsborg 2006.

<sup>4</sup> In the first person, present tense use, it will be possible to draw the distinction. I cannot say that I see that P, but that I don’t believe it. In this sense, then, I cannot say it looks as if P to me, but that I’m not inclined to believe it. However, according to McDowell, one can come to say that one saw that P even if one didn’t at the time take it that P (see, for instance, his 1998, 474). As I noted in ch. 3, I think there is reason to doubt that McDowell is right about this, however admirable his motivation is (for instance, his example in the passage referred to seems to conflate seeing a red cube as a red cube it is and seeing that the cube is red – a difference that should be clearer by the end of this chapter).

<sup>5</sup> Thus, on this suggestion, I might say what I couldn’t say on McDowell’s suggestions, namely that it looks as if P to me but that I’m not inclined to believe that P (one might question, though, whether it really looks as if P to *me* in this case). What I say, is that I would have been inclined to believe that P if I hadn’t known that such-and-such. Jackson’s suggestion is different from McDowell’s in that McDowell is concerned with what I entitled to despite my lack of belief, Jackson with what I would have been entitled to or believed under other circumstances. Apart from the sameness that they both deny that epistemic looks entail inclination to believe, there is the further interesting parallel that both hold that evidence can be as it is irrespective of the details of the (modal and epistemic) context.

A closely related problem with determining content from how things look epistemically is that isn't a 'source' or 'basis' for belief (cf. Travis 2004, 62); how things look, on this notion, is already a (tentative) belief. Thus, it also marks a violation of the fourth constraint of the previous chapter. Perceptual content should be 'conveyed' to the perceiver. But attributions of how things epistemically look to someone are claims about her view on the matter.

Correspondingly, an epistemic look fails the second condition; it fails to provide a 'face value' at which it can be 'taken' or 'rejected'. It is already taken. (Travis 2004, 62, 79). There is, indeed, a 'value', but that 'value' is just the value expressed in the commitment of the speaker. As Travis explains:

If perception represented things to us as thus and so, there would have to be, for any instance of it, a way things were according to it. Looks, on this [epistemic] notion ... identify something such a way *might* be. So far, that is all to the good for the representationalist. They are not, on the other hand, something that might make content *available*... If perception were representational, looks in this second sense might be its representational content; but they could not be what made that content recognizable for us. (2004, 76-7)

Hence, epistemic looks cannot explain visual illusions either. Visual illusions are supposed to be mistaken experiences, not mistaken responses to them. Clearly, there are all kinds of epistemic mistakes in perception. I believe that what is in front of me is a tomato, but it turns out that it is made of plastic. Is this a visual illusion? I think not. It is clearly a misleading experience, but not all misleading experiences are cases of things being represented to me as being a certain way.<sup>1</sup>

Yet another problem is that evidence is highly sensitive to background knowledge. On the epistemic notion, differences in background information will make things look very different to different perceivers, even if they 'visually' look just the same, as with the tomato above). More generally, how things look epistemically is not really a *visual* matter.<sup>2</sup> There need be no shared look in common between cases of having it epistemically look to one as if things are a certain way (2004, 80).<sup>3</sup> Epistemic looks are a matter of what beliefs (or evidence) a situation provides one with. There is no *one* visual character to correspond to a body of belief (evidence).

For the present, I will let this suffice. I am not aware that intentionalists have tried to respond to Travis' criticism by appealing to something like the epistemic notion of 'looks'.<sup>4</sup> One might still think that there is more to say here. Intentionalists do want perceptual content to serve as evidence – of the familiar and puzzling kind we look at in Ch. 3. Perhaps some 'epis-

<sup>1</sup> This connects with the next point, that epistemic looks aren't sufficiently *visual*. A tomato and a plastic tomato just look the same. Reasonably, the phenomenology doesn't alter from seeing something 'as' a tomato to seeing it 'as' a plastic tomato (even if the latter means it has no backside). There seems, then, to be nothing 'visual' about the 'illusion'. Now, one need not hold that such 'switches' should be characteristic of illusion. But there seems to be a clear difference between this illusion and such illusions as the Checker Shadow, where it is hard, if not impossible, to see the tiles 'as' having the same colour. In contrast, there is no difficulty in seeing the tomato 'as' a plastic tomato. I return to these and similar issues in sect. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Byrne:

Viewing one's car in an underground garage, it might both *look black*, and thereby *look as if it is blue* (epistemic) – that is how blue things look in this light. (2009, 441)

Several philosophers have pointed out that epistemic uses need not be connected with visually acquired evidence at all. Brogaard, for instance, writes:

If I hear on the radio that Bank of America has put the financial crisis behind it, I may say 'It looks like I won't need to find a new bank'. This use of 'look' is different from the 'look' that occurs in 'It looks like the road is wet (but it's not)', said on the basis of how the road looks. (*forth*, §2, 3)

She defines the epistemic use as purporting to describe 'a cognitive state concerning what is subjectively probable conditional on evidence' (*forth*, §2, 3). I think one may think that the 'generalized' use as an extension of a use that is visual; one can compare with non-visual uses of 'see' as more or less synonymous with 'realize' (Dretske 1969, 79). Nevertheless, there is a clear sense in which epistemic uses are never visual: They do not purport to describe visual characteristics. The purport to express visually acquired evidence.

<sup>3</sup> One may think this less convincing. It is clear that there is no *one* visual character present in visual evidence that it is raining (the drops on the window, the wet street, the slight loss of transparency over to the bushes at the other side of the garden). But no experience consists merely of the content that it is raining. Perhaps if one supplied the *complete* contents of the experience, then it would correspond to just one visual character?

<sup>4</sup> Thus, Nes (2008, 77) and Byrne (2009, 440-1) accept Travis' claim. Siegel (2010) and Schellenberg (2011) do not explicitly accept it, but neither do they challenge it. Brogaard (*forth*, §4, 11) similarly doesn't consider epistemic looks-indexing.

temic' notion could pick out such evidence. As I noted, Jackson thinks that epistemic looks are belief-independent (1977, 31). I return briefly to the issues again in sect. 3.3.

### 1.2 *The Non-Epistemic Notion*

The non-epistemic notions of 'looks' is first characterized by what it is not: It is not epistemic. When I say that something looks a certain way, on this notion of 'looks', I do not express that I take it that there is reason to believe that anything is that way. Instead, and in contrast with the epistemic notion, I say something about the visual characteristics of what I am looking at, as it figures in my experience.<sup>1</sup> I can say that the papier-mâché figure in front of me looks like a cow: It looks exactly like a cow, in relevant respects (for instance in shape). I may know very well that it is made of papier-mâché. Or I may say that the mountain looks red, though I know it is just the light on the snow. Thus, the non-epistemic notion doesn't attribute any belief or inclination to believe to the perceiver. Travis describes the notion like this:

On the first notion, something looks thus-and-so, or like thus and so, where it looks the way such-and-such, or things which are (were) thus and so, does (would, might) look. (2004, 69-70)

What is picked out here looks most clearly like what Chisholm calls the comparative use of 'looks'. On the comparative notion, 'looks French' might pick out the way something that is (were) French looks or would (might, could) look. There is an thus (implicit) comparison with how things that *are* a certain way look; I describe the visual characteristics of what I have in front of me, as it figures in my experience, by comparing it with an object that is a certain way. For instance, the papier-mâché figure in front of me really looks the colour, shape, and so on, of a cow (some kind of cow, in some kind of condition, viewed from some angle, and so on). Often, there are culturally determined paradigms for how things looks – for cows, a certain range of colours and shapes (not yellow) and certain viewing angles (not from below) – that I can exploit in my utterance. I may also refer to a situation I and my hearer both know. Comparisons, then, will reasonably be quite context-dependent.<sup>2</sup> But their point is just to say something about the way a certain object looks.<sup>3</sup>

#### *Can the Non-Epistemic Notion Index Content?*

Travis argues that the non-epistemic notion is no more fit to index perceptual content than the epistemic. The problem is that in looking like a cow looks (from this angle, under these viewing conditions), or like a cow might (could, would) look, what I look at looks like countless other things (viewed from some angle, under some conditions), or what countless other things might (could, would) look. Thus, the non-epistemic looks of things 'point in no one direction' (Travis 2004, 72). Suppose (like Travis) that Pia has a twin sister. They are impossible to tell apart (at least under certain circumstances, to most people, and so on). When one sees Pia, then (under relevant circumstances), she will look exactly like her sister. That is what she looks like. In saying that Pia looks like her sister, there is no single way she would have to *be* in order to be the way she looks. She looks like her sister, but, of course, in looking that way she also looks (exactly) like herself. And there are countless other things that (might) look that way – an impostor, a wax figure, a hologram, and so on. Hence, non-epistemic looks determine no *one* content.

<sup>1</sup> In attributions to other, I will say how it figures in their experience. I can also make unattributed statements about how things look objectively, independently of anyone's experience, as I return to later.

<sup>2</sup> Hence, comparative looks are 'relative', as most authors point out. I will have in mind certain restrictions, or even a very specific situation. For instance, the papier-mâché viewed from the side doesn't look at all like a cow, nor does the papier-mâché viewed from the front look like a cow would viewed from below, and so on. Nor does it look like a cow running. There can also be questions of expertise. This is parallel to the case of epistemic looks. To layman, the bird's moving that way may be taken to mean that it has a broken wing. To the hunter, it means that she attempts bring attention away from her nest. But this also means that they may draw different comparisons. The layman thinks all the finks look the same (not that she believes that they are the same; there are different names on their cages), the ornithologist will deny that one looks like the other (he cannot understand how people can fail to note the differences).

<sup>3</sup> There is an important question of whether, when I say that things look a certain way to someone, I thereby also express that the perceiver recognizes the comparison. Similarly, one must bear in mind the difference in drawing a comparison in communication and drawing it in thought (in *noting* a similarity). Such issues are the topic of sect. 3.

It seems plausible that the sense in which anything seen must look some way – the first step on the route from appearance – is the non-epistemic sense.<sup>1</sup> But since the way things non-epistemically look doesn't determine any (one) way for things to be (to be as they look), it indexes no (one) perceptual content. Following Schellenberg (2011, 716), we may call this 'the indeterminacy objection'.<sup>2</sup> Experience cannot, in the case envisaged, *both* represent something as being Pia, as being her sister, and as being any of the countless other things that might look like Pia does. In itself, the experience doesn't choose among them:

Pia's looking even exactly like her sister does not yet mean that whenever one see *Pia*, things are not the way they look. Otherwise, *no* experience of seeing Pia, and, by parity, *no-one* of seeing her sister, would be one in which things were the way they looked. (2004, 70)

Experience representing just by means of what has the look in question would make for inconsistent contents. Nothing can be both Pia and her sister, and hence nothing can be represented as both Pia and her sister.<sup>3</sup> Something can, of course, be either Pia or her sister, but that again gives no plausible content, especially when we consider the countless other things that also look that way and hence would have to be included in the content.<sup>4</sup> However, the inconsistency is rather the surface of the problem. The problem is not, at bottom, that there are too many ways for things to be 'according' to the look: It is that there are too few – namely, none. Although the way things look gives us all kinds of (immediate) knowledge about them, this knowledge isn't, as it were, in the look as such. The look as such is mute. It points in no direction; an indefinite number of objects could have that look.

This might deepen our understanding of epistemic looks. Pia's looking exactly like her sister doesn't mean that I cannot, in facing her, simply know that it is her.<sup>5</sup> It looks as if it is Pia; that it is Pia is what there is reason to think (in fact, what I see). In other circumstances, Pia looks epistemically like her sister. Thus, I am misled into thinking that things are a way they are not; that may even be the only reasonable to think in a given context. It would normally be reasonable to believe that the pile of tomato-looking things at the grocer's are in fact tomatoes. For all that, they *could* be mere lookalikes, made of wax. In their visual characteristics, then, the tomatoes look like tomatoes, and hence like tomato-lookalikes. Non-epistemically, they look the same; after all, tomatoes and tomato-lookalikes look alike.<sup>6</sup> Epistemically, they look like tomatoes, not like tomato-lookalikes.<sup>7</sup> For them to look epistemically like tomato-lookalikes, I must

<sup>1</sup> It may, perhaps, also be true that I will always be inclined to believe something about what I look at – or at least that I always acquire a certain evidence by looking at it. But it is much less obvious.

<sup>2</sup> Nes (2008, 78) calls it the 'incoherence argument'. In looking like her sister, Pia looks like many things. Nothing could be all those things; hence the incoherence. But Travis' more basic claim point is that a *look* is simply 'silent' with respect to what thing has it. It doesn't point in too *many* directions; it points in none. All 'pointing' is a matter of how *epistemic* looks – of what the perceiver believes, is inclined to believe, or (perhaps) ought to believe.

<sup>3</sup> Might one suggest that experiences can have inconsistent contents? For instance, Escher drawings are said to have inconsistent contents (they 'say' things which are inconsistent with each other, for instance 'A is above B', 'B is above C', and 'C is above A'). Crane's 'waterfall illusion' has been argued to be such a case for visual experience. A simpler example is that of seeing an approaching object, which in one way becomes bigger and in another way remains the same size. But the idea seems hopeless. The suggestion that seeing Pia should be like any of this is phenomenologically very dubious, quite apart from the fact that the experience would have to include an indefinite number of such mutually inconsistent contents.

<sup>4</sup> Again, one might well *know* for certain that it is Pia. But such knowledge lies outside the mere look of what one is facing. It is a matter of how things look epistemically. Perceptual content should reasonably be independent of this kind of background knowledge; the fact that Pia is the only relevant alternative for me doesn't mean that it is represented to me that she is in front of me.

<sup>5</sup> A worry: Perhaps such knowledge cannot be immediate? The worry seems misplaced. All that is required, I think, is that the ordinary epistemic conditions apply. For instance, one's taking Pia to be Pia may satisfy constraints of safety and sensitivity – in no near situations would one go wrong, and in near situation where what one has in front of one weren't Pia, one would not take her to (see Martin 2010, 200-2 for more discussion).

<sup>6</sup> One might object that we refer to look-alikes by reference to what they look like, namely tomatoes. Shouldn't that suggest that 'like a tomato' characterizes their look in a more 'basic' way? However, we can imagine a community which has had no contact with tomatoes, and where there are vegetables of a different kind, schmatoes, which look exactly like tomatoes. Clearly, 'like a tomato' wouldn't characterize the look of the tomato-lookalikes in a more 'basic' way if someone from this community entered our grocer's. Of course, again, they will look different *epistemically*. Here, 'schmato' will characterize the look and not 'tomato' (for our guest). But it makes no sense to draw this distinction non-epistemically: In this sense – that is, *visually* – the objects simply look just the same. See Martin 2010, 198-203 for more discussion.

<sup>7</sup> Further, things looking a certain way may well *mean* that they are a certain way. But this is a matter of natural meaning. A look will mean all kinds of things, but it isn't thereby *conveyed* to the perceiver (as we saw in Ch. 3). More interesting is the line between what the look may put an individual in a position to know and what most people will take it that the look means, or, again, between what an ideal epistemic agent would have taken it to mean and what

have reason to believe that they are.<sup>1</sup> If we like, we can say that how things look ‘tells’ me that there are tomatoes (or tomato-lookalikes) present. So far, though, nothing suggests that experience must ‘represent’ it to me.<sup>2</sup>

As I noted at the beginning of this section, looks-statements ‘contain’ embedded is-statements. Intentionalists may have taken this as a reason for thinking that they index content. As we can now see, this would be a mistake. When the claim ‘it looks as if P’ is taken epistemically, the content ‘P’ cannot indicate perceptual content, since it expresses a belief. When the claim is taken non-epistemically, by contrast, the content ‘P’ serves merely to draw a comparison, fixing a way of looking by pointing to how things look when P. The comparison as such is ‘external’ to the way of looking that it picks out. This is clearest in cases where the comparison is ‘unrealistic’, as when I say that the airplane looks like a tiny dot.<sup>3</sup> But it is the same with Pia’s looking like her sister, or like a dancer, or looking angry; in all cases, we merely draw attention to the way she looks by comparing it with how something else (Pia’s sister, dancers, angry people) would (might) look (in some situation).

One might object that *being Pia* and *being Pia’s sister* aren’t the right contents to figure in experience anyway. There are restrictions on what kinds of contents can be perceptual. For instance, experience might not be able to represent particulars; representing something as Pia or her sister might be a further accomplishment.<sup>4</sup> There is something to this line of objection, as I will return to: It can seem that we can look for a set of ‘minimal’ properties that are indexed by experience. I will refer to this as the ‘minimizing strategy’. But it should be clear that most properties – at any rate, most ‘wordly’ properties – are vulnerable to the indeterminacy objection.

I think the reasons for this are quite familiar. First, we can always imagine lookalikes and dummies. Second, as has been emphasised since the ancients, circumstances can make things look all kinds of ways – ‘the relativity of perception’. Any given way of looking can be produced by a number of things in a number of circumstances. As before, a papier-mâché cow may, in certain respects, and in certain circumstances, look exactly like a cow. A papier-mâché zebra can look exactly like a zebra, or again – to mention a well-known example (Dretske 1970) – like a cleverly disguised mule. In looking like itself, a zebra looks like all of them. Again, so might a number of other animals or things, under certain (unfavourable) circumstances – which the zebra (thereby) also looks like. Epistemically, of course, some of these things are privileged; but this is not a *visual* matter.

For ‘objective’ looks, it seems reasonable that one can avoid the indeterminacy objection by ‘minimizing’ the content one wants one’s perception to index. For instance, one may exclude

we take it to mean. If there is an ‘objective’ notion of how things epistemically look, then what an ideal epistemic agent would believe might determine how things objectively look.

<sup>1</sup> What if there is no reason to believe that they are tomatoes, but I still, unaccountably, take them to be some? In the first person case, saying that things look as if P expresses that I take it that there is evidence, in the same way saying that I believe that P does. Saying of someone else that she believes that P doesn’t express that she has evidence. Though this isn’t entirely clear, there may be an asymmetry here. If I say that it looks as if P to X, then I say that there is at least some reason for her to believe it. I do not merely say that she, possibly quite irrationally, is inclined to believe it. If the way things look non-epistemically doesn’t give any reason for X to believe that P, it doesn’t look as if P to her, however inclined she is to believe it and however insistent she will be that it looks as if P, even if she relativizes it to her. This, then, gives one sense in which one can be mistaken about how things look.

<sup>2</sup> An aside: I can also say the look tells me (the finite disjunction) that tomatoes or tomato-lookalikes are present. But it cannot tell me (the infinite disjunction) that there are tomatoes or tomato-lookalikes or holograms or ... present. This is another way of saying that how things look non-epistemically cannot fix how things epistemically.

<sup>3</sup> I take it that there is no temptation to take the plane to *be* a tiny dot – at any rate, not in the same (non-perspectival) sense that we take it to be an airplane.

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this move comes at a cost, both phenomenologically and epistemologically. Phenomenologically, we are clearly *aware* of particular individuals (for one thing, I introduced intentionality as a relation to, or directedness toward, individuals). When I see Pia, she is present in full singularity. That is not to say that I will invariably know that it is Pia, of course. I may never have seen her before. I see her on the bus, just as I see the other strangers. So that it is Pia need not enter my consciousness at all. But it seems that perceptual content should still include singular contents like ‘that person’ or something of the sort. Epistemologically, it is a problem that perception should be a core source of knowledge of individuals. If individuals are never represented by experience, then it hard to see how we have this knowledge. Moreover, it seems to be at odds with popular theories of reference, since all particularity would seem to enter by means of anaphora. A more reasonable suggestion, then, is that one can represent particulars, but only demonstratively. This can seem unproblematic; surely, one cannot fail to see that the thing in front of one is *that* thing?



any ‘substance’ properties. That would rule out worries about zebras and mules. However, when it comes to ‘subjective’ looks – how things look to an individual perceiver, at a certain time, and so on – the point about the relativity of perception could seem to hold across the board. And, surely, it is such subjective looks the intentionalist is interested in. Even ‘surface’ properties like colour and shape can be produced in a number of ways – as should be clear already from the existence of distorting mirrors or illumination. For all that, there may be something to the minimizing strategy. Perhaps there is a sense in which we can characterize the look that a zebra and a cleverly disguised mule share, or again the look of a blue shirt and a white shirt in blue light, as seen by an individual. It might be that we can characterize *looks* themselves, without describing the things that have these looks. I will discuss this strategy sect. 2.3. For the present, I return to how Travis’ point applies to an intentionalist position – McDowell’s.

### 1.3 Case Study: McDowell

McDowell accepts a disjunctivist version of intentionalism, though a disjunctivism that allows for shared contents across ‘good’ and ‘bad’ cases. The points Travis makes against McDowell will hold for standard, non-disjunctivist versions of intentionalism as well. Having delineated his two notions of ‘looks’, Travis sums up:

Neither notion suits the representationalist. He might thus seek a third. Both the temptation and its execution are visible in McDowell’s effort to explain a notion of ‘ostensibly seeing’. (2004, 79)

McDowell’s ‘ostensible seeings’ cover both genuine seeings (good cases) and merely ostensible seeings (bad cases).<sup>1</sup> His disjunctivism is expressed by the fact that being an ‘ostensible seeing’ doesn’t individuate the cases; seeing and merely ostensibly seeing are still different fundamental kinds.<sup>2</sup> There is a real commonality, however:

The contentiously legitimate category of things that are the same across the different cases is the category of how things seem to the subject. (McDowell 1986, 157)

The disjunctivist conception is clearly hospitable to such commonality; in fact, it depends on it.<sup>3</sup> The common category of ‘ostensible seeings’ is thus fixed by how things seem or look:

Ostensible seeings are experiences in which it looks to their subject as if things are a certain way. (McDowell 1998a, 438; quoted in Travis 2004, 79)

However, McDowell also holds that the way things look fixes a way for things to be ‘according’ to the experience. The question, of course, is which notion of ‘looks’ McDowell appeals to here. It is clear that it cannot be the epistemic notion:

Even if one does judge that things are as they look, having them look that way to one is not the same as judging that they are that way... Unless there are grounds for suspicion, such as odd lighting conditions, having it look to one as if things are a certain way – ostensibly seeing things to be that way – becomes accepting that things are that way by a kind of default. (McDowell 1998a, 438; Travis 2004, 79)

On the epistemic notion of ‘looks’, as Travis has explained it, ‘for it to look to one as if *X* is for one to take it that *X*; for one’s mind to be made up’ (2004, 79). This may fit notions of seeing *that* something is the case, but the above passage makes clear that it doesn’t fit the category McDowell is after. As I have noted repeatedly, the intentionalist conception is belief-independent.

<sup>1</sup> Strictly speaking, the passages Travis quotes (and the terminology of ‘ostensible seeings’) express not McDowell’s view but the view McDowell finds in Sellars (who should probably not be counted a disjunctivist). However, with some qualification, McDowell too accepts that view that seeings are a subclass of ostensible seeings (1998, 474).

<sup>2</sup> A useful analogy may be ‘ostensible banknotes’, comprising real and fake (‘merely ostensible’) notes (Fish 2009, §5a).

<sup>3</sup> The quoted passage continues in a way instructive for understanding McDowell’s position:

In the case of experience, the less than Cartesian position I described, exploiting the idea that the notion of appearance is essentially disjunctive, establishes that although that category is certainly legitimate, that does nothing to show that worldly circumstances are only externally related to experiences; to think otherwise is to fall into the fully Cartesian conception. (1986, 157)

This leaves the non-epistemic notion. McDowell needs a notion that gives a ‘face value’ (as we saw in Ch. 3). That means that it must be belief-independent. The non-epistemic notion can provide for that. But to have a face value, it must also fix a determinate way for things to be:

McDowell ... wants a look in his sense to carry ... a given import: for it to be present is ... for such and such ... to be suggested; so for there to be a way things should be to be the way they look... Only then could there be such a thing as judging (all the more refusing to judge) that things are as they look. Only then could there be any such thing to judge; such a thing as things being, or not, as they look. (2004, 80)

While belief-independent, an experience of having things look a certain to one should, in McDowell’s Sellarsian terms, “‘make” or “contain” a claim’ (1998<sub>a</sub>, 438).<sup>1</sup> It is this ‘given import’ that sets McDowell’s purported ‘third’ notion apart from the non-epistemic notion, just as its belief-independence (and supposed genuinely visual character) set it apart from the epistemic. McDowell wants to combine features of both the epistemic and the non-epistemic notion of ‘looks’. The problem, according to Travis, is that he thereby ‘wants to mix two immiscible notions’. (2004, 81)

This gives the simple structure of Travis’ argument. There are two notions of ‘looks’, none of which can index content. In construing experience as both belief-independent *and* suggestive of a way for things to be ‘according’ to it, the intentionalist uses features of two notions: the determinacy or univocity of the epistemic notion, and the belief-independence of the non-epistemic notion. However, the determinacy of the former is a consequence of its being an expression of a view, and the view-independence of the latter is a consequence of its having no specific import. Thus, the intentionalist ‘places an impossible set of demands on looks’ (Travis 2004, 82). The crucial further premise, of course, is that there are no further notions for the intentionalist to appeal to – in particular, none that combines the determinacy of the one with the belief-independence of the other.

## 2 A Third Notion?

As I have construed it, Travis’ distinction between ‘epistemic’ and ‘non-epistemic’ notions is familiar from Chisholm’s (1957, ch. 4, §2, 43-44) and Jackson’s (1977, ch. 2, §1, 30-31) threefold distinction between ‘epistemic’, ‘comparative’ and ‘non-comparative’ (or ‘phenomenal’) uses of ‘looks’.<sup>2</sup> The latter uses are all ‘non-epistemic’; Travis’ ‘epistemic’ corresponds to their ‘epistemic’. Thus, their threefold distinction consists of two twofold distinctions: a more general between the epistemic and the non-epistemic and a more specific within the non-epistemic. As I have construed it, Travis’ distinction is the more general of these. However, several philosophers have read him otherwise. They thus think Travis misses the non-comparative notion of ‘looks’. Whether he does, is the topic of the present section.

### 2.1 Comparative and Non-Comparative Notions

Travis’ point seems straightforward. Epistemic looks determine a way for things to be, but express a view on part of the perceiver. Non-epistemic looks do not express a view on part of the perceiver, but neither do they determine a way for things to be. According to Travis, there is no other notion of ‘looks’ for the intentionalist to appeal to. Hence, how things look cannot determine perceptual content.

Several philosophers think Travis hasn’t correctly represented logical space here. Byrne thinks the distinction on which Travis bases his argument is the distinction between epistemic and comparative notions:

<sup>1</sup> Compare Sellars 1956/1963, §16, 144-5. Though McDowell enrols him as one, it is not clear that Sellars is an intentionalist in the sense of construing perceptual content as belief-independent. An important question is here how to read Sellars’ qualification, in speaking of an experience ‘as, so to speak, making an assertion or claim’, that ‘this claim is, so to speak, evoked or wrung from the perceiver by the object perceived’ (1956/1963, 144). Is the claim *made* by the perceiver – that is, assented to? McDowell (1998, 437n10, 440n14) argues that Sellars should not be read that way; he reads Sellars as an intentionalist. For a challenge to McDowell’s reading, see Williams 2006/2008, 160-66; McDowell responds in his 2008<sub>b</sub>, 247-51. Compare also Gupta 2006, 126n28. See also the discussion in Ch. 3, sect. 2.1.

<sup>2</sup> Chisholm and Jackson officially speak of ‘uses’, not ‘notions’. As I have said, I will not distinguish here.

It may be too obvious to mention (perhaps this is why Travis doesn't mention it), but his two 'notions of looks' correspond to Chisholm's 'comparative' and 'epistemic' uses of 'appear words' (of which 'looks' is an example). (2009, 439)

He accepts that neither of these can index content, but naturally thinks that Travis' argument is incomplete:

Obvious next question: what about the 'phenomenal use' of 'looks' – 'looks black', and the like – which Travis does not discuss? (2009, 441)

Byrne thus thinks that Travis' arguments that non-epistemic looks cannot index content is based on mistaking a species for a genus. If Travis' assimilates the non-epistemic to the comparative, then there is a third notion, the non-comparative, which, though non-epistemic, is distinct from the comparative notion. The non-comparative notion should anyway seem a more plausible candidate for indexing content than the comparative. It promises to characterize a certain way of looking 'directly', where the comparative merely gives an 'indirect' characterization by means of a comparison with things which are a certain way.

Several authors have followed Byrne in taking Travis' distinction to be that between the epistemic and the comparative, thus holding that there is a third, alternative notion not considered by Travis. Schellenberg (2011) explicitly follows Byrne when she argues that once we notice the non-comparative notion, we can avoid the indeterminacy objection; the non-comparative does point in one direction. The same line is, independently, taken by Nes (2008, ch. 1) and Brogaard (*forth*). I will return to these authors below (sect. 2.2); in the following (sect. 2.1), I look at the distinction between comparative and non-comparative looks. I then (sect. 2.2) proceed to Byrne's discussion of his non-comparative notion, considering in passing whether he is right that Travis fails to take it into account.

It will be useful to start with Byrne's characterization of Travis' complaint:

Travis' main complaint ... is that 'looks like' points 'in no one direction'... The comparative construction reports that some things look the same way, *without saying what that way is*. If I say that Pia looks to me like her sister, I am saying, roughly, that Pia looks to me the (salient) way her sister looks to me. If Pia looks tall and blonde to me and so does her sister, my remark is true. Similarly if Pia and her sister both look short and tired. *How* Pia looks to me (blonde, pink, angry) is not something that can be 'read off' what I have literally said, although my audience might well be able to infer it. (2009, 440)

Byrne goes on to discuss expressions where the way things look can, presumably, 'be "read off" what I have literally said', such as 'Pia looks blonde to me'. Such locutions, Byrne claims, belong to Chisholm's non-comparative category. Where the comparative claim says that Pia looks like her sister in some way, but without saying 'what that way is', the non-comparative claim does just that: It says *how* Pia looks, not just that she looks like her sister.

There are some distinctions worth noting here, alluded to not just by Byrne but also by many other philosophers claiming to find a non-comparative notion of 'looks'. I don't think these philosophers have always been altogether clear about what they have had in mind. It is thus important to distinguish between the distinctions one can make. Without claiming either comprehensiveness or full clarity, the following attempts to draw a preliminary map.

One distinction is between saying (o) that something resembles something else and (i) that it resembles it in some particular way. Of course, when something resembles something else, it will always resemble it by looking some particular way, but we need not, in saying that two things resemble each other, mean to say speak of a particular look. A claim that Pia looks like her sister can be counted true under all circumstances where Pia looks like her sister, quite independently of how Pia's sister happens to look – so long as they two look the same way. This may be all I intend to say. However, in saying that Pia looks like her sister, I might also want to fix on a particular look for Pia to have.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Byrne notes, my audience might well be able to infer that I have a particular look in mind. But so long as I don't express this explicitly, it is not, perhaps, part of 'what I have literally said'. However, I think there are several ways of

This first distinction can be drawn in terms of rigidity.<sup>1</sup> In ‘X looks the way Y looks’, I may (o) let ‘the way Y looks’ denote whatever way Y looks. The phrase can denote various looks in various possible situations and the claim be true in all situations where Pia and her sister look the same way. But we may also (1) let ‘the way Y looks’ rigidly denote some particular way for X to look, by fixing on how Y looks in a particular, fixed situation. For instance, we may fix on the way Y *actually* looks.<sup>2</sup> If so, the claim will be true only in situations where X looks the way Y actually looks. Both readings seem possible for ‘Pia looks like her sister’.<sup>3</sup>

However, even when ‘the way Pia’s sister looks’ rigidly denotes a particular way of looking, our statement need not yet say ‘what that way is’ in the way Byrne requested. There is a sense in which a statement that Pia looks like her sister *actually* looks doesn’t by itself say *which* way that is, thus not *how* she looks. I may not know which way it is; I may know only that the two actually look alike. Compare knowing that the actually tallest mountain in Brazil is less than 8000 meters high. I know that, but I have no idea which mountain is the highest mountain in Brazil. Still, my description ‘the actually tallest mountain in Brazil’ refers rigidly to it. When I make statements about what things look like, I will ordinarily know more. I will have a particular way of looking in mind, just as I may have a particular mountain in mind.<sup>4</sup> A second distinction, then, is between (1) saying that Pia looks like her sister the particular way fixed by my comparison and (2) saying *how* Pia looks by drawing the comparison. In saying that Pia looks like her sister, I want to draw attention to *that* particular look. Given a suitable context, I may convey *which* way Pia looks by drawing a comparison to an audience knowing (or understanding, or inferring, or thereby attending to) how her sister looks.

Again, the point here can be made in more formal terms. Take the statement ‘Fs look the way Fs look’. The first distinction is visible in that it is in one sense (o) necessary, in another sense (1) contingent.<sup>5</sup> The second distinction is visible in that the *contingent* statement is in one sense (1) (still) a priori, in another sense (2) a posteriori.<sup>6</sup> It is a priori that things that are F look the way they actually look (though they could, of course, have looked differently). If, by contrast, the statement expresses knowledge of *which* look Fs have (how Fs actually look), then the claim is empirical. One can only know empirically how Fs look.<sup>7</sup>

understanding ‘what is said’. Have I said which way Pia looks if I say that she look exactly like her sister actually (now) looks, if I have no idea of how she looks? Of course, someone can use this information to get to know it. As before, drawing the line between semantics and pragmatics – between ‘sentence meaning’, ‘speaker’s meaning’, ‘what is said’, and ‘what is conveyed’ – is not really my task here; I think the philosophical points can be made independently on any explicit stand on these matters (though a fuller discussion might have to draw such lines).

<sup>1</sup> Compare Maund 1986, 174. However, from the way he develops the idea, Maund’s distinction between ‘comparative’ and ‘referential’ uses of ‘looks’ to appears rather to correspond to the distinction between (o) and notion (2) as set forth below. In speaking of a ‘referential’ use, Maund echoes Donnellan’s distinction between ‘attributive’ and ‘referential’ uses of definite descriptions. Referential uses require having a particular way of looking in mind. Again, this should be clearer below.

<sup>2</sup> The difference between the statements comes out like this: If I say that Pia looks like her sister, then on the ‘actualized’ reading my claim would have been false if Pia and her sister had looked like each other, but different from how they actually look. On the ‘unactualized’ reading it would have been true.

<sup>3</sup> There is also a scope ambiguity here which must not be confused with the present ambiguity. I will comment on this in a moment.

<sup>4</sup> Due to this, Donnellan’s point can seem to hold that my statement may be true of Pia’s look even if it isn’t true of her sister’s. I have successfully referred to it by a false description. (I note, though, that whereas it may hold for communication, I don’t see how it can hold for thought. But drawing a comparison is a communicative act and not something we do in thought. I return to the issues of noticing similarities in sect. 3.)

<sup>5</sup> Necessarily, everything looks the way it looks, but not everything looks the way it actually does necessarily. That is, where ‘w’ ranges over ways of looking,

□ [the w: Fs look w] (Fs look w)

is true, while

□ [the w: Fs actually look w] (Fs look w)

is false (unless the Fs have their looks necessarily, like, presumably, sense data).

<sup>6</sup> It is a logical truth that things look as they actually look. This means that

[the w: Fs actually look w] (Fs look w)

can, in one sense, be known to hold of everything a priori (note that while a logical truth, it is contingent; as Sider (2010, 258) points out, the rule of necessitation doesn’t hold for languages containing ‘actually’). However, when the use of ‘the way Fs actually look’ expresses *knowledge* of how Fs look, the claim cannot be a priori. Only in the latter sense does the claim express ‘knowledge which’ – that is, that the speaker knows which way Fs look.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson’s Mary knows that red things look the way they actually do (Jackson 1982; 1977, 34–6; Martin 2010, 192ff). The two distinctions between necessary and contingents and a priori and a posteriori capture two aspects of Chisholm’s familiar distinction in terms of synthetic and analytic versions of ‘Fs look the way Fs look’ (1957, 51–2). In the a posteriori sense, ‘the way Fs look’ expresses empirical knowledge.

The latter – epistemic – distinction is the more important.<sup>1</sup> However, the distinction between comparative and non-comparative is sometimes made in terms of alethic modality. It is also, sometimes, criticized in such terms.<sup>2</sup> However, it is only when I have a particular way of looking in mind (that is, know how things (do, would, might) look in the (fixed) situation with which I compare) that the rigid claim becomes interestingly different from a mere non-rigid claim.

There may be still other distinctions to draw. For instance, one might think that if we know *which* way something looks, then it ought to be possible to say that it looks *that* way without merely using a definite description, as when I use a comparison. Perhaps, then, there is a sense (3) which specifies the way things look without drawing a comparison – thus (literally) in a non-comparative way. Again, I think this is something various many philosophers have had in mind.<sup>3</sup> One might think that once we have fixed on a way of looking by means of a description such as ‘the way Pia’s sister actually looks’, then it ought to be possible refer to that way by means of a *name*. Just as we can, if we know which city is the capital of Brazil, replace the definite description ‘the city which is the capital of Brazil’ with ‘Brazilia’, we could replace ‘the way which is the way Pia’s sister looks’ with a name, ‘F’, thus availing ourselves of a way of saying how Pia looks ‘directly’ and without comparison: She looks F.<sup>4</sup>

Such a term might *express* how things look without drawing the comparison, just as one can understand ‘Brazilia’ without going via the knowledge that it is the capital of Brazil. There is no explicit comparison in ‘Pia looks angry or ‘Pia has an angry look’. Perhaps, then, this claim says *how* Pia looks in a way drawing a comparison doesn’t. The thought, then, is that we can fix on a certain way of looking by employing a concept that expresses how the object in question looks. Instead of saying that Pia looks like her sister, we say that she looks angry. Someone knowing that term would know how Pia looks without having to look at her sister and find out how she looks (namely, angry). This claim can be understood by anyone knowing what it is to look angry. Thus, we may have yet another a way of saying ‘what that way is’ that does more than merely saying *which* way it is.<sup>5</sup>

One might, however, doubt that the idea just set forth is entirely correct. Is it clear that ‘angry’ characterizes a look in a way that goes beyond comparison with how angry women look? It can seem hard to find a difference between ‘X looks angry’ and ‘X looks the way angry people (do, could, might) look’.<sup>6</sup> However, while perhaps too general, the line sketched may still be on the right track. Even if ‘angry’ doesn’t characterize the look non-comparatively, other terms may, and that would allow us to revise the initial idea of ‘expressing’ a way of looking. Perhaps,

<sup>1</sup> One might think that the first distinction between ‘the way X looks’ and ‘the X actually looks’ is superfluous. Could we not make all the claims we want to make in terms of this distinction by distinguishing between wide and narrow scope readings of the statements we make? The idea is that statements like

□ [the w: Fs actually look w] (Fs look w)

can be replaced by statements like

[the w: Fs look w] □ (Fs look w)

and that this will allow us to dispense with the actuality operator altogether. That would obliterate the first distinction I drew, since there would be no difference in a non-modal statement such as ‘Pia looks like her sister’. But this seems wrong; ‘rigidifying’ operators are genuine enrichments (see Sider 2010, 253n107).

<sup>2</sup> Leeds (1975, 201-2) criticizes Chisholm’s distinction between ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’ readings of ‘Fs look the way Fs look’ by rephrasing ‘analytic’ as ‘necessary’ and ‘synthetic’ as ‘contingent’. He then argues that the distinction is merely one of scope. Leeds is followed by Breckenridge (2007a, 33-4). The criticism does not have bite against the distinction I have drawn between rigidified and non-rigidified descriptions. I also think the criticism misses its target, since Chisholm’s distinction is more reasonably understood in epistemic than modal terms. On the ‘analytic’ reading, ‘Fs look the way Fs look’ is a priori (whether it is contingent or not); on the ‘synthetic’ reading, it is a posteriori – an ‘empirical generalisation’ (Chisholm 1957, 51).

<sup>3</sup> If I say that Pia look like her sister, I can say more about ‘what that way is’ by saying in what *respect* Pia looks like her sister – in facial expression, in stature, or whatever. This is *not* the idea I have in mind here. Context will often determine how explicit I must be to convey which way of looking I have in mind – if I have one in mind. In some contexts, I will have to say more. I leave such specifications aside.

<sup>4</sup> There are some complications. First, as I have stressed, for the introduction of a term to be a real improvement, we must know *which* thing we are talking about. If I have no idea which city is the actual capital of Brazil, then I can give it a ‘descriptive name’ in Evans’ sense (1982, 31), but that name won’t express ‘knowing which’. Second, of course, in the case of looks, what is fixed by the description will be general, not singular. Ways of looking are universals; different particulars could look the (very) same way.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Maund’s ‘expressive’ use of ‘looks’ (1986, 177-9).

<sup>6</sup> It is important here to note the range of comparisons one may draw, and the fact that these will ordinarily fix rigidly on one particular way of looking. Reasons for doubting that ‘X looks angry’ is properly ‘non-comparative’ will be presented below.

then, there is a sense (4) that mentions only a restricted set of properties to specify the way things look. In particular, colour and shape properties seem to play a special role in how things look. Someone looking angry does so in virtue of having more specific visual characteristics, for instance, in part, by looking red. It seems that we can, in principle anyway, describe a particular look exclusively in terms for shape and colour. Hence, we can learn how angry people look without ever seeing someone angry. By contrast, we cannot learn how red things look without seeing them.<sup>1</sup> Finally, there can seem to be a difference in sense between ‘X looks red’ and ‘X looks the way red things look’.<sup>2</sup>

As we will see, this ‘revised’ idea is not what Byrne has in mind. It seems more like what Jackson has in mind. The revised idea can be taken one step further if we focus on ‘subjective’ looks – how things look from a certain angle, or to a particular perceiver. The idea here is that there might be a sense (5) that allows us to fix on merely *phenomenal* properties – for instance, occlusion properties, or properties of a visual field. In other words, the notion might allow us to characterize looks themselves in a way talk of (apparent) shapes and colour of ordinary objects doesn’t.<sup>3</sup>

Again, this is not what Byrne has in mind – and again it can seem to be what Jackson has in mind. Philosophers are not always clear what they mean when invoke the non-comparative notion. Sometimes, criteria which distinguish only among the first notions mentioned (0-2) seem to be taken to support a notion corresponding to one of the later (3-5). Of course, I do not take myself to have provided full clarification here: I hope only to have shown that the terrain is not simple and to have provided a preliminary map by which one can proceed.

A summary is in place. Taking the statement made by the sentence ‘X looks like Y’ as the point of departure, at one end of our spectrum of ‘comparative’ and ‘non-comparative’ statements there is the following:

- (o) A statement that merely says that there is a way X and Y both look, without thereby determining any particular way of looking.

As I have described, this pallid claim will be true in any situations where X looks like Y, regardless of *how* they look. If this is the ‘comparative’ notion, then a contrasting – hence in *some* sense ‘non-comparative’ – notion can be that of either of the following statements:

- (1) A statement that *determines* the way X looks by comparing with how Y actually looks (or would or might look in some similarly fixed situation).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It could even seem that possessing the concept *red* entails knowing how red things look. Such concepts are *visual* in a way *angry* isn’t. Now, even if colour-blind people can have some concept of *red*, there might still be something to this idea.

<sup>2</sup> It can also seem that this and the next use will make possible the nominalisation from ‘X looks F’ to ‘X has an F look’. Arguably, though, such nominalisations are possible on all uses.

<sup>3</sup> A different suggestion, pointing in the same direction, is given by Martin:

[O]ne might think ... that there are broader concerns that should lead us to posit a phenomenal use of looks statements. One can sum up the idea as follows: When I say of Fido that he looks to be a dog ..., then I seem to be saying that there is a look (i.e., a way of looking) that Fido has, and that looks gives me evidence for concluding that Fido is a dog. But, one might now suppose, if there are these looks that can stand in evidence for facts and that can be more or less similar to each other, then what are they? Is there any way of specifying directly the looks that Fido has ...? (2010, 182)

Martin also illustrates the idea by comparing the look of Fido with the taste of a wine:

For example, suppose we say

This wine tastes sweet.

Then it is perfectly natural to understand ‘sweet’ here as qualifying the way in which the wine tastes. Wines count as sweet in virtue of being disposed to manifest sweet tastes, so ‘sweet’ here qualifies the taste that the wine produces primarily and applies to the wine as the substance that produces or is associated with the taste only secondarily. ... Of course, that is not to deny that the sweet [taste]... might not be misleading as to the nature of the wine... In these cases, then we seem to have examples where the complement is used directly to qualify the manner of appearance. (2010, 182-3)

As Martin shows, however, and as I discuss in sect. 2.4, the comparison doesn’t support the idea that looks are independently characterisable in the way tastes (presumably) are (2010, 182-91).

<sup>4</sup> There are other ways of rigidifying than by saying ‘the way X actually looks’; we can use a counterfactual ‘the way X would look’ rigidly by fixing on a particular counterfactual situation. As I have argued, however, such uses are very rare when we do not know how things would look in that situation. So (1) would be made by means of (2).

- (2) A statement that determines the way X looks and *expresses* which way that is by drawing a comparison trading on knowledge of how Y looks (in some fixed situation).
- (3) A statement that *expresses* which way X looks, without drawing a comparison.
- (4) A statement that expresses which way X looks by mentioning a *visual* characteristic of X.
- (5) A statement that expresses which way X looks by mentioning a *phenomenal* characteristic of X (or a characteristic of X's look).

Do some of these mark the 'real' comparative and non-comparative notions? One might think that none of the first three (0-2) can be non-comparative, since they all involve comparisons. In that case, the non-comparative must be located among the latter three (3-5). However, I think (2) captures much and perhaps all philosophers have intended the non-comparative to capture. For instance, echoing a criterion from Chisholm (1957, 51-2), 'red things look the way red things do' is *synthetic* on (2), since it involves empirical knowledge of the look of red things.<sup>1</sup> As I suggested, 'X looks angry' may also involve this kind of comparison. And it isn't clear that 'X looks red' doesn't draw a comparison too. If (2) is the non-comparative notion, then (0) is reasonably the comparative.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, statements like (0) and (1) are not usually what we intend to convey when we draw a comparison. One might, indeed, doubt that they are usefully described as 'drawing a comparison' at all. Perhaps, then, (2) is really the best candidate for the *comparative* notion. The more pallid notions expressed by (0) and (1) would then be construed as mere statements about resemblance. If (2) is the 'real' comparative notion, then a 'non-comparative' must after all be localized among the ones not involving a comparison (3-5).<sup>3</sup>

I think this is the more reasonable way of understanding the spectrum. Correspondingly, I will refer to (2) as the 'comparative' notion. However, as I said, (2) expresses what many philosophers have wanted the non-comparative to express. This opens the possibility that there may not be a non-comparative notion at all. The latter three ideas are clearly more speculative than the first three. Is there any such notion? This is a question that will stay with us in the following, but which I will not directly address until sect. 2.4. For the present, I return to Byrne's elucidations and their relevance to Travis' argument.

## 2.2 *The Non-Comparative Notion*

Byrne says that a statement like 'X looks old' can be understood comparatively as well as non-comparatively (and of course it can be understood epistemically). Read comparatively, it says that X looks the way old people look. Read non-comparatively, it fixes on a specific way of looking, the way expressed by 'old'. For instance, old people are, and look, wrinkled. Byrne uses the 'classical' criterion that used non-comparatively, the statement that old people look old is contingent (2009, 443). In other (perhaps better) possible worlds, old people develop soft, baby-like skin. When we make a non-comparative statement, by contrast, we want to 'convey a thing's distinctive appearance' (2009, 443). Another 'classical' criterion mentioned by Byrne is that when the comparative statement that X looks like Y is true, it must be in virtue of a the truth of a non-comparative statement, 'on pain of regress' (2009, 441).

<sup>1</sup> See also the criteria in Brogaard *forth*, §2, 5, none of which need determine anything beyond the a posteriori sense given by (2).

<sup>2</sup> What about statements like (1)? Such statements are rarely used and perhaps don't express much of a 'comparison' at all. Of course, we *can* say merely that X looks like Y actually looks without conveying or intending to convey anything about how Y actually looks. I might say that Pia looks as if she just came out of the tanning booth even if I have no idea how tanning affects people's appearance. I just overheard a conversation, and so I know it, but not thereby having any idea of how Pia might look in such a situation. But while we *can* say such things, it is not what we normally do. We normally have a particular way in mind, as on (2); thus, (1) rather belongs with (0).

<sup>3</sup> One could also note that when we speak of knowing 'what X looks like', we ordinarily do not mean that one knows of some person Y that X looks like Y. In the latter sense, one would know of everything (that one knows of) what it looks like; I know that X looks like X (if I know of X).

In light of the foregoing section, none of this is very clear. Byrne may intend his ‘non-comparative’ to mean no more than (2).<sup>1</sup> I think he has in mind something like (3). I will return to what exactly Byrne may have in mind; for the present I turn to how his non-comparative may bear on Travis’ point. Does the non-comparative ‘point in one direction’? On any understanding, it determines a particular way of looking, a ‘distinctive appearance’. Does that mean that when, say, things non-comparatively look old, they have to be old to be as they look? It can seem that they do. In other words, it can seem that we have finally arrived at a notion that can index content.

For a look to ‘point in one direction’, there must be a single way for things to be for them to be as they look. I will refer to this condition as ‘the determinacy condition’. It seems clear that a notion capable of indexing content must satisfy this condition. While the determinacy condition held for the epistemic notion, it failed for the comparative. Pia clearly doesn’t have to be her sister in order to look like her and be as she looks.<sup>2</sup> When we focus on non-comparative readings of such phrases such as ‘Pia looks old’, by contrast, there seems to be a single way she has to be in order to be as she looks. She has to be old.<sup>3</sup> It can seem, then, that we have a way of indexing content. This is what Schellenberg, Nes, and Brogaard think. Byrne, however, argues that even non-comparative looks do not point in one direction:

[I]f someone looks<sub>nc</sub> Scandinavian, and so looks to have the stereotypical Scandinavian bodily features (straight blond hair, small nose, pale skin, etc.), he can be as he looks<sub>nc</sub> without being Scandinavian. (2009, 444; the subscript marks the noncomparative)

To look Scandinavian is to look to have straight blond hair, small nose, pale skin, and so on.<sup>4</sup> But someone can have those features, and thus ‘be as she looks’, without being Scandinavian. Thus, the fact (if it is a fact) that ‘X looks Scandinavian’ (not only determines but) ‘expresses’ a particular look doesn’t mean that the look points in one single direction. The determinacy condition doesn’t hold after all; one doesn’t have to be Scandinavian to look Scandinavian and be the way one looks.<sup>5</sup> Pia may look blonde, small-nosed and pale, and thus Scandinavian. But her having those features doesn’t entail that she is from Scandinavia. Thus, while he thinks Travis hasn’t properly argued for his conclusion, Byrne ends up agreeing with it. Even non-comparative looks are unfit to index a single content. There is no single way for things to be, even when we fix on a single way for them to look.<sup>6</sup>

This raises a natural question. While ‘Scandinavian’ may or may not be a non-comparative notion in one sense, might there be a further non-comparative notion that *does* satisfy the de-

<sup>1</sup> Both criteria are satisfied by notion (i) already. When X looks like Y, X and Y look the way they do in virtue of their actually looking the way they do. If they had looked differently, they wouldn’t have looked as they actually do. Thus, (i) contrasts with (o). As I have noted, there are other ways of rigidifying a description that by using the actuality-operator. If they had looked differently but like each other, they would still have looked as they would *then* look; fixing on a particular counterfactual situation, it is still not true that it is necessary that they should look as they would *then* look. Again, (i) contrasts with (o).

<sup>2</sup> Of course, if Pia looks like her sister, then she *is* thereby like her sister – namely, in looking that way – irrespective of whether she ‘is as she looks’. Nes (2008, 79-80) half-heartedly suggests an objection on such lines, but leaves it aside. The intentionalist doesn’t want perception merely to index contents of the sort ‘X is like Y’. As I will return to, Nes has more forceful objections.

<sup>3</sup> The condition is not to be confused, of course, with the ‘condition’ that when something looks F, it has to be F. This principle is obviously false for subjective looks. Martin (2010) interestingly defends it for ‘objective’ looks, as I discuss further in sects. 2.3 and 2.4.

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, one might think that to look Scandinavian is to *have* straight blond hair, and so on, not just *look* to have it. There is an important ambiguity here between the ‘objective’ look of an object (how it looks) and more ‘subjective’ looks (how it looks from a certain angle, how it looks to a certain perceiver). This will be clearer in sect. 2.3.

<sup>5</sup> There is, perhaps, an air of contradiction of saying that someone looks F and is as she looks while not being F. For in speaking of things being as they look, we may keep in mind the term we used to characterize the look. Perhaps we *must* keep the term in mind; without it, talk of ‘being as one looks’ might not make sense:

If Pia’s imitation of her sister nonplussed looks uncannily like her sister nonplussed, then ... there is a way things should be to be what they *thus* look like... How things look, full stop, is another matter. (Travis 2004, 70)

So long as we are careful, however, we can also express Byrne’s point by saying that someone can look Scandinavian and be as he looks *full stop* without being Scandinavian. What he cannot, without contradiction, is look Scandinavian and be as he *thus* looks without being Scandinavian.

<sup>6</sup> Byrne doesn’t appear to be entirely of one mind of the matter, however:

The upshot is that Travis is in one way right. Perceptual content, if there is such a thing, is not ‘looks-indexed’, at least as that notion has been explained here. (2009, 444)

The last qualification may indicate that Byrne also thinks that there may be a further non-comparative notion.



terminacy condition? The structure of Byrne's argument in fact suggests that there is. Pia can look Scandinavian and be as she looks without looking Scandinavian. She is as she looks by being, say, blonde, pale, and small-nosed. But can she look to have these features and be as she looks without having them? It can seem that the answer is 'no'. If it is, then we may have a notion of 'looks' that fixes a way for things to be. This would reasonably be a notion on the lines of (4), and thus a genuine alternative to the notions considered at so far.

The questions of whether there is such a notion, and, if so, whether it can index content, will occupy me below. For the present, two other questions should be briefly addressed: Is Byrne right to think that Travis misses his notion? And is he right that his own notion is non-comparative? I think Byrne is mistaken on both scores. In the passage already quoted, Travis introduces his non-epistemic notion as follows:

On the first notion, something looks thus-and-so, or like thus and so, where it looks the way such-and-such, or things which are (were) thus and so, does (would, might) look. (2004, 69-70)

I think the natural interpretation is that Travis intends notion (2). Although it is, as I have said, possible to say that Pia looks the way her sister might in the sense of (o) or (1), it is not what we usually want to say. When we use 'the way Pia's sister does (would, might) look' to say something about the way Pia looks, we usually have a particular way of looking in mind.<sup>1</sup> That Pia looks *that* way is what we want to convey to our hearers. If they understand what we intend to say, they will thereby understand *how* Pia looks.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, the point Byrne made about 'Scandinavian' seems to be just the point Travis makes in the following passage:

If Pia looks like her sister, there is a way she should be to be what she *thus* looks like: she should be her sister. If Pia's imitation of her sister nonplussed looks uncannily like her sister nonplussed, then, again, there is a way things should be to be what they *thus* look like: it should be her sister, nonplussed. How things look, full stop, is another matter. (2004, 70)

Obviously, 'Pia looks like her sister' is comparative on the surface. However, as Byrne notes, a comparative need not be signalled by an explicitly comparative term like 'like'. A superficial 'non-comparative' might be a comparative; 'X looks old' can be used to say that X looks like an old person. As noted at the beginning, we should not look to surface grammar to determine whether a notion is comparative or non-comparative. Perhaps, then, some statements of the superficially non-comparative form 'X looks F' can only be understood comparatively: The idea sketched above was that only some properties denoted by 'F' would allow for a non-comparative reading of 'X looks F'.

It seems reasonable that 'Pia looks Scandinavian' picks out a particular way of looking in the way 'Pia looks as if she were Scandinavian' or 'Pia looks like a Scandinavian might' does. This suggests that Byrne's 'X looks Scandinavian' is comparative after all, in the manner of (2). In other words, Byrne's example may simply be an instance of Travis' schema: 'something looks thus-and-so ... where it looks the way such-and-such, or things which are (were) thus and so, does (would, might) look' (2004, 69-70).

Of course, Byrne disagrees:

Plausibly, sometimes this phrase is used to convey a thing's distinctive visual appearance, not to make an epistemic or comparative claim. Naked mole rats are hairless, sparsely whiskered, pinkish-grey, and very wrinkled. They look old. (2009, 443)

Byrne's claim is that 'the rats look old' need not be taken comparatively, since one 'might have no idea whether the rat looks like an old rat' (2009, 443). That is clearly unsatisfactory. Nobody supposes that objects (or kinds) must be compared with themselves. Nor would one have to

<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is very hard to use 'the way Pia's sister might look' to rigidly denote a *non-actual* way of looking as on notion (1) without having a particular way of looking in mind, as on notion (2).

<sup>2</sup> Moreover, of course, Travis' formulation 'looks thus-and-so...' is at least superficially comparative.

compare them with how they would *actually* look. Once again, this is clear from Travis' schema. In being hairless, wrinkled, and so on, his naked mole rats look a way an old animal might well look (in relevant respects).<sup>1</sup> The examples Byrne gives all seem to 'convey a things distinctive visual appearance' through an implicit comparison. We know which way old people look (in the relevant respects); hence, the comparison expresses which way of looking we have in mind. Similarly with 'looks centaurian' or 'looks Scandinavian'. Of course, for someone to understand the relevant comparison, she must understand which way of looking the speaker has in mind.<sup>2</sup> But that doesn't preclude comparative claims from conveying a distinctive visual appearance, once such understanding is in place. As I suggested, this seems to be just what notion (2) is used for.

In fact, I think there is little reason to think that there is any such notion as (3), as Byrne seems to have mind. I won't rest any weight on this assumption, though. It will be defended in sect. 2.4. For present purposes, the question whether Byrne's notion should be called 'comparative' or 'non-comparative' is not important. Neither is it an important question whether Byrne's notion coincides with Travis'. As I said, I see no reason to think that it doesn't; I cannot see that Byrne says anything that sets it apart from it. What matters, however, is that Byrne's (putative) notion cannot index content. The important and more interesting question is whether there is *another* notion which is distinctly non-comparative: a notion on the lines of (4) or (5). Such a notion might index content, and thus be a genuine oversight on Travis' part. This is the question I will pursue in sect. 2.3. For the remainder of this section, I will look at some other attempts to fix content by appeal to a non-comparative notion on Byrne's lines.

### *Schellenberg*

Schellenberg sets up Travis' overall objection, the indeterminacy objection, as consisting of two premises. The first premise is that perceptual content is looks-indexed. The second premise is that the way things look in experience doesn't fix such content. Like the other intentionalists I know of who have discussed Travis' objection, Schellenberg accepts the first premise.<sup>3</sup> Hence, she targets the second:

I will argue against the indeterminacy objection, by showing that on at least one understanding of 'looks', the second premise must be rejected. As I will show, the force of the indeterminacy objection relies on a particular understanding of 'looks', namely on ... the comparative use of appearance words. (2011, 721)

Like Byrne, Schellenberg says that Travis 'considers the comparative and the epistemic sense of looks' and that this 'leaves the option that the content of experience corresponds to how the world looks (or more generally seems) on a non-comparative use of appearance words' (2011, 721-2). She concludes that 'if "looks" is understood non-comparatively, then the way things look fixes the content of experience' (2011, 722). However, she says relatively little about the relevant non-comparative use or sense:

[W]e can understand the noncomparative use as pertaining to cases in which appearance words are used to pick out or refer to particulars, such as objects or property-instances, without thereby making comparisons to other particulars. Cases include uses of demonstratives, such as 'that shade of red', 'that shape' and 'this high pitch'. Arguably, the epistemic and comparative uses are parasitic on such demonstrative, noncomparative uses of appearance words. How the world seems in such cases provides the basis on which comparisons are drawn and thus provides the basis for the world to seem a certain way comparatively. Moreover, how the world seems noncomparatively provides the

<sup>1</sup> In fact, I suppose the term 'looks old' is apt because naked mole rats have characteristic visual features in common with old *people*.

<sup>2</sup> As noted, she may fail to fully understand the comparison. If so, she may grasp only the 'pallid' comparative claim that mole rats look the way (some relevant way) old people (some old things) look – or the only slightly more informative claim that mole rats look like some way some old things *actually* look.

<sup>3</sup> Travis' first premise is crucial to her own 'master argument' (2011, 718-20) for perceptual content, which relies on what she calls 'the seems-content link' (2011, 723).

evidence that allows for the world to seem a certain way in the epistemic sense of seems. (2011, 722)

This is all very brief. I think there is little here to distinguish a clear notion.<sup>1</sup> Nor is there much defence that there *is* such a notion. I think nothing in what Schellenberg writes gives any reason to suppose that her notion, as opposed to Byrne's, can index content.<sup>2</sup> At best, one can read Schellenberg's examples as gesturing in the direction of Jackson's 'phenomenal' use – which I will consider in the section 2.3. Somewhat surprisingly, no serious argument is offered.

### Brogaard

Brogaard's article is not a response to Travis, but as her argument both falls straightforwardly within the category of looks-indexing and is quite interesting in itself, it is worth considering. Brogaard distinguishes the non-comparative from the comparative as follows:

Comparative perceptual reports tell us that two experiences have certain properties in common but they need not tell us what the properties are. (*forth*, §2, 3)

Non-comparative (non-epistemic) 'looks' reports purport to describe the properties of experience directly (rather than comparatively). (*forth*, §2, 4)

Again, this doesn't tell one too much. It is striking that Brogaard says that claims about how things look (to a perceiver) pick out properties of an *experience*. That can seem contentious. From the fact that 'Pia looks angry to me' says something about my experience, it doesn't follow that 'angry' is a property of my experience. However, we should read it to say no more than that the reported properties is 'part' of the *phenomenology* of the experience.<sup>3</sup>

Keeping this in mind, Brogaard echoes Byrne in holding that comparative statements 'tell us that two experiences have certain properties in common but they need not tell us what the properties are' (*forth*, §2, 3). Now, that leaves it open that they *could* say it, in the manner of (2). Presumably, Brogaard think such comparisons would be 'indirect'. She holds that the non-comparative cannot be reduced to the comparative.<sup>4</sup> But she doesn't give much of an explanation of what a more 'direct' way would be.<sup>5</sup>

Brogaard's argument that non-comparative looks-reports reflect representational properties of an experience has several stages, but the crucial starting point of the argument is 'the hypothesis that "looks" is a raising verb' (*forth*, §4, 8):<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Like other writers, Schellenberg alludes to several criteria, but none of them seems to determine a notion beyond (2).

<sup>2</sup> This is somewhat surprising, given that her explicit claim (2011, 721n11) that her argument draws on Byrne's.

<sup>3</sup> On another occasion, Brogaard gives the following example of a non-comparative claim:

For example, 'this shirt looks red' conveys that the speaker's visual experience of a certain shirt is a phenomenally red experience. (*ms*, §2, 3)

In saying that the experience is red, she must mean simply that the phenomenology of the experience is related to a content involving the term red, as when one's experience represents that there is a red tomato in front of one. Moreover, she claims that the phenomenal result of taking off one's glasses cannot be 'accurately reported' using statements like 'John looks rough and imprecise' (*forth*, §4, 11). It seems, then, that Brogaard holds that 'X looks F' never reports such 'intrinsic' properties: It always reports represented properties.

<sup>4</sup> Brogaard gives three arguments for the irreducibility of the non-comparative notion to the comparative:

First, comparative 'looks' reports plausibly are existentially quantified non-comparative 'looks' reports at the level of logical form. (*forth*, §2, 5)

As we have seen, comparative claims need not be *merely* existentially quantified reports. Although 'the way X looks' is a definite description, my utterance of 'Y looks the way X looks' need not say merely that there is a way such that X and Y both look it, as on the 'pallid' comparative sense (o); it may well denote a way rigidly and moreover *convey* it through a comparison, as on notion (2).

Second, ... we cannot successfully reduce all non-comparative 'looks' reports to comparative reports. 'That chair looks purely qualitatively red' and 'That chair looks the way a purely qualitatively red object would look' plausibly have the same truth conditions. Hence, the comparative report presupposes a non-comparative use of 'looks'. (*forth*, §2, 5)

The conclusion doesn't follow. We can agree that the claims, as used on a particular occasion, have the same truth conditions, but that might be due to their making the same *comparative* claim. For all that has been said, 'that chair looks purely qualitatively red' may make just the same claim as 'that chair looks the way a purely qualitatively red object would', just as 'Pia looks Scandinavian' may make just the same claim as 'Pia looks the way a Scandinavian would'. Again, a comparative claim may well convey just that way of looking in the manner of (2).

Brogaard's third argument corresponds to Chisholm's point about the difference between analytic and synthetic readings of certain claims, which was discussed above.

<sup>5</sup> Again, if X looks like Y looks, then X actually looks like Y looks. Hence, there is always a 'reduction' from the 'pallid' comparative (o) to an 'actualized' comparative (i). In fact, Brogaard holds that comparative reports 'reduce' to non-comparative reports; see next note.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, Brogaard holds that '[b]oth comparative and non-comparative phenomenal reports reflect representational phenomenal properties of the experiences they describe' (*forth*, §4, 12; 'phenomenal' here merely says that the re-

'X looks red' has the underlying structure 'Looks(X is red)'. In the transformation of the underlying structure, 'X' raises to become a constituent of the higher clause 'X looks to be red'. This then undergoes infinitive deletion to yield 'X looks red'. 'X looks red' thus has the same underlying structure as 'A laptop was reported stolen'... '[A] laptop was reported stolen' says that it was reported that a laptop was stolen. The subordinate clause thus attributes being stolen to some laptop. Likewise, the subordinate clause in 'X looks red' attributes being red to X...

The sentential operator indicates how the properties got attributed. Being stolen was attributed to a laptop in an act of reporting. Being red is attributed to X in a perceptual act. It follows that the subordinate clauses of non-epistemic (or perceptual) 'looks' reports mirror properties represented in perception. (*forth*, §4, 8-9)

Though the hypothesis that 'looks' is a raising verb is eminently plausible, the conclusion seems too swift. We can (I think should) accept that 'X looks red' is a raising construction in the way Brogaard describes, and thus involves an operation on an embedded clause 'X is red'. As I said at the outset, claims about how things *look* seem to 'contain' other claims about how they *are*. However, this in itself doesn't justify the conclusion that X is perceptually represented as being red or that anything is 'attributed to X in a perceptual act'. I don't see that the conclusion follows. In fact, that goes even if there should be a non-comparative notion of 'looks', an assumption Brogaard doesn't defend. The claim 'contained' in 'Pia looks Scandinavian' is 'Pia is Scandinavian'.<sup>1</sup> As the discussion of Byrne showed, something could look *that* way and be as it looks without being Scandinavian. The embedded claim simply marks what we are comparing with. Unless more is said about both the non-comparative notion and the way the embedded claims are supposed to be made 'by the perceptual act', Brogaard's argument provides little reason to suppose that the embedded claims correspond to representational content in experience.<sup>2</sup> However, as before, it might be at least partly vindicated by defining a more clearly non-comparative notion, along the lines of (4) or (5).<sup>3</sup>

### Nes

Like Schellenberg, Nes thinks the 'critical issue' is 'whether Travis fails to recognize a notion of looks: the non-comparative qualitative one' (2008, 86). He goes on to argue that Travis does indeed miss this notion. That allows for what Nes calls 'non-comparative grounding' of perceptual content. This is a clear case of looks-indexing:

For any visual experience, (i) there is a class of non-comparative qualitative looks-statements true of it, and (ii) the non-comparative qualitative looks-facts about the experience affirmed by these statements ground the ascription of at least the core of its representational content. (2008, 81)

ported properties are 'part' of the phenomenology of the experience, as explained above). It may seem doubtful that comparative statements can index content. As I said, Brogaard doesn't consider Travis' argument. However, the explanation for her claim is that she thinks 'comparative "looks" reports... reduce to non-comparative reports' (*forth*, §4, 8). In other words, as the 'regress' argument has it, whenever we can say that Pia looks like her sister or like a dummy of her sister, there is another, non-comparative claim to be made, in virtue of which the comparative claims are true. On this background, her claim makes more sense. For she might mean that the way comparative reports reflect representational properties is quite indirect. When 'Pia looks like her sister' indexes content, it is the content that can be read off the non-comparative claim (fact) that makes it true – perhaps to be reported by a notion like (4) or (5). Like the others, Brogaard doesn't qualify her non-comparative notion. At any rate, what matters for present purposes is the claim that non-comparative reports index content.

<sup>1</sup> The details need not bother us. Roughly, 'Pia looks Scandinavian' is a contraction of 'Pia looks to be Scandinavian', which is produced when the subject of 'Pia is Scandinavian' is raised to be the subject of 'it looks like Pia is Scandinavian' – compare how 'John' in 'John is proven (to be) guilty' is raised to subject positing from 'it is proven that John is guilty'. There are some complications here, in particular due to the fact that the constructions with 'looks' sometimes demands 'copy raising' (see Rogers 1971, Asudeh and Toivonen 2012). None of it should matter here, though.

<sup>2</sup> There may be a further problem here: If there is a non-comparative notion, then it may be characterized precisely by *not* having the logical form 'looks (X is F)'. As Martin discusses (2010, 179-81), Jackson seems to have thought that 'phenomenal' non-comparative statements have a different logical form. He then (2010, 183-5) goes on to point out that there are forms of 'X looks F' which, on one notion of 'looks', do *not* transpose to 'X looks to be F', 'X looks like it is F', 'it looks that X is F', and the like. An example is 'X looks splendid'. In these cases, 'F' seems to characterize the 'looks' itself. Martin suggests that Jackson may have thought that 'X looks red', on the phenomenal notion, might be parallel in purporting merely to describe the visual impression of something. I discuss this further in sect. 2.4 below. Now, reasonably, a non-comparative with a different logical structure might still index content; as I noted in sect. 1.1, one might argue that 'X looks F' indexes 'X is F' directly. But if so, Brogaard's argument from logical structure would be idle.

<sup>3</sup> Again, the examples she gives may suggest that she thinks that non-comparative looks are 'phenomenal', like 'X is red'. But she is nowhere explicit about this.

Nes' main argument is directed at Travis' understanding of the non-epistemic notion. As we have seen, Travis explained it as follows:

On the first notion, something looks thus-and-so, or like such-and-such, where it looks the way such-and-such, or things which are (were) thus and so, does (would, might) look. (2004, 69-70; quoted in Nes 2008, 82)

Nes comments:

He here seems to explain in the same breath what it is for something to look blue, say, and what it is for something to look like a blue thing. If he is right in doing so for any qualitative looks-statement, one would expect any fact of the form 'x looks F', and the corresponding explicitly comparative fact of the form 'x looks like an F thing', to be on a par when it comes to content determination. (2008, 82-3)

He goes on to argue that there is indeed a crucial difference between these statements. In particular, he argues, the comparative cannot be reduced to the non-comparative.

Like Schellenberg and Brogaard, Nes says nothing explicitly that lets him escape Byrne's problem. The examples he gives suggest that he might well accept a more restricted notion of 'looks', but he makes no such official restriction on his 'qualitative non-comparative' notion.<sup>1</sup> Instead, he argues on a more general level against the suggestion that 'X looks F' and 'X looks like an F thing' are on a par, and in particular against the assumption that non-comparative claims can be fully captured by comparative statements.

One of his main arguments starts from the premise some ways of looking cannot be referred to by means of definite descriptions denoting the way things actually look: There are, or could be, ways of looking that no object actually looks. For instance, there apparently is a shade 'supersaturated red' which we cannot experience as a property of anything:

This is a shade of colour which one might, as a matter of a law about our visual system, experience only in the context of an afterimage-involving experience. (2008, 89)

Clearly, we cannot refer to this way of looking by means of an actualized description involving ordinary objects.<sup>2</sup> But this is not a problem for Travis. We don't have to use 'actually' in order to rigidify a definite description. There is no requirement that the situation by reference to which we determine the way of looking should be an actual situation.<sup>3</sup> Nes considers the proposal of referring to the way supersaturated red things *might* look. He grants that there is a 'remote scenario' where there are supersaturated things looking supersaturated red, thus rendering the claim 'things look the way supersaturated red objects might' true. His claim is that this cannot render the non-comparative claim 'things look supersaturated red' true (2008, 91-2).

I think this misses the point of drawing a comparison (again, I refer to section 2.4). When we say that X looks the way Y might look, 'the way Y might look' is used with a particular way of

<sup>1</sup> The label 'qualitative' should make the same suggestion. However, Nes explains his notion as follows:

Let's call looks-facts, or statements of such facts, *qualitative* iff they are articulated on the form 'x looks F', where 'F' is an adjective, for example 'red', 'round', 'happy', or 'interesting'. (2008, 80-1)

While he notes that some looks-statements of this form may be implicitly comparative, such as 'X looks American' (2008, 81), Nes thus seems to be quite liberal when it comes to what properties 'F' can stand for.

<sup>2</sup> That being said, one might, even in this case, refer to the actual *situation* in which things *look* that shade. There is no requirement that any object must be that shade; in fact, no *object* is needed at all. For instance, we can say that *things* look as if my experimental psychologist induces a supersaturated red afterimage. (One point to keep in mind about looks-reports is that we can say that it looks as if P even if no *object* looks as if P; 'it' can be a mere dummy pronoun. In other words, the report can be fully appropriate even if I see 'nothing'.)

<sup>3</sup> Jackson makes essentially the same argument as Nes:

[T]here might be a shade of red which no object actually has. Indeed, for all I know, there is. It could even be the case that there were no red objects at all, although objects looked red on occasion. (1977, 35)

Martin replies as follows:

Jackson's argument seeking to establish that a looks-red statement can be true even where a comparative gloss is false can be set aside immediately. Jackson's argument for this possibility turns on the assumption that somehow the comparative element must be tracking the actual extension of a term... It is surely false in general that explicit comparative claims can be made truly only where they make comparisons with things that actually exist. There is really no problem in saying 'Ellen is as acute as Sherlock Holmes' such that an audience understands a truth by it... For the more restricted case of appearance statements that have no explicit comparison particle, the same verdict plausibly holds, so no challenge seems to be posed to construing all talk of color looks comparatively just from the possibility of uninstantiated colours. (2010, 192)

To me, this seems just right; I have nothing to add to it.

looking in mind. We intend to convey how X looks by comparing with an imaginable situation in which things look a certain way. In the case at hand, we would simply imagine a situation in which there are supersaturated red things (and where these things look to us as they are). While perhaps physically remote, the invoked scenarios should not be ‘imaginatively’ remote, given the context of utterance. In the given example, they aren’t.<sup>1</sup>

I think the point about drawing a comparison also answers a further worry Nes raises for Travis’ argument. When we are faced with a white shirt in blue light, the natural thing to say is that it looks blue. But in looking blue, the shirt also looks the way a white thing in blue light might (obviously, since that is what it is). According to Travis, that shows that the determinacy conditions fails; in looking that way, the shirt looks like countless things. Nes objects that ‘X looks blue’ and ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’ are not on a par. Simplifying slightly, the problem Nes raises is that ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’ reasonably entails ‘X looks like a white thing’. Now, by Travis’ lights, that latter claim is should itself be on a par with ‘X looks white’.<sup>2</sup> And that leads to the unacceptable conclusion that ‘X looks blue’ and ‘X looks white’ are on a par in this situation.

As I said, I think this misses the point of the comparison. On the comparative understanding, in saying that Pia looks angry, I say that she looks like an angry person. That entails that she looks like a person. But while I can be said to say this, too, in saying that she looks angry, it is not the point of what I say. In drawing the comparison, I want to convey how Pia looks. I could well have used a much more complicated phrase. Perhaps the best way of conveying how Pia looks is that she looks as if she has been eating spaghetti without using her hands. That implies that she looks as if she has eaten. More specific claims entail more general ones. But the point of the comparison, again, is the specific situations with which I compare. As comparisons, more specific claims are *not* on a par with more general ones, even if they entail them. In turn, this means that ‘X looks blue’ and ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’ may well be on a par (in the context of utterance) without any of them being a par with ‘X looks white’.

For all that, it is very natural to object where Nes does. Doesn’t ‘X looks blue’ describe the way the way X looks in a more ‘direct’ manner than ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’? It seems that it does, and this is surely part of what Nes has in mind. In the former case, the reference to a (more or less specific) situation seems to be dispensed with in favour of a claim that ‘expresses’ the way the shirt looks – in other words, something like notion (4). In sect. 2.4, I will discuss the use of comparative statements in more details, and hopefully vindicate the idea that ‘X looks blue’ draws a comparison after all – namely, a very natural one: It compares X with the way blue things look.

Like other writers, Nes also gives a ‘regress’ argument for the existence of non-comparative looks. He thinks reflection on uninstantiated shades shows that taking comparative claims as basic gets things the wrong way round. When we say how things look, we are concerned with ‘the way something looks’ (2008, 92). Comparative claims get at the way ‘indirectly’; it is ‘specified as the way objects that are *such-and-such* look when *so-and-so*’ (2008, 92). The idea is that a non-comparative might specify it ‘directly’. As we have seen, the idea is familiar, but not too clear. Though it seems right that reference to a certain colour – say, red – describes the look ‘directly’ in a way reference to the way things look when things are *such-and-such* (the way of

<sup>1</sup> To bring out his point, Nes considers a remote scenario where happy creatures look pyramid-shaped. Thus, pyramids look the way happy creatures might. But that doesn’t, he says, mean that pyramids look happy (2008, 92). Now, as I will return to, it is easy to sympathize with this. Clearly, there is no tendency to associate ‘happy’ with the way pyramids look. But Nes’ analogy seems to fail. For someone who has the particular way of looking in mind, it is *not* hard to imagine how supersaturated red objects might look: They might look as they would then be – namely supersaturated red. Thus, the comparison could convey how things look in the afterimage-involving experience’, rendering the claim ‘things look supersaturated red’ true.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, I interpret Nes as making the same objection that Brewer reports Gupta to have made (2007, 94, 94n10); my reply is different from and much simpler than Brewer’s, though.

Nes’ original objection stemmed from noting that ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’ is ‘closely related’ (2008, 85) to ‘X looks white and illuminated by blue light’. Nes then objects that ‘because “looks” distributes over conjunction’ (2008, 86), ‘X looks like a white thing in blue light’ implies ‘X looks white’. While we should grant that the ‘close relation’ is one of entailment, as Nes needs for his conclusion to go through, I think the objection fails for the same reason as the simplified objection discussed in the main text.

the after-image in the psychology lab) doesn't, I have suggested that one thereby simply draws a natural comparison with a certain class of objects – namely, the red ones. In other words, when we say that an object looks a certain colour, we draw attention to the way things having that colour look.<sup>1</sup> Nes thinks otherwise:

Surely, the more fundamental conception of the way things look supersaturated red to us is the one visually available to us when enjoying an experience in which something looks supersaturated red to us. (2008, 92)

It is very reasonable that conceptions of ways for things to look must be tied with experiences of them.<sup>2</sup> But it isn't clear that this means that we have a special non-comparative way of specifying them. Even if no (physical) object could have the colour we are out to describe, the claim that X looks that shade might still draw a comparison. It might determine the look by reference to the way a supersaturated red object would look, if objects could, contrary to fact, be supersaturated red. Or it might determine it by reference to the way things are in the situation in which we have this kind of experience: Even if no objects have this colour, or the situation merely produces an after-image, the look can be determined by reference to this situation. Again, notion (2) seems capable to do all the required work.

In fact, I find it natural to think that the way a colour is 'visually available' in an experience is as a (seeming) property of objects.<sup>3</sup> That should suggest that the look of red just is the look of red things. It is unclear that 'the look of red' gives a more 'direct' specification than 'the look of red things' or indeed says anything beyond that.<sup>4</sup> However, I readily admit that the issues raised here are difficult. The next two sections provide further discussion.

### 2.3 Another Non-Comparative Notion?

As suggested, if 'Scandinavian' doesn't characterize a look non-comparatively, then perhaps other terms might, such as 'blonde'. Despite its superficially non-comparative form, 'X looks Scandinavian' could seem to draw a comparison between X and Scandinavians. 'X looks blonde', by contrast, could seem not to. The property of being blonde is itself distinctively *visual*. The idea, then, is that we might identify a non-comparative notion by focusing on a restricted set of properties, on the lines of (4).

Byrne actually argues against this suggestion, though he doesn't arrive at it the way we have. From the outset, he sides with Chisholm, arguing against Jackson's idea that non-comparative statements mention only 'phenomenal' terms more closely tied with appearance than, perhaps, 'Scandinavian' – 'terms for colour, shape and/or distance' (Jackson 1977, 33).<sup>5</sup> Using the example 'X looks centaurian', which, according to Chisholm (1957, 116) can be read non-comparatively, Byrne writes:

Centaurus, going by the usual artists' renditions, share distinctive characteristics, which is why they can (in mythology) easily be identified by sight. That is, there is a distinctive centaurian 'visual Gestalt': centaurs have a certain kind of body hair, torso, colouring, gait, and so forth. 'Centaur-shaped' does not do it justice. Likewise, 'cow-shaped' is a significantly oversimplified answer to the question 'How do cows look?' (2009, 443)

<sup>1</sup> As I discuss in sect. 2.4, Martin (2010) argues that red things look red simpliciter. The natural alternative is that there is an implicit comparison with how red things look under optimal viewing conditions.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, Hume may be right that we can arrive at conceptions of some unexperienced colours by abstraction.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, this seems true even for afterimages.

<sup>4</sup> I think that one's views here may be influenced by one's views on colour realism. Jackson is a point in case. It is clear that our conception of a colour is tightly tied with experience of it. But it isn't for that reason clear that the conception is more fundamentally of a property of experience as opposed to a property of objects. If not, it is at best unclear that 'looks red' should be different from 'looks to be red' or 'looks the way red things do'. Anti-realism about colours doesn't change that. Neither need the fact that colour-blind people cannot appreciate the relevant way red things look and thus cannot appreciate the relevant comparison either. Again, I discuss this in more detail in sect. 2.4

<sup>5</sup> There might be other properties as well, in particular surface properties, size, and perhaps number. But Jackson's short list gives the relevant idea of how to arrive from the non-comparative from the comparative:

[I]nstead of terms like 'cow', 'house', 'happy', we have, in the phenomenal use, terms like 'red', 'square', and 'longer than'. (1977, 33)

Byrne holds that properties like shape and colour do not sufficiently characterize how centaurs or cows or Scandinavians look.<sup>1</sup> As he points out, these things have a certain Gestalt. As I shall note later, Byrne hints to something important here. The notion of a Gestalt might suggest a way to index content; the concept *centaur* might so to speak enter the very ‘organization’ of the experience.<sup>2</sup> But this isn’t how Byrne himself argues. He argues merely that since terms like ‘centaur-shaped’ cannot do justice to the Gestalt, there is a non-comparative sense of ‘looks centaurian’.

As we saw, though, the fact that there is a distinctive centaurian ‘visual Gestalt’ doesn’t mean that a centaurian look (so specified) indexes content. As I also argued, this may well be because ‘X looks centaurian’ can only be read comparatively, in the manner of (2): When we say that something looks like a centaur, we say that it looks the way centaurs (do, would, might) look, thus (rigidly) fixing on *that* particular look. However, the possibility that statements describing how things look in terms of colours and shapes might satisfy the determinacy condition should reasonably lead one to question Byrne’s argument here. Perhaps we should look for terms that might characterize a particular look ‘intrinsically’.

One reason for thinking this is that a wax figure need only have certain shape and colour properties to be an exact visual replica the cow. Thus, concepts for shape and colour might be sufficient to describe the look of it – though to capture the *complete* look, in the way ‘X looks like a cow’ might, it would clearly have to be a very complicated statement.<sup>3</sup> The further idea was that if things look, say, blonde, then they have to be blonde in order to be as they look. In other words, looks described in terms of such properties might satisfy the determinacy constraint; if so, we might even *define* the non-comparative as a non-epistemic satisfying the determinacy constraint.

I suggested that we might get a feel for Jackson’s strategy by considering why Byrne’s strategy failed.<sup>4</sup> In order to fix on a way things should look for them to be such that they satisfy the determinacy condition, we might fasten on specifically visual terms – terms that denote properties that are, so to speak, ‘part’ of the look itself, as promised by notion (4). Byrne’s complaint that terms like ‘looks old’ violated the determinacy constraint because ‘naked mole rats can *be* as they look<sub>nc</sub> (wrinkled, pink, etc.) without *being* old’ (2009, 443-4) suggested that a look reported by a phrase like ‘looks pink’ might satisfy the constraint.

A zebra, a papier mâché zebra, and a cleverly disguised mule might all look have the same visual Gestalt. But as we saw, the property of being a zebra cannot be part of an ‘intrinsic’ char-

<sup>1</sup> It is irrelevant here that centaurs are fictive. This should be clear from the discussion of Nes’ argument from necessarily uninstantiated shades in sect. 2.2. See also sect. 2.4 below.

<sup>2</sup> I have in mind, of course, the Gestalt psychologists’ emphasis that how things look to a perceiver is fixed not merely by shapes and colour but crucially by the organization of the experience. The idea is discussed in sect. 3.

<sup>3</sup> It is not fully clear to me what Byrne argues against when he says that we cannot capture the ‘visual Gestalt’ of a centaur in terms of colour and shape properties, once we set aside the idea that the experience is ‘shaped’ in terms of the concept *centaur*. First, his complaint may be that no simple term can characterize the complex of shapes and colours that make up a centaurian Gestalt. It is clearly right that we do not have such terms readily available. However, the idea was to construct a theoretical term denoting a range of volume and colour properties, and then introduce a term ‘F’ for it. Thus, ‘X looks F’ would describe the look of anything with a centaurian look. But in contrast to ‘centaurian’, ‘F’ would be such that X would have to be F in order to be as it looks. (And one might further argue that even if perceivers lack words to describe the look, they have fine-grained representational capacities which enable them to represent the complex property, even if she has and could have no ordinary language terms for it.) Second, Byrne’s complaint may be that a complex term not mentioning ‘centaur’ would fail to pick out the right *range* of determinate properties that would go into a ‘centaurian’ look. The point can be made already at the level of shape; ‘centaur-shaped’ picks out a range of volumes in a way a geometric term wouldn’t. It doesn’t provide a *rule* for ‘how to go on’ constructing (varieties of) *that* kind of look. In response, one might hold that the (geometric, chromatic) term ‘F’ wasn’t meant to give such a rule; it was meant only to capture the look of a particular centaurian-looking object, or even just the current look of it to a particular perceiver at a certain time.

<sup>4</sup> There is a double irony here. For though he argues against Jackson’s version of non-comparative looks, Byrne actually more or less agrees with Jackson about the properties represented by experience. Byrne argues that we can arrive at representationalism by inference to the best explanation of visual illusion. He thinks reflection on illusion suggests that perceptual content is relatively thin: ‘Visual illusions ... concern properties like shape, motion, colour, shading, orientation and the like, not properties like *being tired*, *belonging to Smith* or *being a lemon*’ (2009, 449). But such properties seem close to what would be indexed by Jackson’s ‘phenomenal’ notion, ‘explicitly tied to terms for colour, shape, and/or distance’ (1977, 33). In fact, since Byrne thinks that ‘the phenomenon of illusion and the phenomenon of non-comparative looking are ... intimately connected: to explain one is to explain the other’ (2009, 444) and that the phenomenon of illusion is in turn to be explained in terms of perceptual representing (2009, 447-8), one might think that he would also accept a more restricted, ‘phenomenal’ non-comparative notion. But he doesn’t say more about how he thinks of the non-comparative looks of things. I am simply puzzled here.



acterization of the look, at any rate not an ‘intrinsic’ characterization meant to index content.<sup>1</sup> Jackson’s proposal was that only colour and shape properties can. Terms like ‘blonde’, ‘pink’, and ‘pale’ presumably all belong to those categories. Can an object be as it looks when it looks pink without *being* pink? It may well seem that it cannot. If so, the look indexes a way for the object to be.

### *Phenomenal Looks*

The present strategy is the one I mentioned in sect. 1.2, of ‘minimizing’ the constitutive elements of a look. We have returned to it via a rather elaborate detour. Terms for particulars couldn’t enter into the ‘intrinsic’ description of a look: ‘Pia looks like her sister’ doesn’t index content. Neither could kind terms: ‘X looks Scandinavian’ doesn’t either. That leaves terms for ‘surface’ properties – in particular, of course, ‘visual’ terms: ‘X looks yellow’ might well seem fit to index content.

At this point, it obviously matters whether we talk about how an object looks ‘objectively’ or how it looks ‘subjectively’. One might perhaps doubt that there are fully objective looks, but at any rate, there is a difference between how an object looks in itself and how it looks under certain circumstances or to a particular perceiver.<sup>2</sup> There is some force to the idea that we can characterize the objective look of a particular object in terms of a restricted set of properties. The simple reason for this is that for an object to look yellow, it might well have to *be* yellow. That is, the look of an object may satisfy the very strong ‘condition’ that in order for an object to *look* a certain way, it has to *be* that way.<sup>3</sup> Whereas an object can, of course, look yellow to a perceiver without being yellow, the idea is that it cannot look yellow simpliciter without being yellow.<sup>4</sup> I will not here discuss whether this idea is true. Martin (2010, 203-208) interestingly defends it; he thinks the ways things objectively look are visible characteristics (in Aristotle’s sense, proper sensibles).<sup>5</sup> But it should be clear that while objective looks may satisfy the de-

<sup>1</sup> As before, of course, the comparative ‘X looks like a zebra’ or the superficially non-comparative ‘X looks zebraish’ are more *apt* to convey what look we have in mind (to someone who knows what zebras look like) than an elaborate description in terms of volumes and patterns of black and white.

<sup>2</sup> I have in mind here merely the way we distinguish between the way the red carpet *really* looks and the way it looks in dim light or to colour-blind Mary. The further question, of course, is whether there really are fully objective looks. There is a strong tendency to think that the way things look must be explained in terms of possible experiences of them (at least for ‘secondary’ qualities like colour; the parallel conclusion about shape seems far more radical). I obviously cannot go into that discussion here, though it is important for the debate between intentionalists and naïve realists. An intentionalist like Byrne argues for a subjective understanding of objective looks, in terms of how things look to most perceivers (2009, 445-6). By contrast, a naïve realist like Martin thinks objective looks are objective visual characteristics of things:

A common strategy in discussing the looks of things is immediately to offer an account of corresponding psychological states: the visual experiences that we enjoy in looking at things. In offering semantic theories, this has led writers to propose accounts of looks statements that take as fundamental ascriptions used to talk about psychological states... Connected with this are at least two lines of thought. The first is that our talk of appearances in general and looks in particular exhibit a subjectivity of use that parallels avowals of psychological states, so one might take this as an indicator that this is best explained by supposing that at root such talk avows the presence of relevant psychological states. Second, one may suspect that with such elements as looks, philosophers are inclined to accept a *phenomenalism* that they are more likely to reject for what they take to be the intrinsic properties of physical objects, that facts about the looks of objects are constituted by facts about actual or possible visual experiences one may have of them. Although the assumption of phenomenalism seems widespread, and with it the assumed priority of statements about how things look to *x* over statements about how things look, the account here reverses that order. (2010, 161-2)

Though I sympathize with Martin’s approach, what I say below can be accommodated within a subjectivist account of colour (if not of shape).

<sup>3</sup> This condition must not, of course, be confused with the determinacy condition. The determinacy condition states that in order for an object to look *F* and *be as it looks*, it must be *F*. The present condition states, more bluntly, that *X* has to *F* in order to look *F*.

<sup>4</sup> One may also note that when we ask how things look, we may be more prone to say which colour it *has* than which colour it looks to have. By contrast, if you ask how Pia looks, I may well say that she looks Scandinavian. I *could* also say that she *is* Scandinavian (given that she is), but then I would also convey that her looks is typical of her qua Scandinavian (or, of course, that I don’t know how she looks, but offer you the most relevant information I have). If Pia’s look isn’t typical, my answer may well have been inappropriate. An answer that Pia is blonde, however, is more directly informative (unless, of course, she has just dyed her hair and I make a statement about her natural hair colour, and so on). In fact, it may be odd to say that she *looks* blonde: Do I imply that she *is* not?

<sup>5</sup> He thinks of such properties – strictly observational properties – as satisfying the condition that they are ‘necessarily visually unique’ (2010, 203), thus satisfying the condition stated above:

[O]bservational properties are those properties for which necessarily no object that exemplifies them, and is characteristic with respect to look for that property, has a visual duplicate that lacks them. (2010, 203)

terminacy constraint in satisfying this stronger ‘condition’, they cannot index content.<sup>1</sup> Perceptual content must be indexed by the way things look to a perceiver.

Might more ‘subjective’ looks, while obviously failing the stronger ‘condition’ just mentioned, still satisfy the determinacy condition? Some philosophers have complained that Travis’ discussion fails to engage with the intentionalist’s concerns because it focuses on objective, ‘demonstrable’ looks. Now, Travis makes it clear that he recognizes this; as he says, for a notion of ‘looks’ to index content, ‘the way things... look (to N) – what is fixed by their demonstrable looks, so viewed – must fix how, in the relevant sense, they look to N’ (2004, 80). But one might still think that Travis doesn’t really consider subjective looks on their own terms.<sup>2</sup>

Suppose we focus on the particular way a particular cow looks, from a certain point in space at a certain time, to a particular perceiver. Something else could clearly produce *that* look.<sup>3</sup> Holding illumination and other distorting factors fixed, and simplifying slightly, it seems that all the objects in question would have to have is the same colour and the same visual shape (profile or silhouette) as the cow. In so far, it seems that even the stronger ‘condition’ is true.

Noting this, we may turn to ways of changing illumination, colours, figure, and so on. All we need is to hold ‘visual shape’ (silhouette) and colour right. We can also vary the size and distance of the object (though this will involve some practical complications).<sup>4</sup> At this point, the stronger principle obviously no longer holds. We still see the object, and it still looks the same way, but it need not have the profile and colour properties of the cow. But might not the determinacy condition still hold? In producing this ‘illusion’, we held certain colours and properties fixed, namely those the object looked to have from a certain vantage point. In other words, we held the ‘proximal’ properties the object relative to the vantage point fixed.<sup>5</sup> If a camera

Martin argues that specifically about the properties of being cubical. However, he also thinks the constraints holds for colours (2010, 204) as well as other properties:

Indeed, what goes for shape such as being cubic arguably goes for Jackson’s complete list of features by which he defined phenomenal uses of looks talk: All of them give us examples of visually unique properties. (2010, 204)

<sup>1</sup> There may be this much of a connection between perceptual content and the objective looks of things: Perhaps perceptual content only involves visual properties of this kind. For instance, one might think that perception can only index content about colour, shape, position, and so on (as well as, perhaps, certain general properties like ‘substance’ or ‘cause’). Again, this is an idea that will be clearer as I proceed.

<sup>2</sup> This complaint is made by Byrne (2009, 446–7) and, in particular, Siegel:

If the fact that a lemon demonstrably looks lemony doesn’t entail that it looks lemony to *S*, why should we think that the lemon’s demonstrable looks fixes the facts about the contents of *S*’s experience when she sees the lemon? At best these facts are fixed by *S*’s experience somehow picking up the demonstrable look of the lemon, when she sees it. But with the idea of *picking up* a demonstrable look, we’ve introduced another kind of look altogether. (2010, 62)

<sup>3</sup> There need not even be a solid object there; there could be what Martin (2010, 188) calls a ‘pure visible’ (rainbows are an example) – or a mere hallucination where it (dummy ‘it’) looks as if there is a cow in front of one.

<sup>4</sup> There are practical, but not theoretical difficulties here. The surrounding scene will normally make it difficult to change distance without changing appearance. We may suppose, however, that only the cow is illuminated, the surroundings laying in complete darkness. Under such circumstances, all we need is vary the size of the cow proportionately. Binocular vision provides another difficulty. This can be handled by laying down that the perspective is from a single point in space. Again, this is artificial, but not impossible.

<sup>5</sup> It must be kept in mind that it is *not* clear that the result will be an ‘illusion’. For there to be an illusion, there would have to be a way things would have to be in order to be as they look. That is, of course, just what is in question. One should note that whereas in the example I started with seeing a cow and ended up with seeing something else with just the same look, we could just as well reverse the order. We can start with a perceiver looking at a shape on a wall which happens to look that way. She may have no concept of a cow, in fact no concept for any animal. She just takes herself to look at a certain shape (which may or may not be a picture of a cow, or of something else, or no picture at all). It still looks to her exactly as the cow would. In the end, she sees one (while still thinking she is looking at a wall). Now, in this situation, the same look has probably produced a different illusion, one of a wall. But this illusion is a matter of how things look *epistemically*, determined by what the perceiver took herself to be looking at the start. Ordinary perception is of course heavily shaped not just by one’s beliefs about what one is looking at but of one’s knowledge of it.

I sometimes have the impression that this point is not sufficiently appreciated. It is important to see how much context matters for how we experience things. For instance, if I look at the moon through a window and the window is imperceptibly replaced by a picture of a disc of the same apparent size and colour, then I am, presumably, having an illusion of the moon. If I look at painted disc on the wall in the gallery, but the wall is imperceptibly removed so that I see the moon, I have an illusion of a disc on the wall. We might also start with a set of hallucinations. Since our examples are already artificial enough, suppose that our evil scientist have removed my eyes. I know this. Suppose that she keeps inducing hallucinations in me. These consist of alternating squares and circles in my visual field. I keep attending to them (if I didn’t, they would probably quickly disappear from consciousness). I am entirely clear that they are mere ‘sensations’. I think of them as after-images. Now, one day, my evil scientist gives me back one eye for a moment, without my knowledge. Between two square after-images, she lets me see the moon! Of course, I notice no difference. The moon looks just like the ordinary after-images. But it also, clearly, looks like the moon. It looks as it is, non-epistemically; there is no distortion. On the other hand, it also looks like an after-image. That is what it is reasonable to believe. I am in no position to know that I have seen the moon (perhaps I’ve never seen it before and never heard of it). So this is what it looks like epistemically. Will the intentionalist hold that the moon is represented as an after-image? That seems to be the only content that is ‘conveyed’ to me. But that is due to how things look to me

were placed at the point, it would produce (qualitatively) just the same picture.<sup>1</sup> Now, it can seem that if the original look of the cow under normal conditions were described in terms of certain shapes and colours, then these shapes and colours should still figure ‘in’ the look, even in complete hallucination. For things to be as they look, then, there has at least to be a certain figure in front of me.<sup>2</sup> Thus, we have finally arrived at a notion on the lines of (5), characterizing the look ‘directly’ – without recourse to visual properties of the objects seen.

This could seem a promising proposal. It also seems to fit with how several philosophers have thought about the way things look non-epistemically. Chisholm, for instance, says:

If we can say that the rectangular table-top ‘looks diamond-shaped’ from one corner of the room, then a photograph taken from that corner of the room will contain a figure that is diamond-shaped. (1957, 45)

It should be said that Chisholm offers this as an example of the comparative, not the non-comparative. However, it seems that it could just as well be taken to make a non-comparative statement.<sup>3</sup> In the example, ‘diamond-shaped’ characterizes the ‘visual shape’ of the table-top. Seen from a certain angle, the table top looks that way. Anything that looks *that* way to me has to produce, among other things, a diamond-shaped figure in my visual field.<sup>4</sup> Matters are more complicated when it comes to cow-properties, but there is no principal difference. All that matters is the way things figure in my visual field – their ‘immediate’ impression or look.<sup>5</sup>

Could such ‘phenomenal’ properties index content? It seems to me that they cannot. There are several reasons for this. First, one may doubt that such ‘immediate’ content is conveyed to the perceiver.<sup>6</sup> We are not good at focusing on the mere ‘visual field’ shapes of things.<sup>7</sup> One may also doubt that there are any such properties at all.<sup>8</sup> But even if these doubts can be set aside, the problem remains that the content indexed will be too thin. This is clearest in the case of visual shapes. In the normal case of seeing the table-top, the content indexed should *not* be that something is diamond-shaped. That would be completely inadequate with respect to the

epistemically. Now, the present strategy is of course to ‘minimize’ the look so as to exclude reference to such properties as being a moon, being an after-image, being a material object, being a mere sensational object. Perhaps there is a content which merely registers the way the moon (or the after-image) appears in the visual field. For instance, it looks red. Perhaps that is how it looks non-comparatively or phenomenally.

<sup>1</sup> It would not, I take it, produce a *numerically* identical picture. A picture is individuated by what it is *of*, and what the picture is *of* is just the object that happens to be in front of the camera.

<sup>2</sup> In hallucination, things look just the same to me as when I faced the cow. No *object* looks the same, though. It is helpful to note that ‘it’ in ‘it looks as if a cow is present’ often works as a mere dummy pronoun. (I think this simple point dissolves the problem Byrne (2009, 447-8) raises for the theory of appearing.) While no object is present to my senses, there are still certain configurations in my visual field – if not, I couldn’t be having this hallucination. Only so can things look this way. The idea is that how things look fixes a way for things to be; for things to be as they look, there must in fact be such a figure in front of me.

<sup>3</sup> In fact, it is more plausibly read as a non-comparative statement. If ‘diamond-shaped’ simply refers to a geometrical property, then ‘the way diamond-shaped objects look’ is at least *de facto* rigid (if not *de jure*).

<sup>4</sup> The simplest way to arrive at such properties is perhaps to see what properties would have to be present on the surface of a picture placed right in front of the eye so as to preserve the present look of the cow in front of me. Of course, we have to imagine a very artificial situation; for instance, only one eye should be open, no head movements should be possible, and so on. Another way is to look at the intrinsic properties of a photo taken from the relevant perspective, as just suggested.

<sup>5</sup> One may think it dangerous to speak of properties of a visual field. Won’t such talk lead straight to sense data? I think there is no such danger. The *objects* perceived (when an object is perceived at all) are just the objects in front of one. From *this* angle, the perceived cow figures a certain way in my visual field. That doesn’t mean that I am aware of any other *objects* than the cow itself.

<sup>6</sup> Of course, one may claim that such properties, at least much analogue to the ‘immediate’ properties in the visual field, are ‘conveyed’ to the visual system in form of the retinal images. When they function properly, the receptors of the retina ‘pick up’ information about ‘immediate’ shapes and colours.

<sup>7</sup> To notice such properties, we must presumably take a ‘painterly attitude’ toward what we experience. Perhaps painters are in fact better to focus on such properties, since they are properties that a realistic drawing would have to have. Nöe draws on this when he says that we can indicate the elliptic shape of a penny in one’s visual field with one’s hand (2004, 89, 140). He thinks this means that we do in fact experience such properties (which he calls P-properties). Another suggestion Price’s good old ‘method of doubt’:

When I see a tomato there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is a tomato I am seeing, and not a cleverly painted piece of wax. I can doubt whether there is any material things there at all... One thing however I cannot doubt: that there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape. (1932/1950, 3)

Of course, Price thinks his ‘method’ directs our attention to sense data. But one might suggest that what he directs our attention to (if his directions are at all possible to follow) is the way *outer* things figure in our visual field – that is, their ‘immediate’ look.

<sup>8</sup> Is it really true that we experience a penny viewed at an angle as elliptical? The analogy with pictures brings with it several dangers; one may think that one of them is to think that there are ‘immediate’ properties. I should perhaps stress that I remain neutral on whether there really are such properties; I concede them for the sake of argument.

beliefs that the perceiver would normally acquire. It also seems completely inadequate with respect to the phenomenology.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps things are different when it comes to colours. If something is ‘immediately’ yellow, one might think that things would have to yellow for the experience to be accurate. This appears more plausible. If so, the fact that something looks blue to me might index the content that something is blue. However, other plausible considerations tell against it. Colour constancy is well known. The colours allegedly represented by experience do not correspond to ‘immediate’ colour properties. And either way, as I have said, looks that index only colours are not of much use to the intentionalist.

This is not surprising. The way things look, as we presently imagine it, can be captured by describing certain shapes in a visual field, or of an object as-seen-from-an-angle. If there are such properties, they are like the ‘intrinsic’ properties in Chisholm’s photography. But this is not what we want experience to represent. Sticking with the analogy, we want experience to represent the ‘external’ properties of the photography – that is, what *it* represents. In fact, if non-comparative looks are the ‘immediate’ looks of things, then it seems that they could at most index ‘intrinsic’, non-representational properties of an experience.

This is close to what sense datum theorists thought: When we describe the way things appear to us in perception, we arrive at certain ‘inner’ items.<sup>2</sup> Now, we can certainly resist that idea. Talk about objects figuring a certain way in a visual field doesn’t commit one to the existence of sense data or other sensational items.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps there is a way things look to us ‘immediately’, describable in terms for colour and shape. If so, such terms may characterize the ‘impression’ of things in experience. And perhaps such properties index some minimal content. When something looks red, it seems that for things to be as they look, something has to be red. So perhaps there is a content indexed by the red look – though this is clearly a further step.

However, one might think that it should be possible to stop one step of what appears to be the dead-end of the ‘minimizing’ strategy. Things would be much better if *depth* could be among ‘immediately’ presented properties.

#### *Could Depth be Indexed by Non-Comparative Looks?*

It is notable that some sense datum theorists, while broadly following the ‘minimizing’ strategy (sense data can be red, but no sense datum can be a deer), have stopped short of accepting that things look diamond-shaped when one sees a table. Thus, Jackson holds that depth figures in phenomenal looks (1977, 102-4).<sup>4</sup>

However, although depth is clearly part of the phenomenology of experience, it is doubtful that it is possible to resist the last step. Depth perception is special, but the considerations that motivated to the minimizing strategy seem to exclude that depth could belong to the ‘intrinsic’ properties of a look. As before, things could look just the same to a perceiver despite our radically changing their distance from her. To arrive at the ‘minimal’ properties of a look, we considered the ‘immediate’ properties that would have to be constant in order that widely different scenes should look the same. These would be the ‘intrinsic’ visual properties of the ‘external’ scene as perceived from a certain vantage point; for instance, the look of a cow would be ‘minimized’ to a certain silhouette and certain colours. Size and depth would be among the ‘variable’ properties of the scene. Spatial switches would clearly be quite salient phenomenologically, but

<sup>1</sup> It might, of course, be that an ‘intrinsic’ diamond-shape figures in *some* way in the phenomenology. But it is not how things would strike the perceiver. At best, she would have to take a ‘painterly attitude’ toward her experience to have it strike her that way.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, we might end up with contents like Price’s ‘there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape’ (1932/1950, 3) and the like.

<sup>3</sup> Of course, though, there will be ‘sensations’ in the minimal sense that there will be *sensings*. When something is seen, it is sensed. But this is not generally what people have in mind when they speak of ‘sensations’ or ‘sensational properties’; if it were, Peacocke would not ask whether ‘visual field’ properties are ‘sensational’ (1983, 14).

<sup>4</sup> Price also thinks that sense data are presented as having a location (1932/1950, vii-viii, 3). Robinson, on the other hand, argues that depth, though clearly ‘shaping’ the sensory core of perception, belongs with interpretation and belief (1994, 206-7). Depth is therefore ‘experiential, but not bed-rock phenomenal’ (1994, 207).

there would still be a sense in which things looked just the same throughout such switches.<sup>1</sup> Thus, depth-looks fail the determinacy condition. Given a sufficiently artificial set-up, things will look the same whether the cow-shaped item is just ahead of one's nose, or rather located in outer space.<sup>2</sup> The moon can look the size and distance of a penny, and vice versa.<sup>3</sup> Believing what one sees to be an item in the sky, or an item just in front of one, or an item at a more fitting distance for a cow, will make a clear difference in phenomenology.<sup>4</sup> The point is just that the 'immediate' properties of one's look would remain the same.

Perhaps, though, intentionalists could try to secure a special place for depth by holding that we represent it in a quite special way. Perhaps, in particular, certain forms of depth representation are belief-independent, as it is, for instance, when we look into an Ames room.<sup>5</sup> This could secure that depth, while not strictly being part of the 'minimal' look, would still be sufficiently phenomenal to count as 'intrinsic' to the look. I think this is an interesting proposal. I agree that spatial perception is special, and I also think there are cases like the one the intentionalist points to. However, by arguing that the property of depth is represented in a particular way in perception, the proposal is quite different in spirit from the 'minimizing' strategy.<sup>6</sup> Thus, I think the proposal suggests a quite different way of arriving at perceptual content, which I will turn to in the next section.

Is there a way to keep depth among the intrinsic properties of a look that is more in keeping with the minimizing strategy? The fact that prominent sense datum theorists like Jackson and Price have thought so may mean that there is (and there is also the fact of stereoscopic vision). It would certainly be interesting if one could defend this idea. But I think the proposal I just sketched is much more promising. I thus leave the minimizing strategy aside; though I cannot claim to have established it conclusively, I do not see how 'intrinsic' looks can index depth.

The proposal considered suggests an altogether different strategy for arriving at looks that can index content. In contrast to the minimizing strategy, it might also allow one to index quite rich contents. The main idea is that how things look is a matter of how one's experience is 'organized'.<sup>7</sup> While such organization is in large part due to representation in belief, the proposal is that belief-independent representation may play a similar role. If it does, then we seem to have a non-epistemic notion of 'looks' that satisfies the determinacy condition. It also seems plausible that 'basic' properties like depth and other spatial properties might play a special role in perception – though as I noted, many other represented properties also shape phenomenology. The proposal that there are 'representational' looks will be the topic of section 3.

Before I end this section, I note two things. First, whereas spatial representation alters phenomenology, there is also a sense in which phenomenology remains the same across spatial switches. As Wittgenstein again observes, in such cases, 'I see that nothing has changed; and yet I see it differently' (1953/2001, part II, sect. ix, 165<sup>e</sup>). It is the sense in which things remain *constant* that is captured by the non-comparative considered it so far. Depth arguably doesn't figure in phenomenology at this level.

Second, I am of course fully aware that the examples I have considered in pursuing the 'minimizing' strategy are highly artificial. But that is due to the nature of the pursuit. In ordi-

<sup>1</sup> It seems clear, in particular, that it isn't part of how things look with only one eye. As I noted, stereoscopic vision introduces some complications. Things look different with one eye than with two. However, while this means that what I just said isn't entirely accurate, I don't think the intentionalist would want to rest too much weight on it: Would she say that things are represented as having depth only to animals with two (or more) functioning eyes?

<sup>2</sup> Thus, the only 'depth' indexed by such content should be that of the indeterminate 'before me' (experience will, I take it, always 'point outwards' in some sense; even, I think, when we experience after-images behind closed eyes, or believe that we do).

<sup>3</sup> What matters in this case, is that the retinal image remains the same size.

<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that it must. When distance exceeds a certain limits, phenomenological differences cease. Believing the moon to be 3 or 300.000 kilometres away reasonably doesn't alter its appearance.

<sup>5</sup> For discussion and illustrations, see Palmer 1999, 247-8. I return to the example in sect. 3.

<sup>6</sup> In principle, one might combine the strategies, thus arriving, at a 'mixed' position. However, if one accepts the present proposal, one's motivation for the minimizing strategy might easily vanish.

<sup>7</sup> Instead of 'organize' we might say 'synthesize'; in Kantian jargon, the experience is 'unified' according to the concept *duck* or the content *that is a duck*.

nary perception, we have no difficulties determining the real shapes and sizes of things – as well as, of course, a wide range of other properties.<sup>1</sup> A penny viewed obliquely does not look elliptical. One sees that it is round. And even if it should happen that it isn't, one believes that it is.<sup>2</sup> Beliefs alter phenomenology. Again, such changes are due to how things look epistemically. In contrast to these 'natural' ways of looking, the strategy pursued was to try to fix properties of the current look of the tilted penny to a perceiver that wasn't vulnerable to the indeterminacy objection. Now, the penny looks like many things. All kinds of things could have that look, whether they are elliptical, round, or for that matter square and viewed through suitable distorting glasses. But if some way of characterizing the look is to have any priority on this strategy, I think it can only be that the penny looks elliptical (pace Jackson and Price). That is how it figures in the visual field. Other ways for it to look are a function of representation – normally just my knowing how things are, but potentially also other forms of representation. I think focusing on 'phenomenal representation' is the best way the intentionalist can make her case. Before I consider this new strategy, however, I turn once more to the claim that there is a particular non-comparative notion.

#### 2.4 *Is there a Non-Comparative Notion?*

While the answer will not, in the end, be crucial, it is time to question whether there really is a non-comparative notion of 'looks', as many philosophers of perception have assumed. As I have said, this is in part a question of terminology. One could want to draw a line between notion (o) or (1) and (2), and call the latter notion non-comparative. But that seems a bad choice. In drawing a comparison, I normally want to convey how things look. But that requires that I have a particular way of looking in mind. And that is just what (2) expresses. For all that, it is a comparison, and hence should reasonably be labelled 'comparative'. The question, then, is whether there is any notion like (3), (4), or (5).

In what is probably the most comprehensive analysis of 'looks' in the philosophical (and perhaps even the linguistic) literature, Breckenridge defends the view that 'looks' is univocal (2007<sub>a</sub>). Breckenridge thinks that the only notion is a comparative one, roughly on the lines of (2).<sup>3</sup> Since I have not had the time to look closely at Breckenridge's work, however, I will focus on Martin's recent discussion (2010), which in part builds on Breckenridge's work. My discussion will be brief, in comparison with Martin's impressively rich work. The footnotes will convey some of the complexity of the issues. I will start by setting forth Martin's understanding of comparative statements, then turn to his discussion of non-comparative statements.

#### *Comparative and Non-Comparative Notions Again*

Martin starts by noting a 'twofold distinction' (2010, 163) between 'evidential' and 'non-evidential' uses. The evidential corresponds broadly to what I have called the epistemic use. The non-evidential corresponds to Chisholm's comparative (2010, 165). Thus, he notes, his twofold

<sup>1</sup> I should perhaps stress that I fully accept Heidegger's description of ordinary perception:

We never... originally and really perceive a throng of sensations, e.g., tones and noises, in the appearance of things...; rather, we hear the storm whistling in the chimney, we hear the three-engine aeroplane, we hear the Mercedes in immediate distinction from the Volkswagen. Much closer to us than any sensations are the things themselves. We hear the door slam in the house, and never hear acoustic sensations or mere sounds. (Heidegger 1935/1977, 156; quoted in Crane 2006, 126)

Now, even if I should accept that there are 'visual field properties', I would not thereby accept that there are 'sensations' in the sense Heidegger (presumably) has in mind. Visual field properties are (normally) relational properties had by the objects themselves, as seen from a certain angle. But that is not my main reason for agreeing with Heidegger. My main reason is just that visual field properties are not 'originally' perceived.

<sup>2</sup> It is important to remember that just as one cannot believe at will, so one cannot abstain from belief at will either.

<sup>3</sup> He states his view as follows:

There is, I believe, a sense of 'look' such that 'Patch looks red' means that Patch looks the way red things look. ... What I will argue ... is that there is nothing in the literature as I have surveyed it that gives us good reason to think that there is any other sense of 'look'. (2007<sub>a</sub>, 20)

Breckenridge makes it clear that there are many ways of qualifying comparative claims. These do not amount to differences in the sense of 'looks'. Thus, Breckenridge clearly acknowledges the distinction between my notions (o), (1), and (2). What he denies is that there is any statement on the lines of (3), (4), or (5). I also note that Breckenridge accepts that there is an epistemic use; we can use comparative statements to give evidence (2007<sub>a</sub>, 27-8).

distinction corresponds to Travis' (2010, 164).<sup>1</sup> For present purposes, Martin's discussion of the evidential or epistemic use will be set aside, but it is worth looking at his long and interesting discussion of comparative uses. Martin starts by placing comparative statements along 'similes and metaphors in general' (2010, 169). One example is 'X swims like an otter'. Comprehending this comparison requires knowing what is (taken to be) characteristic for otters (with respect to swimming).<sup>2</sup> Such knowledge will be shaped by one's context; for instance, knowing what is (taken to be) characteristic may require knowing what is paradigmatically associated with otters in the speaker's culture.<sup>3</sup> It can even require very local knowledge; it may exploit knowledge that only you and I have (the rest of the audience won't get it). Thus, the comparison conveys *how* X swims. In other words, it works along the lines of my notion (2). However, an audience can in a sense understand what I have said without understanding the comparison. In such cases, they will have understood something on the lines of (o) or (1). And similarly, the speaker can use comparative forms without drawing a comparison. In such cases, 'one has indicated that there is a comparison to be made' (2010, 170), but not *which* comparison it is.<sup>4</sup>

Martin goes on to discuss the logical form of statements involving 'looks'. I will be informal. In *broad* form, all statements of the form 'X looks pregnant' says that X has a look that is specified, in some way or other, by the property *pregnant* (2010, 171-2).<sup>5</sup> When the claim is read comparatively, the look is specified by a comparison. Thus, 'X looks pregnant' specifies X's in terms of a similarity in looking between X and pregnant women (2010, 172).<sup>6</sup> In the context of utterance, a competent audience will understand in which respect X's look is relevantly similar to the look of pregnant women and thus which way of looking the speaker has in mind.

But the broad form of 'X looks pregnant' leaves it open that there may be *other* ways of specifying the look than by means of a comparison with pregnant women. The surface structure 'X looks F' may cover various logical structures, and thus also different truth conditions. This gives a straightforward way of understanding the idea behind the non-comparative notion. For, in particular, 'F' might characterize the look itself, and not just things that look that way. As in previous sections, while 'pregnant' reasonably cannot characterize the look itself, perhaps other terms might?

Martin discusses this proposal at length. He does find statements that have a reading like that just sketched, thus having a non-comparative logical form. For instance, on the most natu-

<sup>1</sup> Martin also notes that there is a discussion of epistemic uses of 'looks' in linguistics, under the topic of evidentiality and epistemic modality. Like 'X must be F' or 'X reportedly is F', 'X looks F' can express the epistemic standing of 'X is F' as well as how the speaker acquired the evidence for it.

<sup>2</sup> In principle, 'X Fs like a G' need not mean 'X Fs like a G Fs'; in a suitable context, it could mean 'X Fs like a G Hs' (Martin 2010, 171). This complication is irrelevant for present purposes.

<sup>3</sup> Hence the parenthetical qualification of the previous sentence. Such 'paradigmatic' features may fail both to be characteristic and to apply to the object at all (one may compare here with how what a community has taken to be paradigmatic for a natural kind may turn out not to apply to it, as Putnam and Kripke stressed).

<sup>4</sup> Martin's example, 'X swims like something in this room' is different from (o). However, the same point should hold for 'X swims like an otter' when one merely knows it by hearsay, having no idea of how otters (might) swim. In other cases, one can even indicate a specific way of swimming while not knowing which way it is, in the manner of (1), as when one speaks of the way otters actually swim. The following passage indicates that notion (2) should still be basic:

[E]ven if comparative claims do not necessarily involve making comparisons, it may well be that commonly we do make comparisons in uttering a comparative sentence, and the point of our so speaking will then involve an assessment of the comparison made and not just the truth conditions of the comparative sentence. (2010, 170)

<sup>5</sup> Thus, 'X looks pregnant' has the following broad logical form (where 's' stands for *state*):

$$\exists s (\text{has}(X, s) \wedge (\text{look}(s) \wedge \phi(s)))$$

In other words, X is in a state of having a look. The state is specified by  $\phi$ , which will be filled in some way which involves the predicate 'pregnant' (Martin 2010, 172). As we will see shortly, there may be more ways to do that. (For the worry that the analysis allows ' $\exists s (\text{has}(X, s) \wedge (\text{look}(s)))$ ' to stand on its own, while the unqualified 'X looks' – like 'X weighs' and unlike 'X swims' – is ungrammatical, see Martin 2010, 171, 172n5.)

<sup>6</sup> This is a simplification on my part. In particular, there will be constraints on how the comparison will be drawn and understood. To understand the comparison, the audience must 'execute a function of *getting-the-characteristic*' (2010, 169); thus understanding 'X swims like an otter', requires one to successfully 'apply *getting-the-characteristic* to "otter" and "swimming" and thereby return the value "lithe and graceful"' (2010, 169-70). This enables us to understand the following proposal of the logical form of 'X looks pregnant':

$$\exists s (\text{has}(X, s) \wedge (\text{look}(s) \wedge \text{SIM}(\text{C}(\text{pregnant}, \text{looks}, k), s)))$$

The way of looking is specified by the similarity in look between X and things falling under the predicate 'pregnant'. Thus, SIM is a two-place predicate of predicates and individuals; SIM(F, i) is true just in case i is relevantly similar to Fs. C(pregnant, looks, k) is a function that returns the property characteristic of the property 'pregnant' with respect to 'looks', relative to some contextually determined parameter k. In other words, it is the (correct) output of the function *getting-the-characteristic* in the context of the utterance of 'X looks pregnant' (2010, 172-3).

ral reading, 'X looks splendid' reasonably specifies the look 'directly': It simply says that X has a splendid look (2010, 183-4).<sup>1</sup> Martin also points out examples from other sense modalities. In saying that X sounds shrill, I do not usually say that it sounds like shrill things, or that it sounds to be shrill (2010, 182-3). Rather, I say that the sound (itself) is shrill.<sup>2</sup> One could note here that it makes little sense to ask whether X, in looking splendid, really is splendid.<sup>3</sup> If X non-comparatively looks splendid, then it is thereby splendid (to me).<sup>4</sup> Now, we can use such statements comparatively, to say that X looks like something that is splendid. For instance, the meal can look to be a splendid meal without being a splendid meal (2010, 184).<sup>5</sup> In the latter case, then, 'splendid' modifies the verb 'looks' indirectly, by means of a comparison with something which is splendid. In the former case, it modifies 'looks' directly; the look is itself splendid (2010, 185).<sup>6</sup> Martin concludes:

This vindicates Jackson's and Chisholm's suggestion that we need to find noncomparative or phenomenal uses of looks statements in addition to comparative ones. ... [W]e need to posit a structural ambiguity, and in some cases a shift in sense, in order to understand a shift in truth conditions. (2010, 185)

However, the question is whether the structural ambiguity is visible in statements that could be of use for the intentionalist. It is unclear that 'X looks splendid' indexes content, and even if it does, 'X is splendid' is not the kind of content that the intentionalist is after (nor is it what Chisholm and Jackson had in mind). Is there a similar structural ambiguity in, say, 'X looks red'?

Martin thinks not. I will not run through his argument in detail, but the main thrust of it is that vision 'contrasts sharply' (2010, 187) with other sense modalities such as hearing: Whereas I can say that a sound is shrill and thereby characterize the sound as such, I cannot similarly characterize a look as such.<sup>7</sup> When I say that X looks red, I characterize X itself (2010, 187, 190).<sup>8</sup> It also seems that one can always draw the contrast between 'X looks red' and 'X is red' in a way we saw that one cannot in the case of 'X looks splendid'.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Martin thinks 'X looks red'

<sup>1</sup> In other words, 'X looks splendid' can be read in two ways. First, the look can be specified by drawing a comparison in the manner described above:

$\exists s (\text{has}(X, s) \wedge (\text{look}(s) \wedge \text{SIM}(\text{C}(\text{splendid}, \text{looks}, k), s)))$

Second, the look can simply be specified directly:

$\exists s (\text{has}(X, s) \wedge (\text{look}(s) \wedge \text{splendid}(s)))$

The statements say different things. The first says that X has a look that is like that of splendid things. The second says that X has a look which is splendid. I think the first can be used to say what the second says, as explained a few notes below. But it can also be used to say other things. It can be used to say that X looks as if it is splendid, or like splendid things – in other words, to draw comparisons, or again to make epistemic claims.

<sup>2</sup> I have changed the example; Martin discusses tastes and smells. Of course, it is also possible to make the comparative claim that something sounds to be shrill; I so, one says that it sounds the way objects that produce shrill sounds sound. Though the term 'shrill' seems in the first instance to apply to sounds, it also applies to the things that produce shrill sounds. For instance, the dampened sound of the flute at a very soft volume may be the sound flutes that produce very shrill sounds at normal volume produce; if so, the flute sounds (as if it is) shrill.

<sup>3</sup> To be sure, there are complications. For instance, we must distinguish between things that really look splendid and those that only look so from an angle or a distance, or again between things that categorically look splendid and those that merely happen to look splendid. In other words, the point only holds for unqualified statements.

<sup>4</sup> It seems that the same point may hold of shrill sounds. If X sounds shrill (that is, produces a shrill sound), then it is thereby (if only derivatively) shrill.

<sup>5</sup> Thus, where the contrast between 'X looks F' and 'X is F' doesn't make sense, we are dealing with a non-comparative statement. In saying that X looks splendid, we're not saying that it looks to be splendid. Perhaps that is because it thereby is splendid (to me). A better example is probably Gisborne and Holmes' 'the dress looks pretty' (2007, 5). At best, 'the dress looks pretty, but it isn't' and 'the dress looks pretty, and it is' make very unusual claims. For a dress to look pretty is for it to be pretty, and vice versa. (Of course, context may give another understanding. In saying that the dress looks pretty, I may say that it looks to be one of the pretty ones.)

<sup>6</sup> Thus, the claim is not that 'looks' itself has ambiguous, but that the statements it is used to make have.

<sup>7</sup> We might also note that objects seem to 'have' looks in a different way than they 'have' sounds, smells, or tastes. Perhaps that is also why we cannot see a look in the way we can hear a sound. There are many of interesting questions about the various sense modalities and the way we characterize how things sound, smell, taste, feel, and look, and parallel questions about the various ways we talk about them. Philosophers have of course long been interested in the various modalities and their interrelations; Rogers 1971 and Gisborne 1993 contain interesting discussion from the side of linguistics.

<sup>8</sup> This will be clearer in the next subsection. But the reason has already been stated: Martin thinks that the looks of things are due to their visible properties. An object that looks red (simpliciter, objectively), simply is red. Unless there is an implicit qualification, then, such statements say that the object is red.

<sup>9</sup> However, as noted in the previous note, there is a sense in which 'X looks red' actually entails 'X is red'. In this, it parallels 'X looks splendid'. But unlike 'X looks splendid', 'X looks red' is always equivalent to 'X looks to be red'. One might also note that 'red things look red' is necessary in a way 'zebras look like zebras' isn't: Though red things could



never describes *X*'s look in the sense 'X looks splendid' does, or even in the way 'X sounds shrill' describes the sound of *X*. In other words, he holds that all uses of 'X looks red' are comparative (2010, 194). But he also thinks there is something to the distinction Chisholm, Jackson, and a number of other philosophers have claimed to find. The following gives a brief exposition of his view of what is special about allegedly non-comparative statements like 'X looks red'.

Using Martin's example (2010, 175-6), suppose we make the statement looking at a bright red kettle in a shop for kitchen utensils. The light is such as to show the colours as they are; no customer shall unwrap her newly bought kettle at home only to discover that it has a different colour from the one it looked in the store. Clearly, the statement 'the kettle looks red' will be true under these circumstances. Now, things look quite differently in the shop's dimly lit storeroom. Yet there is a sense in which the statement is true when I see the darkly glooming red kettle in a corner. It looks the way a red kettle looks under these circumstances.<sup>1</sup> But it doesn't look the way it looks in the showroom. Surely, then, there also a sense in which it *not* true that the kettle looks red. The kettle doesn't look as it is – as we would say, somewhat helplessly, it doesn't really look *red*. So it seems that 'the kettle looks red' is both true and false. That should surely point to different senses. Shouldn't the sense in which the statement is false be the non-comparative sense?

Martin thinks not. It is true that the statement has different senses. But according to him, that is because we draw different comparisons. In the showroom upstairs, we draw the very natural comparison with how things that are red normally look. As I have noted, I can draw all kinds of comparisons, as determined by what my circumstances, culture, or imagination allows. And comparisons often trade on knowledge of paradigmatic ways of looking (like, for the otter, of swimming). In the showroom upstairs, the comparison is very obvious: I simply compare the way the kettle looks with the way red things (actually) look in daylight. As Martin puts it, the claim 'invites a default ... interpretation' (2010, 176). In the storeroom, by contrast, I make a comparison with the way red things look under very special circumstances. Normally, the hearer will have to be in the storeroom herself to understand it.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, Martin's account confirms what I stated earlier, that notion (2) can do much of the work philosophers of perception have required the non-comparative to do. Indeed, Martin holds that it can do all the work they have required it for – since they haven't been much interested in the work done by 'X looks splendid' and the like. Admittedly, a comparative statement doesn't in itself 'express' how things look: The hearer can understand the statement (sentence) as such without understanding what the speaker means or says. If so, she only gets at a truth expressible by notion (o) or (1). To understand the claim made by (2), one has to understand the comparison being drawn. A fuller treatment would have to say more here about the relation between semantics and pragmatics – between what a statement says and what a speaker says, means or conveys. I am not sure how to draw these lines, nor should it really matter for our purposes. For the present, I sum up the three foregoing paragraphs. First, there seems to be no need for a notion along the lines of (3), (4), or (5). This contradicts the assumptions of a large number of philosophers. Second, a statement of the form 'X looks red' can have various senses. This is, however, not due to various senses of the word 'looks', or to a structural ambiguity in the sentence, but rather to the fact that we can draw various comparisons, based on various

fail to be red, they couldn't fail to look red *when* they are red; by contrast, zebras could be zebras but not look like zebras (in the senses (1) and (2)). Finally, one might note that one cannot say 'X non-epistemically looks red, and epistemically looks to be that way'; that would be like saying 'X is angry, and arguably is'.

<sup>1</sup> One might, perhaps, object that the statement must be used in the epistemic sense in these circumstances. That seems wrong. Suppose I know that there are no red kettles left. Yet, to my surprise, I notice that the newly arrived golden ones look just as the red ones do under these circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> The 'relativity' of comparative statements to different is expressed by the variable *k* in the previously given formalisation. In the showroom, there is an obvious comparison to be drawn, trading on an obvious value for *k*. In the storeroom, the hearer has to supply the relevant value for *k* by considering the circumstances of the utterance. If she isn't able to supply this value, she won't understand the comparison. She will then only know that there is a certain comparison to be drawn, and some way of looking that the kettle has in common with something which is red in some sort of circumstance. Or she may, of course, simply misunderstand and take the comparison to be the otherwise obvious one – and protest that the kettle surely doesn't look red down here.

paradigms or various contexts (2010, 181). Third, the saliency of one particular comparison for ‘X looks red’ should explain why philosophers have thought that there such claims have a distinct form.<sup>1</sup> In the next subsection, I discuss Martin’s explanation of the ready comparisons which have lead philosophers to posit a non-comparative notion.

### *Phenomenal Looks and Observational Properties*

I have already mentioned Martin’s explanation of the ‘obvious’ comparisons in the previous section: The objective look of things is a matter of their observational properties. For something to look red, unqualified, is for it to *be* red. When ‘F’ stands for strictly observational properties, we pick out properties that are visually unique (2010, 203-5). While a red object can of course look other than it is under many circumstances, or to certain observers, nothing can look red simpliciter without being red. Though I will not defend Martin’s position here, I think it is quite interesting. For instance, it explains why there could seem to be a ‘phenomenal’ notion like (4): In saying how an object looks, it is natural to refer to its visual characteristics. While ‘X looks like a zebra’ is a more convenient statement in many contexts, ‘X looks black and white’ can at least point someone who has never seen a zebra in the right direction.<sup>2</sup> For things that look like zebras do so (in part) in virtue of (not just looking but) being black and white. In principle, it seems that we could describe the look in terms of shape and colour properties:

We should talk of the visually basic properties of objects, those by which visual resemblance is fixed. These include the observational properties of objects: size, shape, color, visible texture, spatial arrangement of parts...

With these as the most generic visible properties by which we can tell whether objects resemble or fail to resemble each other, any perceiver with ordinary vision will be acquainted with these properties and able therefore to update their worldly knowledge associated with linguistic terms by reference to them. Moreover, it is easy to see how it could be common knowledge among us that people do know what these properties are, so in inviting a comparison from an audience, one may reasonably expect them to extract the information that such and such an object is similar to one with such and such visually basic properties. (2010, 207-8)

As Martin notes, any object having the visual properties of a zebra will be a visual duplicate of a zebra. The important point is that in saying that X looks black, we refer to properties of X, not of X’s look. Thus, we could, and would, often say that something *is* black and white, not just that it looks black and white, in response to how X looks. If the question doesn’t concern how X looks under present circumstances, or to Y, then that answer is sufficient.<sup>3</sup> But the presence of distinctively visual properties means that a certain ‘phenomenal’ comparison is particularly salient. We describe the look more ‘intrinsically’ when we refer to colour and shape properties, properties that no objects *having* those properties could fail to have.

Defenders of the non-comparative will reasonably protest at various points. In particular, I think, they will protest to an understanding of claims like ‘X looks F to S’ in terms of the simpler ‘X looks F’. It can seem that Siegel is right when she complains that ‘with the idea of *picking up* a demonstrable look, we’ve introduced another kind of look altogether’ (2010, 62). However, it seems that Martin is right that ‘X looks red to me’ draws exactly the same comparison which we draw when we say that X looks red: It refers to the look of red things, to me.<sup>4</sup> That is not, of course, to say that X has to be red – only that it is, from a certain angle, and perhaps only to me, relevantly similar to red things. Martin has a great deal to say about subjective

<sup>1</sup> In other words, while wrong about the first point, Jackson and Chisholm were, to an extent, right about the second and third points: There are various senses of statements about how things look, and there is a peculiarity, stressed by Jackson in particular, of ‘phenomenal’ statements such as ‘X looks red’.

<sup>2</sup> That is, if she isn’t entirely blind. Every perceiver knows what it is to be – and hence to look – black and white. By contrast, not every perceiver knows how a zebra looks.

<sup>3</sup> What about saying that it is a zebra? Now, that might do too. We may well refer to the visual Gestalt that zebras (actually) have. But suppose someone doesn’t know how zebras look. It seems that we have a particular way of referring to looks, namely with reference to colours, such as ‘black and white stripes’. So long as one has ordinary colour vision, then one will have the concepts for these things.

<sup>4</sup> It may be that such comparisons are with the paradigmatic character of *experiences* of red things. This still wouldn’t suggest a non-comparative, of course. See also next footnote.

looks in the later sections of his paper (2010, 208-18).<sup>1</sup> At this point, I can merely refer to his discussion. While it will not establish the conclusion beyond any doubt, I will close the present discussion by commenting on two further objections to the idea that the comparative can do the work intentionalists have wanted the non-comparative to do. I will then return to my issue of whether some other notion of 'looks' might index content, when I discuss the topic of phenomenal effects of representation in perception.

First, one may protest that red things don't look red to everybody. As Jackson suggests, a colour-blind person might have extremely good 'grey-vision', and thus be 'able to make among the greys the same number of discriminations normal people make in the whole colour spectrum' (1977, 36). Now, as Martin points out (2010, 192), Jackson doesn't mean this to entail that things cannot look red simpliciter; he is concerned with the ways things look to a perceiver.<sup>2</sup> Reasonably, more would have to be said in order to establish that experiences of red are more basic than visual properties, or that 'X looks red to S' is more basic than 'X looks red'.<sup>3</sup> For the present, an inability to perceive chromatic colour will simply mean that the otherwise obvious comparison will not be available.<sup>4</sup> That comparison draws on knowledge of the looks of things, and that knowledge is just what a person with grey vision won't have. While she will understand the comparative claim, she won't understand the comparison. In particular, if she thinks the way of looking the speaker wants to convey is the way red things look in daylight to *her*, then she is simply, if understandably, mistaken.<sup>5</sup>

Second, there is the 'regress' argument that when something (comparatively) looks like something else, then it does that in virtue of (non-comparatively) looking a particular way. This should be solved simply by noting that comparisons do determine particular ways of looking.<sup>6</sup> Now, if Martin is right, then we have no other ways to fix on ways of looking than by comparison. The definite description 'the way X looks' cannot be replaced by a 'name' for that way. This might be thought puzzling – but it is not clear to me that it should.

I think the above considerations support the otherwise natural idea that statements about what things look *like* are normally about *how* they look. Though the consideration presented aren't conclusive – certainly not in compressed form I have presented them – I will from now on assume that there is no non-comparative use of 'looks' of the sort Chisholm, Jackson, and a host of other philosophers have thought.

### 3 A 'Representational' Notion?

The previous section suggests that there is no useful non-comparative notion of 'looks' for the intentionalist to appeal to. There are non-comparative claims to be made about, for instance, aesthetic properties, but these do not determine useful contents for the intentionalist. In this section, I return to the question of whether there are ways of looking that may nonetheless determine content – in particular those ways of looking that seemed to be due to belief-independent representational effects on phenomenology. As I noted at the end of sect. 2.3 (and already in the Introduction), there is no doubt that representation influences phenomenology.

<sup>1</sup> In particular, he suggests that whereas comparisons may trade on knowledge of (paradigmatic) visual characteristics of, say, otters, zebras, and so on, they can also trade on knowledge of the (paradigmatic) character of experiences of such things:

When you are invited to consider what it is for one to see some aspect of the world, the invitation can invite imagining from inside a point of view, or may require one simply to note the kind of impact such seeing may have on the subject. (2010, 212)

As far as I can see, this suggestion might well be used to argue that even if subjective claims should turn out to be more basic than objective claims, they would, for all that, be merely comparative.

<sup>2</sup> For more on the suggestion that 'X looks red' is implicitly subjective, see Martin 2010, 210ff.

<sup>3</sup> Reasonably, the important background issue is colour realism. For a preliminary discussion, see Fish 2010, 140-5. Again, though, the consequences of denying colour realism on objective and subjective looks, and in particular on the semantics of objective and subjective statements about looks, will be indirect. Of course, even if it should have such implications, shape properties would (reasonably) be untouched.

<sup>4</sup> As Martin says, we might compare the situations of colour-blind people to someone 'forever condemned to work in the [storeroom]' (2010, 192).

<sup>5</sup> Again, this is a mere sketch of what Martin says. See his 2010, 192-4.

<sup>6</sup> So, faintly paraphrasing Gertrude Stein, roses look like things that look the way that things that look like roses look. But that is not to say that there is no particular way roses and other red things look.

For instance, representation of depth does.<sup>1</sup> In the following, I explore the way representation influences phenomenology. While it is clearly important for how intentionalists have motivated their position by reflection on how things are presented in experience, it is an aspect that Travis hardly discusses. Thus, it is overdue to look at the effects of phenomenology on experience.<sup>2</sup>

This will conclude the present chapter, and indeed the thesis as a whole. Perhaps contrary to expectation, the result is that the existence of representational effects on phenomenology gives little support for intentionalism. On the contrary, the fact that there is a basic layer of phenomenology that remains constant through switches and other representational effects phenomena suggests that representation is a response to what we merely confront. In other words, I think reflection on representation in experience supports the simple view I delineated in the Introduction. Before I discuss this topic, however, I will return briefly to the idea that there is a way things look ‘phenomenally’ in perception, as suggested by the ‘minimizing’ strategy.

Even if ‘X looks red’ can only be understood comparatively, as I will from now on assume, it still gives a more ‘direct’ description than ‘X looks like a tomato’. Thus, the ‘default’ comparisons with coloured and shaped items may be thought to give the ‘intrinsic’ character of how things look.<sup>3</sup> In other words, there may be enough of an asymmetry between ‘X looks the way tomatoes do’ and ‘X looks the way red things do’ to privilege the latter when it comes to describing the character of my experience. If so, such comparisons might index content: When things look *that way* (red, like a tomato, and so on), there would be content indexed that something is red. Rejecting non-comparative statements need not mean that a privileged subset of comparative statements couldn’t index content – for instance, those that describe the ‘intrinsic’ properties of a look, like those arrived at by the ‘minimizing’ strategy – by drawing a comparison with things that have such properties. What the preceding sections establish is that no facile reference to non-comparative looks will do. The main weight on my argument, however, rested on the fact that content indexed by ‘non-comparative looks’ will be too thin to suit the intentionalist. This objection would be valid for the parallel strategy of privileging certain salient comparisons with coloured and shaped things as well.<sup>4</sup>

Now, the fact that representation influences phenomenology may also point to another way of privileging certain comparisons. ‘X looks like a duck’ explicitly draws a comparison, but while there is a sense in which it can only be true if X looks like a rabbit, there is also a sense in which it is *not* true if X looks like a rabbit. In the familiar situation, the figure looks exactly the same way throughout. However, it doesn’t look the same way to me. This points to another strategy for avoiding Travis’ argument.<sup>5</sup> Where sect. 2.3 looked for a non-comparative sense by ‘minimizing’ the constituent properties of the look, the present suggestion should avoid the problems that suggestion ran into. As before, it also grows out of dissatisfaction with Travis’ concern with objective, ‘demonstrable’ looks.

<sup>1</sup> There are other, interesting questions about the effects on representation on phenomenology that I won’t be able to consider. For instance, excitement or aesthetic pleasure may influence one’s experience. It has even been suggested that depression literally makes things look less bright.

<sup>2</sup> Travis does mention the Müller-Lyer, but what he says about is not very convincing, at least not on the face of it. I return to Travis’ account of these matters in Ch. 5.

<sup>3</sup> Again, if Martin is right about (fully) objective looks, then ‘X looks red’ implies ‘X is red’. While this implication doesn’t hold for less objective looks, it underwrites the idea that the default comparisons describe certain looks more ‘directly’ than others.

<sup>4</sup> In particular, I argued that nothing merely visual privileged one assignment of depth from another. The general claim was that nothing visual seemed to privilege, say, ‘it looks like the moon’ from ‘it looks like a round patch on a wall’ or ‘it looks like a round after-image’. As I have stressed, epistemic factors privilege such one comparisons all the time. The problem is to find non-epistemic factors that could.

<sup>5</sup> I should also note that these two strategies also have a faint relation to Sellars’ distinction between ‘two ways in which a [perceptual] report may be minimized’ (1967, 13). Similarly, the distinction I am going to make between two ‘layers’ in the phenomenology of experience bears a relation to his distinction between a ‘primary mental aspect’ of experience, understood as a ‘minimal conceptual episode’ (1963, 15) and ‘rich conceptual episodes’ that make up ordinary experience (1967, 16). Like Sellars, I distinguish between the ‘receptivity of sense impressions’ and the ‘guidedness ... of the flow of conceptual representations proper involved in normal perceptual activity’ (1967, 16). However, while I accept such a distinction, I think my understanding of them, and especially of the ‘primary mental aspect’, is quite different from Sellars’.

### 3.1 *Belief and Phenomenology*

Ordinary perception gives us a wealth of belief.<sup>1</sup> Normally, the beliefs I acquire are simply knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Adapting Siegel's example (quoted in ch. 1, sect. 2.2), when I look into the piano at the array of hammers and strings, I see not only an array of objects but also (as we might say) an array of facts: I see that the strings and hammers have 'a certain shape, color, texture, and arrangement relative to one another, among other things' (2005/2011).<sup>3</sup> These are things I come to know. Thus, seeing is ordinarily also seeing *how*, which is seeing *that*.<sup>4</sup> Thus, things are readily available for my pursuits; for me to approach, avoid, eat, admire, think about, and so on. These tasks require representation. At the very least, I must *register* that the object is in front of me.<sup>5</sup> Now, it is clear that belief alters phenomenology, but it is equally clear that it cannot do the work for the intentionalist. Perceptual beliefs are commitments; they are *responses* to what we see. As stressed, that is not how intentionalists perceptual representing. Nevertheless, it will be useful to start with perceptual belief, before moving on to forms of representing that are reasonably thought more relevant.

Beliefs affect what we look at, how we direct our attention to it, and thus how it comes into view. For instance, focus or lack of it clearly affects phenomenology. More to the point, of course, is the way changes in belief can lead to Gestalt switches and similar phenomena. Particularly salient are spatial switches, when we realize that what we looked at wasn't arranged the way we thought in space. A related phenomenon is when perception doesn't 'settle'.<sup>6</sup> All of this suggests that belief influences phenomenology; it is clearly not confined to cases where there actually is a change in belief. In seeing a piano, it makes a potentially great difference whether one recognizes it as a piano – or at least that it has salient features in common with a piano.<sup>7</sup> For all that, perceptual representation is not yet in view. A mistaken belief is not a mistake 'in the senses', even when it affects phenomenology in the ways described.

<sup>1</sup> In using 'belief' as a mass term, like 'knowledge', I hope to make clear that there is no use *counting* here.

<sup>2</sup> In turn, perceptual belief depends on a wealth of background belief. This point will be of importance below.

<sup>3</sup> The things that I see, then, are of two fundamental and fundamentally different kinds. First, there are the objects in my environment. These are the object of visual awareness. Second, there are things I come to know. Of such things there can be no awareness. Both can (presumably) be objects both of conscious perception and blindsight. But they correspond to two very different notions of 'perceive', and (hence) of very different kinds of perception.

<sup>4</sup> One may dispute that seeing how is seeing that – perhaps one the grounds people have denied that knowing how is knowing that. I think the latter is true as well, but for present purposes, all that matters is that seeing how is. Of course, not all of what I see to be the case is easily articulable, but there is nothing wrong with demonstrative contents. And a lot of it is articulable. I have names for the colours, basic shapes, furniture, trees, animals, and so on. Spatial content may be particularly inarticulate. But our grasping spatial facts is clearly visible in the way we are able to move around among the things we see. Besides, we are more articulable once we can use our hands to help us show what we mean. I think it is quite natural to think that seeing *how*, *what* and *where* is seeing *that* (this should be much less controversial than Stanley and Williamson's (2001) infamous claim that all knowing *how* is knowing *that* – though I think that claim is plausible too). At any rate, I think seeing how, like seeing that, reflects a commitment on part of the perceiver (as I have noted, though, some philosophers, like McDowell, would disagree).

There are, of course, various questions one can raise about the content of perceptual belief. I will not be concerned with them here. I will, however, note one possible source of confusion for thinking that 'seeing how' is non-conceptual, stemming from noting the close relation between perception and imagination. In seeing the tool, I can readily imagine how it will look if I turn it upside down, a task that is harder when I turn my back on it. What one must not be led into thinking, is that imagination trades on contents of 'seeing how'. Seeing how is seeing that, it is to see that something is *that way*. One may do that on the *basis* of imagination, but believing or coming to know something is crucially different from imagining. Seeing that something is a certain way is a commitment. Imagination *cannot* be committed. This is not just a feature of the *state* (so the fact that imagination cannot be committed is not merely parallel to the fact that hopes cannot be committed): It is a feature of the *images* of imagination. Images, by nature, cannot be committed (hence, for instance, they cannot guide action, or at any rate directly; action can only be guided by committed representation).

<sup>5</sup> Of course, registration and awareness are normally just two sides of the same coin. This is not something I deny; it is something I have just stressed. My point is just that unless awareness is representation, as intentionalists may think, they might come apart, even if awareness of an object would always involve representation of it (as I noted in the Introduction). I should perhaps also note that in speaking of 'registering', I do not mean that what is registered must be registered as it is. Suppose I believe I'm having an after-image; sick and tired of the after-images induced in me by an evil scientist, I bang my head at the wall, thus hitting the small patch I was actually seeing. I clearly registered the patch on the wall, though not as it was (though for all that, it looked as it was).

<sup>6</sup> See Peacocke 1983, 22-3 for a good example. I do not, of course, endorse Peacocke's explanation, which relies on two problematic assumptions: First, when things 'settle', it happens normally as a matter of coming to believe or know that things are a certain way. Exceptions are very rare – though they are the topic of the current sections (in particular sect. 3.4). Second, I do not accept that 'visual field properties are sensational' (1983, 14) – at least in Peacocke's sense of 'sensational'. According to the simple view, the 'sensory core' of perception is constituted by the objects and properties of the environment, even before experience has 'settled'.

<sup>7</sup> There is an important ambiguity here. What is it to recognize that the piano has salient features in common with a piano? It can mean, for instance, that one recognizes that it has a certain shape, size and colour. In other words, it is recognizing how the object objectively looks, in Martin's terms. Noticing or failing to notice these features could clearly influence phenomenology. It also clearly matters for the range of one's thoughts and actions with respect to it. However, noticing that the piano has these features is not yet noticing the visual features as features of a *piano*, when

At this point, of course, intentionalists will stress that switches and other familiar phenomena *can* be independent of belief. For instance, even if I weren't to believe that there is a piano in front of me, I could still see it *as* a piano; my experience could still be organized according to the concept *piano*. Intentionalists are clearly right to point to such cases. But while they are right about this, they are not explicit about how such cases support their position. Nor are they explicit about which cases they have in mind (though they often mention the Müller-Lyer). In the next subsection, I will look at one simple way of arriving at belief-independent representation in perception – namely, by ‘subtracting’ the commitments of the perceptual beliefs they give rise to. Perhaps this way is suggested by the example just cited that my experience could still be organized according to the concept *piano* when I know that I'm not looking at a piano. As I will argue, the content arrived at by the strategy of ‘subtraction’ is not sufficiently belief-independent; it is still based on epistemic looks. In the subsequent section, I consider briefly whether epistemic looks can index content after all. In the last section, I look more closely at the various cases of belief-independent representation in perception, and discuss whether the ways of appearing that they give rise to can index content.

In general, I will make two broad claims. The first is that it is, at least in conscious experience, very rare that we first notice that something can be seen as being a certain way, and then go on to believe it. In ordinary cases, things are the other way round: We first believe that things are a certain way, and then things change when we notice that they aren't that way. Intentionalists will say that while this is true on the conscious level, the fact that we *can* see things ‘as being a certain way’ while not believing it gives reason to think that perception always represents things as being a certain way, and that this representing is (in some sense) prior to belief. I think this conclusion isn't supported; representation in perception is first and foremost a matter of how things look epistemically. Now, there is a second case, namely where we notice that something looks like something else. I notice that the piano looks like a piano; I may still believe that it is painted on the wall. Of course, I might then come to believe that the piano is real. But this was a matter of noticing that things have certain visual features in common with something else; it is not what intentionalists have in mind when they speak of ‘prior’ representing by experience. Noticing that something looks the way it would look if it were F is itself a belief (or knowledge) – belief that what I look at looks like a piano. And insofar as what is seen to look like a piano is then ‘represented’ as a piano, it is not something that could ground a belief. I notice that Pia looks like her sister; she isn't for that matter represented as her sister by my experience. I still, in the relevant context, *see* that it is *Pia*.

The second point is that even belief-independent representation is nevertheless a *response* to the way things are merely presented. While there clearly are representational effects, these effects must be distinguished from the ‘sensory core’ of perception, which, in the ordinary cases, consists merely of the objects and properties in front of us. As I will suggest, this is supported by the phenomenology of the switches and other phenomena; there is a (non-epistemic) sense in which things look the same even through switches. So reflection on representation in perception seems to tell against the intentionalist.

### 3.2 ‘Subtracting’ Perceptual Commitment

It is sometimes suggested that one can simply ‘subtract’ commitment in perception, thus arriving at perceptual content. For instance, Strawson considers how one would best describe the phenomenology of one's current experience.<sup>1</sup> He gives the following answer:

this means that the perceiver must herself associate these features with pianos. In other words, there are extensional and intensional understanding of statements that X recognizes something to have the features of a piano, depending on whether the concept *piano* figures in her representing.

<sup>1</sup> In particular, he says, one should not answer the question ‘[h]ow it is with you, visually, at the moment’ (1979/1988, 94) by ‘talking about lights and colours, patches and patterns’, since ‘to do so would falsify the character of the experience’ (1979/1988, 95).

I use the perceptual claim – the claim it was natural to make in the circumstances – in order to characterize my experience, without actually making the claim. I render the perceptual judgment internal to the characterization of the experience without actually asserting the content of the judgment. And this is really the best way to characterize the experience... Thus we might have: ‘It sensibly seemed to me just as if I were seeing such-and-such a scene’ or ‘My visual experience can be characterized by saying that I saw what I saw, supposing I saw anything, as a scene of the following character...’ (1979/1988, 95)

Now, intentionalists need not hold that we can arrive directly at perceptual content by this simple manoeuvre. We make many perceptual judgments that don’t mirror perceptual representation.<sup>1</sup> The idea is rather that some of these judgments reflect perceptual content. One shouldn’t, then, take Strawson’s example too literally in this respect. Neither should one take it too literally with respect to the nature of the ‘subtraction’. Just as we cannot believe at will, so we cannot refrain from believing at will. Can we suspend judgment in ordinary perception? That is highly doubtful. The idea is rather that if we, contrary to fact, were to suspend judgment, then experience would still remain as it is, characterized by the relevant ‘perceptual claim’. It would still represent what it does in the actual case. In this section, I will cast doubt on this idea; the idea of ‘subtraction’ doesn’t work.

Strawson’s example is that of seeing ‘the dappled deer grazing in groups on the vivid green grass’ through a window (1979/1988, 94). Now, if I really were to doubt that that is what I were seeing, would it still seem to me ‘just as if I were seeing’ the deer? Non-epistemically, of course, it would.<sup>2</sup> It would look just as it does when there is a group of deer there. But in that sense, it also looks just as if there is a group of cleverly painted machines there, or as if all the items are much bigger but also much farther away, or as if the window is replaced by a suitable hologram, and so on. It thus seems that the only way to choose between these contents is in terms of what it is reasonable to believe that one sees – in other words, in terms of how things look epistemically. We must suppose, then, that our perceiver has seriously started doubting. Perhaps there really are machines out there? Maybe a zoologist tells her that deer are extinct. Will she still hold that it is represented to her that there is a group of deer in front of her?<sup>3</sup>

Now, of course, it is hard to take such radical doubt seriously. When faced with a deer, one ordinarily *cannot* believe that it is a machine.<sup>4</sup> That belief would be highly unreasonable and there would be no tendency to believe it.<sup>5</sup> Any other suggestion for perceptual content than that one is seeing a group of deer will be far-fetched. But the obvious problem with privileging the concept *deer* in this way is that it lets content be indexed by *epistemic* looks – either by what the perceiver believes, or at least by what she has reason to believe. The idea that the content of perception would remain as it is even in a counterfactual situation of ‘subtracting’ commitment depends, I think, on unreflectively letting the content of the experience be determined

<sup>1</sup> Even intentionalists who think that perceptual content is quite rich would agree to this, such as Siegel, who discusses the question at length (2010). Strawson himself, though, makes no such qualification.

<sup>2</sup> I set aside the issues concerning one’s knowledge of the non-epistemic looks. Many people have, of course, held it to be indubitable that things *look* a certain way – both, I assume, for epistemic and non-epistemic varieties. I think it is clear that upon coming to doubt that one is seeing a group of deer, one might well doubt that it really looks like a group of deer as well. Deer have a certain non-epistemic look; is it clear that one must be certain that the items in front of one have *that* look? And is it clear that one will be clear about exactly *how* things look in the first place?

<sup>3</sup> The intentionalist can accommodate this point by holding that the content of perception is highly context-sensitive, thus reflecting not just the environment of the perceiver but also her views. I discuss some of the problems for this idea in the next section.

<sup>4</sup> As Austin complains about the philosophical attitude of evaluating one’s evidence when faced with a chair:

[T]he plain man would regard doubt in such a case, not as far-fetched or over-refined or somehow unpractical, but as plain *nonsense*; he would say, quite correctly, ‘Well, if that’s not a real chair then *I don’t know what is.*’ (1962, 10)

Now, there are clearly cases where one can doubt that what one is looking at is a real chair. That is not what Austin protests at. His point is just that it is a philosophical mistake to suggest that we can really do this in normal cases. ‘Stepping back’ from our experience is stepping back from our beliefs. Many of these beliefs cannot reasonably be doubted.

<sup>5</sup> There is another potential problem here: If my inclination to think that a deer is present means that this content is represented by my experience, then a less reasonable subject’s inclination to think that a machine is present may mean that that content is represented by her experience. If so, experience may justify unreasonable claims for a less reasonable subject and not for a more reasonable subject. This at least seems unfortunate.

by one's evidence in the actual situation.<sup>1</sup> To take the suggestion seriously, one must consider cases where the evidence is quite different from what it actually is.<sup>2</sup> But that would, I think, support contrary conclusions: Taken singly, experiences would not have much content at all – or only insofar as they also entitled us to believe those contents (whether or not the contents were true).<sup>3</sup>

There are various things one may say to this. First, one may reasonably object that concepts like 'deer' don't figure in perceptual content anyway. As I noted, intentionalists won't say that any perceptual claim will reflect content. Perhaps only spatial and a few other properties are represented. Once again, the considerations are closely related to those that lead to the 'minimizing' strategy. Looking like a deer is no more apt to index content than looking centaurian is.<sup>4</sup> The intentionalist may thus say that reflection show that while most of the properties we perceive are perceived as a matter of how things look epistemically, a few remain. While this could seem to lead to the dead-end of purely visual field properties, she would try to hold that, for instance, spatial properties like depth are so 'stubborn', as well as phenomenologically salient, that her perception would represent the same scenario even if the evidence were quite different – that is, even if she weren't entitled to believe that things are that way.<sup>5</sup> For instance, she might *know* that she were hallucinating, but still involuntarily represent the scene as being one way to the exclusion of other possible scenes. The objection needs more discussion than I can give it in this section. What I suggest, though, is that her representing is due either to her suppressed dispositions to believe, or else to her noticing that things look similar the way things would look if such-and-such were the case.<sup>6</sup> This idea will be discussed further in sect. 3.4.

One might well think that while doubt can change one's current perception, there is a certain level of representation that is, if not immune to doubt, at least sufficiently 'resistant' and/or

<sup>1</sup> This is closely related to the point made in sect. 2.3 that what matters for how one is represented to in cases of illusion is normally one's 'starting point'. That starting point is ordinarily epistemic through and through: One has already made up one's mind about what one is looking at. Starting with (knowingly or at least 'believingly') seeing a cow which is then (unknowingly) replaced by a visually identical patch on a wall produces an illusion of a cow; starting with seeing a patch then replaced by a visually identical cow produces an illusion of a patch.

<sup>2</sup> Could one imagine a situation without any evidence at all? That seems unlikely, though some empiricists have thought that this is how we face the world as new-borns. I think it is hard to imagine a view 'uncluttered' by background information; 'naïve' foundationalism seems wrong in that perception requires *already* having knowledge of one's environment. If there is no arriving at such knowledge 'from scratch', then it seems equally problematic to imagine such a 'neutral' state. But this obviously requires more discussion.

Another interesting question concerns the *relevant alternatives* when I doubt what I have in front of me. When I doubt that I am seeing a deer, then I reasonably wonder if it can be some other animal, or a machine, and so on. But reflection on this can lead to the following objection: What if the relevant alternative is that I am hallucinating? It can seem that this alternative doesn't lead to 'minimizing' the properties of what I am looking at. Clearly, then, my experience determinately represents a deer even in the absence of any evidence of a deer? Again, this requires more discussion than I can give here, but I don't think the objection is very forceful. If I hallucinate, then the relevant question will still be whether I am hallucinating a deer or something else; the question will be settled by considerations of how it moves, what is beneath its skin, and so on. This will be settled by the ordinary 'phenomenalistic' counterfactual truths about it: If I were to move towards it, or if its skin were removed, then it would look such-and-such. In this sense, a relevant alternative of complete hallucination seems to make no real difference. When I am 'in' the hallucination, I must treat the 'virtual reality' that I face as an ordinary reality (this is so whether I believe that I am hallucinating or not). So again, what is represented to me will depend on the epistemic context 'within' the hallucination. Another way of dealing with the objection is to consider the relevant representing as one of noting similarities: I know that I face nothing, but I also note that it looks as if a deer were present. All of this requires more discussion than I can give here. I return to the issue of noting similarities in sect. 3.4.

<sup>3</sup> As I have stressed at various points, one can be entitled to a claim without that claim being perceptually represented to one. Travis' complaint is related to Gupta's complaint about the 'multiple factorizability' of experience: The 'rational contribution' of experience is always dependent on the perceiver's view (2006, 5-11). Gupta argues that this means the rational contribution of experience cannot be the content of experience, as the intentionalist construes it. He is quite clear, however, that the fact that experiences taken singly are 'indeterminate' doesn't mean that experience cannot play the ordinary rational role we take it to have:

[O]ne can acknowledge this rational role without ... assigning any propositional content to it. Indeed, the idea of propositional content gets in the way of a proper understanding of the rational role of experience. (2006, 127-8)

<sup>4</sup> Again, the considerations are also related to Price's 'method of doubt' (1932/1950, 3). If I really doubt that there is a tomato in front of me, will I still hold that it is represented to me that there is a tomato there? Why not rather a loo-kalike made of wax? In other words, one may arrive at purely 'visual' properties, and thus content of the sort 'that is a red patch'.<sup>4</sup> Again, however, the intentionalist might hold that depth is present in how things look in such cases – whether or not such looks are 'non-comparative' – and argue that perception represent basic visual properties.

<sup>5</sup> The suggestion I make on behalf of the intentionalist is not that things would look the same in very remote situations; it is merely that the look will be sufficiently evidence-independent to be the same in a broad range of situations.

<sup>6</sup> One *might* also take the tough line that this kind of self-conscious hallucination is impossible. But wouldn't the same proximal stimulus on my retina lead me to represent just the way I in fact do, even when I know that it is mere 'virtual reality'? This seems plausible. One might hold, though, that this representing would be a form of involuntary 'make-believe'.



phenomenologically salient to secure that it cannot be assimilated to the concepts like *deer*. If we someone really doubts that she is looking at a flock of deer, as she first believed, then her perception will reasonably change. She may believe that she mistakes them for a group of antelopes, that they are statues, or that they are machines.<sup>1</sup> While none of this will make a great difference to phenomenology, coming to think that they really are spots on the windowpane will radically alter the experience. The intentionalist might try to hold that this striking effect can only be explained if the content is represented by the perceptual state as such. This claim can be further supported if it is hard to ‘control’ the impression; perhaps one will inevitably fall back into ‘seeing’ the scene as one where there is a group of items out on the lane. One might, for instance, refer to the way we experience the Ames room, which is involuntarily perceived as being a certain way despite our knowing that it is quite different. As I argued in sect. 2.3, I think the phenomenology of depth vision belong basically with other representational responses in perception. One can agree that spatial perception is special, and spatial switches particularly salient and/or resistant, but this doesn’t seem to be a difference in principle. Spatial switches are like other switches in that while there is a sense in which things look different after the switch, there is also a sense in which they look the same.

A second complaint is that the example I have considered will ordinarily involve representations – a group of machines made to illude deer, or a trompe l’œil painting. This complaint is initially easier to handle. What I see need not be designed to illude anything. It can be a sheer accident that the machines resemble deer or that the patches on the wall make up a ‘picture’ of them. However, there is something right in the complaint. I will apply the concept ‘deer’ to describe the experience. While I can use ‘deer’ to draw a mere comparison in a way that leaves the concept merely ‘external’ to the experience, as in the ‘demonstrable’ comparisons, isn’t there also a sense in which the concept goes into the very ‘organization’ of the experience, even if I don’t believe that I am looking at a deer? Even if I know that I am seeing a machine, I will note that it resembles a deer. I need not thereby note that it looks like a statue, or any of the various possibilia it thereby also looks like.

Noting such similarities influences phenomenology. Unlike the comparatives considered so far, the concept applied ‘shapes’ the phenomenology of the experience, and can therefore be seen as reporting on it. The concept *deer* is applied in the judgment that something looks like a deer, not in a judgment that it is a deer. In other words, the comparisons reporting on the ‘organization’ of experience may be privileged in a way that allows them to index content (and in contrast to the ‘minimizing’ strategy, this strategy may again yield quite rich contents). Before I go on to consider these and other belief-independent applications of concepts in perception, however, I will have a brief look at the suggestion that epistemic looks might after all index content, as promised in sect. 1.1. If so, Strawson’s strategy would work after all – though not, of course, in the way he intended.

### 3.3 *Might Epistemic Looks Index Content?*

As noted in sect. 1.1, not all philosophers accept Chisholm’s and Travis’ description of the epistemic notion. Jackson, for instance, writes:

It seems to me a mistake to analyse the epistemic use in terms of tentative, guarded, etc. assent to ‘*p*’. [I]f this were the case, it would be *inconsistent* to say ‘They appear to be away, but I happen to know that they are hiding in the attic.’ ... Our account handles such cases by describing them as cases where we take it that though a certain body of visual evidence supports that *p*, other (non-visual) evidence makes it certain that not-*p*. (1977, 31)

<sup>1</sup> One may think that these differences don’t make a difference at all. I think noticing that the deer are statues will lead to some kind of switch. I also think being certain that one isn’t looking at deer will. At any rate, one can change the example to one of looking at a stuffed duck which also looks just as a rabbit.

Other people follow him in this.<sup>1</sup> They thus reject the Moorean condition on the epistemic notion (sect. 1.1) as well as Travis' claim that '[i]t cannot look as if X on this ... notion where it is perfectly plain that X is not so' (2004, 76). According to the suggestion, there are belief-independent epistemic looks. Could such looks index content?

To begin with, it is not entirely clear that there is a counterfactual epistemic notion. Why shouldn't we think that the statements Jackson discusses are straightforwardly comparative? What I confront looks just as it would look if such and such were the case. When I say that it looks as if P, knowing full well that non-P, it seems reasonable to say that I merely draw a comparison.<sup>2</sup> However, it seems that one could be saying that there is hypothetical evidence, such that if one didn't know that P, then the present experience would give one reason to believe that Q. This notion would not be comparative. Comparatively, things looking as if Q is equivalent to saying that they look as if R. But even if one didn't know that P, there would be no reason to believe that R. Hence, looking as if Q is not equivalent to looking as if R, on the present notion.<sup>3</sup> That seems to underwrite the existence of counterfactual epistemic looks.

One may also attempt to blur the line between comparative and epistemic looks. Perhaps the red look of the snow-capped mountains in the evening can be captured by an epistemic notion, since it gives *some* support for the belief that the mountains are red. In some (bad) epistemic circumstances, one might believe (and be entitled to believe) that the mountains are red. Given that intentionalists want content to justify belief, this proposal should perhaps not be ruled out at the outset. Might not any experience of having it look comparatively as if P give *some* (if normally defeated) reason to believe that P? If so, one might think of the content of perception as the contents of possible justified beliefs in light of the experience, and thus of every comparative claim as weakly epistemic.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, I will provisionally accept that there are counterfactual epistemic looks, and more generally belief-independent ones.

However, though I think it is possible to develop this idea, I think it can at most lead to a very revisionary version of intentionalism. I will be brief, and restrict myself to a couple of comments. First, contents indexed epistemically will not be independent of one's view. In the above example, even if I don't believe that Q, the fact (if it is a fact) that there is 'counterfactual evidence' that Q is still due to the fact that I *would* be inclined to believe that Q. Now, one may hold that the content of experience should be identified by what one's background commitments *entitles* one to believe in a particular situation. But it is unclear why one should think of this in terms of representation, given that one can be entitled to a belief without having it represented to one.<sup>5</sup> Second, epistemic looks are still not properly visual. Perception will entitle one to many beliefs that are not about one's environment. Here one might reasonably draw the line in terms of inferential and non-inferential beliefs. More problematic, however, are visual illusions, which are stubbornly evidence-resistant. In other words, even radically counterfactual epistemic looks cannot, it seems, index the content of the Müller-Lyer.<sup>6</sup> Third, construals on these lines will have problems accommodating the 'immediacy' of experience. What one is enti-

<sup>1</sup> Compare Maund 1986, 171; see Breckenridge 2007a, 26-30 for discussion of similar views. Brogaard thinks that while epistemic statements are generally 'evidence bearing for the speaker', they can be 'implicitly relativized to a third party' (*forth*, §2, 3). Perhaps this third party could be myself, only in a counterfactual situation.

<sup>2</sup> Compare Martin 2010, 166-8.

<sup>3</sup> To illustrate, when seeing Pia's twin sister where one expects to see Pia, 'P' might stand for 'Pia is in Australia', 'Q' for 'Pia is present', 'R' for 'some indiscriminable machine is present'.

<sup>4</sup> One might build here on Gupta's ideas of experience. Gupta defines the 'given' in experience as its 'total rational contribution' (2006, 19). He argues that the given cannot be 'propositional' on the grounds that it cannot take properly into account the context-dependence and 'multiple-factorizability' of experience: Any experience could 'tell' one various things, dependent on one's view (2006, 5-11). Instead of a 'propositional' or 'categorical' given, he defends a 'hypothetical' given (2009, 464) which is not a proposition but a *function* that takes views (background commitments) as inputs and yields perceptual entitlements as outputs (2006, 79-80; 2009, 464-6). Building on this, we might understand the content of experience as its rational import in a given case: what experience entitles the perceiver to believe, given a background view. Thus, the content of perception would be the *output* of Gupta's function. Finally, we could understand how things *look* to the perceiver as what it entitles her to believe – that is, as Travis' 'objective' epistemic looks (2004, 77-8).

<sup>5</sup> There is, of course, also the general complaint of Ch. 3, of the content's having to be 'conveyed' to the perceiver, and of belief-independent content serving as evidence for beliefs.

<sup>6</sup> The defender of the present approach would have to answer that there is indeed justification for the belief that the lines are unequal, but that it is defeated.

tled to believe on a given matter may require reflection, and so it may not be obvious to the perceiver how things epistemically look.<sup>1</sup> Though again more discussion would be needed, I conclude that intentionalists are right to set aside epistemic looks as a candidate for indexing content.

### 3.4 *Belief-Independent Perceptual Representation*

While one cannot arrive at perceptual content merely by ‘subtracting’ commitment from perceptual beliefs, there are phenomenally relevant applications of concepts that are not applications in belief. This naturally suits the intentionalist. The phenomenological effects of such applications will naturally be reported by saying how things look, and such statements satisfy the determinacy constraint without being epistemic: Unlike non-epistemic statements, they point in one direction; unlike epistemic statements, they are independent of the perceiver’s beliefs. As an example, one can consider seeing the profile of a duck as a duck, and then as a rabbit.<sup>2</sup> Non-epistemically, the duck looks just like a duck (might) and thereby just like a rabbit (might). This is obvious: It looks the same. However, in reporting the switch, I cannot use the claim comparatively, as that notion has been understood so far – though it is still used to draw a comparison.<sup>3</sup> When I say that the object now looks like a duck, I report that my experience of the duck is organized according to the concept *duck*; in saying that it look like a rabbit, I report that it is organized according to the concept *rabbit*. And in this sense, it does *not* look the same. The look is like epistemic looks in pointing in one direction, but it is non-epistemic in being independent of what I regard as epistemically possible: I know full well that there is no rabbit in the ornithological section of the taxidermy. In other words, statements like these exploit the ‘embedded’ claim of the comparison – ‘X is F’ in ‘X looks F’ – in a way that is not ‘external’ to what is conveyed by the comparison, as they are in the ‘demonstrable’ comparative statements.

Though the classical Gestalt switches are familiar from psychology textbooks, they are rare in ordinary perception. My basic contention will be that the presence of these and similar phenomena provides too thin a basis for intentionalists to rest the weight of their position on. In particular, it is rare that noting similarities or ‘aspects’ of this kind isn’t prompted by a (tentative) belief. When perception is ‘shaped’ by a certain content that one knows is false, it is normally due to one’s having for a moment thought that the content was true or might be true. Thus, content is determined by the original epistemic look; after the (inclination to) belief is no longer present, I can ‘preserve’ the organization of the original impression. For instance, I can imagine that things are as I originally believed that they were.<sup>4</sup> As I have noted, there is a second case, of noting similarities. Normally, such noticings do not have the strong effect needed for the concept to shape the phenomenology. I may well notice that the rock is shaped like a violin or that the apparatus has a human face in it, but while this is not without effect on phenomenology, it normally doesn’t characterize the experience as a whole in the way beliefs do. I see quite clearly that there is no violin and no face present. Admittedly, some noticings have a phenomenologically much stronger effect. Seeing the duck as a rabbit may be such a case. But however strong the effect is, noticing similarities doesn’t seem to provide the intentionalist with what she wants. Now, there may be a further group of cases that are due neither to initial inclinations to believe nor to noticing similarities. These may be cases of ‘involuntary’ represen-

<sup>1</sup> One might also complain that letting perceptual content depend heavily on background beliefs undermines the relative sameness of experience for two perceivers with different background information facing the same scene. Arguably, this isn’t much of a problem, though; intentionalists positing ‘rich’ perceptual content will be committed to it anyway. It may well be a virtue of such views that they let toddler X and scientist Y have quite different experiences when facing the laboratory equipment.

<sup>2</sup> I use real examples in order to avoid complications; the textbook visual illusions are representations. One can imagine looking into a darkly lit museum through a window; one sees only the profile and the faintly glooming eye of the duck.

<sup>3</sup> This precludes calling the present notion ‘non-comparative’, even if it is both belief-independent and satisfies the determinacy constraint. Is it a genuine ‘third’ notion, beside (and, so to speak, between) the epistemic and the non-epistemic notions? As I will argue below, I think it is too marginal to be called that.

<sup>4</sup> This is not true for the cases where experience ‘falls into place’ from an initial state of not being able to make out what one is looking at. Once experience has ‘settled’ it is very hard to ‘recall’ how things looked before.

tation in perception, such as those involved in the Müller-Lyer lines or the Ames room. Such cases seem more congenial to the intentionalist, and will be considered at some length. I begin, though, by noting on switches prompted by an initial belief.

For a moment, it looks as if there is a person at the end of the road. But only for a moment – I also notice that the person doesn't move, and then various other aspects that don't fit with the idea that there is a person there at all (the figure is too tall, say). As I make out, it was just a pattern in the branches of the tree 'behind' the 'person'; seen a certain way, the pattern makes up the shape of a person. I can still 'see' the person, though. What sorts of look do we have in this situation? When I first 'saw' the person, it was a matter of how things looked epistemically. I was at least inclined to judge that there was someone down the road. The epistemic look is no longer present.<sup>1</sup> Still present, however, is the non-epistemic look – and it has of course been there all along. The pattern in the branches really looks a way a person may well look (in shape). Neither my belief that I were seeing a person nor my still being able to 'see' the person is without a base in how things look from this angle. It looks as if a person is present.<sup>2</sup> However, this 'seeing' the person is not merely a matter of that non-epistemic look; on the non-epistemic notion, things look the same to me whether I 'see' the person or not. In contrast to the non-epistemic look, the look in still 'seeing' the person is due to how I conceptualize the experience. The shape itself is the shape of countless other (possible) things. My experience is not organized according to concepts for these things. It is organized according to the concept *person*.

The organization of this experience was due to an initial belief. This fits with what I take to be a natural thought: The main employment of concepts in perception, as in other cases, is in judgment. Normally, when the inclination to believe disappears, the 'organization' it gave rise to disappears as well.<sup>3</sup> Retaining the initial look may then require effort: We have to imagine that things are that way. Since there is generally a visual basis in how things non-epistemically look, this isn't too hard. Now, it is clear that we can 'imagine into' perception quite apart from any epistemic endeavours. We may simply explore our experience by trying to see things differently from how we know they are. But the phenomenal results of such voluntary efforts cannot be what the intentionalist has in mind. At the very least, we must look to involuntary cases of imagination. In particular, while belief-independent, the cases should be capable of giving rise to a mistaken belief, even (subjectively) warrant it. Perhaps, for instance, seeing the profile of a duck as that of a rabbit belongs here.<sup>4</sup>

In Wittgenstein's term, we often 'see a likeness' between what we look at and something else (1953/2001, 165<sup>e</sup>). Looking at a rock, I notice that it has a shape resembling that of a violin, at least as seen from this angle.<sup>5</sup> More saliently, noting that the duck looks like a rabbit changes the experience. This is involuntary; as Brewer says, it just 'jumps out at me, or captures my attention' (2007, 94).<sup>6</sup> While the phenomenological effect of this need not be very strong, it usu-

<sup>1</sup> I assume now that there is no longer any tendency to believe that there is a person down there. Perhaps there is still a 'counterfactual' epistemic look, as discussed in the previous section. Or perhaps I still leave open a tiny possibility that it might be a person; in this case, it may even look epistemically both as if there is a person there and as if there isn't (just as I may think there are reasons for and against a claim).

<sup>2</sup> In other respects, of course, it doesn't look like there is a person there. For instance, no person is that tall. As I have stressed earlier, there are always a number of comparisons to draw and a number of aspects to notice.

<sup>3</sup> This is again related to the point made against the idea of 'subtraction' in sect. 4.2. The content is determined by an initial case of deploying the concept in judgment, as in the case of imagining a counterfactual circumstance of 'subtracting' the commitment. In the case of 'seeing' the person, the commitment is actually subtracted, but still leaves an impression on visual consciousness.

<sup>4</sup> Another case: Flying objects, such as birds and planes, can sometimes present 180 degree switches when seen in silhouette. Non-epistemically, of course, the objects look just the same. Being familiar with the illusion, I suspend judgment. Still the object will be seen as being a certain way. This is not something I actively imagine; in fact, it can be very hard to see it the other way.

<sup>5</sup> It is not clear that I must *first* recognize the shape and then the 'violin'; perhaps it can be the other way round. I may not even know in what respect what I look at looks like a violin; perhaps 'something' reminds me of it in a way that isn't transparent to me. I assume, though, that the shape must in *some* sense be recognized, in a way to be explored, perhaps, by vision science; if not, I wouldn't have noticed the similarity (compare Travis *forth*, 6ff).

<sup>6</sup> Once again, however, having such similarities 'jump out' at one may well be dependent on one's state of mind. I assume we are less likely to notice aspects and similarities when we preoccupied with finding out something – for instance, when we are lost in the forest and try to find out how to get home. When the epistemic business is under control, we may come to notice that the trees look as if they were dancing; they just froze to let us pass. More generally, it is very hard to notice likenesses out of context. As Wittgenstein notes, the fact that the duck looks like a rabbit doesn't strike us when it is depicted among other ducks (1953/2001, 167<sup>e</sup>; compare the illustrations in Hanson 1958, 13-

ally has some effect: Someone who fails to notice the likeness with a violin sees the rock differently. Of course, there is no tendency to believe that the rock is a violin. The example doesn't suit the intentionalist.<sup>1</sup> Seeing likenesses of this sort is an ordinary phenomenon. The intentionalist won't for that reason hold that perception represents the object in front of me as a violin; she will hold that it is represented (at most) as a rock. After all, I see that it is one. Seeing the duck as a rabbit is a more plausible example. However, if this is understood in terms of seeing a likeness, it still doesn't suit the intentionalist. Like believing that something is a violin, noting a similarity is straightforwardly a *response* to what one is presented with; it is not merely that presentation itself.<sup>2</sup>

So far, I have suggested two main cases of belief-independent applications of concepts 'in' perception: first, as an 'echo' of an epistemic look; second, when we notice likenesses. The first must be set aside; it isn't sufficiently belief-independent. In a recent defence of a naïve realist account, Brewer lays much weight on the second case:<sup>3</sup>

From various points of view, and in various circumstances of perception, physical objects have visually relevant similarities with paradigms of various kinds of such things. These may intelligibly lead us to take them as instances of such kinds when seen from the relevant points of view in the circumstances in question. Thus, they look various ways to us. (2007, 91)

Brewer seems to hold that noting visual similarities can account for all cases of belief-independent phenomenal representation:

For example, the [Müller-Lyer] diagram is visually relevantly similar to a pair of lines, one longer and more distant than its plane, one shorter and less distant, projecting into the diagram itself on the plane. It is therefore perfectly intelligible how someone seeing it might take that very diagram as consisting of unequal lines, regardless of whether she does or not. In this sense: they look unequal in length. (2007, 91)

When the lines look unequal, according to Brewer, they look a way unequal lines may well do. According to the 'classical' explanation of the Müller-Lyer in terms of depth cues, it is related to the simpler Ponzo in that looks the way lines that are in fact of unequal length may look from certain (paradigmatic) perspectives.<sup>4</sup> The 'immediate' properties of the visual field correspond to those that would be produced by certain unequal lines.<sup>5</sup> Now, however the psychological

4). Seeing the duck as a rabbit requires either conscious effort or knowledge that it *can* be seen as a rabbit or else a very supple and imaginative mind.

<sup>1</sup> Of course, most of these likenesses are simply too obvious to us to capture our attention. It is the *unobvious* similarities that are likely to 'capture' our attention. In some sense, of course, we 'notice' that the house looks like a house. Thus there is a sense of 'seeing a likeness' that is more generic than Wittgenstein's (1953/2001, 165<sup>e</sup>) 'noticing an aspect'. Or is this merely because we don't notice *that* we notice the similarities that we notice all the time?

One might think that while the effects on phenomenology of noting the unobvious similarities is more striking, noting the obvious similarities is more fundamental. Clearly, my experience would clearly be very different if I hadn't noticed that the house looks like a house and not like a tree! Thus one might think that the fact that the house is represented as a house is a fundamental fact about the phenomenology of the experience. However, one must not here confuse the present notion with the comparative. In the comparative sense, I can note that the house looks like a house without having the concept house – though obviously I wouldn't be able to put it that way myself. On a natural comparison, for me to note that the house looks like a house and not like a tree would be to recognize its spatial and chromatic properties. If I didn't make out *these* properties, my experience would clearly be very different. As I noted above, there are extensional and intensional readings of 'X looks like an F to S'.

<sup>2</sup> As I noted, noticings reasonably themselves involve belief, just as registering and coming to know does. One might perhaps doubt this, on the grounds that *finding* X similar to Y is a mere subjective response that cannot be true or false. According to Evans, we can only speak of truth and falsity when we deal with objective similarities (of which he expresses skepticism) (1983, 292). If, further, beliefs are constitutively true or false, noting similarities need not be a matter of belief. I think both premises are contestable, though.

<sup>3</sup> Similar considerations can be found in Martin 2010, 214-7.

<sup>4</sup> In the typical case, the closest corner of a cube seen at an angle will present a line with arrows pointing inwards; while the farthest corner *inside* the cube will present a line with outward arrows. Gregory 1968, 282-3 is a classical presentation. Though the 'classical' explanation of the Müller-Lyer is very intuitive, it is still controversial. One interesting proposal is Howe and Purves 2004, which offers a probabilistic explanation: The perceptual system overcomes the 'inherent ambiguity of information in retinal stimulus' by correlating it with its probable 'physical sources' (2004, 1238). Thus, Gregory's explanation in terms of 'past experience with sources of ... stimuli' 'points in the right general direction' (2004, 1238), but his more specific claim about the significance of the arrows as indicating corners are not validated, according to Howe and Purves. For our purposes, however, it is worth noting that the more general probabilistic explanation equally supports the idea that the Müller-Lyer is perceived the way it is in virtue of a relevant similarity with actually unequal lines.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Gregory 1968, plates 15 and 16 (unpagged). At any rate, the structure in the retinal image when viewing the Ponzo (to take the simpler case) corresponds to that one has in viewing two unequal lines laid out perspectively (like the sleepers on a railroad). It seems that there must be corresponding structures in the visual field (compare also the considerations of sect. 2.3).

explanation may go, noting that the lines look unequal is at any rate noting a similarity with unequal things – namely, with respect to being unequal.

Thus, Brewer seems right that we apply the concept *unequal* to the Müller-Lyer lines in virtue of some similarity with lines that actually are equal. However, one might doubt that one can really assimilate the Müller-Lyer to noting that a rock looks like a violin.<sup>1</sup> The similarity is in a sense ‘intransparent’ to the subject. Does the perceiver notice a similarity with the relevant unequal lines?<sup>2</sup> Now, as I said, in one sense she does: That’s just what she reports when she says that they look unequal; her applying the concept *unequal* just *is* noting that similarity. The contrast in ‘transparency’ is then merely that the perceiver can say that she applies the concept *violin* to the rock in virtue of its shape, she cannot say what it is about the lines that makes her apply the concept *unequal*.<sup>3</sup> Still, though, the Müller-Lyer lines are different from the violin-shaped rock in that there is no ‘mistake’ in the case of the rock; while we can see it as a violin, we can clearly see it as a rock, and hence as a non-violin. There is no tendency to believe that it is a violin. Relatedly, applying the concept in the Müller-Lyer is ‘involuntary’ in a sense that it isn’t in the case of the violin-shaped rock, even if both applications are ‘spontaneous’.<sup>4</sup>

A useful example may be the Ames room (which also has the advantage that it is a real case of seeing and not a case of seeing ‘in’ an illustration). The Ames room looks like an ordinary room. It looks rectangular. By looking like a rectangular room, it also looks like countless other things, such an Ames room – but it is the former similarity that strikes one. And in contrast to the violin-shaped rock or statue of a deer, or even a duck-rabbit, the similarity strikes one, as it were, very ‘hard’. Reportedly, it is impossible to see the room the way it really is, even when one has it in plain view and knows it exactly how it is structured. The illusion is so strong that it isn’t diminished by the fact that the room is populated by persons who appear to grow and shrink in size as they move around.<sup>5</sup> As one might say, this is not merely to ‘notice’ a similarity; if at all, it is to be overwhelmed by it.

I will not give an all-out answer to how we should understand these cases, though I will make some suggestions below. What I still think quite right is Brewer’s claim that the ‘involuntary’ and ‘stubborn’ representation of the Ames room is still a *response* to how things are just presented to us. If we could make the room look as it is, there is still a sense in which it would look the same:

The difference in how things are for us phenomenologically is no change in the core subjective character of the experience; it rather concerns our classificatory engagement with what is presented to us. (2007, 93)

According to Brewer, ‘the core subjective character of perceptual experience is simply constituted by the objects presented in that experience’ (2007, 89). One sees the room; the shapes and colours are constituted by the layout of the room itself. It is even true, I think, that in a sense one sees the room as it is – though it is equally clear that one also sees the room in a way it is not.<sup>6</sup>

Perhaps surprisingly, Brewer thus holds that ‘illusion forces us to distinguish two different levels in perception’ (2007, 91). I think reflection on how things look in belief-independent phenomenal representation supports this claim. One must distinguish the way things are merely

<sup>1</sup> Given the unsettled question of how to explain the illusion, one might also doubt whether the application is indeed based on any similarity. One may say that this is a question for psychologists, not philosophers. However, one should note that there is a sense in which the claim that I note a similarity is trivial

<sup>2</sup> Of course, one may say that her visual system does, but that is another matter.

<sup>3</sup> As noted, though, this may in principle be true for the case violin-rock as well. One need not note any *further* similarity; nor need one have any particular situation of seeing a violin or a set of unequal lines in mind.

<sup>4</sup> I should perhaps be careful about saying that the concept ‘violin’ (‘unequal’) is ‘applied’ to the rock (the lines) in drawing the comparison. The concept is not applied in a judgment that the rock is a violin. Nothing hinges on this for my purposes; thus I will retract the formulation if challenged (though it seems to fit well with the idea that ‘X looks F’ involves an embedded ‘X is F’).

<sup>5</sup> As before, however, the room must be viewed with only one eye.

<sup>6</sup> In other words, there are no distortions of the colours and shapes of the room. Thus, it is not as when one sees the room through distorting glasses or after having taken a drug that gives everything a yellowish tinge. I return briefly to *this* kind of illusion in Ch. 5.

presented from how they are represented, even when the representing is as involuntary and inevitable, as in the case of the Ames room and the Müller-Lyer lines. The contrast between representation and presentation is visible in that there is still a sense in which things look the same throughout a switch, as Wittgenstein noted (1953/2001, 165<sup>e</sup>).<sup>1</sup> In the Ames room, there is no switch to be experienced; we cannot experience the Ames room as an Ames room (as a room shaped like the Ames room). For all that, there is a difference between the sense in which the room is simply seen as it is – it is, after all, in plain view – and that in which it is misleadingly represented.

As I have stressed, the phenomena I have been considering are rare in normal perception. The basic form of phenomenal representation is in belief and knowledge – our registering what is around us. In addition, there is noting that things are similar to other things. In both cases, the concepts are deployed in judgments, whether it is belief that something is (possibly) a violin, or that it is *like* a violin in some respect. Finally, there are the various phenomena I have been considering in this section, whether or not they are to be assimilated to one of the two forms mentioned.

As I said a moment ago, I am not sure that Brewer is right that these phenomena should be assimilated to noting similarities. Clearly, they depend on relevant similarities; I couldn't see the Ames room as an ordinary room if it weren't demonstrably similar to one. But their phenomenology may suggest that they belong more with belief that the room is rectangular than with noting that it looks that way. The 'stubborn' character of the Ames room and the Müller-Lyer lines are very unlike noting that a rock has the shape of a violin or even that a duck can be seen as a rabbit.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, then, the phenomena are rather due to dispositions to form certain beliefs.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that the illusions often concern features that are particularly important in the life of an organism, such as recognition of spatial properties, or faces and human figures. So one seemingly reasonable story may appeal to effects of belief-forming mechanisms in perception.<sup>4</sup>

I think, however, one can sidestep the question of how exactly the Ames room and similar phenomena should be understood. What the cases show, and Brewer is right to stress, is that we need to appeal to two distinct levels of perceptual phenomenology. While intentionalism can clearly accommodate that by positing two levels of representation, I do not think any of the cases considered suggest that the 'lower' level is representational.<sup>5</sup> Even in spatial switches one can draw the contrast between the sense in which things change, and the sense in which they

<sup>1</sup> One may also compare with the following remark:

If I saw the duck-rabbit as a rabbit, then I saw: these shapes and colours (I give them in detail) – and I saw besides something like this: and here I point to a number of different pictures of rabbits...  
'Seeing as...' is not part of perception. And for that reason it is like seeing and again not like.  
(1953/2001, 168<sup>e</sup>)

It is perhaps not clear Wittgenstein would accept the simple view. I think his observations fit well Brewer's picture. Of course, they also fit with various other two-layered views, including intentionalist ones.

<sup>2</sup> Again, that is not to say that Brewer might not in the end be right. There is clearly a spectrum from seeing the rock as a violin to seeing the duck as a rabbit to seeing the Ames room.

<sup>3</sup> I should also note that Brewer might agree with this. We may assimilate the two suggestions if we accept the empiricist idea that we make 'higher' perceptual judgments based on judgments about how things look. For instance, I may note that what I have in front of me looks just like a tomato would (or might) and then form the belief that it is a tomato. Brewer explicitly commits himself to empiricism about concept acquisition and use, without defending the view (2007, 92). An extended argument for naïve realism on the basis of a broadly empiricist story about concepts is given by Campbell (2002a; 2002b). Such theories are inevitably controversial, but that goes for any theory of concepts.

<sup>4</sup> One might also hold that cases like the Ames room are due to contradictory beliefs (where, perhaps, one is more 'primitive' than the other). Byrne (2009, 450–1) draws this conclusion, with reference to the fact that contradictory beliefs are after all not uncommon. While counterintuitive on the face of it, the story is perhaps not as phenomenologically inapt as it looks at first blush; one will clearly feel the 'pull' of the Ames room. In that sense, one is 'of two minds' on the matter, though one's 'better self' remains in control. Besides, the story gives a straightforward picture of the rational relation between perceptual representation and (other) belief. Glüer (2009) defends a different doxastic account where the content of such beliefs is 'phenomenal' – that is, of the form 'it looks as if P' (where I assume that 'looks' is non-epistemic). While this preserves the idea, discussed in Ch. 3, sect. 2.2, that the relation between experiential representing and subsequent belief should be defeasible, it seems phenomenologically less apt.

<sup>5</sup> One might that at the very least we represent these properties too. Clearly, when something looks red to us, we note that it looks red! Now, this may be true. Though we are very bad at making out 'immediate' properties of our visual field, we are normally able to note what colours and shapes we confront in our environment. At least when the 'sensory core' of perception is constituted by these properties and shapes (as seen from an angle), we are aware of the properties constituting the sensory core of our experience. This doesn't suggest that these properties are represented experientially, as intentionalism has it. Rather, we are normally just able to note how things look.

remain the same.<sup>1</sup> This suggests, I think, that the basic shapes and colours of one's visual field are not represented by experience.<sup>2</sup> They are, in ordinary cases, simply constituted by the objects and properties around one.<sup>3</sup> Representation in perception is our *response* to these objects and properties.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, I think this means that the sense datum and other 'sensational' theorists have a good point.<sup>5</sup> The 'sensory core' of perception is not due to representation.<sup>6</sup> But if my arguments are correct, they mishandled this insight when they thought of it in terms of 'intrinsic' properties of experience.<sup>7</sup> Although we may have to posit sensational features (or even objects) in cases of illusion, the 'sensory core' of ordinary perception seems to be constituted simply by the objects and properties presented to us.<sup>8</sup>

As I said, intentionalism can clearly incorporate two 'layers' as well, either by saying that both are representational, or by accepting an 'impure' view such as Peacocke's. My claim is only that the way things 'appear' to us in perception doesn't seem to support intentionalism. Rather, reflection on how things are 'presented' to us seems to support the simple view sketched in the Introduction. If the character of experience suggests a philosophical theory, it seems to suggest naïve realism. I also think this shouldn't be very surprising.

I have made two broad claims in the discussion of phenomenal representation. The *second* is the one just summarized, that representation seems to add another 'layer' to a phenomenology of mere awareness of our environment. This is supported by the fact that there is a sense in which things look the same across changes in representation. The first is that belief-independent representational effects are relatively rare. In closing, I will make a few comments about this claim. This will also allow me to draw some lines back to the considerations of Ch. 3.

One may question whether it is true that belief-independent perceptual representation is as rare as I have claimed. Whereas it shows up relatively rarely in conscious experience, one may hold that it is in fact pervasive. Ordinarily, according to the intentionalist, perception is (broadly) veridical, and we believe that it is. Hence, we do not notice perceptual representation.

<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that a change in the 'higher' level cannot lead one to ask whether there hasn't been a change at the 'lower' level as well, that is, in the environment (or in one's colour vision).

<sup>2</sup> I should perhaps note that though I am sympathetic to a realist view of colour, I am not committed to it; one may hold that the visual field properties are constituted only by the shapes of objects. Even so, colour wouldn't have to be represented; it could be a sensational effect.

<sup>3</sup> There are clearly cases where they aren't, such as where a blow to one's head makes everything look red, or as in illusions such as the Hermann Grid. I will note on such cases in the final chapter. Again, I don't think such cases are due to representation; rather, these effects are sensational.

<sup>4</sup> This is not to say that it is a *mere* response to these things. As should by now be clear, representation in perception is a product of many factors. Two particularly important factors is our background knowledge (whether this is based on ordinary memory or simply the continuous tracking of our environment, present in short-term memory) and our concepts (whether these are 'standing' concepts for kinds and properties, or demonstrative, 'short-term' concepts referring to our immediate environment).

<sup>5</sup> For instance, Peacocke notes the 'non-representational similarities' across switches and other cases where representation alters phenomenology – and attributes the point to Wittgenstein (1983, 16, compare 22-23). The present suggestion, of course, is that the 'non-representational similarities' is simply due to our awareness of the environment – which is, of course, identical throughout.

<sup>6</sup> Thus, I agree with Brewer that 'the character of perceptual experience is simply constituted by the objects presented in that experience' (2006, 89); Campbell similarly holds that 'the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself' (2002a, 116).

Another virtue of the view, I think, is that it doesn't require the minute details of our experience to be represented. These minute details are simply the minute details of our environment. Thus, we need not invoke non-conceptual content to accommodate this richness. This is not to say that I do not think that representation can capture much of this richness, at least of features attended to. A related point is that representation doesn't have to 'recreate' the rich phenomenology of ordinary perception, constituted as it is by the shapes and colours of the objects around me.

While radical hallucination of the philosophical sort is probably possible, I do not think it is important that one's theory should be able to account for it in purely representational terms. According to sensory core views, hallucination – of a vivid form, for a cool and rational subject – would require sensation as well as representation.

<sup>7</sup> I'm not all-out committed to there being 'visual field' properties – though as before, it seems that reflection on perspective shows that there must be. I am, however, highly skeptical of the idea that such properties could be arrived at by introspection or other broadly introspective means, such as Price's 'method of doubt'. Thus I skeptical that we can report on them by noting the 'immediate' look of things. The idea of visual field properties fits well with that of perception's involving a 'sensory core'. In ordinary perception, the sensory core is simply constituted by our environment, as seen from an angle; in illusion, one may, if one likes, pick and choose from the sensationalist's repertoire (see next note).

<sup>8</sup> Of course, naïve realism is committed to some kind of disjunctivism in any case: Things looking (non-epistemically) just the same to a perceiver does not constitute a common kind of experience. I take no stand on how to account for such cases; in particular, I take no stand on whether one should accept a 'positive' or 'negative' story (for an overview, see Fish 2010, 98-104). Things can look just the same – thus, not merely be indiscriminable – even in complete hallucination (theoretically). Perhaps one has to invoke sensations to account for that.



For all that, it is there all along; while representation in perception ordinarily seems to be just belief, these beliefs are in fact always grounded in representation ‘by the senses’.<sup>1</sup>

Though I cannot, of course, disprove the intentionalist construal, I think reflection on how things are present to mind in experience provides little reason for it. Though such reflection shows that there is phenomenal representing, such representing is ordinarily present only in belief. We *know* that there is a tree in front of us and cannot doubt it. Ordinary perception is not belief-independent; we cannot step back. (There are also the various phenomena of noting aspects and similarities, but these do not present themselves in a way usefully described as our being ‘represented to’ by the senses – except in a rare cases like those of seeing the duck as a rabbit and the Ames room as rectangular.) While we cannot normally step back, perceptual representing is still quite ‘flexible’ vis a vis our evidence, as noted in sect. 3.2. If we *really* doubt what is in front of us, our experience no longer gives a clear ‘verdict’ that they are a certain way. When experience is ‘settled’, it is because *we* are settled: The ‘stubbornness’ of perceptual representation is a matter of our firm knowledge of how things are in our environment. Again, this suggests that experience is quite unlike that of the Ames room – where how things are represented is ‘beyond our rational control’.<sup>2</sup> For all that, of course, facts are normally just ‘disclosed’ to us: They are simply placed in view, thus allowing us to make out how they are.<sup>3</sup>

The perceiver’s report that the Ames room looks as if it is rectangular can indeed be seen to satisfy the condition Travis placed on a notion of ‘looks’ capable of indexing content:

The relevant sense must make the following attitude coherent: ‘That, anyway, is how things look (to me); as to what there is reason to think, that is quite another matter.’ (2004, 80)

The look of the Ames room is both determinate in content, stubbornly independent of my commitments, and itself ‘committed’.<sup>4</sup> It can thus seem to provide an example of what perceptual representing might be. But normal experience isn’t ‘stubborn’ in the sense the Ames room is. If ordinary experience is stubborn, it is by being shaped by our *knowing* how things are, not by things being stubbornly represented. If we really were to doubt – in particular, if we had *reasons* to doubt – that there is a chair or a group of deer in front of us, located where we first took it to be, experience would normally no longer ‘present’ things as being these ways either. Thus, in the sense in which the representing in the Ames room is stubborn, representing in ordinary experience is quite the opposite.<sup>5</sup>

To end this section – and thus the whole chapter – on a high note: I also think it is good if things are this way. It is quite unclear that cases like the Ames room could give us evidence, as

<sup>1</sup> This can also seem to be established by visual science. I am less sure that it is, though this question lies outside the scope of the present work. I think it is often unclear just what vision science studies. A large measure of it may concern belief-forming mechanisms; mechanisms that allow their possessors to make out what is around them. One may note that Byrne, one of the authors with a good grasp of vision science, has recently defended a belief theory of perceptual content (2009, 450-1). It is also notable that both Marr (1982, 3, 31) and Palmer (1999, 5) define perception in terms of gaining *knowledge* about one’s environment.

<sup>2</sup> Compare, again, McDowell’s formulation, quoted in Ch. 3, sect. 2.1:

How one’s experience represents things to be is not under one’s control, but it is up to one whether one accepts the appearance or rejects it. (1994/1996, 11)

Of course, McDowell didn’t have in mind situations like the Ames room, but such situations do at least provide for an understanding the relevant idea of lack of ‘control’. If the present considerations are right, the lack of ‘control’ in perception is not very peculiar. It is simply a matter of our being unable to believe at will. Our beliefs are under our control in the sense that they are *our* commitments, something we are, in principle, rationally responsible for. That is, again, compatible with perception sometimes rendering our false beliefs not just blameless but justified, as when we take an identical plastic item at the grocer’s for a tomato.

<sup>3</sup> If one likes, then, one can say that how things are is ‘conveyed’ to us, just as when facing a tomato or a tree (fake or real), I can say that the senses ‘tell me’ that there is a tomato in front of me. But nothing philosophical follows merely from such locutions, as Austin stressed (at this point I refer back to Ch. 3, sect. 2.2).

<sup>4</sup> The experience of the Ames room is ‘committed’ in really ‘saying’ that the room is a certain way. It is certainly natural to ‘base’ a belief upon the ‘impression’ that the room is rectangular. Thus, it seems to provide a model for the intentionalist model for how we ‘base’ our beliefs upon experience by accepting its ‘face value’. We can then clearly distinguish between ‘how things look’ and ‘what there is reason to think’.

<sup>5</sup> According to the picture presented here, experience is of course ‘stubborn’ in a further respect, but this is not representational stubbornness: The core of perceptual phenomenology is constituted by the properties of what we have in front of us, which clearly cannot be changed by the way we look at them. The same will be true when the core of perception is constituted by sensational properties. If everything looks yellow due to your taking a drug, then knowing that it is an illusion will have little effect on phenomenology (though representation may have some effect, as when you no longer take notice of the tinge – though again, we should distinguish between representation on the one hand and adaptation and other ‘low-level’ mechanisms on the other).

opposed to merely render our judgments blameless. While we can be fooled, and this is in part rendered blameless by our not being able to see it otherwise, it would be quite unnerving if ordinary perception were like that.<sup>1</sup> One of McDowell's concerns has been that perception should justify, not merely 'exculpate' our commitments (1994/1996, 7-8). To do that, he held, there has to be 'rational relations' between our experiences and those commitments – and for there to be such relations, experience has to represent that things are a certain way.<sup>2</sup> I think the present point brings out another side to the (admittedly not altogether clear) distinction between exculpation and justification: We should be responsible for how things are represented in perception. We should not merely base our beliefs on how things are (however reliably) represented to us.<sup>3</sup> Our beliefs should be grounded in awareness of the world itself. This is a better idea than construing the passivity of experience as our being 'saddled' with content about the world. The 'passivity' of perception is to be located beyond representation, in the way we simply are presented with the objects we come across in our environment. Besides, the present picture doesn't involve the questionable idea, discussed in Ch. 3, that rational relations can hold between my commitments and representations that are neither mine nor someone else's. Instead, it offers the possibility that our commitments are simply answerable to the world itself – as it is presented to us in experience.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> If our beliefs are blameless in such cases, it is because we didn't have reason for suspicion, not because we couldn't help representing the room this way – that is at best an extenuating circumstance, not an acquitting one. As usual, our beliefs are judged as to whether they are in accordance with our evidence or not.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, McDowell's main contention was that the contents would have to be conceptual, in a 'demanding' sense according to which '[i]t is essential that conceptual capacities ... can be exploited in active thinking, thinking that is open to reflection about its own rational credentials' (1994/1996, 47). What I am suggesting is not incompatible with the idea that representation in perception, for mature human beings, is conceptual. Beliefs are normally taken to be conceptual. If belief is the paradigmatic form of perceptual representing, it is natural to take the representing in the Ames case to be conceptual as well. I find the debate about 'conceptual' and 'non-conceptual' relatively unclear; everything hinges on what one means by 'conceptual'. Again, McDowell is quite clear about this:

It is important that the connection between conceptual capacities and rationality is a stipulation. It is not that there is a universally shared idea of conceptual capacities, which determines a subject matter about whose properties people disagree. The notion of the conceptual can be used in variety of ways, for a variety of purposes (2006/2009, 132)

In other words, one might well hold that perceptual representing is conceptual in a less demanding sense; perhaps perceptual beliefs are of a distinct kind (compare beliefs theories like Byrne 2009, 450; Glüer 2009, 316n35).

<sup>3</sup> The point is not that intentionalism should lead to coherentism or skepticism. For instance, one might accept Burge's 'transcendental' vindication of perceptual entitlement (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Thus, I deny what McDowell still explicitly holds, that 'we exaggerate the extent of the doxastic activity experience prompts in us if we suppose that we acquire all the beliefs we would be entitled to by what we have in view' (2008a, 11). I am not, though, committed to a particular picture about the rational relations between experience and belief. Perhaps there can a rational relation between a mere object of awareness and belief, as empiricists want; my seeing a green tree might ground my belief that the tree is green. One could give another construal of that relation; belief could be grounded in seeing *that*, where seeing is knowing. In other words, one could accept a knowledge account like that of Williamson (2000; for some remarks on perception, see 198-9). However, even on such an account there should be a 'conceptual' relation between my seeing the tree and my being able to think about it; awareness of the tree should 'ground' my demonstrative concept of it. This relation is 'rational' only in a broader sense; concepts, being subpropositional, are not commitments. The idea is defended by Campbell (2002a; see in particular chs. 2 and 6).

## Ch. 5 Conclusions

Though Ch. 3 ended in puzzlement over the intentionalist's idea of perceptual representing, it didn't draw any conclusions about what (if anything) was wrong with the picture characterized by the four elements. Conclusions were first drawn in Ch. 4. One main conclusion was that appeal to a non-comparative notion of 'looks' is very unlikely to support the intentionalist's case. It is unclear that there is such a notion, and if there is, it is unfit to index content. The only hope for the intentionalist in this direction seemed to be that depth may be sufficiently 'phenomenal' to be indexed by non-comparative statements. If this can work out, then reflection on perceptual presentation shows that perceptual content is very thin. For all that, the hope seems rather faint (stereoscopic vision notwithstanding). The other main conclusion was that appeal to belief-independent representation in perception seemed equally unlikely to support the intentionalist. The overall negative conclusion, then, is that the common appeal to how things appear or look in perception seems to have little force. How things are presented and how they are represented are different things.

If nothing else, the negative conclusion should shift the burden of proof. However, I also attempted to draw a positive conclusion. Admittedly, this attempt was somewhat bold and speculative. It seemed important to develop an alternative to intentionalism in this direction – if only to see why it fails. If the ways things look in experience suggest a philosophical theory of perception, it seems to be a version of naïve realism. As far as I can see, my 'simple view' is viable.<sup>1</sup> According to the simple view, perception is just a matter of being presented with objects and their properties. To be sure, they are presented a certain way, but it is more unclear whether they are presented 'as being' a certain way. At any rate, they are not represented as being a certain way, unless by the perceiver herself, in making out what she confronts.

Thus, the 'second step' on the route from appearing seems a mistake. In the final parts, I relate this conclusion to the four broad arguments sketched in Ch. 2: the arguments from appearing, accuracy, illusion, and epistemology. This continues my (still speculative) defence of the simple view.

### *Arguments from Appearance*

The basic idea of the second step is that when things are presented a certain way, they are thereby presented 'as being' a certain way. Relatedly, as Siegel put it, properties figure in experience 'as being instantiated' (2010, 45). It should by now be clear that these ideas are not clear. It can clearly seem reasonable to say that properties figure as being instantiated. What would it be for a property to be presented as being uninstantiated? It can seem a feature of perceptual experience that all properties are presented as being instantiated.<sup>2</sup> Of course, properties figure in the *world* by being instantiated, what we perceive are normally properties of the world. Now, perhaps some properties figure otherwise. Perhaps Chisholm's diamond-shape figures as being uninstantiated? The answer is not obvious to me.<sup>3</sup> It is also unclear what it is for things to be presented 'as being' a certain way. Is the rock presented as being a violin? Is the snow-capped mountain presented as being red at sunset? Are the greyish kettles in the store-room, which I immediately see to be red, presented as being greyish? Again, the answers are not obvious to me. It is clear that ordinary perception presents instantiated properties, and that

<sup>1</sup> Of course, I have also built on various recent writers, such as, Martin, Brewer, Campbell in addition to Travis. There has been an increasing interest in naïve realism over the last 10 years. This is reassuring, but it remains to be seen whether this trend will continue or the view once more retreat to a positions as yet another strange philosophical view of perception.

<sup>2</sup> As in Ch. 3, sect. 1, hopes reasonably do not present properties 'as being instantiated'. Perhaps beliefs do, and thus do not really contrast with perception. However, *negative* beliefs probably do not present their properties 'as being instantiated', and it is sometimes claimed that perception contrasts with belief precisely by never involving negation.

<sup>3</sup> On the one hand, the property is clearly *there*. It is an objective fact about the table that it presents a diamond-shape from this angle, as a photograph will tell. On the other hand, it clearly isn't presented in the same way as the squareness of the table is when I see that it is square. What if I don't see that it is square, but (oddly, but possible) take there to be something diamond-shaped in front of me? And so on.

they are perceived *as* being instantiated insofar as I *see* that they are instantiated, but it is unclear what it means apart from this – in particular, when I do not *see* how things are.

Now, as we have seen, being presented as being instantiated reasonably means being presented in a *committed* manner, in the sense that experience is not ‘neutral’ with respect to how things are (Siegel 2010, 47). In other words, things are a certain way ‘according’ to experience.<sup>1</sup> In Ch. 3, I failed to give a clear sense to this, except on the clearly inadequate model of testimony. From Ch. 4, it was at least clear that the analogy between ‘presented’ and ‘presented as being’ and ‘look’ and ‘look to be’ doesn’t hold. It is true that when things look F, then they look to be F, and also that there is an embedded claim that they *are* F. But on the non-epistemic reading, looking to be F simply means looking in a way something that is F might. Though Pia looks just like her sister (might), Pia isn’t presented as being her sister. The other option was the epistemic sense. In this sense, it is clear that properties are presented as being instantiated. For we believe that they are instantiated, and more generally know it. This gives a sense to talk of things being presented as being a certain way. But it is not what the intentionalist has in view.

As I have granted, there are cases of belief-independent representation in perception. While the violin-rock doesn’t provide a good case here with respect to properties being presented as being instantiated, the Ames room and the Müller-Lyer lines do. As I have argued, however, such cases are exceptions to the rule. Normal representation in perception is belief, and indeed knowledge. As I also granted, it might be that a set of ‘phenomenal’ properties is present in a special way in experience, constituting its ‘sensory core’. However, while it can seem that these properties are ‘present’ in a stronger sense than ‘higher’ properties are, these properties were reasonably too thin to support the intentionalist’s idea. Moreover, it is also unclear that they are presented ‘as being instantiated’. This will be discussed under the next heading.

### *Arguments from Accuracy*

It is often simply assumed that experiences are assessable in terms of accuracy, and similarly that the fact that things look a certain way in experience means that it is. In Ch. 2, I suggested three natural assumptions in play in the latter assumption: First, things can be or fail to be as they look. Second, experience is accurate if things look as they are, inaccurate if not. Third, the notion of accuracy is a semantic notion. As I suggested, there are potential problems with all of these.

Though the first assumption can appear uncontroversial, it is questioned by Travis’ argument. On the non-epistemic notion, the ways things look ‘do not make *any* way the way things should be to be the way they look’ (2004, 92-3). As before, they point in no one direction:

If Pia’s imitation of her sister nonplussed looks uncannily like her sister nonplussed, then ... there is a way things should be to be what they *thus* look like... How things look, full stop, is another matter. (Travis 2004, 70)

One might question this. Perhaps there is a way things would have to be to be as they look to us – in looking red, or diamond-shaped. Setting aside the way things look epistemically, there are the examples of noting likenesses.<sup>2</sup> In such cases, there may be a way for things to be to be as they look. The same is true of the visual illusions and various odd phenomena of involuntary, belief-independent representation in perception.

While, then, the first assumption may hold in various ways, it is still not clear that looks are assessable for accuracy. Suppose that the ‘rock’ really is a violin, only painted grey and cleverly placed in the environment. To our great surprise, it is as it looks (at least in this respect). But this wouldn’t mean that the experience was accurate. If anything, in misleading us to believe

<sup>1</sup> Reasonably, it is also connected with the properties being *conveyed* to the perceiver. But once more, that idea was hard to understand.

<sup>2</sup> I also set aside Martin’s objective sense. There clearly is a way for things to be to be as they look when they objectively look red. But this, reasonably, is not accuracy, since things cannot *fail* to be red when they objectively look red.

that we had a rock in sight, it was inaccurate.<sup>1</sup> It is also worth noting that even if we accept the second assumption that how things look to us means that the experience can be described as accurate or inaccurate, it is not clear that this notion is a semantic notion. As Martin points out, to ask whether an experience is accurate may simply 'to look for a match between how things were in the situation the subject was in and the kind of situation a paradigm perceiver would be in, to whom the subject's experience was saliently similar' (2010, 223).<sup>2</sup> Not all cases of accurate 'matching', then, are cases of accurate representation:<sup>3</sup>

When we ask whether a forgery of a Ming vase whether it is an accurate copy of the original, we do not assume that either the original or the copy possesses a representational content. So in general, to ask of something whether it is accurate or not need not require it to be a representation or to have a representational content, even if in some specific cases it is; it is simply to invite someone to match things... Our talk of things being as they appear does not in itself presuppose the presence of representational content. (2010, 223)

In other words, talk about being as one is may simply be to ask whether one has a look that is characteristic or paradigmatic with respect to what one is.<sup>4</sup> In particular, this should apply to Siegel's claim (2010, 45, 71) that experiences are accurate only if the properties presented 'as being instantiated' are in fact instantiated. Why should we think that the experience of having a red object in view has accuracy conditions in a way that goes beyond that in which the forgery of the Ming vase has?

Finally, there are, once again, the various cases of belief-independent representation. These clearly determine a way for things to be, and thus verify all three assumptions. As I have argued, though, they seem to be of little help for the intentionalist.

### *Arguments from Illusion*

Arguments from illusion are probably the main motivation for intentionalism. There are various points to be made about them; some of the points should be clear from my comments on the arguments from appearance and accuracy. If experiences do not represent, then we cannot understand illusions as inaccurate representation (though as explained, we may retain the notion of accuracy). Correspondingly, we must understand their misleading character in some other way than it being represented to us that things are a certain way. We may, of course, retain the idea that things are 'conveyed' to us, as when we say that a misleading experience of seeing a plastic tomato at the grocer's 'told us' that there was a real tomato there. It was the reasonable thing to believe.

Now, while intentionalists may or may not hold that it is represented to us that there is a tomato, they will surely not hold that an experience of an empty gateway represents to us that the neighbours are away, even if that is what it is reasonable to believe. In other words, experiences rationally lead one to believe that X is a certain way without its being represented as be-

<sup>1</sup> Again, it non-epistemically looked like a violin – also in the sense that I noticed this similarity. It didn't epistemically look like a violin. Epistemically, it looked like a rock. Of course, it looked like a rock non-epistemically as well – again also in the sense that I of course noticed that similarity.

<sup>2</sup> Another observation which may tell against understanding being as one looks in semantic terms is that we can ask not just whether things are as they look, but also whether they walk as they are or talk as they are (2007b, 118-20). For instance, the king may not walk like a king, or, while tired, he doesn't talk as if he's tired. In such cases, he walks and talks not as he is, but nothing is represented as so – in particular, he need not 'represent himself' as not being a king; he may well try to walk like a king.

There are two potential problems with this argument – both of which Breckenridge is explicitly aware (2007b, 120-1): First, some of Breckenridge's own examples suggests that 'looks F' is to be understood adverbially, along with 'walks F-ly'. As I have touched on in various places, it should probably not be understood that way (see also Brogaard *forth*, §3, 5-8). I have avoided this problem by shifting to examples that are clearly comparative. Second, though, it is not clear that the analogy between looking and walking is altogether good. It is at least more natural to speak of things being as they look – though it is true that we seem to be able to speak this whenever a more 'superficial' property may correlate with a less superficial one. That being said, I think Breckenridge's conclusion is broadly right.

<sup>3</sup> In particular, this should apply to Siegel's second premise that.

<sup>4</sup> Siegel (2010, 39-40) considers this response and concludes that (where 'accuracy' is a semantic notion) 'little daylight can be found between this kind of matching and accuracy' (2010, 40). However, she reasonably won't characterize the 'matching' of the objective looks of the Ming vases in terms of a semantic notion of accuracy. I think the analogy with such cases leaves enough a clearly visible gap in between 'matching' and representation with respect to subjective looks as well.

ing that way. Travis (2004, 64-8) extends this idea of misleading experiences to cover all cases of perceptual illusion – for instance, to the Müller-Lyer:

In the Müller-Lyer, two lines are contrived ... to have a certain look... Two lines may well have that look because one *is* longer than the other. That is a familiar way for things to be. Depending on circumstances, that look may thus *indicate* that it is two lines of unequal length that one confronts. Or one might take it to. Unequal length *might* be what is to be expected; or at least it *is* expected. *Thus* may someone be misled by the Müller-Lyer... That mistake neither requires, nor suggests, that in this illusion one line is represented to us as being longer than the other. (2004, 68)

In other words, Travis thinks that the misleading character of the Müller-Lyer is entirely due to how things look *epistemically*, while the visual character of the illusion is due to how they look non-epistemically. Naturally, this has led to protests – for instance, from Byrne (2009, 446). Travis claims that we are misled by the fact that we expect the lines to be of unequal length, just as we expect the neighbours to be away when we see the empty carport, or the item in front of us to be a tomato when it looks like one (at the grocer's). But this seems phenomenologically very inapt. For one thing, taking such lines to be of unequal length doesn't seem to depend on circumstances. We normally expect that the lines, as seen in the ordinary textbook, are of equal length.<sup>1</sup> The lines stubbornly look unequal, even if all the evidence points to their being equal.

Now, we need not accept Travis' particular explanation. Non-epistemically, the lines look all kinds of ways, both the way unequal lines might look and the way equal lines might (do). The case, then, is one of being 'struck' by a certain content, namely the content that the lines are unequal. Now, I did not give a clear answer to how we should think about such situations (whether it should, for instance, be understood on the lines of noting a likeness, as Brewer did, or as the effects of a belief-forming disposition, or in some yet other terms). What I argued is that the representing of the lines as unequal is still simply a *response* to what we confront. Thus, while I agree with Byrne that what Travis says isn't satisfactory, I agree with Travis' overall diagnosis.

Byrne also mentions what he takes to be a harder case:

If one stares at a bright red surface for a minute or so and then looks at a grey surface, it appears tinged with green. A Travis-style explanation of this illusion would involve taking a certain objective look of the grey surface to suggest that the surface is green (or greenish) – specifically, an objective green look. But *whatever* the account of 'objective looks', an ordinary grey surface does *not* objectively look green, or greenish: it objectively looks grey. Hence a Travis-style treatment does not get off the ground. (2009, 446-7)

Clearly, it is represented that the surface is green? On the suggestion of the previous chapter, this is not clear. Reasonably, the illusion is rather one in the sensory core of perception.<sup>2</sup> Again, though I do not take a final stand on how one is to explain such phenomena, there is clearly some kind of 'misfiring' in our visual system. It seems implausible to hold that it is representational misfiring.<sup>3</sup> It rather seems to be misfiring in the parts of the system that bring our environment into view.<sup>4</sup> As such, one might say that our view of reality is 'occluded' by sensory elements. In this case, then, the sensory core is no longer constituted by the colour properties of the objects around us.

Again, the phenomenon is reasonably termed 'illusion'. Hence, it is reasonable to say that the experience is inaccurate; the surface doesn't look the way it is. But this is well handled by Martin's suggestion about accuracy. Things are not as they characteristically are when we face a

<sup>1</sup> Of course, seeing the lines in a textbook *is* one natural context. In such contexts, Müller-Lyer-like arrows may fool us into believing that *unequal* lines are of *equal* length.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, 'looks greenish' might have a special role, as suggested by the 'minimizing' strategy: that of describing *merely* visible characteristics, as they figure in one's experience at a given time.

<sup>3</sup> One *could*, of course, explain this illusion in terms of representation as well. For instance, it might be that some belief-forming mechanism misfires and lets the visual system 'believe' that the surface is green. But it should be clear that this is less plausible. There is no *objective* similarity here to explain the relevant representing.

<sup>4</sup> Thus, after-effects may be broadly assimilated to the Herman Grid in (probably) having to be explained physiologically, in terms of fatigue in or other effects on the receptors and synapses in the retina (see Palmer 1999, 115-9).

grey surface; they are as they characteristically are when we face a green surface. It looks to us like it does when we face a green object.

Summing up, I think we must distinguish between (at least) three sorts of ‘illusion’. First, there is ‘epistemic’ illusion, as when we unsuspectingly encounter plastic tomatoes. Second, there is ‘phenomenal’ illusion, as when the sensible properties of our environment are not in clear view in the way they should. Third, there is ‘representational’ illusion, as in the Ames room. This last kind is explained in terms of belief-independent representation, but it is merely a response to how things are presented to us anyway. That is how it is in the Ames room; in ‘phenomenal’ terms, we see the room all right. Nothing ‘occludes’ it in the way it would be if it were oddly illuminated or the experience accompanied by a cloud of after-images.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, I think there is little here to support intentionalism. The phenomenal and epistemic features of illusion are equally well explained by the simple view. In fact, intentionalism can seem to distort the phenomena in question by not distinguishing clearly between epistemic, representational, and phenomenal effects in perception (this is not to say that it doesn’t have the resources to draw these lines). Thus, I am (again) in agreement with Martin:

It would be ... mistaken to suppose that one relies on anything more than faith to take the pattern of our talk about illusion in the senses to reveal the truth of intentionalism about sense experience. (2010, 223)

Given the importance of the argument from illusion, I should say a little about how it might be handled by the simple view. Of course, this view must embrace disjunctivism. Experiences are not individuated by how things non-epistemically look in them. They are rather to be individuated by what one sees in conjunction with how things look. Again taking a bold line, I think this is common sense. In perceiving a deer, one perceives a deer; in perceiving a screen just in front of one, one perceives a screen, even if the experiences are phenomenally identical (that is, things look the same in them) and your perception is ‘as of’ a deer (whether this is due to belief, seeing a likeness, or some involuntary representational effect).<sup>2</sup> I will not here discuss or motivate disjunctivism.

What is worth noting is that the present view means that there are clear differences between disjunctivism about knowledge and disjunctivism about seeing.<sup>3</sup> The first involves a commonality arguably consisting in a belief. The second involves a common (non-epistemic) look. Since such looks are themselves ‘neutral’, one cannot straightforwardly group the experiences into ‘good’ or ‘bad’ cases outside of the epistemic context.<sup>4</sup> In the example from Ch. 4, sect. 2.3, the moon can, in suitable circumstances, look like an after-image, and the other way round. In itself, the look is neutral. It doesn’t pronounce on whether it is the look of the moon or the look of an after-image. This is different when it comes to disjunctivism about knowledge, notably seeing *that*. Knowledge is ‘better’ than mere true belief; seeing *that* is better than merely having a true belief that things are as they (epistemically) look, which again, of course, is better than a false belief that things are that way.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I am not entirely clear about how one should think about ‘phenomenal’ illusion. In a sense, we see the a room as it is when illumination is non-standard; it looks the way things illuminated this way looks: If, due to some surgical intervention in my retinal receptors to ‘correct’ for the illumination, I had experienced the room as it would be experienced in normal light, I would *not* have seen the room as it really looks, from this angle, in this light. (There will be complications due to epistemic and representational factors that also ‘correct’ the immediate impression; lightness and colour constancy are well known, and will only partly belong to ‘sensation’. Experience is shaped by general knowledge of how things look under various sorts of illumination, as well as specific knowledge of my present environment.)

<sup>2</sup> Note that if one thinks the perceptions are ‘the same’ in the cases where one doesn’t know, then one should reasonably say that the same also in the cases when you know full well and perhaps even saw that they have switched: The *look* is certainly just the same.

<sup>3</sup> Travis 2011 is very clear about the distinction – and defends both disjunctivisms.

<sup>4</sup> The ‘phenomenal’ and ‘representational’ effects on perception can also group cases into ‘good’ and ‘bad’. For instance, a case where the room phenomenally looks the colour it has is reasonably ‘good’, since ‘accurate’. It is also very natural to say that seeing is always ‘better’ than hallucinating.

<sup>5</sup> This being said, it is not clear how serious we should be about individuating experiences. Are phenomenally identical experiences of seeing a red ball of the same kind when the balls are numerically distinct? Are slightly phenomenally distinct experiences of the same ball distinct (such as those had by you and me when we look at it from here)? Is looking at the ball knowing that one looks at a red ball distinct from looking at the ball believing that one has a red and round after-image? Perhaps this should lead us to draw a number of fine distinctions. However, it could also lead us to think that project less interesting.

Thus, there are two quite different notions of having ‘access’ to the world in perception. Seeing an object and recognizing it for what it is can, in principle, come wide apart, as the case of the moon and the after-image shows: In one case, I see the moon while (rationally) taking it to be an after-image; in the other, having the after-image lets me know that I am hallucinating. Returning to ordinary life, I may have the mountain cabin in plain view, looking (non-epistemically) as it is, but grossly mistake its size and hence its distance – or I may see it badly (myopia, inattention, drugs, fog) yet locate it just where it is (and get there before dark). In ordinary life, the two disjunctivisms go naturally together.<sup>1</sup> I have the environment in plain view, and am also able to make out how things are in it, in particular with respect to visible characteristics such as location, size, shape, colour, movements, and so on. For all that, seeing and seeing that may come well apart. I think this has been somewhat obscured in the literature on (perceptual) disjunctivism.

### *Arguments from Epistemology*

The considerations from the Ch. 4 have particularly striking consequences for the epistemological part of the intentionalist picture. If Travis is right, the picture is based on mixing aspects of two different kinds of looks: on the one hand, the beliefs-independence and passivity of non-epistemic looks; on the other, the determinacy and positive justificatory force of epistemic looks. The main points have been run through. Intentionalists often stress that experience is not committed to by the perceiver, yet provides positive input to belief. The intuitive difficulty, discussed in Ch. 3, sect. 2, was to see what it would mean for perceptual commitment not to be the perceiver’s commitment, and moreover how such perceptual commitment could ground the perceiver’s commitment in belief. Epistemic looks cannot do the work the intentionalist wants them to do. They are not a matter of how things are visually, but of what the perceiver believes or has reason to believe. Non-epistemic looks could seem capable of doing the required work. They are in a sense ‘passive’; they are, in normal perception, simply constituted by the properties of what we face. As such, however, they cannot ground anything – at least not by involving representation of things as being a certain way. Non-epistemic looks are ‘indeterminate’.<sup>2</sup> However, some non-epistemic looks do involve representation. I discussed several ways belief-independent representation can influence phenomenology in Ch. 4, sect. 3. I argued that such ‘representational’ non-epistemic looks cannot ground beliefs. Noting that the rock looks like a violin doesn’t justify any belief that it is a violin. And even the ‘involuntary’ representing in the experience of the Ames room seems only render us blameless, not really to offer justification.

The present picture also avoids a few other problems, like that of making sense of what it is for information to be ‘conveyed’ to the perceiver. If we like, of course, we can use the good old metaphor of what the senses tell me, when taken in its ordinary (non-literal) sense. Similarly, we don’t have to spell out the idea that things are presented ‘as being’ a certain way. Things are clearly presented a certain way, but it is up to us to make out how they are, as Travis says:

[P]erception, as such, simply places our surroundings in view; affords us awareness of them. There is no commitment to their *being* one way or another. It confronts us with what is there, so that, by attending, noting, recognising, and otherwise exercising what capacities we have, we may, in some respect or other, make out what is there for what it is – or, again, fail to. (2004, 65)

As I claimed at the end of the previous chapter, it also seems that this best preserves the idea of responsibility in perception. Nothing represents anything *to* us; we simply face the things in front of us and must try to make out how they are.

<sup>1</sup> McDowell, for instance, understands the good disjunct of perception as that of being in a position to know (perceive) that things are a certain way (e.g. 1982/1998, 390, 390n37). However, he also thinks that the good disjunct captures what it is to have the world genuinely in view in the sense of being aware of it (e.g. 1998, 474).

<sup>2</sup> Again, I do not commit myself at this point. One might hold that non-epistemic looks ground claims *about* how things non-epistemically look, both about ‘basic’ visual likenesses (‘X looks red’) and about more ‘substantive’ ones (‘X looks like a tomato’), which may ground further beliefs – or again that non-epistemic looks can ground perceptual beliefs directly. Empiricists will be attracted to such ideas, which are clearly both very important and very interesting. The present point is only that beliefs thus grounded won’t be grounded by a further representation.



I haven't proposed a real alternative to the epistemological part of the intentionalist picture. As I noted, one might accept an epistemology of seeings that things are a certain way instead of one of perceptual representing. Such a picture might preserve the attractive sides of McDowell's epistemological disjunctivism. There should be not need for further representation grounding seeings. But developing such a picture is a story for another occasion.<sup>1</sup>

### *Summing Up*

While its focus would initially appear quite restricted, the thesis has covered a lot of ground – probably too much. The terrain is difficult, and I make no claim to have settled matters. In particular, as noted, my defense of the simple view remains a speculative attempt to sketch an alternative to intentionalism – though not without support in the works of some recent authors. What should be clear from Ch. 4 is that there is no straightforward route from how things appear to how they are represented. Travis concludes:

Being represented to in experience was meant to be a familiar phenomenon... There is no such familiar phenomenon. (2004, 93)

Perhaps perception is representational. But while there may be a phenomenon of perceptual representation, it is not a familiar one (except in the philosophy industry). I conclude that Travis is quite right that looks-indexing fails. I also think the considerations in Ch. 3 should lead to doubt that the intentionalist view of perceptual representing really is as straightforward as it can seem at first blush (that is, as when one has come to master the intentionalist language game). Again, there is no familiar fact of our being represented to in experience. It seems that we have to do the representing ourselves, in making out what we confront. If reflection on appearances supports a philosophical theory, it seems supports naïve realism. To arrive at intentionalism, one must follow some other route.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the epistemology of naïve realism must be disjunctivist. One might, perhaps, accept a theory like Davidson's. As before, though, one will reasonably worry that belief acquisition theories – as opposed to the knowledge acquisition theory suggested – will not be able to provide a sufficient 'check' on belief. And a disjunctivism about perception will clearly fit well with a disjunctivism about perceptual representation as well.

<sup>2</sup> Thus, I once again find myself agreeing with Martin (2010, 224).

## Appendix: Perceptual Awareness

What does ‘perceptual awareness’ mean? I use it in an informal way, along with other terms like being ‘in contact’ with an object or having it ‘presented’ to one. I think the meaning of such terms must to an extent remain intuitive. I simply mean to point to the familiar fact that in perception, things are present to mind.<sup>1</sup> We see them, right in front of us, or touch them with our hands. The objects seem directly present to us. It can seem that not much more can be said about this, and perhaps that it isn’t needed either.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, it is worth an attempt.

Philosophers use a variety of terms to capture perceptual awareness. The terms are perhaps not all equivalent in meaning. Nevertheless, they point in roughly the same direction.<sup>3</sup> Here are a few recent samples:

[W]hen a subject is experiencing, ... she is aware of the world. (Schellenberg 2011, 721)

Our senses ... bring our surroundings in view; affords us ... awareness of them. (Travis 2004, 64)

What is distinctive of this presence to mind that we find in perception? (Crane 2006, 38)

Of course, such formulations are popular among disjunctivists, such as Travis and McDowell, whose motivation is in part to account for the immediate presence in (ordinary) perception. They are also popular among those who stress the transparency of perception. But the general claim is not one that only ‘pure’ intentionalists would make; all intentionalists stress the ‘world-directedness’ of perception and often point it out as a challenge for rival sensationalist view (and even these views will often acknowledge this as an at least *prima facie* challenge).<sup>4</sup>

Part of what is meant in speaking in such terms is that (ordinary) perception has the character of being a certain *relation* to the world. The relation is not merely a spatial or causal one (though there will of course be such relations).<sup>5</sup> Taking up Crane’s term, the relation is one of *being present to mind*. For that reason, it would be tempting to label the relation ‘intentional’, but that is problematic, as noted in Ch. 1. Intentionality is standardly equated with representation, and it would clearly prejudge matters to assume that the relevant relation of awareness is representational. At any rate, as we saw, it is not *merely* representational. Anything that is true (false) of the environment is a relation to it – it stands in the relation *being true (false) of* to objects in it. The same goes for reference. Such representational relations are not restricted to perceptual states. They hold between any intentional state and its subject matter. Perception seems to bring objects to mind in a much stronger sense. It seems to bring us ‘in touch’ with them, place them ‘in view’.<sup>6</sup>

In speaking of perceptual *awareness*, it is natural to think of it as having to do with consciousness. More precisely, the relation seems to be that of *being conscious of* something. It is clearly natural to think of it that way. Strawson, for instance, writes:

<sup>1</sup> As Dretske points out, perception is sometimes defined in terms of awareness: *Webster’s Ninth Collegiate Dictionary* defines perception as ‘awareness of the elements of the environment through physical sensation’ (Dretske 2006, 148).

<sup>2</sup> Take, for instance, Block’s refusal to explicate ‘qualitative state’:

You ask: What is it that philosophers have called qualitative states? I answer, only half in jest: As Louis Armstrong said when asked what jazz is, ‘If you got to ask, you ain’t never gonna know.’ (1978/1980, 278)

In ‘explicating’ the notion of ‘what it is like’ to be in a mental state, one can do little but give examples of mental states. It is hard to do better in explicating what it means to have an object in view in perception.

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps they do not even all refer to the same phenomenon, but rather a range of phenomena. I will turn to this below, in discussing to what extent consciousness is part of it. I will, though, assume that there is sufficient unity both in what philosophers mean and what they intend to refer to. Settling this isn’t entirely straightforward, since the terms are exactly so intuitive. On the one hand, we all know what it means to be ‘perceptually aware of the world’, and so unpacking doesn’t seem to be needed. On the other, whether required or not, such further unpacking is very hard.

<sup>4</sup> Intentionalism is often motivated by comparing it with sense datum or other ‘sensationalist’ views. It is worth noting that Moore is often credited with ‘pointing out’ the transparency of perception (see his 1903, 450). Moore, of course, was a sense datum theorist. For more discussion of sense datum theory and transparency, see Martin *forth*.

<sup>5</sup> I remain officially silent, though, on the nature and philosophical relevance of the causal relations between perceiver and objects perceived.

<sup>6</sup> For one sense modality, it is of course quite literally true that we are ‘in touch’ with our environment. On the intentionalist construal, the ‘feel’ in touch is a matter of either intrinsic sensation or of represented properties; the ‘relations’ involved are merely semantic on the one hand and merely causal and spatial on the other (all kinds of things touch each other). On the simple view, by contrast, feeling and touching should not be thus divorced.

[S]ensible experience (in general) presents itself, in Kantian phrase, as an immediate consciousness of the existence<sup>1</sup> of things outside us. (1979/1988, 99)

The phrase is from Kant's Refutation of Idealism.<sup>2</sup> A traditional view holds that mental states are generally conscious – in various senses of 'conscious', but at least in the 'access' sense.<sup>3</sup> Again, Kant is a case in point.<sup>4</sup> At any rate, *perceptual* states are often assumed to be conscious.<sup>5</sup>

However natural it is to think of perception as conscious, there is, for my purposes, no need to assume that it must be. In discussing perceptual awareness, I have used as examples states that are conscious in a number of ways.<sup>6</sup> But the worry about object-awareness is not a worry about these other forms of awareness. It is independent of whether the states in question are accessible to the being having them or whether that being is conscious. I do not assume that perceptual awareness implies these forms of awareness. Perhaps more to the point, I do not assume that the awareness in question is the kind of 'attentional' awareness that Campbell (2002<sub>a</sub>), for instance, is concerned with. One can be perceptually aware of something while not attending to it. There is a sense in which attention brings something to one's awareness, but this is not the sense I am after.

Neither has the point about perceptual awareness *prima facie* to do with phenomenal consciousness. I think, of course, that there is something it is like to be in our ordinary perceptual states.<sup>7</sup> But as I said, I do not assume that perceptual states have to be conscious in this way.<sup>8</sup> It is unclear to me how to think of the kind of awareness I am after in perceptual states that are not phenomenally conscious. If we turn to terms like being in perceptual 'contact' or 'touch' with the world, or perhaps even a term like perceptual 'presence', the connection with consciousness is less immediate. I take these terms to be at least co-referential with 'perceptual awareness'. One may, of course, stipulate that the notion of perceptual awareness is to be stronger than these other notions. For instance, Schellenberg writes:

If a subject is perceptually related to the world (and not suffering from blindsight etc.), then she is aware of the world. (2011, 719)

<sup>1</sup> I think the claim that we are aware of *existence* is unfortunate here. Awareness of existence is naturally understood to be awareness *that* something exists – which is an entirely different kind of awareness than awareness of objects. Even if one can be aware of properties, one cannot, it seems, be aware of *existence* in the perceptual way one can be aware of, say, a colour. The contrast is important in light of the difference between perceiving objects and perceiving facts.

<sup>2</sup> The original text (1781/1956, B276, 255): '[D]as Bewusstsein meines eigenen Daseins ist zugleich ein unmittelbares Bewusstsein des Daseins anderer Dinge außer mir.'

<sup>3</sup> Although the view has been challenged, it has not disappeared from the scene. A philosopher like Searle holds on to some version of the traditional view in requiring that unconscious states must be accessible to consciousness, as stated in his 'connection principle'.

<sup>4</sup> For this point, the relevant Kantian slogan is from the Transcendental Deduction:

Das: *Ich denke*, muss alle meine Vorstellungen begleiten können; denn sonst würde etwas in mir vorgestellt werden, was gar nicht gedacht werden könnte, welches eben so viel heißt, als die Vorstellung würde entweder unmöglich, oder wenigstens für mich nichts sein. (1781/1956, 136, B132)

Roughly: 'This: *I think*, must be able of accompanying all my representations; for if not, something would be represented that could not be thought, which just means that the representation would be either impossible or at least for me nothing.' It seems reasonable to read Kant, too, as saying that all mental states – or at least all representational mental states (Vorstellungen) – are 'access conscious'.

<sup>5</sup> For a rejection of the view that perception requires consciousness, with explicit discussion of Kant, see Burge 2010, 368ff. It is, of course, possible to claim that consciousness marks an important distinction in perception. Blindsight is probably an example of unconscious perception. However, as perception it is clearly to some extent defective. Campbell argues that consciousness, in particular the availability of conscious attention, makes a crucial difference with respect to how perception enables reference to the world (2002<sub>a</sub>, 8-10; 142-5; a similar point is made in Johnston 2006, 264-5).

<sup>6</sup> These states are 'conscious' both in the sense of being accessible to the perceiver, in the sense of having a certain phenomenology, and probably in other senses as well. It is obviously easier to use accessible states than inaccessible ones as examples. And it seems that accessible perceptual states as a matter of fact – or of necessity? – have phenomenology.

<sup>7</sup> An example of *unordinary* perception is, of course, blindsight. I don't hold one isn't aware of one's environment in blindsight – though I think it is clear that one isn't *consciously* aware of it. Such states might even be access conscious; it seems that Block's 'super-blindsighters' might have such access. On the other hand, blindsight is clearly problematic. As I noted just above, Campbell argues that blindsight doesn't allow demonstrative reference to objects. That might also imply that super-blindsighters cannot be perceptually aware of these objects. More generally, could there be beings that had *only* blindsight, blindsmell, blindtouch, and so on? Perhaps such beings couldn't be self-conscious. But perhaps that is how it with (lower) animals, which perhaps are not conscious at all. Even for such beings it should be possible to distinguish between their having an object in view and their merely having information about it.

<sup>8</sup> However, there probably is this much of a link between perceptual awareness and phenomenal consciousness: *When* a perception is phenomenally conscious and places the environment in view, then its phenomenology should be at least partly constituted by the properties of the environment.

Schellenberg doesn't intend the antecedent and the consequent to say the same thing. It is unclear to me what Schellenberg means in speaking of being 'perceptually related' to the world.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps she has in mind some form of 'contact' in the form I have tried to delineate. If so, perceptual awareness will involve more. But perhaps she just means some form of causal relation.

I think it useful to illustrate the idea of perceptual awareness by contrasting (veridical) perception with veridical hallucination (as I also did in a long footnote in the Introduction). In veridical hallucination, what is missing is just the kind of 'contact' with the world. The perception gives us all the information one needs. One might think that if veridical hallucination gives one all the information one needs, then one *is* in genuine contact with the world (at any rate if the state is phenomenally conscious). This is in fact a standard reply (Lewis 1980/1988). And I think there is something to it: Surely, if the 'imaginative' state of veridical hallucination really 'shows me' how the environment is, then surely I am in contact with it? For one thing, I wouldn't notice a difference if the veridical 'hallucination' turned into genuine perception. Still, I think the reply is puzzling. There should be more to awareness of the objects in my environment than merely reliably imagining it? They are, after all, just *there*.

There is also an question of whether perceptual awareness is a *cognitive* relation. If it is a representational relation, then one might call it cognitive on that ground. More generally, philosophers who have discussed perceptual awareness have sometimes invokes a notion of *acquaintance*, following, in particular, Russell (1910). Acquaintance is supposed to be a relation that grounds a concept through awareness of the referent of that concept. In particular, it is supposed to ground singular concepts. The model is presumably the way a demonstration can ground (the use of) a demonstrative.<sup>2</sup> This is a thought taken up by Campbell, among others.

Again, I do not want to take a stand here. I do not assume that awareness must provide such grounding of concepts. A relation of acquaintance, whatever exactly it is, will entail awareness, but it is unclear that the converse holds.<sup>3</sup> The relation between representation and awareness obviously goes far beyond what I can discuss here.

<sup>1</sup> The quoted passage is her first premise in an argument to the effect that perception has content, so it is not intended to be uninformative, even if it is, she says, 'not contentious' (2011, 722).

<sup>2</sup> Russell didn't restrict his notion to individuals; he held that one can be acquainted with universals as well as particulars (1910, 111).

<sup>3</sup> An epistemologically motivated philosopher like McDowell seems to hold that the relation goes both ways. He discusses the idea of acquaintance in connection with the topic of object-dependent representing. Campbell similarly discusses acquaintance, but doesn't equate it with awareness:

Suppose you say to me, 'What is that mountain over there?' To understand your question I have to know which mountain you are talking about... Ordinarily, my knowledge of which thing you are talking about is provided by experience of the object. And it is not just having the mountain in my visual field that matters. I have to single it out visually, I have to see it as a figure against a background. (2002a, 6)

Having something present in one's visual field reasonably entails awareness of it. But such awareness is not sufficient for Campbell's variety of 'acquaintance', which requires attention and figure-ground organization. Travis more clearly doesn't think that awareness of an object entail acquiring a concept of it:

[P]erception, as such, simply places our surroundings in view, affords us awareness of them... It confronts us with what is there, so that, by attending, noting, recognizing, and otherwise exercising what capacities we have, we may, in some respect or other, make out what is there for what it is – or, again, fail to. (2004, 65)

Travis doesn't suggest that awareness has anything to do with acquaintance, understood as a cognitive relation. He distinguishes sharply between what he takes to be cognitive *responses* to experience, and experience itself. On the other hand, it seems that he holds that awareness is 'cognitive' in so far as it 'grounds' these responses.

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