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HOW TO INDEX VISUAL CONTENTS**

Abstract

According to the Content View (CV), visual perceptual experiences *represent* the subject's surroundings or have *representational content*. A critical question posed by Charles Travis against CV is how the subject of experiences could index or introspectively ascribe a specific representational content of a given (occurring) visual experience: if her visual experiences incorporate representational contents, how could she ascribe a particular content to any given visual experience of hers? According to Travis, while visual representation is supposed to be "a familiar phenomenon; something we can tell is happening" (Travis 2004: 86), there is no good available evidence that our visual experiences represent our surroundings; and he thinks so because there seems to be no method of visual contents' indexation or self-ascription. The aim of this paper is to show how CV could meet what I shall call the Indexing Problem for perceptual — more specifically, visual — content. My main positive suggestion turns on the thought that the contents of visual experiences could be indexed by the way things *demonstrably* look to the subject of experiences.

Keywords: Charles Travis, perceptual experience, representationalism, content, looks, demonstratives

According to the Content View — from now on, CV — visual perceptual experiences *represent* the subject's surroundings or have *representational content*.[1] A critical question faced by CV is how the subject of experiences

[1] CV will specifically be understood here as an account of the visual modality: as such, it is silent about other sensory modalities. Philosophers that either assume or argue for such an account include Searle (1983), Peacocke (1983), McGinn (1989), McDowell (1994), Brewer (1999), Siegel (2006, 2010, 2011), Byrne (2009), Schellenberg (2018). Philosophers

could index or introspectively ascribe the representational content of any given (occurring) visual experience: that is, if her visual experiences incorporate representational contents, how could she ascribe a particular content to any given visual experience of hers? This problem has been persuasively articulated by Charles Travis: while visual representation is supposed to be "a familiar phenomenon; something we can tell is happening" (Travis 2004: 86), there is no good evidence that our visual experiences represent our surroundings, because there seems to be no method of visual contents' indexation or self-ascription. Following Travis's terminology, I shall call this difficulty the *Indexing Problem* for perceptual content.

After clarifying the nature of the Indexing Problem, this paper aims to show how CV could parry Travis's attack. More specifically, I shall take issue with the claim that the Indexing Problem cannot be solved by claiming that visual contents (the contents of visual experiences) could be indexed by the way things *demonstrably* look to the subject of experiences. This task will be divided into four parts. (1) I briefly introduce CV as an account aiming to account for perception and illusion. (2) I clarify the Indexing Problem a bit further: against this backdrop, I introduce the central notion of this study — namely, that of "looks." (3) I reconstruct Travis's reasoning behind his claim that visual contents cannot be indexed by demonstrable looks. (4) I critically assess Travis's objection in two stages: I try to show, first, that his objection is faulty and, second, how demonstrable looks could actually index such contents.

1. THE CONTENT VIEW

CV's key notion is that of visual content. In a slogan, CV contends that visual experiences are representational mental states or have representational content in a way analogous to the way in which other propositional attitudes (paradigmatically, beliefs) are representational mental states or have representational contents.

An important motivation behind this view is its apparent ability to account for the phenomena of visual perception and visual illusion. When I see my surroundings (e.g., this table, this desk, that pile of papers over there), I undergo a visual experience in which an array of mind-independent objects is presented to me. When the way things seem to me matches the way things actually are in my surroundings, I undergo what philosophers call a *veridical*

arguing against CV include Martin (2002), Travis (2004), Brewer (2006), Breckenridge (2007a, b). This list is far from exhaustive, of course.

visual experience or simply an episode of *perception*. However, almost as clear as the fact that we perceive the world is the fact that we are also misled by what we see. Indeed, visual perception (at least in typical human beings) is associated with sensory fallacies best known as visual illusions. Illusions are fallacious insofar as they fall short of the success characteristic of seeing or visual perception. In illusions, I perceive my surroundings, but the way things seem to me is not the way they really are: for example, something might seem to have a color or shape different from the one it actually has. Some infamous examples of illusions concern the half-submerged stick (the stick you see is straight but looks bent to you when half-submerged in water) and the Müller–Lyer diagram (the lines you see are the same length but one of them looks slightly longer than the other).

CV has the merit of explaining both kinds of phenomena in tandem. In broad outline, the idea is that perception as well as illusion involve experiences that have representational contents: while the contents of illusions are false or inaccurate, those of perception proper are veridical or accurate (in the sense of being error-free). On this account, episodes of perception and illusion constitute the same kind of intentional states — that is, visual experiences with representational contents — in a way analogous to that in which other intentional mental states (e.g., beliefs, hopes) are mental states that have representational content. A given visual experience is taken to have a representational content or "face value" in the sense that, according to such an experience, things in the world seem or appear to be one way or another. However, the way things seem — that is, the experience's content or face value — may correspond or fail to correspond to the way things actually are in the subject's surroundings. The existence or absence of such a correspondence between visual content and the world opens up the possibility of dividing experiences into veridical/accurate ones and false/inaccurate ones. Accordingly, episodes of perception may be described in terms of veridical experiences, and those of illusion — in terms of visual experiences with false contents. Hence, the thought at the heart of CV — namely, that visual experiences have representational content — captures the more intuitive idea that visual experiences may be true/accurate or only partially accurate. CV contends that visual experiences have representational contents in a way that is analogous to that in which beliefs have contents: experiences would represent things about the world as being the case, even though the world is not always as experiences represent it.

To specify a representationalist view like CV a bit further, let us briefly compare it with what is known as a *relationalist* approach to perception. Whereas CV conceives perceptual experiences as mental phenomena that represent or

misrepresent our surroundings, a relationalist view models them as primitive — that is, unanalyzable — relations of conscious awareness constituted by a subject and her objects of perception. While versions of relationalism come in all shapes and sizes, a key differentiating criterion turns on the question of how the relevant objects of perception should be conceived. If such items are conceived as somehow internal to the subject's mind, the relationalist stance takes the form of the infamous *sense-datum* or *phenomenalist* doctrines. A far more popular proposal, known as *naïve* or *direct* realism, holds that the relevant perceived or perceivable objects are the ordinary items of the world (e.g., trees, dogs, people, etc.). In the contemporary philosophical landscape, the general tension between representationalism and relationalism tends to emerge as a debate between CV and direct realism. The dialectic between the direct realist and the CV theorist may be expressed in a number of ways. For example, both views are often depicted as sharing the thought that perceptual phenomena make us aware of the middle-sized world we know, but whereas direct realism claims that this is so because the objects and features of the world are constitutive elements of the relevant phenomena, CV undermines that claim by appealing to the phenomenological or otherwise experiential resemblance between perception, illusion, and, perhaps more importantly, hallucination. Again, the issue at stake may be stated in terms of whether perception could actually be inaccurate: for, whereas representationalism holds that experience could be categorized either as accurate or inaccurate, a venerable philosophical tradition — which Travis seems to follow — claims that inaccuracy only emerges at some cognitive level downstream perception.

Before turning to Travis's objection to CV, it is worth stressing that I am not taking a stance here on behalf of a representationalist or a relationalist account of perception. Although the relevant literature is no doubt full of stimulating insights, the general debate in its present form seems problematic to me for at least four reasons. Firstly, as far as I can see, the exact import of both accounts is yet unclear. Launched in the early 1990s, the mainstream debate concerning what it means to conceive experience as representational or relational is still ongoing. Secondly, but relatedly, few writers acknowledge the metaphorical character of the notions of representation and direct/immediate awareness that lie at the heart of CV and direct realism, respectively.[2] For, whereas the notion of representation is primarily pictorial rather than psychological, the contrast between directness/immediacy and indirectness/mediacy finds its natural home in more specific and contextually defined informational scenarios (e.g., I have an indirect access to a concert via

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[2] Exceptions include Austin (1962), Hacker (1987), Snowdon (1992), and Travis (2013).

recorded streaming or to my face when I stare at myself in the mirror) rather than in our general epistemological and psychological understanding of how the mind accesses the world. Bearing the metaphorical character of the relevant notions in mind, it is not surprising to find the philosophical literature populated with as many versions of representationalist and relationalist accounts of perception as there are writers involved in that debate.

Thirdly, as Matt Soteriou (2013) has persuasively argued, philosophical debates about perception often lace claims about the nature of perceptual experience with claims about self-awareness. The problem discussed here is, I believe, no exception: Travis seems to assume that, if experiences have representational contents, then their respective bearers should be capable of indexing or identifying such contents. But this inference might not be so straightforward. After all, the philosophical notion of perceptual content could perhaps codify information of personal-level perception without imposing any strong requirement on the subject's introspective ability to specify such information. If plausible, this suggestion would undermine Travis's assumption that the representational character of perceptual experiences is associated with a particular condition on the subject's internal awareness of such phenomena.

Finally, I believe that a wide-spread anti-metaphysical indifference among contemporary philosophers of mind has handicapped specific debates about the nature of perception. The discussion concerning representationalism and relationalism usually takes place within a philosophical tradition that has tendentiously avoided addressing deep ontological or otherwise metaphysical questions, so as to focus on the study of the intentionality and phenomenology of mental states. Presumably, however, the debate would benefit from taking up the question of the ontological structure of perceptual experience — or, to put it more crudely, the question of what we talk about when we talk about perceptual experiences.

For all the reasons just outlined, this paper should not be seen either as a defense of CV or an attack on Travis's implicit relationalism[3]: instead, it is best regarded as an exercise in critical assessment without any further philosophical agenda. Although the foregoing remarks on the import of CV are no doubt sketchy and far from exhaustive, I believe they provide the necessary background for Travis's objection.

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[3] Although Travis himself is not completely clear on this point, his more global motivation for critically assessing CV seems to be his allegiance to something like a direct realist or relationalist view of experience. For a discussion of representationalist and relationalist accounts of perception, cf. Martin 2002, 2004, Burge 2005, Soteriou 2005, 2007, 2013, 2016, Brewer 2006, 2017, Glüer 2009, Genone 2014, Brogaard 2014, Cavedon-Taylor 2015, Nanay 2015, Raleigh 2015, de Sá Pereira 2016, Shahmoradi 2016, Schellenberg 2010, 2017, 2018.

2. THE INDEXING PROBLEM

This is how Travis summarizes the Indexing Problem and the objections it engenders against CV:

> (i) The fundamental problem is this. Being represented to in experience was meant to be a familiar phenomenon. That an experience would be deceptive, or non-veridical, unless such-and-such were so is something an experiencer was supposed to recognize about it. (ii) There is no such familiar phenomenon. There is thus no such work for sources of experiences to do. Perception is not the stuff of which things might be represented to us as so. It is, in a crucial way, not an intentional phenomenon. (Travis 2004: 93; my numbers)

On this view, visual experiences' having representational contents is supposed to be a familiar phenomenon in the sense that the subject of those representational states should be able introspectively to access the relevant representations or contents: that subject could, that is, introspectively recognize the way things are in her surroundings according to her occurring visual experiences. The Indexing Problem thus comes down to the following question: if visual experiences have representational contents, how could the subject of experiences introspectively access or index the relevant experiential contents? I take it for granted here that a demanding notion of indexing should be related to a subject's introspective capacity to recognize, appreciate, read off, scan, or simply self-ascribe the features represented in/by her visual experiences; that is, a subject's capacity to index visual contents is understood here as a capacity introspectively to "pinpoint" or "indicate" visual contents. This section aims to unpack Travis's point (i) a bit further. Point (ii) captures the idea that the Indexing Problem poses a threat to CV insofar as the lack of the aforementioned indexing-capacity raises challenges to the ascription of content to perceptual experience. This objection will be the main theme of section 3.

Travis's starting point is the plausible — albeit by no means trivial — assumption that the story of visual perception is a story about how we use certain capacities in order to recognize features and objects in the world (Travis 2004: 64). When I see my surroundings, I undergo conscious visual experiences which tell me what surrounds me: I see a desk, some trees, birds, buildings beyond my window, etc. If visual perception involves a capacity to identify or recognize the objects of visual experience, there should also be an account specifying what a subject would thus recognize or identify as the object(s) of her experience (Travis 2004: 84). This being the case, the Indexing Problem arises when the question is posed whether the subject of experiences could recognize the contents that CV would ascribe to her experiences.

Travis expands on the problem in the following passage:

> If we are going to be represented *to* in experience then the relevant representing must be something we can appreciate for what it thus is. If, in a perceptual experience, things are represented to us as being thus and so, then we must be able to appreciate the experience as representing as so what it thus does; to appreciate what it is that is thus so according to it. That need not mean that we can characterize such representational content accurately, or formulate it explicitly. But we 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. (Travis 2004: 62-63; cf. also 69)

Travis focuses here on the notion of a subject's capacity to appreciate or recognize the representational content of her occurring visual experiences — in short, the subject's capacity to index or recognize visual contents. When I speak of the Indexing Problem, I use *indexing* precisely as a member of the family class that includes *identifying*, *appreciating*, *recognizing*, and even *reading off* (Travis 2004: 69). Hence, the Indexing Problem comes down to this: if visual experiences have representational contents, the subject of experiences should be able to index (identify/appreciate/recognize/read off) the features of such contents; that is, the subject of experiences should possess a capacity or a disposition to perform such recognitions.

The Indexing Problem is clarified by Travis's claim that possession of a capacity to identify visual contents does not entail "that we can characterize such representational content accurately, or formulate it explicitly" (Travis 2013: 28). This qualification points toward two different ways of understanding the Indexing Problem. First, it would consist in the problem of whether the subject could introspectively index, recognize, read off, or self-ascribe the representational content of her occurring visual experiences. Second, it would also consist in the linguistic or semantic problem of whether there is a linguistic construction whose sole purpose is that of reporting the content of visual experiences. In this paper, I take it for granted that the Indexing Problem concerns the actual features of visual phenomenology, not the existence of a specific linguistic construction for visual contents.

The previous quote (Travis 2004: 62-63) also specifies what is meant by recognition or indexation in the present context. By a capacity to recognize the contents of visual experiences, Travis seems to understand a subject's disposition to decide what is so or what is not so according to her experiences. A paradigmatic scenario in which this kind of indexation would occur is one where an experimenter asks a test-subject what she sees at a given time

— namely, either *A* or something else, *A* being any aspect of the subject's environmental array. Travis's point is that, if we understand visual experiences along such lines, then the experiencing subject should have a disposition to decide what is the case according to such an experience. As such, in a second pass, the Indexing Problem may be stated as follows: if visual experiences have representational content, then the subject of experiences must be disposed successfully to decide what is the case or what is not the case according to her visual experiences.

The Indexing Problem specifically affects an account of visual experiences like CV. By contending that visual experiences (either veridical perception or illusion) have representational content or face value, CV seems to hold a subject's awareness of the world hostage to her awareness of representational contents (Travis 2004: 58ff., 65, 69). But if our conscious access to the world is thus mediated by contents, then two questions arise: first, what worldly information is in fact conveyed to a subject when she sees her surroundings? and, second, what is it about such an experiential input that a subject could index or identify? Hence, even if we made the controversial concession that experience has content, we would still be left with the problem of whether and how an experiencing subject could index or recognize the contents of her experiences. If experiences are conceived along the lines of CV, a perceiver should be capable of recognizing or self-ascribing the contents of her experience. This, in a nutshell, is the Indexing Problem.

If a subject faced the Müller–Lyer diagram and the content of her experience was supposed to be that two lines seem to have different relative lengths, she should be able to identify the representational information thus conveyed: that there are two lines with inverted hashes, that they are parallel, that they (apparently) have *different* lengths, and so on. If the subject could recognize all this, she would *ipso facto* access the conditions that specify how her experience could be veridical: if the experiential episode is veridical, the diagram would have to contain two parallel lines that have different relative lengths.

To sum up, this section has aimed to unpack the Indexing Problem in more detail: if visual experiences have representational content, then the subject should be able to index such a content, in the sense of having a disposition to decide what her experience represents as being or as not being the case. In other words, if visual experiences have representational contents, the subject should be able to introspectively self-ascribe the relevant contents to the corresponding occurring visual experiences. The next section will present Travis's objection against the subject's possession of such a disposition of self-ascription.

3. THE WAY THINGS LOOK

Travis goes on to argue that there is no natural way of solving the Indexing Problem. To flesh out this objection against CV, it is necessary to say a bit more about how the ways things appear or look in visual experience are supposed to disclose the content of an experience.

CV contends that visual experiences have content: on the one hand, visual experiences convey representational contents to their subjects, and, on the other, such contents tell their subjects how their surroundings are even if things are not that way at all. The Indexing Problem is that if visual experiences have content, then their subjects should have a capacity to index those contents. Now, on the assumption that visual contents convey representational information to the conscious subject, it seems natural to think that such information is made manifest to her by means of the way(s) things look.[4] For instance, when I see a bottle of water, this object looks to me several different ways. If this visual experience has a content or face value, it is plausible that such content or face value be conveyed to me by precisely those looks. Travis thus suggests that visual contents are "looks-indexed": the subject might recognize or self-ascribe the visual contents of her experiences by means of the way(s) things look. This thought is crucial to Travis's objection (Travis 2004: 63, 69).

But how should we understand the notion of looks here? This is a difficult question that goes beyond the scope of this paper, so I will restrict my discussion to two points. First, it is not altogether clear what kind of ontological items looks are. For the purposes of his criticism, Travis seems to assume that they are features of psychological phenomena such as perceptual experiences (cf. also Chisholm 1957, Jackson 1977, Breckenridge 2007a, b). However, there are also readings according to which the relevant items are not psychological features but certain kinds of linguistic constructions: some views along such lines take looks-constructions to pick up on certain aspects of perceptual experience or perceptual content (Byrne 2009: 439, 444, Siegel 2010), while others take them to provide an epistemically modest alternative to claims that presume to establish how things actually are (Sellars 1963, Hacker 1987). For the present purposes, I shall focus on a notion of looks conceived as psychological, or perhaps phenomenological, features of experience.

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[4] As I mentioned towards the end of section 1, this inference is controversial, but I shall not challenge it here.

Secondly, philosophers have identified several notions or senses of looks, no matter how the latter should be ontologically categorized.[5] When framing his objection against the looks-indexation of visual contents, Travis acknowledges an epistemic and a demonstrable sense of looks. On the epistemic sense of looks — for short, e-looks — it e-looks that *P* if there is visual evidence that supports the belief or proposition that *P*. For instance, it may e-look as if the neighbors are away when I see their house's curtains drawn or an uncared lawn, or no movement whenever I knock on the door; it may e-look that Brazil is going to beat Chile in the soccer match when I watch the game on television and pay attention to the performance of each team. Although Travis has much to say about e-looks, I shall set them aside right away because they seem to transcend the realm of perceptual experience: in principle, they refer to propositions one may reasonably assert on the basis of experientially available evidence. As Travis puts it, that the neighbors are not home or that Chile is going to lose are things *indicated* by what we literally see or things that we can reasonably *expect* on the grounds of visual evidence (cf. also Byrne 2009: 440-441).

The demonstrable sense of looks — d-looks, for short — involves two key features: (i) a relation of comparative resemblance between the currently seen object and other objects in a certain respect and (ii) what I shall call here the subject's *sensitivity to a ground of resemblance*. Travis spells (i) out mostly by means of examples: Pia may look like her sister, a Vermeer may look like a van Meegeren, and so on (Travis 2004: 70, cf. also 74, 76, 86). Generalizing from such examples, one could claim that something *o* d-looks a certain way *f* to a subject when *o* resembles *f*-things precisely in respect *f*. That is, d-looks involve (either explicitly or implicitly) a relation of comparative resemblance, drawn by the subject of experiences, between something currently presented by her visual experience and some other thing(s). As for (ii), if any given items *A* and *B* share a property (or cluster of properties) *P*, then I shall call *P* a *ground of resemblance* between *A* and *B*. For Travis, d-looks also seem to involve the subject's sensitivity to grounds of comparative resemblance, since something's d-looking thus or so would entail that the subject becomes aware of the visually demonstrable properties that the aforemen-

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[5] As just suggested, by talking of *senses* of looks, I am not implying that Travis is talking about linguistic constructions: "senses" here should not be equated with "meanings" but, perhaps, with linguistically neutral "kinds." Although Travis casually indulges in such talk, I assume throughout this paper that the Indexing Problem and the objection he builds on it should not be understood as the challenge of finding an appropriate linguistic construction — i.e., a "looks"-construction — whose sole purpose is to convey visual contents, but as the challenge of self-ascribing representational contents — psychological properties of some sort — to visual experiences.

tioned thing apparently instantiates. Visually demonstrable properties are properties that the subject could identify ostensively. These apparent visually demonstrable properties constitute grounds of resemblance between the perceived thing's look and other absent things. Travis's d-looks are those where "there is a suitable visually decidable resemblance" (Travis 2004: 74) between the stimulus' look and other things' look. Further, "it is the exclusive province of the visible to decide what demonstrable looks something has — to what exemplars it is visually akin" (Travis 2004: 76). I am talking about *apparent* visually demonstrable properties because these properties seem to correspond to properties recognized by the subject, whether or not the object the subject sees actually instantiates such properties. Thus, d-looks involve, on the one hand, relations of comparative resemblance, and, on the other, the visually apparent characteristics on which such relations are grounded.[6]

That said, Travis's objection from d-looks against the indexation of visual content proceeds in two stages. Both phases correspond, respectively, to a "first simple point" (Travis 2004: 71) and to a "substantial problem" (Travis 2004: 72ff.). Schematically, the line of reasoning deriving from both points may be expressed as follows:

(T1)   There is a distinction between (i) CV's technical notion of the way things d-look and (ii) the common facts concerning the ways things d-look; and (ii) does not give any credibility to (i).

(T2)   When we try to specify the *way* things d-look, the *ways* things d-look do not point in any direction.

(C)   D-looks cannot index the representational content of visual experiences.

Travis's "simple point" is not so simple. To begin with, T1 involves a twofold claim: first, it draws a distinction between an ordinary notion of d-looks and CV's more sophisticated understanding of how things d-look; and secondly, it aims to show that the former ordinary notion does not fulfill any

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[6] It may be natural to relate this notion of d-looks to what are known as comparative and non-comparative looks (on this notion, cf. Chisholm 1957: 45ff., Jackson 1977: ch. 2, Byrne 2009: 439-440, Schellenberg 2010). One should resist this temptation, though. If d-looks are conflated with comparative looks, one might find it tempting to argue against Travis's objection by suggesting that visual content is indexed or fixed by non-comparative looks, not by comparative ones. But while d-looks pick up on a comparative component, they also refer to the grounds of the relevant comparisons. The relationship between the notion of d-looks and that of comparative/non-comparative looks does not seem to be one of identity but that of genus to species. Accordingly, the force of Travis's objection does not hinge on the type of looks — be it comparative or non-comparative — that are supposed to index visual contents.

content-indexing role. All this does not yet mean that CV's more sophisticated notion cannot fulfill the relevant role. T2 then kicks in to show that CV's understanding of the ways things d-look does not help to define what a given visual experience represents. Thus, the combination of T1 and T2 aims to undermine the idea that visual contents may be indexed by d-looks.

Turning to T1, Travis stresses a distinction between an ordinary notion of the ways things d-look and CV's more sophisticated notion of the way things d-look. In other words, he draws a distinction between an ordinary notion of d-looks and a more sophisticated notion of d-looks that allowed the subject of experiences to ascribe representational contents to her own occurring visual experiences. This more sophisticated notion would allegedly improve CV's credibility. Ordinary facts about d-looks include: Pia may look like her sister, a man may look old, and so on. Thus, Travis does not deny that there is some sense of looks in which o could d-look (like) f if the apparent visually demonstrable properties of o resemble the apparent visually demonstrable properties of f-things. At the same time, ordinary facts about the ways things d-look exhibit a peculiar variability insofar as they are "occasion-sensitive": the ways things d-look are not kept constant for those things but depend on the occasion on which the underlying comparisons are made (cf. Travis 2004: 71). Although Travis does not say much about occasion-sensitivity in the present context, the notion seems to hint at the following thought: what d-looks a certain way on one occasion may not look so on another occasion; how things d-look crucially depends, *inter alia*, on the circumstances in which something d-looks a certain way to a subject.[7]

In opposition to the previous ordinary facts, however, CV uses a quite different notion of looks. Assuming that (a), for every visual content, there is one way things in the subject's surroundings should be (i.e., the way that would make the corresponding visual experience veridical) and (b) visual contents are looks-indexed, then every occurring visual experience should pair up with only one particular way things would d-look — namely, the way things actually are according to that visual experience.[8] Travis is clear about

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[7] On occasion-sensitivity, cf. Travis 1997, especially p. 5.

[8] It is indeed a good question whether there is a single way things actually are and, more specifically, whether we could epistemically compare how things look with the way things really are. After all, a venerable tradition of philosophers (including Berkeley and Kant) have argued that we could not coherently flesh out and uphold that position. Although I cannot address this important issue here, it is worth bearing in mind that the kind of representationalist view that Travis criticizes need not rely on an ideal notion of how things really are, but only on one sufficiently robust to ground the distinction between accurate and inaccurate ways of representing the world (between accurate and inaccurate ways things look or could look to us).

his intention of not conflating the previous facts about the ways things d-look with CV's more technical sense in which, for every visual experience, there is a way things d-look:

> though we are often enough confronted with appearances, that is not yet to say that the appearances, on a given occasion, add up to such a thing as "the way things (then) appear to be". It is a large assumption that there is, in general, such a thing as *the* way things appear to be. (Travis 2004: 60)

While the sophisticated notion posited by CV defines one particular content for any given experience, ordinary facts about the ways things d-look are much less stable insofar as they are contextually fixed by the respects under which the perceived object at stake is compared to something else.

The second part of T1 is a consideration intended to show that ordinary facts about the ways things d-look cannot fulfill the kind of role that CV needs them to fulfill (cf. Travis 2004: 70). When CV assumes that there is a way things look, it aims to claim that visual experiences have a face value or content. If something looks *f* to a subject, she will take that experience at face value, in the sense that she will be compelled to accept that the way things are corresponds to the way things look to her. In other words, according to CV's special notion of d-looks, if a given object looks *f* to a subject, her experience will be non-veridical unless the perceived object is *f*. However, Travis seems to think that ordinary facts about the ways things d-look do not fit this pattern. For instance, if d-looks indexed the content of visual experiences, then whenever a subject sees Pia and Pia d-looks like Pia's sister to that subject, the subject would undergo a visual experience which, if taken at face value, would constitute an inaccurate visual experience: this demonstrable look would ascribe the content *Pia's sister* to the visual experience caused, *ex hypothesi*, by Pia. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same would follow if one saw Pia's sister and she looked like Pia. However, Travis goes on, this is not the way ordinary facts about d-looks work. In normal cases, Pia may d-look like her sister, a man may d-look old, and so on, and none of these looks imply that the subject undergoes a non-veridical experience. Things simply d-look like something else and the implicated experiences do not force the subject to take the conveyed information at face value or reject them as inaccurate. On this ordinary notion of d-looks, an object's d-looking *f* to a subject does not entail that her occurring experience is illusory unless the perceived object is *f*. Hence, these ordinary facts about d-looks — about the ways things d-look — seem to differ from the sort of d-looks demanded by CV.

Let's turn to T2 now. While Travis attempts to show that "how things must be to be what they thus look like does not decide how things must be to

be the way they look; so nor, by that route, any way they must be to be as they (supposedly) are according to an experience in which things did so look" (Travis 2004: 71), he also concedes that "it is still open, perhaps, that things looking as they do points to some representational content for an experience to have" (Travis 2004: 71). As such, he turns to CV's technical notion of the way things d-look in any given visual experience, and specifically to the question of how ordinary facts about d-looks may help to build such a technical notion.

Travis thinks that ordinary facts about d-looks do not flesh out the technical notion of d-looks because there is no criterion *derived from visual experiences alone* for picking one or another particular fact about d-looks in order to determine the more technical notion of d-looks (cf. Travis 2004: 71-72). Travis poses the following question to any given subject undergoing a visual experience: just what content does your experience have? In his view, a straightforward answer cannot be given in terms of d-looks. The reason for this is that ordinary d-looks are, as it has been pointed out, occasion-sensitive; as such, one and the same thing may d-look in countless different ways. The ways things d-look are occasion-sensitive because, first, they are defined not only by the relevant perceived object but also by the respects in which such an object is compared with other things; and, second, the relevant respects are contextually fixed. The trouble with looks-indexation of visual contents is not that d-looks are occasion-sensitive *per se*, but that such occasion-sensitivity is grounded on the respects used by the subject to draw the comparisons underlying d-looks, not merely on objectively fixed features of the subject's surroundings (cf. Travis 2004: 66). The countless ways things d-look, so to speak, are not defined by the nature of things but by the way the subject construes what she sees.

D-looks' occasion sensitivity would not be problematic for CV if there were a principled criterion for picking up on one particular way of d-looking *as* the content-indexing way of d-looking. Even if Pia d-looks like countless different things, what matters for the looks-indexation of the present visual content is that there should be one particular way Pia actually d-looks that allows me to recognize the content of my visual experience about Pia. But Travis counteracts this possibility as follows:

> Which facts as to Pia's looking (like) thus and so matter, and how, to how things should be to be the way they look *simpliciter*? Which looks, if any, matter to what is thus represented as so? And how? And why? (Travis 2004: 72)

If CV aims to index visual contents by means of d-looks, it should settle not only what particular facts about d-looks matter for the identification of visual contents but also how and why they matter. The problem is thus a criterial one.

Thus, the gist of T2's second point is that:

> for looks to identify a content, one needs a principled way of ignoring some of the specific ways things look, and attending only to others. That would be a policy of fixing, in terms of looks, what is so according to an experience, so when it would be deceptive, non-veridical, or misleading in the sought-for further way. (Travis 2004: 72)

Furthermore, if d-looks are intended to index contents that are distinctively perceptual or experiential contents, then it is also natural to expect that the privileged d-looks will thus stand out in virtue of a criterion that exclusively relies on what we can introspectively gather from visual experiences. Perception alone — as opposed to some other cognitive faculty downstream perception — has to be responsible for discriminating or "selecting," in a principled way, the relevant content-indexing d-looks (cf. Travis 2004: 73).

Travis, of course, thinks that CV does not have a good answer to these criterial questions. Although representationalism is motivated by a key feature of d-looks already mentioned — namely, that d-looks only range over the visible properties of the subject's surroundings — the visible features of objects and properties in the subject's environment do not define what those objects and properties are. As described by Travis, d-looks are occasion-sensitive: the same things may d-look in many different ways, depending on the occasion of observation and the respects of comparison taken into account on that occasion. It is also clear that d-looks are constrained by more or less manifest visible features of the things compared by d-looks: the respects of comparison underlying each d-look must correspond to properties that are manifest to the subject. But Travis additionally claims that the ways things d-look do not define how things are precisely because they only pick up on visible respects of the things that d-look in one way or another (cf. Travis 2004: 74-75). Crudely, the thought is: the visible properties of objects do not determine their essence.[9] And then, since d-looks only range over the visible properties of objects, it follows that d-looks cannot help the subject in determining what kind of spatio-temporal object (using this term in a wide sense) she is seeing. But CV's intuition that visual contents may be indexed by d-looks is precisely the intuition that the way things d-look in our occurring visual experiences

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[9] I think that the distinction between visually demonstrable properties and spatio-temporal objects, which underlies this point of Travis's argument, is parallel to a distinction drawn by Alan Millar between facts/objects that we know perceptually and facts/objects that are, strictly speaking, perceptually manifest to us. By seeing a bottle of milk, for instance, we *visually know* that there is a bottle of milk in front of us, but this token of information is not directly conveyed by the way(s) things look (cf. Millar 2000: 73-74). What is *perceptually manifest* to the subject are the ways this object looks: being transparent, bottle-shaped, containing a white liquid.

decree what is the case according to such experiences. When I see a lemon, Travis suggests that the apparently visible characteristics of what we see do not determine what thing we actually see: sure, the yellowness and the lemony shape of what is seen may suggest that I see a lemon; but, for all that, there might be phenomenologically indistinguishable circumstances in which what I see is not a lemon but rather, say, an exact wax replica of a lemon. Thus, when something d-looks like countless different things, no d-look is privileged over any of its counterparts. So, Travis concludes, d-looks seem poor candidates for indexing the content of visual experiences.

Let's take stock. The Indexing Problem poses the following challenge to CV: if visual experiences convey representational contents to the subject of experiences, then that subject should have a capacity or disposition to recognize what content a given experience has — that is, she should be sensitive to such a content and should be able to decide what that content is or what is the case according to her experience. A natural supposition is that, since d-looks present the subject with the apparently visible properties of her surroundings, d-looks turn out to be the key to recognizing or ascribing the contents to her own occurring visual experiences. By means of T1 and T2, I have presented Travis's contention that visual contents could not be self-ascribed via d-looks. According to T1, the particular d-looks that we uncontroversially acknowledge are unfit to index the content or face value of visual experiences: several cases in which things d-look a certain way would have to be classified as inaccurate experiences, *quod non*. According to T2, a more technical notion of d-looks could not decide what is so according to visual experiences: first, things d-look like countless different things, since d-looks are occasion-sensitive; second, no particular subset of those d-looks could reveal what experiences convey to us as being the case, because d-looks do not define how things *are*. Thus, Travis reaches C — that is, the conclusion that d-looks cannot index the representational content of visual experiences.

4. WHAT LOOKS COULD SHOW

In this section, I assess Travis's claim that visual contents cannot be indexed by means of d-looks. On the negative side, I try to show that Travis does not succeed in proving that d-looks fail to index visual contents, since T1-C relies on a notion of looks that actually undermines C. On the positive one, I show how d-looks could in fact index visual contents. In particular, the thought is that visual contents may be indexed by a sub-category of d-looks —

namely, demonstrative d-looks. Let's first pause on the negative assessment of Travis's objection to d-looks.

Travis's argument for claiming that d-looks cannot index visual contents relies on T1-C. Since I intend to reject C, either T1 or T2 must be false. I shall concede T1: Travis seems right in saying that a broad range of common facts about looks (e.g., that Pia looks like her sister to me, that the man in the bench looks old, and so on) do not index the contents of visual experiences. My target is T2, then. I shall argue that a key element of this premise undermines Travis's attempt to conclude that one and the same thing may have countless different d-looks, and, *a fortiori*, that d-looks cannot index the contents of visual experiences. The key element at stake is the intuition that d-looks refer to the visually demonstrable properties of things. As previously mentioned, T2 states that, when we try to specify *the way* things d-look, the ways things d-look do not point in any particular direction. I have presented this idea in two sub-stages. First, Travis contended that things have countless different d-looks: this is so because the ways things d-look crucially depend on the respect of comparison the subject has in mind when things look so to her. Second, he claimed that the ways things d-look cannot define how the subject's surroundings should be so as to d-look the way they actually are: d-looks refer to the visually demonstrable properties of objects, and, as such, cannot define what those objects are; the color or shape of something does not determine what that thing is. That said, my objection to T2 is this: the thought that d-looks only range over visibly demonstrable properties of things clashes with the thought that one and the same thing may d-look in countless different ways.

Consider a characterization of d-looks as those looks that refer to the visibly demonstrable properties of things. As Travis said, d-looks involve comparisons between the apparent properties of the relevant perceived object and those of other things. The *relata* of such comparisons are the visually demonstrable properties of objects: that is, d-looks only range over properties that the subject can see. A consequence of thus defining the scope of d-looks is that they do not allow, strictly speaking, recognizing or indexing full-fledged spatio-temporal objects. When a subject sees a lemon (suppose it is really a lemon), the only d-looks involved are, strictly speaking, those concerning the lemon's color and shape, but none concerning that object's being a lemon. Proof of this is that there is a possible scenario where the subject sees something that d-looks exactly the same as the object she sees now but that fails to be a lemon: for instance, she might be staring at a perfect wax replica of a lemon. Thus, Travis's point is that how things d-look does not decide what those things are. This point is crucial for undermining the idea that d-looks may index visual contents: the contents of visual experiences are sup-

posed to decide how the subject's surroundings are — that is, what there is in her surroundings. But visual contents cannot be identified or recognized by means of d-looks because the latter are completely silent about how the subject's surroundings are.[10]

Now, my point is that T2 collapses precisely because d-looks only range over the visible or demonstrable properties of perceived objects. This objection may be unpacked in the form of the following dilemma: either d-looks only range over visibly demonstrable properties of objects or d-looks do not only range over visibly demonstrable properties of objects; either way, T2 fails to make its point and, hence, conclusion C is blocked. I analyze each horn in turn.

Let's assume that d-looks only range over visibly demonstrable properties of objects. If this is so, then T2's first assumption — namely, that things may d-look in countless different ways because of their peculiar occasion-sensitivity — is undermined. Recall that the first part of T2 consisted in the claim that one and the same thing (or one and the same set of things) may d-look in countless different ways, because those d-looks crucially depend on how the subject compares the perceived object with something else. On one understanding, Pia may look like her sister. On another, Pia may look like Maura, and so on. But if d-looks only range over the object's visible properties, then things cannot really d-look in many different ways. When I see Pia, the only d-looks she may present in relation to my sense of sight are those referring to properties of color and shape: she d-looks pale, she d-looks dark-haired, and so on.[11] Pia does not d-look like her sister, or like Maura, or like a wax replica of Pia. Why? Because the object I see might have d-looked just as it does right now without being Pia's sister, Maura, or a wax replica of Pia. Furthermore, when I say that I see Pia, I am not implying that I see Pia *qua* Pia. I am only implying that I see an object which presents to me certain visually demonstrable properties, an object that happens to be Pia. That such a person is Pia is as extraneous to the domain of visually demonstrable properties as it is her being

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[10] This point about the scope of d-looks overlaps, I think, with the debate over whether visual experiences have high-level or low-level representational contents. Roughly speaking, high-level contents would convey properties about the environment (e.g., being a lemon, being Pia's sister, and so on), whereas low-level contents would convey very basic properties, such as properties of color and shape. Cf. Siegel 2006 and Byrne 2009 for a defense, respectively, of a "high-level content" and a "low-level content" version of CV. However, I have avoided thus unpacking the present point, since I think it would only add unnecessary complications.

[11] One might protest that d-looks also involve high-level properties, such as being a lemon or being a pine-tree. However, the distinction between "perceptual knowledge" and the "perceptually manifest" is precisely intended to exclude that kind of properties from the domain of d-looks.

Pia's sister, Maura, or a wax replica of Pia. Of course, I do not deny that there is a sense in which Pia looks like all the previous things — that is, like her sister, like Maura, etc. What I deny is that such a sense corresponds to that of d-looks.

Now, if one and the same thing cannot thus d-look in several contradictory ways, then Travis's line of reasoning loses traction: he claimed that d-looks point in no particular direction because they point in too many directions and there was no criterion for picking one of them over the others. My response is that, since d-looks only range over the visibly demonstrable properties of perceived objects, things cannot really d-look in countless different ways.

Let's now turn to the second horn of the dilemma: assume that d-looks do not only range over visibly demonstrable properties of things. This allows Travis to say that one and the same thing d-looks in countless different and mutually exclusive ways. That is to say, Pia's looking like her sister, like Maura, or like many other things, would correspond to the demonstrable sense of looks. In short, the underlying intuition of T2's first part would thus be vindicated.

Not really, though. If you take this path, you jettison the second grounding intuition behind T2 — namely, the thought that d-looks do not reveal ordinary spatio-temporal objects. Travis contended that d-looks could not index visual contents because, while visual contents are supposed to define what is the case, d-looks could not pinpoint what would be the case according to our visual experiences: d-looks do not define what those things are. This is why things may d-look in countless different ways: d-looks are not, so to speak, committed to what things are and, hence, one and the same d-look may correspond to different things. This is ultimately why d-looks could not index visual contents. But once we abandon the thesis that d-looks fail to reveal ordinary objects, there is no longer any principled motive for denying that visual contents are indexed by d-looks. Thus T2 collapses again.

If I am correct, T2 is false. The crucial point is that Travis uses a notion of looks, d-looks, which seems incompatible with the idea that things may d-look in countless different and exclusive ways. If Travis modifies his notion of looks (after all, you might think that I do not get his notion of looks right), then T2 collapses again, for it now undermines its main principled reason for concluding that d-looks cannot index visual contents. Hence, the overall objection loses its original edge.

If my line of reasoning is sound, then Travis fails to motivate the claim that d-looks could not index visual contents. However, this does not prove that d-looks actually index such contents. I shall, therefore, outline how d-looks could achieve that. This task is divided into two stages. First, I shall stipulate a sense of looks that would allow the subject of experiences to recognize or

appreciate the representational contents of her occurring visual experiences and, second, I tailor d-looks so as to show that they may fulfill the indexing role of the previously stipulated sense of looks.

Turning to the first part of this task, I shall stipulate the following sense of looks: whenever a subject of experiences *S* undergoes a visual experience that represents something as thus-and-thus, *that* looks *thus* to *S*. "*That*" in this formula is something like a schematic demonstrative placeholder for whatever *S*'s perceptual-attentional capacities are directed to, and "*thus*" is an analogous placeholder for whichever of the object's properties *S*'s perceptual-attentional capacities are directed to. For instance, when I see a yellow lemon, *that* (the lemon that I see and attend to) looks *thus* (yellow) to me. Whenever Carolin seems to see pink elephants, *these* (the elephants, most probably imaginary) look *thus* (pink) to her. Examples may be multiplied *ad libitum*. This stipulation is not necessarily question-begging, since it does not establish a definitional relation between visual contents and this sense of looks but an explanatory one — that is, one that should be judged by the dividends of postulating such a relation.[12]

In line with Travis's phenomenological notion of d-looks, I do not understand this sense of looks as a possible linguistic construction used to report the contents of her visual experiences: instead, I take it to be a class of characteristically visual mental phenomena. Likewise, placeholders "*that*" and "*thus*" should not be understood, strictly speaking, as demonstrative indexicals playing a part in a certain kind of statements: they are intended to hint at the perceptual-attentional operation, characteristic of the subject's visual processes, where the subject latches on to objects and properties of her surroundings.

As far as I can see, it is quite plausible to combine the thesis that visual experiences have representational content with the claim that there is a sense of looks according to which a demonstratively identifiable object looks in a certain demonstratively identifiable way whenever the subject undergoes a visual experience. There are at least two reasons for claiming this.

First, a CV theorist might argue that visual experiences convey perceptual demonstrative contents to the subject and that such contents may be suitably captured by the schema "*That* (*there*) looks *thus*." Visual contents might be understood as a kind of content that, once embedded in a non-experiential belief, would constitute a propositional content of the form "*That* (*there*) is *thus*" (cf. Brewer 1999: ch. 6). I am not saying here that visual contents are propositional but that such contents (propositional or not) may be employed as the contents of certain empirical beliefs expressed by something like the afore-

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[12] Compare with a similar move made by Byrne (2009: 447-448).

mentioned propositional structure. Given this way of understanding visual contents, it seems natural to think that if a subject could index those contents by means of the ways things look, a good candidate for the indexing job would be a kind of looks schematized by means of the formula "*That* (*there*) looks *thus.*" Note that I do not treat the two schemata, "*That* (*there*) is *thus*" and "*That* (*there*) looks *thus*" as equivalent: the former stands for demonstrative perceptual contents and the latter for those looks that would allow the subject of experiences to ascribe contents to her own occurring visual experiences.

Visual contents and the stipulated sense of looks would be related as follows: whenever a subject of experiences undergoes a visual experience *E*, she should be able to ascribe a content to *E* by forming a simple perceptual belief that *that* looks *thus*. This belief-content would in turn express how the subject's perceptual-attentional capacities latch on to a perceived object and to the properties that such an object seems to instantiate according to the subject.

Second, I previously mentioned that the scope of what is visually manifest to the subject is quite limited — perhaps only to properties of color and shape — and it seems to me that a schema of the form "*That* looks *thus*" could suitably capture such a limitation. Although a subject may, for example, perceptually know that there is a bottle of milk in front of her, there is also a reasonable sense in which only basic properties of color and shape are manifest to her. Proof of this is that there could be a possible world in which things looked exactly the same, but the subject was not facing a bottle of milk. What this intuition suggests is that, if there are representational contents exclusively deriving from visual experiences, they should exclusively refer to the properties presented by such experiences. Accordingly, any method of content recognition or self-ascription should also point toward what is represented *by those experiences*. A sense of looks according to which, for any given occurring visual experience that a subject undergoes, she might recognize that *that* looks *thus*, appropriately ranges over the visible properties of objects.

Now, if there is a sense of looks such as the one just stipulated, it is worth asking whether the notion of d-looks could fulfill that role — in particular, whether d-looks might fulfill the role of indexing visual contents in the sense specified above. There is one respect in which there is an immediate match: both d-looks and the stipulated sense of looks exclusively range over visually demonstrable properties. As I have said, d-looks only refer to those properties of objects that the subject could, so to speak, target with her visual and attentional capacities. What a subject could thus recognize by means of d-looks would be the kind of representational information presented by visual experiences, and this kind of information alone. In other words, just like the stipulated sense of looks, d-looks reveal to the subject only what is visually manifest.

However, there is also a mismatch: d-looks involve relations of comparative resemblance that the stipulated sense of looks does not seem to involve. As I explained in section 2, d-looks answer to a sense of looks according to which *o* d-looks (like) *f* just in case the subject takes *o* to share one or more of the visually demonstrable properties possessed by *f*-objects in virtue of possessing *f*. But then, that *o* d-looks (like) *f* does not exclusively depend on what is visually manifest to the subject of experiences (i.e., the object she sees right now) but also on additional or extraneous information about properties that the subject takes other objects to instantiate. D-looks would thus betray the stipulated sense of looks, insofar as the stipulated sense drops the "additional information" requirement; when a subject's visual experience originates a belief that *that* looks *thus*, the subject does not seem to require anything else but what is presented by her experience in order to validate such a belief. For, assuming that visual contents are such that they could also be integrated into a belief-content of the form "*That* (*there*) is *thus*," this new sense of looks would allow the subject to recognize what is represented to her whenever her visual and attentional capacities focus on (or, so to speak, demonstratively latch on to) something that appears to have a certain color- or shape-property. No additional information is required for the subject's attentional latching on to something of her surrounding environment.

In spite of the previous remarks, d-looks could still match the stipulated sense of looks. Recall that d-looks involve relations of comparative resemblance and that resemblance is in turn a reflexive relation; that is to say, although it usually holds between two different items, it is also a relation that an item may bear to itself. For instance, a painting resembles its model, but it is perfectly consistent with the nature of the resemblance-relation that the painting may be said to resemble itself (even if it sounds trivial or idiomatically awkward). Accordingly, I think that one may distinguish a subclass of d-looks that rest on reflexive relations of resemblance: whereas non-reflexive d-looks are underpinned by a comparison between A's and B's apparent visually demonstrable features, where $A \neq B$, reflexive d-looks would be underpinned by apparent visually demonstrable properties of a single perceived object; the reflexive looks would involve a comparative relation between A's and B's apparent properties, where $A = B$.

The key point about reflexive d-looks is that they would not refer to the additional information on which standard (i.e., non-reflexive) d-looks do rely — that is, to the information that goes beyond what is visually manifest in the subject's occurring visual experience at hand. In virtue of this peculiarity, it is possible to square d-looks with the stipulated sense of looks according to which, as I said, any additional information seemed to be excluded. By drawing

a distinction between reflexive and non-reflexive d-looks, it is possible to pick out a subclass of d-looks that do not rely on such additional information. Hence, what seemed to avoid a full match between d-looks and the stipulated sense of looks is not problematic anymore. Reflexive d-looks, in conclusion, may fulfill the role of a sense of looks according to which, whenever a subject sees something X, the demonstratively identifiable X looks in a demonstratively identifiable way to the subject.

The intended sense of reflexive d-looks may be defined as follows:

(RDL)   For every visual experience of a subject S at a time t_n,
                    that d-looks *thus* to S
             if and only if:

> i. S's perceptual-attentional demonstrative *that* is dependent on S's perceptual and attentional capacities latching on to the object(s) S is seeing at t_n;
>
> ii. such an object looks some way to S at t_n;
>
> iii. the way such an object looks to S depends on the object's having a property to which the subject's perceptual-attentional demonstrative *thus* is latched on to;
>
> iv. the way that object looks to S does not conceptually rely on additional information over and above what is presently visually manifest to S at t_n.

RDL provides one way in which CV could solve the Indexing Problem. Namely, if visual experiences represent the way the subject's surroundings are, then the subject of such experiences is supposed to be capable of recognizing the corresponding representational contents or ascribing such contents to her own visual experiences. RDL settles the issue by giving the following recipe: whenever a subject of experiences S undergoes a visual experience E, she may ascribe a content to E by attending to the object and the apparent properties to which her perceptual-attentional capacities latch on to while she undergoes E; the outcome of this would be a content that may be expressed by the perceptual belief that *that* d-looks *thus*. This is my outline of a sense of looks by means of which a subject may recognize the representational content of her visual experiences — more specifically, a way in which visual contents may be looks-indexed.

The general idea of this section has been as follows. I have taken for granted that, if visual experiences have representational content, then this representational content may be a perceptual demonstrative content — that

is, one that could be expressed in a corresponding belief with the content *that* (*there*) is *thus*. If this is plausible, it is also plausible that the subject of experiences could recognize the content of her experience by means of a sense of looks that could likewise be captured in a belief with content of the form *that* (*there*) looks *thus*. Finally, I have contended that the role of such a stipulated sense of looks may well be fulfilled by what I have called reflexive d-looks. If all these steps are sound, then I have outlined a positive account of how d-looks may index visual contents.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have taken issue with Charles Travis's claim that d-looks cannot index visual contents, where indexing should be understood as a subject's capacity to recognize or self-ascribe representational contents for any given occurring visual experience. More specifically, my goal was two-fold. First, I have tried to clarify what Travis meant by the indexing and the looks-indexing talk. Second, I have attempted to undermine his objection against the looks-indexation of visual contents in two stages. On the one hand, I have shown that the argument underlying that claim was faulty and relied, as it were, on a notion of looks — that is, d-looks — that could actually index visual contents when correctly understood. On the other, I have used that sense of looks to outline a positive account of how looks, or the way things look to the subject, could index visual contents. If the contents of visual experiences are understood as perceptual demonstrative contents, a reflexive notion of d-looks could be well suited to provide the subject of experiences with a capacity to recognize what her experiences represent. If this line of reasoning is on the right track, I have presented a partial defense of CV to the extent that Travis's objection from d-looks does not succeed in undermining that account of visual experiences.

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