

The Phenomenal Use of 'Look' and Perceptual Representation

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Abstract

The article provides the state of the art on the debate about whether the semantics of 'look' statements commits us to any particular theory of perceptual experience. The debate began with Frank Jackson's argument that 'look' statements commit us to a sense-datum theory of perception. Thinkers from different camps have since then offered various rejoinders to Jackson's argument. Others have provided novel arguments from considerations of the semantics of 'look' to particular theories of perception. The article closes with an argument of this sort for a representational theory of perceptual experience.

1. Article Overview

In *Perception: A Representative Theory* (1977), Frank Jackson offers an argument for the view that perceptual experience is indirect that rests on an analysis of the logical form of 'look' statements outlined by Roderick Chisholm (1957). Jackson's particular proposal is that the semantics of 'look' statements offers support for the sense-datum theory. The sense-datum theory is a form of indirect realism in the sense that it holds that there is no direct link between the perceiver and the objects and features perceived. Instead, the perceiver stands in a perceptual relation to sense-data that represent objects and features in the environment. In a nutshell, Jackson's argument for this view is that phenomenal 'look' statements, which reflect the nature of perception, are best analyzed in terms of mental objects that are as they appear. These mental objects are the entities Jackson calls 'sense-data'.

The general claim that an analysis of 'look' statements can shed light on the nature of perception has been challenged from several different camps. The main counterarguments seek to establish that 'look' statements do not reflect the nature of perceptual experience. Here, I revisit some of these counterarguments after looking closer at the semantics for 'look'. I then look at more recent arguments for the view that the semantics of 'look' can offer insight into the nature of perceptual experience and conclude with an argument of this sort in support of a representational theory of perceptual experience.

2. The Semantics of 'Look'

2.1. CHISHOLM'S THREE USES OF 'LOOK'

'Look' statements (also known as 'look' reports) are utterances of sentences that contain the perceptual verb 'to look'. Consider the following:

- (1)
 - (a) Macaulay Culkin looks pale and fragile.
 - (b) It looks like the line segments in the Müller-Lyer illusion have different sizes.
 - (c) Michael Vicks looks ready to go.

- (d) A princess should always look like a lady.
- (e) Rita Rosina Verreos looks as if she is sick of coaching beauty pageants.
- (f) This looks like a really bad deal.
- (g) It looks as if Biden won't win in Delaware.
- (h) It looks like President Obama won again.
- (i) Watson, ranked 47, looks to have the better draw of the two British women as she starts against Romania's world number 89 (BBC).

Chisholm drew a distinction among three uses of 'appear words' – perceptual verbs such as 'seem', 'appear', and 'look' (Chisholm 1957: chap. 4): epistemic uses, non-epistemic uses, and comparative uses. Unlike statements containing epistemic uses of appear words, statements containing non-epistemic uses do not imply that the speaker believes or is inclined to believe that things are as they appear. As Chisholm puts it:

The locutions "x appears to S to be so-and-so" and "x appears so-and-so to S" sometimes do not imply that the subject S believe s, or is even inclined to believe, that x is so-and-so. I tell the oculist that the letters on his chart "now appear to run together" because both of us know that they do not run together. And when people point out that straight sticks sometimes "look bent" in water, that loud things "sound faint" from far away, that parallel tracks of ten "appear to converge," or "look convergent," that square things "look diamond-shaped" when approached obliquely, they do not believe that these things have the characteristics which they appear to have. In these instances "x appears so-and-so" does not mean that x is apparently so-and-so (1957: 44).

In the Müller-Lyer illusion, for example, the line segments look unequal, even if I know they are not (see Fig. 1). So, the locution 'the line segments appear to me to be of equal length' does not imply that the speaker is inclined to believe that the line segments are of equal length.

Chisholm's idea that locutions containing epistemic uses of appear words imply that the speaker believes or is inclined to believe that things are as they appear can be formulated in terms of subjective probability. We can say that when 'look' is used epistemically, the sentence conveys what is subjectively probable conditional on (total, total inner, total relevant, total relevant presented so far...) evidence. For example, if I hear on the radio that there will be flooding in our area, I might say, 'It looks like we ought to evacuate' in order to convey that we probably ought to evacuate.

We can take it to be a definitive mark of epistemic looks that they go away in the presence of a defeater if the agent is rational. For example, if an NPR reporter announces that the earlier flooding announcement was a hoax, it no longer will look to me as if we ought to evacuate.

When appear words are used comparatively, the locutions in which they occur imply that a thing appears the way relevantly similar things appear under certain contextually specified circumstances. As Chisholm puts it:

When we use appear words comparatively, the locution

x appears to S to be...

and its variants may be interpreted as comparing x with those things which have the characteristic

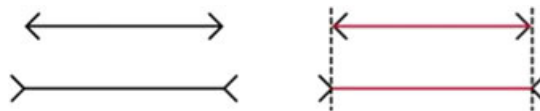


Fig 1. The Müller-Lyer Illusion: In this illusion, you believe the lines are of the same length, but no matter how long you look, you continue to experience them as being of different length.

that *x* is said to appear to have. A more explicit rendering of such locutions, therefore, would be something like this:

x appears to S in the way in which things that are...appear under conditions which are...

The way in which we should complete the reference to conditions in the second part [of] this locution varies, depending upon the conditions under which the appear sentence is made (1957: 45).

For example, under Chisholm's comparative reading, 'x looks like a pig' may mean 'x looks the way pigs may normally be expected to look'.

Non-comparative uses of 'look' are typically expressed using the locution 'x looks F', as in 'Lisa looks pale', 'that bear looks fluffy', and 'the poster looks rectangular'. While the latter can also be read comparatively, Chisholm's non-comparative and non-epistemic reading is supposed to reflect directly how things are presented in perceptual experience. Jackson (1977) dubs the non-comparative and non-epistemic use the 'phenomenal use'.

Comparative and non-epistemic uses are not mutually exclusive. For example, I can say about the Müller-Lyer illusion that one line looks lengthwise like the other line. This use is not epistemic, as the look is not undermined by defeaters. So, some but not all comparative uses are epistemic (Brogaard 2013a). We can call comparative non-epistemic uses and phenomenal uses (in Jackson's sense) 'perceptual'.

The surface grammar of 'look' statements reveals whether the statement is *grammatically* comparative or non-comparative. For example, 'John looked pale' is grammatically non-comparative, whereas 'John looked like a ghost' is comparative. However, grammar does not reveal whether the meaning, or semantic value, of a 'look' statement is comparative or non-comparative (Chisholm 1957: 48; Jackson 1977: 33; Thau 2002: 230; Byrne 2009; Brogaard 2010). Consider the following:

(2) Michael Vick looks unwell but ready to go.

Although (2) is grammatically non-comparative, its meaning may well be comparative. Suppose, for instance, that Michael Vick looks pale and his muscles shrunken but that he's dressed in a team uniform. In these circumstances, (2) may be saying that Michael Vicks looks like someone who is sick and looks like someone who is ready to play a game. (2) then is semantically comparative even though it's grammatically non-comparative.

As grammatically comparative 'look' statements have a distinctly comparative structure, it is likely that they are structurally related to more familiar comparative sentences. Consider the following:

(3)

- (a) The KVLV-TV mast is taller than any other structure in the United States.
- (b) Tom is as silly as his mother was when she was a kid.
- (c) John dances almost like Michael Jackson.
- (d) Bill eats like a horse and behaves like a monkey.

On one plausible view of comparatives, comparative sentences contain so-called 'wh'-items in the sentence structure (Heim 2006). For the present purposes, a 'wh'-item can be taken to be an unexpressed constituent that refers to what Heim calls 'degrees', which is a technical term that refers to abstract quantities like heights, lengths, temperatures, and degree of being rich or beautiful, 3(a), for example, can be read as, 'The KVLV-TV mast is taller than any other structure is wh', which has the truth condition:

There is a height *x* such that *x* is the KVLV-TV mast's height, and *x* is greater than the height *y* of every other structure.

Grammatically comparative 'look' statements can be analyzed in a similar way. 'John looks like Michael Jackson', for example, can be read as 'John looks like Michael Jackson looks like wh', which has the truth condition:

There is an x such that x is how Michael Jackson looks, and John looks x .

In these cases, context restricts the relevant domain for the quantifiers. Suppose both Michael Jackson and John look short. That's not sufficient for John to look like Michael Jackson. If, on the other hand, they both seem to have a distinctive facial profile, that may suffice to make the statement true.

As this analysis of comparative 'look' statements makes unreduced appeal to the notion of 'look x ', it is not meant to provide a complete answer to the question of how to assign truth conditions to the underlying linguistic forms. Because 'look x ' can be perceptual or epistemic, the truth conditions for grammatically comparative 'look' statements are parasitic on the truth conditions for grammatically non-comparative perceptual and epistemic 'look' statements.

2.2. 'LOOK' AS A SUBJECT-RAISING VERB

Appear words, such as 'to appear', 'to seem', and 'to feel', uncontroversially function semantically in the same way as 'to prove', 'to turn out', and 'to strike (me)', which are so-called subject-raising verbs (Postal 1974). Subject-raising verbs are verbs that allow a noun phrase with no semantic relation to the verb to become the subject of the verb. For example, in 'it seems that Deena was pleased', the subject 'Deena' can be raised to the front of the sentence to result in the equivalent sentence 'Deena seemed pleased'. As we will see below, there is some reason to think that 'look' functions in this way, too. If it does, then there is reason to treat phrases like 'it looks like/as if' as sentential operators. The idea that 'look' is a sentential operator plays a role in some of the arguments for and against particular theories of perception presented below, particularly Mike Martin's and Kathrin Glüer's.

Subject-raising verbs, like copular verbs (e.g., 'to be' and 'to become'), join the sentence subject with an adjectival or infinitive complement, as in:

- (4)
- (a) Deena seemed pleased.
 - (b) Tom turned out to be a liar.
 - (c) Publishing in the top journals proved to be difficult.
 - (d) Ron's students felt good about their papers.

Some subject-raising verbs also function as transitive verbs, as in:

- (5)
- (a) John (eagerly) proved the theorem.
 - (b) Erin (enthusiastically) tasted the soup.

When these verbs function as transitive verbs, they describe acts or actions of the referent of the semantic subject. When they function as intransitive raising verbs, they describe a passive experiential or epistemic state of an implicitly or explicitly mentioned perceiver. Consider the following:

- (6)
- (a) Elinor seems aggravated.
 - (b) The tomato appears to be rotten.

The sentences in (6) describe a passive experiential or epistemic state of the speaker.

Subject-raising verbs are followed by adjectives or infinitive clauses rather than adverbs, as can be seen from the fact that the 'to be' of the infinitive clauses, when included, takes an adjectival complement rather than an adverbial complement:

- (7)
 (a) John was found (to be) missing.
 (b) Susan turned out (to be) guilty.

Hence, while the complements of raising verbs can be modified by adverbs, as in 'extremely beautiful', they cannot themselves be adverbs or 'to be' plus adverbial clauses.

On the face of it, sentences with subject-raising verbs have the same grammatical structure as sentences containing intensional verbs such as 'want', 'hope', and 'wish', as in 'John wants to be happy'. However, upon further scrutiny, the similar structure of these sentences is an artifact of surface grammar. The 'want' and 'seem' sentences in question have the underlying forms:

John wants [John to be happy.]
 Seems [John to be happy.]

In 'John seems happy', the subject 'John' is the surface grammatical subject of 'seems', but it is the semantic subject of 'to be happy'. In the transformation of deep grammar into surface grammar, 'John' becomes raised to become the subject of 'seems'. The subjects of raising verbs thus have no semantic relation to the raising verbs. Rather, they are associated with the infinitive predicate or the verb of the embedded clause. For example, in 'the apple seems red', the subject 'the apple' is associated with 'red', and in 'John seems to prefer red wine', the subject 'John' is associated with the verb 'prefer'.

2.3. THE COPULAR VERB CHALLENGE

In previous work, I have argued that 'seem', 'look', and 'appear' all function as subject-raising verbs (see, e.g., Brogaard 2013b). Benj Hellie (2013) offers some considerations against this claim. According to Hellie, the appear words 'look', 'feel', 'taste', 'smell' and 'sound' are copular verbs just like 'be' and 'become'. If this is correct, then it would seem that 'it looks like/as if' should not be treated as a sentential operator. If this is indeed the case, then that would seem to undermine the arguments below that rest on this semantic feature of 'look'. It is plausible, of course, that the arguments presented below could simply be formulated in terms of 'seem' or 'appear'.

Copular verbs take an adjectival predicate as its syntactic complement, as in:

- (8)
 (a) Andrea is/becomes/looks tall.
 (b) Kim is/becomes/looks similar to a cat.
 (c) Luke is/becomes/looks like a dog.

The perceptual copular verbs, Hellie points out, resist taking 'that' clauses as their complements and only reluctantly take non-finite verb phrases (e.g., 'to have had a good time') as their complements. In this respect, they behave differently from subject-raising verbs, Hellie argues, witness:

- (9)
 (a) It appears/seems that Sam is running for office.
 (b) #It looks that Sam is running for office.

- (c) My shoes seem to have been left out in the rain.
- (d) ?My shoes look to have been left out in the rain.

Hellie takes this to suggest that the perceptual copular verbs do not operate syntactically on clauses but on predicates, which means that they do not operate semantically on propositions but on properties.

Hellie is right, of course, that 'look' does not take 'that' clauses as its complement. However, this observation need not support different semantical treatments of 'look' and 'seem'. One could treat this behavior of 'look' as an irregularity of the verb.

The main reasons for thinking that 'seem', 'look', and 'appear' belong to the same word class can be summarized as follows:

- (i) *Etymology*: 'Seem' originated from the older 'beseon', which means 'be seen'. 'Beseon' functions as a subject-raising verb. 'Look' originated from 'locian', which occurred in the same syntactic positions as 'beseon'. This suggests that 'look' and 'seem' belong to the same word class (Brogaard 2013b).
- (ii) *Transitive forms*: As we have seen, 'look', like most uncontroversial subject-raising verbs, can also function as a transitive verb. Consider:

(10)

- (a) John looked (shy, shyly) at Mary.
- (b) Jane (reluctantly) tasted the curry.
- (c) Adrian (enthusiastically) believed everything Mathias said.
- (d) Matt (willingly) proved him guilty.

Unlike subject-raising verbs, quintessential copular verbs, such as 'be' and 'become', do not split up into transitive and intransitive verbs.

- (iii) *Unraised forms*: In its unraised form, 'look' occurs syntactically in many of the same positions as 'seem' and 'appear'. Consider the following:

(11)

- (a) It looks/seems/appears as if Gerard Depardieu will be able to live in France after all.
- (b) It looks/seems/appears like Shakira's baby could arrive any day now.

The suggestion that we shouldn't give too much weight to the irregularities of 'look' that Hellie cites is at least partially supported by the observation that 'seem' and 'appear' don't function exactly like most other subject-raising verbs either. Compare the following:

(12)

- (a) Karen strikes me as guilty (Postal 1974: 358).
- (b) A Macbook was reported stolen.
- (c) Patrick was assumed dead.
- (d) Some 85% of the childrens' writing was deemed outstanding.
- (e) Angie was expected to arrive on time.
- (f) Kate is believed to have stolen two iPods.
- (g) Frank was seen eating a burrito.

(13)

- (a) Karen seemed guilty.
- (b) Frank appeared to have been eating a burrito.

In the raised forms in 12(b)–(g), a copular verb precedes the subject-raising verb. This is not so in the raised forms in (13). 'Strike' functions differently from most other raising verbs. Irregularities like these are to be expected in a language that constantly develops and adopts words from other languages.

3. Phenomenal Looks and Theories of Perception

3.1. JACKSON'S ARGUMENT

In *Perception: A Representative Theory* (1977), Jackson argues that attention to the logical form of 'look' reports offers evidence for the view that perceptual experience is fundamentally indirect: There are intermediaries between perceptual experiences and the world. When we see things in the environment, we see them in virtue of perceiving something else. On Jackson's view, the things that we perceive without having to perceive something else are sense-data. Jackson thought that sense-data are something we literally perceive and the only things we are directly perceptually aware of.

Jackson's main argument rests on the premise that there is a non-comparative use of 'look' that is used to report directly on perceptual experience. Jackson calls this use 'the phenomenal use'. His main argument runs as follows. If it is true to say that something looks a particular way, then there is a corresponding phenomenal look that the thing has. The phenomenal look that the thing has really is the way it seems. External objects are not always the way they seem. So, phenomenal looks are distinct from external objects. Since we can only be directly perceptually aware of things that seem the way they are, and only appearances seem the way they are, we are directly perceptually aware of how the external object looks and not the external object itself. Jackson goes on to argue that since phenomenal looks cannot be analyzed in terms of belief, they are best analyzed in terms of special kinds of mental object called 'sense-data'. Phenomenal looks are thus mental objects that have the properties they appear to have. It is those mental objects that we are directly aware of in perception. We can summarize Jackson's argument as follows:

Jackson's Argument

1. We are only directly perceptually aware of things that seem the way they are.
2. External objects need not seem the way they are.
3. Phenomenal looks seem the way they are.
4. So, what we are directly perceptually aware of is not the external object but how the external object looks phenomenally.
5. Phenomenal looks cannot be analyzed in terms of beliefs but must be analyzed in terms of sense-data.

Conclusion: So, we are directly perceptually aware of sense-data.

Jackson grants that it is not true in general that when we truly say that a thing looks a certain way, then there is a corresponding phenomenal look that the thing has. For example, the truth of the comparative claim that Lisa looks like her sister does not imply that there is a corresponding phenomenal look that the things has. There may be a phenomenal look in virtue of which Lisa looks like her sister, but the comparative construction does not specify what that is. Although it is not true in general that 'look' statements specify a phenomenal look, it is true for a highly restricted range of predicates and for a special sense of 'look', viz. the phenomenal sense. Jackson's argument thus presupposes that there is a narrow phenomenal use of 'look'.

Michael Thau (2002), Alex Byrne (2009), Mike Martin (2010), and others have argued that there is no genuinely phenomenal use of 'look'. Martin (2010) explicitly grants that

there are both non-comparative and comparative uses of 'look'. But he argues that there is no narrow phenomenal use of 'look', in Jackson's sense. Looks are states of objects that we associate with a kind of object. These states are constituted by observational properties, such as *being cubic*. There is a necessary coincidence between having a look of a property and having that property, for the case of visible objects (p. 206). When we report on the look of a thing, however, we may not be commenting on the objective look of a thing. We may simply be saying how an object 'strikes us visually' (p. 215). For example, if I say that a stick half immersed in water looks bent, I may simply be saying that it strikes me the way bent objects normally strike us. Thus, the look of the stick is associated with the characteristic psychological state associated with the look for bent things. The stick is similar to bent things simply in terms of how it strikes me.

As we have seen above, however, comparative 'look' statements likely make unreduced appeal to non-comparative looks. So, on the comparative reading, 'the stick looks bent' can be analyzed as, 'There is an *x* such that *x* is how bent sticks look, and the stick looks *x*'. On Martin's analysis, this amounts to saying that the stick has certain observational properties that bent sticks also have. It seems that the property that the stick would need to have to be similar to bent sticks would be the property of striking me in a certain way. But the property of striking me in a certain way is not an observational property. It is not a property things can look to have. The only relevant property here is that of being bent. Yet the stick doesn't have that. As the way the stick looks cannot be an observational property of the stick, it must be a property of a mental object or a constituent of a mental content. The use of 'look' that occurs in the comparative claim is thus very similar to Jackson's phenomenal use. A further problem arises for Martin's semantic analysis of 'look'. He argues that the semantic analysis of 'look' supports his claim that looks are observational properties. However, as we have seen, it is plausible that 'look', like 'strike', functions as a subject-raising verb, which suggests that looks are psychological states rather than observational properties of objects.

Thau (2002) and Byrne (2009) argue that all uses of 'look' may be implicitly semantically comparative, even if they are grammatically non-comparative (see also Travis 2004: 70–75).¹ Byrne, however, adds that even if there are no semantically non-comparative uses of 'look', this doesn't show that 'look' statements are irrelevant to the nature of perception. 'Look' statements may convey how things look in a conversational context. For example, 'Peter looks Scandinavian' may convey that Peter has the stereotypical Scandinavian bodily features (tall and straight stature, straight blond hair, small nose, pale skin, etc.). That is, a 'look' statement may convey non-comparative, non-epistemic looks.

Although Byrne rejects the view that there is a phenomenal use of 'look' in a narrow sense, what he says about the non-comparative, non-epistemic looks that may be conveyed by 'look' statements could be turned into an argument for a phenomenal use of 'look'. Surely, we can express at least some of the propositions conveyed by 'look' statements using the locution 'look'. For example, 'Peter looks Scandinavian' may convey the proposition that his skin looks pale. But the 'look' in 'looks pale' is used phenomenally here.

Another argument for a semantically non-comparative (phenomenal) use of 'look' can be found in Chisholm (1957). If 'look yellow' is given a comparative reading, 'yellow things look yellow in daylight' is an analytic truth. It says 'things that are yellow look the way things that are yellow look', which is trivially true. If, on the other hand, 'look yellow' is given a non-comparative reading, then 'yellow things look yellow in daylight' is a synthetic truth. Even before she started studying neuroscience and physics Frank Jackson's Mary knew that in daylight yellow things look the way yellow things look. But she didn't know that yellow things looked non-comparatively yellow. This argument offers some support for a

semantically non-comparative, phenomenal use of 'look'. But if there is such a use, then the standard case against Jackson's argument is unsound.

Charles Travis (2004, 2013) is sometimes taken to deny, or fail to recognize, that there are non-comparative non-epistemic looks (see, e.g., Byrne, 2009). However, his position may be more accurately interpreted as the view that non-epistemic looks fail to specify a determinate representational content. Since his only examples of non-epistemic uses of 'look' are comparative, it may seem that he reaches this conclusion by setting aside any potential phenomenal uses of 'look'. His point, however, seems to be that uninterpreted phenomenal appearances cannot determine a unique representational content. So, perceptual experience does not have a unique representational content, independently of the agent's higher epistemic states. One way to respond to this kind of argument is to argue that certain perceptual inferences go into producing phenomenal looks but that these inferences are determined, not by rational principles, but by perceptual principles inherent to the perceptual system (see Pylyshyn, 1999).

3.2. THE PHENOMENAL LOOKS ACCOUNT OF PERPETUAL EXPERIENCE

Kathrin Glüer (2009, 2013) argues that perceptual experiences are special kinds of *beliefs* the contents of which are phenomenal looks. Glüer's view is akin to the theory of appearing, the view that perceptual experience fundamentally consists in one or more objects appearing a certain way to the subject (see, e.g., Langsam, 1997 and Alston, 1999).² However, there are differences. Defenders of the theory of appearing take perception to be directed at objects and do not allow that perception can have a proposition as its content. Glüer treats 'look' as an operator on propositional content, which is correct, if 'look' is a subject-raising verb and hence functions semantically as a logical operator.

One difficulty for the view that perceptual experience is belief is to explain cases in which we don't believe what we experience. As Chisholm argued, when we immerse a stick in water and it looks bent, we don't come to believe that it's bent. We know that it's not. Alex Byrne (2009) has argued that believing is 'constitutively involved' in perceptual experiences. According to him, we do indeed believe that the stick is bent on a very primitive level insofar as believing this is constitutively involved in having the experience. But on a more rational level, we do not believe the stick is bent.

Glüer's view implies that perceptual experiences and other beliefs have different contents. When we have a perceptual experience, things look a certain way to us. Glüer takes these looks to constitute the content of perceptual experience. If I am looking at a blue car, and the car looks blue to me, then the content of my perceptual experience is 'look (the car is blue)', where 'look' is an operator on the embedded material. When I look at the stick in the water, I come to believe that it looks bent, but I don't come to believe that it is bent.

Glüer considers and replies to a potential problem for her appearance account of perceptual experiences. One counterargument to this sort of view is this. The phenomenal notion of look cannot be used to specify the very content of visual experience because 'look' is a propositional attitude operator and thus cannot occur in the content of any first-order propositional attitude. Glüer calls this the 'attitude operator argument'. The argument can be summarized as follows:

The Attitude Operator Argument

1. Perceptual experience is a first-order propositional attitude.
2. If perceptual contents contain 'look' operators, then perceptual experience is not a first-order propositional attitude.

Conclusion: perceptual contents do not contain 'look' operators.

There is some evidence to support premise 1: Second-order propositional attitudes are not typically considered perceptual states. For example, most views of perception would hold that you cannot perceptually experience having a belief or a desire. Having a perceptual experience of a belief or a desire would count as introspection, not perception. Glüer rejects premise 2. 'Look', she argues, is not a propositional attitude operator. So, perceptual contents can be first order, even if they contain a 'look' operator. The reason, she argues, is simple: Propositional attitude operators create hyperintensional contexts. 'Look' does not. So, 'look' is not a propositional attitude operator:

Glüer's Counterargument

1. If Φ is a propositional attitude operator, then it creates a hyperintensional context.
2. 'Look' does not create a hyperintensional context.

Conclusion: 'Look' is not a propositional attitude operator.

The first premise in Glüer's reply is relatively uncontroversial: If an operator is a propositional attitude operator, it generates hyperintensional contexts. For example, Lois Lane hopes Superman loves her but she doesn't hope that Clark Kent does. On the traditional view of names, 'Clark Kent' and 'Superman' are necessarily co-extensional. Since we cannot substitute 'Clark Kent' for 'Superman' in 'Lois Lane hopes Superman loves her', 'hope' is a hyperintensional operator. The premise in need of justification is the second one, viz. the premise that 'look' does not create hyperintensional contexts. It is at least initially plausible that 'look' does elicit hyperintensional contexts. Consider the following:

(14)

- (a) It looks to Lana Lang as if Superman is flying by.
- (b) It looks to Lana Lang as if Clark Kent is flying by.

'Superman' and 'Clark Kent' are co-referential but substituting one for the other appears to elicit a change in truth value. This indicates that 'look' generates a hyperintensional context. However, Glüer thinks this appearance is illusory. 'Look', she says, satisfies the following principle:

Substitution Principle

Co-phenomenal expressions can be substituted *salva veritate* in 'look' contexts.

I take it that Glüer takes co-phenomenal expressions to be expressions that refer to entities that look the same to a perceiver in normal viewing conditions. The substitution principle implies that if two expressions are not co-phenomenal, then substituting one for the other will change the truth value of a sentence. Glüer notes that the Superman look is very different from the Clark Kent look. So, 'Superman' and 'Clark Kent', though co-referential, are not co-phenomenal. Glüer then argues that it follows from this that 'look' contexts are not hyperintensional.

One could question this latter inference. Ordinarily, an operator is defined as hyperintensional just in case substituting an expression for a logically (or metaphysically) equivalent expression under the operator changes the truth value of the whole. If this is also the criterion for evaluating the hyperintensionality of 'look', then 'look' is hyperintensional despite satisfying the substitution principle.

However, there might be an independent problem with the second premise of the attitude operator argument:

Premise 2

If perceptual contents contain 'look' operators, then perceptual experience is not a first-order propositional attitude.

This premise appears to rest on the assumption that hyperintensional operators are propositional attitude operators. This latter assumption, however, is mistaken. Fictional operators, such as 'according to the Sherlock Holmes stories', are hyperintensional, yet they are not propositional attitude operators. So, if premise 2 is true, then it is not because 'look' is hyperintensional. For the Attitude Operator Argument to be effective against Glüer's position, then, one would need to show on independent grounds that 'look' operators are propositional attitude operators.

3.3. ARGUMENTS FOR REPRESENTATIONAL VIEWS OF PERCEPTION

A now fairly standard argument from the phenomenal use of 'look' to a representational view of perception rests on the assumption that 'look' statements, in the phenomenal use, reflect the content of perception (see Travis 2004 for an overview; see also Siegel, 2010). The idea is this: The phenomenal looks expressed by the phenomenal use of 'look' uniquely determine a representational content, which just is the content of the perceptual experience that accompanies the phenomenal look. However, even if we accept that phenomenal looks determine a unique representational content, the question arises why we should think that that content is the content of perceptual experience.

One possibility is to say that phenomenal looks, perceptual seemings, and perceptual appearances just are perceptual experiences. One consideration against this possibility, however, comes from speckled hen cases (see Brogaard 2013b). In most cases in which I have an experience of a speckled hen with 57 specks, it may seem to me that there is a speckled hen, but it does not seem to me that there is a hen with 57 specks. If I decide to count the specks and come to the conclusion that the number of specks is 57, then it does seem to me that the hen has 57 specks, but this is likely an epistemic look rather than a phenomenal look. As I can have an experience of a speckled hen with 57 specks without it looking like the hen has 57 specks, it's not the case that experiences and phenomenal looks are the same thing.

Here is another consideration. In some of the more sophisticated cases of change blindness, a small change in presented images goes unnoticed even after a systematic, visual search of the image. It is likely that when we deliberately apply attention in a systematic visual search, the change is indeed experienced. Yet until we notice the change, it would be false to say that it looks like there is a change in the image. So, we can have an experience of something without having a corresponding phenomenal look.

However, those who believe that there are phenomenal looks in a narrow sense need not take looks to be either the content of perceptual experiences or identical to perceptual experience. There is a further option, which is that of taking phenomenal looks, perceptual seemings, and perceptual appearances to be states of the mind that are distinct from perceptual experiences (Brogaard 2013a). Certain discriminatory selective capacities, we might say, are required in order for a certain state of phenomenal look to obtain. If this is

so, then the semantics of 'look' statements would appear to be irrelevant to the nature of perceptual experience.

There is, however, possible routes from the semantics of 'look' statements to particular theories of perceptual experience that do not rest on the assumption that phenomenal looks are either the content of perceptual experiences or identical to perceptual experiences. Here is one such argument:

Grounding Argument

1. Some phenomenal looks are grounded in perceptual experience
2. If a phenomenal look is grounded in perceptual experience, then perceptual experience has content.

Conclusion: Perceptual experience has content.

Susanna Siegel (2010) distinguishes between weak and strong perceptual content. On the weakest acceptable formulation of the view that perceptual experience has content, perceptual contents are the accuracy conditions properly conveyed to the subject. If we take looks to be a means of conveying accuracy conditions to a subject, we can articulate this idea as follows:

Weak Content View

Experience *e* has the proposition *p* as a content if

- (a) it phenomenally looks as if *p* to the subject of *e*, and
- (b) necessarily if *e* is accurate, then *p* is true.

We can, then, define 'grounding' as follows:

Grounding

Phenomenal look *L* is grounded in perceptual experience *e* if *L* arose from *e*, and necessarily, if *e* is accurate, then *L* is accurate.

Let's take a phenomenal look to arise from an experience when the phenomenal look is non-derivatively caused by the perceptual experience. Suppose I have a perceptual experience as of *that* being bright, and suppose that this gives rise to the phenomenal look that *that* is bright. Then, it is necessarily the case that if my experience is accurate, then the phenomenal look is accurate. So, premise 1 in the grounding argument is true: Some phenomenal looks are grounded in perceptual experience. Premise 2 is true as well. In the envisaged scenario, conditions (a) and (b) in the antecedent of the Weak Content View are satisfied. So, the consequent is true: My experience has the proposition *p* (*that is bright*) as a content.

There is a further possible route from the weak content view to a representational (or strong) content view. The representational content view says that it's a fundamental feature of perceptual experience that it has representational content, i.e., content that is suitable to serve as the content of a propositional attitude (Searle 1983: 43; Peacocke 1983: 5; cf. Byrne 2009, Siegel 2010).

Representational Content View

Experience *e* has the proposition *p* as a content if it's a fundamental feature of *e* to represent that *p* is the case.

Fundamental features of an experience must explain or account for its epistemological, functional, and phenomenal features (Logue 2013). One argument for the representational view runs as follows (Brogaard 2013b; see also Logue 2013):

The Argument from Epistemic Role

1. If an aspect of the epistemic role of perceptual experience requires that experience represents the environment as being a certain way, then the representational content view is true.
2. An aspect of the epistemic role of perceptual experience requires that experience represents the environment as being a certain way.

Conclusion: The representational content view is true.

Premise 1 follows from what it is for an attribute to be fundamental. Fundamental features of an experience must explain or account for its epistemological role. Here is an argument for premise 2: At least some perceptual experiences automatically give rise to phenomenal appearances (e.g., the experience that *that* is bright automatically gives rise to the appearance that *that* is bright.) But this raises the question of why perceptual experiences give rise to particular perceptual appearances and not others. The most natural answer to this question is that perceptual experience is associated with a proposition that puts constraints on how things perceptually appear, which in turn puts constraints on what a subject believes: In most cases, the content of perceptual appearances is not significantly different from the content of the perceptual experiences that cause them. This is the main reason that perceptual appearances can serve as *prima facie* justification for beliefs. If my experience of something being bright frequently caused a perceptual appearance of something being square, then my perceptual appearance of something being square could not serve as *prima facie* justification for my belief that *that* is square. So, one epistemic role of perceptual experience is to put constraints on the representational content of belief by putting constraints on how things perceptually appear. But experience can put constraints on the representational content of belief only if it's associated with a proposition that represents things as being a certain way. So, an aspect of the epistemic role of perceptual experience requires that experience is associated with a proposition that represents the environment as being a certain way.

4. Conclusion

The debate about whether the semantics of 'look' statements entails any commitments with respect to the nature of perception is far from settled. However, there is some reason to think that phenomenal looks may play a role in an argument for a representational view of perceptual experience. As Schellenberg (2013) and Logue (2013) point out, however, an argument for a representational view of perceptual experience does not by itself establish that perceptual experience is not also fundamentally a matter of being perceptually related to the objects and features presented in the experience.

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Short Biography

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Endnotes

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¹ More precisely, Byrne (2009) comes close to holding this view but remains non-committal about whether, say, 'look Scandinavian' and 'look yellow' should be given the same analysis: Something can be as it non-comparatively looks when it non-comparatively looks Scandinavian/yellow without being Scandinavian/yellow.

² Langsam argues that nothing appears in a certain way to the subject in the case of hallucinations. Alston says that a mental image appears a certain way in hallucinations.

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