

How emotions are perceived

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(penultimate draft)

Abstract. This paper claims that we have direct and complete perceptual access to other people’s emotions in their bodily and behavioural expression. The claim is understood, not by analogy with the perception of three-dimensional objects or physical processes, but as a form of Gestalt perception. In addition, talk of direct perceptual access to others’ emotions is shown not to entail a behaviourist view of mind; and talk of complete perceptual access is shown to include both the phenomenological character and the dispositional nature of emotions.

Keywords: behaviourism, deceit, disposition, expression, Gestalt, phenomenology, suppression

1. Introduction

A debate is taking place in contemporary philosophy regarding our access to other people’s minds. As it is generally acknowledged that such access is sometimes a matter of inference, the bone of contention is whether on some occasions there is direct perceptual access to other minds. Talk of directly perceiving other minds can be a pleonasm, in which case it is equivalent to talk of perceiving, as opposed to inferring, other people’s mental lives. A pleonastic use may well be sufficient for some contemporary purposes. But not here, as the aim is to discuss an issue internal to the perceptual model – namely, whether there is ever direct rather than mediated perceptual access to other people’s minds. This paper contends that there is.¹

Arguably, a direct perceptual model was endorsed by Max Scheler and Edith Stein. In Scheler’s famous words, we are “directly acquainted with another person’s joy in his laughter, with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched hands, with his love in his look of affection ...” and so on for other combinations of emotions and bodily-cum-behavioural features (1923/2008, p. 260). According to one reading of this, Scheler’s explicit point is that perception provides us with *direct* access to other people’s emotions; but beyond this, his implicit point is that perception provides us with *complete* access, too. For, as Scheler goes on to state, in the examples under consideration one is perceptually presented (for instance, visually), not only with some bodily or behavioural feature (or features), but with the “expressive unity” (p. 262) or the “integral whole” (p. 261)

¹ Some related contemporary discussions in social cognition will not be considered here. One concerns an issue in cognitive architecture – namely, whether or not the sub-personal processes underpinning social cognition involve extra-perceptual components (see e.g. Gallagher 2008a, Zahavi and Gallagher 2008, and Gallagher 2015, on the perceptual side of the debate, and Herschbach 2008, Spaulding 2010, Lavelle 2012, Bohl and Gangopadhyay 2014, Carruthers 2015 and Bohl 2015, amongst others, on the non-perceptual side). Another concerns a developmental issue – namely, whether the perceptual skills involved in primary and secondary inter-subjectivity in early infancy are replaced by mindreading skills in adulthood, or whether the former are still the basic form of social cognition in adult life (see e.g. Gallagher 2008b, Zahavi 2011, Gallagher and Zahavi 2012, on one side of the debate, and Herschbach 2008 and Spaulding 2010 on the other).

of bodily-cum-behavioural feature and emotion. Similarly, Stein claims that on such occasions one is perceptually presented with the “unity of experience and expression” (1917/1989, p. 53); i.e. the unity formed by emotional experiences and their expression. The underlying idea here is that, by virtue of being perceptually presented with such “expressive unity” or “integral whole”, one attains not only direct, but also complete access to other people’s emotions.²

Scheler’s and Stein’s texts are mentioned here as potential forebears of the main claim to be made in this paper – namely, that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people’s emotions in their expressive features. However, the focus is not on historical exegesis, but rather on defending the claim itself. A defence is needed, for the following two reasons. First, the claim is not immediately obvious. Thus, if access to other people’s emotions is a matter of perceptually noticing them in their bodily-cum-behavioural features, how can it be direct access? Moreover, how can there be direct perceptual access to other people’s emotions as a whole, including their phenomenology (what it is like for people to experience them) and their dispositional nature, when neither appears to be available to perception?

The second, related reason is that the claim has been denied by a number of contemporary philosophers, including some who favour a largely perceptual model. Here are some representative quotes:

“Some affective and other mental states are hybrid—and thus saying that we perceive aspects or components of some states directly is consistent with there being other aspects or components (i.e., inner psychological parts, neural substrate, phenomenological profile, etc.) that are not directly perceived. We clearly don’t have perceptual access to the totality of another’s mental life.” (Krueger and Overgaard 2012, p. 256)

“the visual presence of Sylvia’s happiness is less than full [...] happiness and excitement ... are not visually present to the full extent.” (Smith 2015, p. 278)

“the perception of the emotions of others must be indirect, proceeding via the perception of emotional expressions” (Smith 2018, p. 145)

“locutions [of] the form ... ‘perceiving the x in y’, as in ‘seeing the sadness in her eyes’ ... are not reports of directly seeing a mental state but of seeing it in some aspect or other of a person’s behaviour or anatomy.” (Parrott 2017, p. 1045)

In these four quotes, the last two deny that there is direct access to other people’s emotions, the second denies that there is complete access and the first makes the overall picture of the nature of emotions underlying such denials explicit. According to the latter, emotions are made up of several components, and although there is direct perceptual access to some of them, there is no direct perceptual access to others, or for that matter to the emotion as a

² Following Scheler, Stein and others, only emotions will be discussed here. For although the arguments of this paper can arguably be extended to other mental states, such a task will not be undertaken here. The reason is that, depending on the mental states under consideration, for the extension to work special difficulties not covered in this paper would need to be addressed. For example, in the case of beliefs: do they have typical expressions, and if so what are they? In the case of intentions: how does a non-relational conception of the expression of intentions in behaviour relate to a causal account of intentional action? And in the case of sensations: can their expression be articulated in terms of expressive episodes plus in-between periods, as in the case of emotions?

whole. Therefore, all that a perceptual model can provide is, at best, indirect and less-than-complete access to other people's emotions, thought of as the whole cluster of components.³

The aim of the paper is to argue against this view. Therefore, assuming from the outset that on occasion there is perceptual access to people's emotions in their expressive features, the core of the discussion will be concerned with the right way to construe this claim. According to a widespread view today, perceiving people's emotions in their expressive features is a matter of perceiving a connection between two sets of items: i.e. expressive features on the one hand, and the emotional whole on the other. Since only the expression of emotions is directly perceived, perceptual access to the emotional whole turns out to be at best mediated and less-than-complete. Contrariwise, according to the alternative to be defended here, perceiving people's emotions in their expressive features is a matter of perceptually noticing a Gestalt, which allows for direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions. The key difference between both construals is that what one is experientially presented with in Gestalt perception is not merely one component amongst several others, but rather the emotion itself – i.e., the emotion as a whole, as defenders of the cluster view would put it.

With this background in place, the plan of the paper is as follows. To begin with, the key idea that the perception of other people's emotions is a form of Gestalt perception is introduced and defended, in contrast with a model based on an analogy with the perception of three-dimensional objects and physical processes (section 2). Subsequently, the ensuing direct perceptual model is further reinforced by countering three objections that have been levelled against it; namely, that it entails a behaviourist conception of mind (section 3); that it fails to account for the phenomenological character of emotions (section 4); and that it also leaves out their dispositional nature (section 5).⁴

However, before executing this plan, some preliminary clarifications are in order. First, throughout the paper reference will be made to people's expressive features, or to the expressive features of emotions, thought of either as states or as processes by different theorists. Talk of people's expressive features and the expressive features of emotions shall be understood interchangeably, for people are the bearers of emotional states or processes, which are expressed (by them) in varying ways.

Second, since the manner in which emotions are expressed varies, all talk of expressive features must be understood inclusively, i.e. as comprising both linguistic and non-linguistic behaviour, as well as posture and facial and bodily gestures. In one sense of the word, these can be taken to be forms of behaviour, in which case talk of expressive features could be replaced with talk of expressive behaviour throughout the paper. However, in another sense of the word, behaviour is what one does intentionally, as opposed to what happens to one, which means that e.g. blushing does not count as behaviour, although it counts as an expressive feature (for instance, of shame). To avoid confusion, talk of expressive features is

³ A cluster view of emotions is often the implicit, if not the explicit, backdrop to contemporary discussions of the perceptual model; see e.g. Green 2007, McNeill 2012 and Overgaard 2014.

⁴ According to a different objection, the direct perceptual model cannot account for our access to "complex emotions, such as guilt and shame, [which] are not associated reliably with any particular behaviors" (Spaulding 2017, p. 151). But if people express such emotions, which they do, the argument of the paper provides a rebuttal of this objection, too.

preferred here; for the topic is the expression of emotions, rather than intentions, which as stated earlier raises special difficulties.

Third, nothing in this talk of expressive features assumes that all bodily and behavioural features are expressions of emotions. For as noted by Austin (1946) amongst others, a distinction must be made between bodily and behavioural features that are symptoms or signs of emotions, and bodily and behavioural features that express or manifest emotions. As this is a well-established distinction (see Cassam 2007, chapter 5, for recent discussion), the paper acknowledges it from the outset, in order to focus on the way in which expressive bodily and behavioural features fit in a perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions.

Fourth, endorsing the claim that there is direct perceptual access to other people's emotions when their expressive features are perceptually encountered does nothing to undermine the claim that, on other occasions, access to others' emotions is a matter of inference. For instance, seeing broken crockery all over the kitchen floor, a police detective called to investigate an alleged case of domestic violence might infer that an angry discussion took place at the time of the crime. If the inference is sound, the detective gains access to someone else's emotion (i.e. anger), despite lacking perceptual access to their expressive bodily and behavioural features. The direct perceptual model to be defended below does not question this, but it is committed to denying that when one has perceptual access to other people's expressive features, one infers their emotions.

With these preliminaries out of the way, the main business of the paper can now begin in earnest.

2. Perceiving a Gestalt

It is agreed by all proponents of the perceptual model that access to other people's emotions is expressive access, for we perceive people's emotions in their expressive features. Hence, for current purposes talk of directly perceiving others' emotions should not be thought of in terms of telepathy, i.e. the ability to bypass other people's bodily and behavioural expression when gaining access to their emotional life. Instead, the issue needing clarification is whether talk of perceiving other people's emotions in their expressive features involves a direct or a mediated relation between the observer and the emotions of others, owing to the fact that access to the latter is expressive access.

As the quotes in the last section have made clear, some contemporary authors have construed the perceptual model in indirect terms. The reason lies in their conception of the expressive features accessed in perception, thought of by them as components of the emotion, considered as a whole. As a result, the perceptual model of our access to the emotional lives of others is likened to the perception of three-dimensional objects (e.g. Green 2007, 2010; Smith 2010; Krueger and Overgaard 2012; Glazer 2017). For, when perceptually presented with the facing side of a three-dimensional object, one is thereby perceptually acquainted with an object, though not the whole object (due to the existence of hidden sides). Hence, perceptual access to the object as a whole is mediated by the (direct) perception of only one part, i.e. its facing side. In applying this analogy to the perception of other people's emotions, expressive features play the role of the facing side of three-dimensional objects, in so far as direct perceptual acquaintance with them gives one indirect perceptual access to the emotional whole. In addition, in so far as emotions are thought of as clusters of components,

perceptual acquaintance with their expression provides one with less-than-complete perceptual access to the emotion as a whole, for other components of the cluster such as phenomenological character and dispositional nature are hidden from view. In this way, an analogy with the perception of three-dimensional objects makes the claim that there is indirect and less-than-complete perceptual access to other people's emotions rather persuasive. But should the analogy be endorsed?

A critical response has it that other people's emotions should be likened not to three-dimensional objects, but to processes (Stout 2010, 2012; Goldie 2012). At first sight, this looks like a sensible rejoinder, for many emotions evolve with time, and the analogy with three-dimensional objects risks neglecting this. Thus, grief is said to have stages, and anger can increase or decrease over time. This notwithstanding, the overall perceptual model remains largely unchanged, for it is still possible to argue that one is only perceptually acquainted with the expressive features of other people's emotions, thought of now as processes, whereas other features such as their phenomenological character and dispositional nature are hidden from view. Hence, if emotions are understood as clusters of components, rejecting the analogy with three-dimensional objects need not undermine the claim that there is indirect and less-than-complete perceptual access to other people's emotions.

Against this backdrop, the key question to ask is whether there is anything wrong with the claim that there is indirect and less-than-complete perceptual access to other people's emotions, itself a construal of the undisputed point that we perceive other people's emotions in their expressive features. The aim of the rest of this section is to argue that this construal fails to accommodate all the phenomenological data in play for a perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions.

The main phenomenological datum is that one perceives other people's emotions in their expressive features, but this is not all, for the said features are taken not in isolation from one another, but rather as a totality. Thus, to take one of Scheler's examples, we perceive joy in people's laughter, but not just in their laughter (or in a particular kind of laughter, to be precise); rather, we perceive joy in their laughter in conjunction with the rest of their facial features, such as their wrinkled and glowing eyes, as well as other bodily features like their generally relaxed posture. In addition, it is a datum that the larger context in which people are located contributes to the expressiveness of their bodily and behavioural features. To take another of Scheler's examples, we perceive sorrow in people's tears (and the rest of their facial and bodily features), but not all tears are sorrowful; for there are also tears of joy and tears that are not expressive of any emotion, as in the case of hay fever and other allergic conditions. In other words, depending on the context, tears can be expressive of a variety of emotions, or none at all. Summing up, the phenomenological data that must be accommodated by a perceptual model is that in perceiving other people's emotions in their expressive features, one perceptually takes in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context.⁵

⁵ Alternatively, one perceptually takes in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in their proper context. Proper, because not just any context will do. Thus, the teary eyes of hay-fever occur in a context, i.e. the suspension of certain particles in the surrounding air, but this is not the right kind of context for the tears to be emotionally expressive, unlike that in which tears of joy or sorrow happen at an award-giving party or a funeral service, respectively. From here onwards, this qualification must be read as given in all references to context in the perception of emotions.

Now, is this view of the phenomenological data detrimental to a construal of the locution “perceiving other people’s emotions in their expressive features” in terms of indirect and less-than-complete access? It seems not, for nothing in the locution appears to exclude the fact that one perceptually takes in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context. Yet, there is nothing in the construal either to make this a central quality of our perceptual experience of other people’s emotions. For the construal aims to illuminate the perceptual model of our access to others’ emotions with the analogy provided by either three-dimensional objects or physical processes, the perception of which is not centrally a matter of perceptually taking in a totality of features in context.

Let us consider some examples. According to Krueger and Overgaard (2012, p. 255), perceiving other people’s emotions in their expressive features is analogous to seeing an iceberg by seeing only the part that rises above water. According to Bar-On (2004, p. 298), it is analogous to seeing a tree by seeing only one of its attached branches (when the rest of the tree is out of view). But in these cases of object perception, one’s perceptual experience is independent of context: one sees an iceberg by seeing the tip of it, regardless of the surrounding background; and similarly for seeing a tree by seeing one of its attached branches. In addition, in these cases of object perception, one’s perceptual experience is not a matter of seeing a totality of features. Thus, seeing the branch is sufficient for seeing the tree, regardless of other properties of the rest of the tree (which are not seen). Similarly for the perceptual experience of seeing the iceberg by seeing the tip, regardless of other properties of the rest of the iceberg (which remain out of view under water). Therefore, when the locution “perceiving other people’s emotions in their expressive features” is construed by analogy with the perception of three-dimensional objects, the fact that one perceptually takes in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context is lost. Hence, the construal fails to do justice to the phenomenological data for a perceptual model of our access to other people’s emotions.

The difficulty is not eased by insisting that perceiving others’ emotions in their expressive features be likened to the perception of a process rather than an object. Thus, seeing the branch of a tree swing to and fro during a storm, one is perceptually acquainted with a process that takes place over a period of time, but one’s perceptual experience is not centrally a matter of taking in a totality of features in context. Thus, one can have the same perceptual experience regardless of the surrounding background and the other features of the tree (which are occluded from view). Therefore, whether the perception of other people’s emotions in their expressive features is likened to object or process perception, the difficulty remains that not all the phenomenological data are accommodated.

The moral is that a different construal of the locution “perceiving other people’s emotions in their expressive features” is needed. The suggestion to be pursued now is that it must be construed as Gestalt perception. The main idea here is that in Gestalt perception one takes in certain features, not in isolation from one another or their context, but rather as a totality in context. Therefore, Gestalt perception differs from the perception of three-dimensional objects or physical processes considered above, regarding both totality and context. Consider totality first. Ambiguous drawings provide nice examples of Gestalt perception, for to disambiguate the drawing, or to switch between its aspects, one must perceptually take in the totality of lines that make up the drawing. In the well-known example of the duck-rabbit, to see either the duck or the rabbit one must see certain lines as the duck’s beak (alternatively, the rabbit’s ears), but one cannot do so without simultaneously seeing some other lines as the back of the duck’s head (alternatively, the front of the rabbit’s head). Similarly, in Rubin’s

vase, to see either the facing profiles or the vase one must see some of the lines as facing noses (alternatively, as the middle of the vase), something one cannot do without simultaneously seeing some other lines as facing chins and foreheads (alternatively, as the bottom and the top of the vase, respectively). Therefore, unless one perceives a totality of related lines, one fails to perceive the existing Gestalt; in other words, one fails to have the perceptual experience of a Gestalt.

Ambiguous drawings are not the only examples of Gestalt perception. Thus, in the Kanizsa triangle, what accounts for the visual experience of a triangle, despite its absence, is that the lines and near-circles actually drawn are seen as mutually related; in other words, they are seen as a spatial totality. Similarly, what explains the Müller-Lyer illusion is that one sees a spatial totality made up of two equal parallel lines ending in arrows pointing in different directions, situated at a certain distance from one another. A further example is the phi phenomenon, in which the visual experience of movement is explained by one perceptually taking in a totality of spatially and temporally arranged dots, rather than individual dots one by one. Moreover, Gestalt perception is not only a visual phenomenon, for it is arguably what goes on in the auditory experience of a musical theme, in which a totality of temporally arranged notes is heard. Overall then, in Gestalt perception one takes in a totality of spatially or temporally organized features.

But there is more, for the totality of features one takes in perceptually is placed in a context. This is particularly clear with Rubin's vase, the disambiguation of which turns on seeing the light and dark sections of the drawing alternately as foreground and background, thereby seeing a vase (or two facing profiles) in context. Similarly, when the duck-rabbit is surrounded by several unambiguous drawings of ducks (or rabbits), the perceptual experience of a duck (or a rabbit) is facilitated. Likewise with the auditory experience of a musical theme, in which a totality of temporally arranged notes is taken in against a background of other notes or themes. Therefore, as claimed, the Gestalt taken in perceptually includes a context.⁶ Note that this conclusion cannot be faulted on the grounds that what the surrounding context does is simply prime one's perception, e.g. in the case of the duck-rabbit. For as normally understood, priming takes place when previous experience conditions current perception, whereas the unambiguous drawings of ducks or rabbits surrounding the duck-rabbit are being currently perceived.

The result is that if, unlike object or process perception, Gestalt perception involves taking in a totality of features in context, it provides a better model for the construal of the locution "perceiving other people's emotions in their expressive features", given the phenomenological data that a perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions must accommodate. Thus, as noted earlier, in cases of joy, one perceptually takes in a Gestalt that includes a particular kind of smile, wrinkled and glowing eyes, a generally relaxed bodily posture, certain linguistic expressions, and so on, in a context including relations to others and the environment; hence, one perceives a totality of features in context. For instance, it is a smile (and glowing eyes, and so on) in the presence of a dear friend, or on the occasion of a happy (and perhaps unexpected) turn of events. Similar examples can be provided for sorrow, anger and other emotions, in which different Gestalts are perceived. Therefore, to recap, perceiving other people's emotions in their expressive features is a form of Gestalt perception.

⁶ The examples used in the last three paragraphs are easily found on sites across the Internet. Visual evidence for the point about the duck-rabbit made in this paragraph can be obtained from Swoyer 2003.

This conclusion cannot be opposed by arguing that what the previous Gestalt examples in fact show is the trivial point that all perception is a matter of taking in a totality of features in context. For it is clear that seeing a tree by seeing only one of its attached branches, or seeing an iceberg by seeing the tip rising out of the water, are genuine cases of perception, despite the fact that neither the whole tree nor the whole iceberg are seen, which in turn distinguishes these cases from the Gestalt examples above. The crucial difference here is that, as noted earlier, three-dimensional objects have hidden sides (and if opaque, inner parts) that cannot all be perceived at the same time, unlike the Gestalt examples above. Similarly, although the attached branch of the tree and the tip of the iceberg are placed in a context, one could alter the context and still see the tree and the iceberg, when all that one sees (directly) is the branch or the tip. However, altering the context in the Gestalt examples above means losing the relevant perceptual experience (for instance, if the unambiguous drawings of ducks surrounding the duck-rabbit are replaced with drawings of rabbits, or if the differences between the lighter and darker sections in Rubin's vase are omitted). Therefore, object perception differs from Gestalt perception, and as a result the charge of triviality is averted.

In turn, construing the perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions as a form of Gestalt perception means that such perceptual access is neither indirect nor less-than-complete. For one thing, to think otherwise would be the result of wrongly modelling the perception of other people's emotions on the indirect and less-than-complete perception of three-dimensional objects or physical processes. For another, in Gestalt perception there is direct and complete experiential contact with the perceived Gestalt. To be sure, one sees the Gestalt by seeing certain elements (in our leading examples, some lines in a drawing), but elements and Gestalt are not two different sets of items, experientially speaking, unlike tree and branch or iceberg and tip. For one can see the branch without seeing the rest of the tree, and still see the tree (similarly for the iceberg and its tip); whereas one cannot see some of the lines in a Gestalt example, fail to see the totality in which they belong, and still see the Gestalt. Rather, when one sees the lines without seeing the totality, the content of one's perceptual experience changes; it is a set of lines, rather than a Gestalt, as shown by the description one would give of one's experience. Again, this differs from object perception, for whether or not the branch is attached to the tree, when one sees the branch without seeing the rest of the tree, one sees exactly the same, i.e. a branch (as the description of one's own experience would show). Therefore, even if the tree and iceberg cases are good examples of indirect and less-than-complete perception, Gestalt perception is not; and in so far as the perception of others' emotions in their expressive features is a form of Gestalt perception, the perception of people's expressive features provides us with direct and complete perceptual access to their emotions.

One objection to this is that Gestalt perception is a matter of inference from, say, certain lines to the Gestalt itself; hence, a matter of indirect, rather than direct perception. Thus, in the Kanizsa triangle, "the visual system 'infers' the presence of a triangle from the cues available" (Green 2010, p. 49). But in so far as this refers to the "processes underlying perception [which] need not be conscious, and need not be reflected in conscious experience" (Green 2010, p. 50), the main claim of this section is not undermined. For the claim that Gestalt perception is a matter of directly taking in a totality of features in context concerns the level of conscious experience, whatever else happens at the unconscious, sub-personal level at which the architecture of perception is mechanistically explained (what "the visual system" does). In this respect, to counter the claim that Gestalt perception supports a direct perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions, it is not sufficient to show that the underlying sub-personal

processes must be construed in inferential terms; rather, what must be shown is that Gestalt perception is, like the perception of a tree by seeing only one of its attached branches, a mediated affair. But this is precisely what has been argued against in the preceding paragraphs. Therefore, the objection is circumvented.

Another objection is that in so far as the perception of other people's emotions relies on contextual cues, prior knowledge and background information, it cannot be direct (Jacob 2001, p. 528; see also Stout 2010, p. 32 and Green 2010, pp. 51-2). But the objection misfires. For one thing, contextual cues belong to the totality being taken in perceptually without compromising directness, as in the examples considered earlier. For another, prior knowledge of a particular subject's expressive idiosyncrasies, albeit operational in the background, does not jeopardize the directness of perceptual access when taking in a perceptual Gestalt; on the contrary, it is what grounds the perceptual abilities being exercised. Similarly for background conceptual information, a point that in fact also applies to object perception. Thus, seeing one's computer in front of one in normal circumstances is a paradigmatic example of direct perception, and yet the perceptual ability being exercised on that occasion is underwritten by prior experience with computers and possession of the related concepts. Therefore, there is no objection from context and background information to the direct perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions.

In what follows, the claim that we have direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features will be defended from other objections; in particular the following three: first, that it entails a behaviourist conception of mind; second, that it leaves out the phenomenological character of emotions; and third, that it fails to account for their dispositional nature. As a result, the Gestalt nature of our perceptual access to other people's emotions will be further clarified.

3. Behaviourism

The claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features appears to be vulnerable to the charge of behaviourism (Jacob 2011, p. 531). For upholding the claim means that emotions and their bodily and behavioural expression cannot be treated as different sets of items; otherwise, perceptual access to the emotions would be mediated. But in turn, failing to treat emotions and their bodily and behavioural expression as different sets of items apparently entails a behaviourist conception of mind. To counter the charge, this section argues for the adequacy of a distinction between behaviour *simpliciter* and mind-full behaviour, for although the claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features entails the existence of mind-full behaviour, only a reduction of emotions to behaviour *simpliciter* justifies the charge of behaviourism. The details are explained next.

Behaviour is a broad notion that can be used in animate and inanimate contexts. Thus, not only talk of the behaviour of humans, animals and plants, but also of fluids, solids and gases in certain conditions, is perfectly meaningful. This broad notion includes human gestures and other forms of expression. Accordingly, it might be thought that expressive features are nothing but a species of the broader genus. This can be called a reductive view of expressive behaviour, for the latter is nothing over and above behaviour *simpliciter*, a broad notion that includes other animate and inanimate instances. If in addition it is claimed that emotions and their bodily and behavioural expression must not be treated as different sets of items, the

resulting view of the nature of emotions is a form of reductive behaviourism; for emotions turn out to be nothing over and above behaviour *simpliciter*. (For a defence, see Carnap 1932-33/1959 and Hempel 1935/1949.)

In order to oppose a reductive-behaviourist view of emotions, one can resist the claim that human gestures and other forms of expression are a species of the broader genus, i.e. behaviour *simpliciter*, and claim that they are an altogether different genus, instead. For, unlike behaviour *simpliciter*, human gestures and similar behaviour are qua gestures and behaviour, expressions of particular emotions. For example, some tears are as such expressive of sorrow, and therefore do not belong in the same genus as allergy tears, which lack emotional expressiveness. Importantly, this can be understood in either of two ways, depending on whether the expressiveness of gestures and the like is thought of in relational or non-relational terms. The precise claim of the paper is that it must be understood non-relationally. According to this, bodily and behavioural features are expressive of emotions, but the latter are not conceived as extra items; rather, they are intrinsic aspects of bodily and behavioural features. To mark the contrast with behaviour *simpliciter*, expressive behaviour non-relationally understood will be dubbed mind-full behaviour. Hence, the paper's anti-behaviourist claim is not the general claim that expressive behaviour is not behaviour *simpliciter* (which does not distinguish between the relational and non-relational conceptions of expression), but rather the more specific claim that expressive behaviour is mind-full behaviour (which excludes the relational conception). The reason to favour this anti-behaviourist strategy is that only a non-relational conception of expression guarantees that our access to others' emotions is a direct affair, due to the fact that expression is not being thought of as a relation to some other item. Rather, to perceive people's expressive features (in context) is to perceive the emotion that is their intrinsic aspect (of course, if one is suitably skilled, attentive and so on).⁷

A relational conception of emotional expression is often considered to be firmly rooted in the way we speak and think about emotions, which means that a non-relational conception is often regarded as a non-starter: either too revisionary, or worse still a form of grammatical confusion. Thus, if people furiously jump up and down, we call their behaviour an expression of rage, not rage. In doing so, ordinary language captures the simple truth that the same emotion could have been expressed in different ways at different times, which means that a distinction must be made between an emotion and its expression at a particular time. Therefore, ordinary language embodies a distinction that a non-relational conception threatens to obliterate; hence the charge of revisionism. In addition, if an emotional expression (e.g. someone's furiously jumping up and down) is the expression of an emotion (i.e. rage), a non-relational conception amounts to the nonsensical claim that something is an expression of itself; hence the charge of grammatical confusion. Let us consider these worries in turn.

To be sure, furiously jumping up and down at a certain time is not the same as being enraged. For one thing, at that time rage might have been expressed by furiously shouting abuse or by flinging one's arms about while bright red in the face, instead. For another, in addition to furiously jumping up and down at a certain time, rage might manifest itself in similar or

⁷ Similarly, behaviour expresses people's intentions, which can be thought of in relational or in non-relational terms. This covers acting out of anger, as well as from a desire for revenge. So, emotions figure among people's motives for action. But as stated earlier, a defence of the non-relational conception of the expression of intention is outside the scope of this paper.

different furious bodily features and behaviour at other times (such as in the future). Therefore, emotions are not to be confused with particular episodes of emotional expression at specific times. But a non-relational conception of expression does not fall foul of this confusion; so it cannot be regarded as revisionary of our ordinary ways of speaking and thinking about emotional expression. On the one hand, as already mentioned in section 1, emotions can be, and indeed are, expressed in numerous bodily and behavioural features. A non-relational conception is not a denial of this; rather, it is the view that the actual bodily and behavioural features that express an emotion at a certain time do so intrinsically. In other words, if certain bodily and behavioural features are the vehicles of an emotion at a particular time, the non-relational claim is that the emotion is then intrinsic to such vehicles (in context). On the other hand, as will be explained at length in section 5, a non-relational conception of expression can accommodate the distinction between a particular episode of emotional expression at a specific time and the dispositional nature of emotions, thought of as a temporally extended pattern. Ordinary language reflects this distinction in calling someone's furiously jumping up and down at a specific time an expression of rage, rather than rage. But in so far as the non-relational conception accommodates the distinction in terms of the difference between an expressive episode of rage and a temporally extended pattern, the charge of revisionism is avoided.

One of the sources of the charge is the appearance that such talk as tears of joy and jumping up and down with rage must be read relationally, owing to the fact that "of" and "with" play a relational function. But one must not assume that the prepositions play a relational function here, just because they do so in other contexts. What is clear is that the prepositions serve to specify the particular emotion being expressed (i.e. joy rather than sorrow in the case of tears; and rage rather than elation in the case of jumping). But if that is what they do, ordinary language is neutral between a relational and a non-relational conception: the former construes the specifying role of the prepositions relationally, and the latter does not. In particular, according to a non-relational conception, specifying the emotion being expressed is a matter of characterizing the precise nature of the tears and jumping involved; hence, it is a matter of an intrinsic aspect of the latter (in context).

Now, the neutrality of ordinary language means that its authority cannot be invoked to sustain a charge of grammatical confusion against the non-relational conception of expression. Indeed, furiously jumping up and down at a certain time is an expression of rage (more precisely, an expressive episode of rage), but from the non-relational viewpoint this does not entail the claim that an episode of emotional expression is an expression of itself. Thinking otherwise is the result of forcing a relational reading of the preposition "of" (similarly for "with") onto the non-relational conception, as follows: talk about the expression of rage (or tears of joy) must be read relationally, but according to the non-relational conception at any given time the rage is not an added item to the furious expression taking place then, so according to the non-relational conception the episode of furious expression at that time must be an expression of itself. What is wrong with this train of thought is the assumption that the emotion-specifying role of the preposition "of" in "expression of rage" must be read relationally: it can be so read, but in as far as it is not compulsory to do so, the non-relational conception avoids falling into the dubious (because nonsensical) claim that something is an expression of itself.

The result, then, is that something other than the appeal to ordinary language is needed to adjudicate between the relational and non-relational conceptions of expression, and therefore

between the alternative strategies mentioned earlier to avoid a reductive-behaviourist view of emotions. For this reason, the question to be asked now is: are there any grounds for preferring a non-relational conception of expression, and with it a direct perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions? The remainder of this section will argue that only a non-relational conception of expression provides us with the conceptual tools required for the intelligibility of cases of suppressed expression, which in turn renders it preferable to a relational conception. For obvious reasons, this will be labelled the argument from suppressed emotional expression. Here are the details.

Suppose for *reductio* that emotional expression were a matter of a relation between two sets of items, emotions (thought of as the whole cluster of components) on the one hand, and bodily and behavioural features on the other. (For current purposes, questions such as the exact nature or origin of the relation can be glossed over.) Now, if emotional expression were a relation between two sets of items, conceivably it could fail to obtain, not only occasionally but permanently.⁸ On the face of it, there is nothing particularly controversial about this, because standard cases of suppressed and deceitful expression are normally thought of as cases in which a relation between such items fails to obtain. Yet, there is danger nearby.

Consider standard examples of suppressed emotional expression under the circumstances assumed by the relational conception, to the effect that the relation could conceivably fail to obtain. *Ex hypothesi*, these are cases in which particular emotions are present in the absence of a relation to any bodily and behavioural features; for instance, cases in which the expression of sorrow, rather than some other emotion like shame, has been suppressed. Now, under these circumstances, the challenge for the defender of the relational conception is to provide the criterion for the presence of one particular emotion rather than another. On a relational conception, the criterion could not be the presence of some bodily and behavioural item, for all such features are missing. And yet, there must be one such criterion, as required by the fact that *ex hypothesi* these are cases in which particular emotions are present, though unrelated to any bodily and behavioural features.

Talk of a criterion for the presence of one particular emotion rather than another can be meant epistemically or metaphysically. If it were meant epistemically, the challenge would be to specify a way to recognize the presence of one emotion, as opposed to others. But here it is meant metaphysically, so the challenge is to provide informative conditions of identity for what the presence of one emotion (for instance, sorrow) rather than others (for example, shame or anger) consists in, in cases of suppressed expression. (Informative rather than trivial, because re-stating that it is a case of sorrow rather than shame will not do.)⁹

Here are some initially plausible candidates to meet the challenge: first-person phenomenology, functional role, intentional content and neural basis. Let us review them one at a time.

⁸ For detailed elaboration, see Putnam 1965.

⁹ To forestall confusion, note that the fact that the notion of a criterion is doing metaphysical work does not prevent it from also doing epistemic work. For the metaphysical conditions for the presence of one particular emotion rather than others in cases of suppressed expression are available for recognition, even if they are overlooked on particular occasions. Importantly though, this qualification does not carry a commitment to implicit verificationism; i.e. a commitment to the idea that providing the conditions of identity for the presence of particular emotions in cases of suppressed expression requires applying them correctly on all, or on a paradigmatic subset of, occasions.

- First-person phenomenology. It is generally agreed that emotions are characterized (at least partly) by their phenomenology, often thought of as obtainable only from the first-person perspective of the subject undergoing them. But assuming for the time being such a view of the phenomenology of emotions (more in section 4), it is not obvious that this will help meet the challenge under consideration, which concerns the presence of particular emotions in others. So perhaps the underlying thought is that first-person phenomenology can provide the needed criterion, even if no-one other than the subject undergoing the emotion can have access to it; so the metaphysical challenge is met, although an epistemic problem remains. But has the metaphysical challenge been met? This is uncertain, unless a criterion rather than the appearance of one has been provided, which is precisely the doubt raised by Wittgenstein's private language argument. For when the subject tries to state (to himself or others) what the criterion is, only appearances are ever mentioned, which in turn prompts Wittgenstein's doubt. So, at the very least, first-person phenomenology is a dubious strategy to follow here.
- Functional role. It is thought that emotions are distinguished by their distinctive functional role, crudely characterized in terms of the bodily and behavioural features that would be expressed under given circumstances. As the whole set of pairings of expressive features and circumstances vary from one emotion to another, functional role appears to provide the sought-after criterion to save the relational conception. But in fact it does not, for the distinctive functional roles of emotions are characterized as pairings of expressive features and circumstances, *unless the former are suppressed*. This clause must be included in the specification of the functional role of particular emotions, for cases of suppressed expression are cases in which particular emotions are present. Yet, the clause means that cases of suppressed expression are beyond the applicability of the functional-role strategy. As the functional roles of all emotions include the clause, they fail to provide informative conditions of identity for the presence of one emotion rather than others, in cases of suppressed expression. Therefore, the strategy does not rise to the current challenge.

Yet, it might be argued that this negative verdict is a by-product of too crude a characterization of the functional role of emotions. For, in addition to expressive features, other mental states must be mentioned. For instance, anger is not only the likelihood to produce angry expressive features, but also to have certain beliefs (e.g. that others are mocking one), certain wishes (e.g. to retaliate), and so on. Similarly for sorrow or shame, understood partly as the likelihood to produce other combinations of mental states. Therefore, in a less crude characterization, the functional role of emotions will consist of triads of circumstances, particular combinations of mental states and expressive features. As a result, the difference in combinations of mental states could be thought to provide the criterion for the presence of one emotion rather than others, in the absence of expressive features. However, this will not help. To begin with, in order to establish the connections to other mental states that characterize the functional role of particular emotions, the proponent of the functional-role strategy must rely on an existing criterion for the existence of the particular emotion at hand. For instance, a criterion for anger must already be in play, in order causally to relate it to certain beliefs, desires, and so on. But in that case, instead of providing the needed criterion in the absence of expression, functionalism simply avails itself of it. Furthermore, in so far as the functional roles of emotions are

characterized as the likelihood to cause other mental states, the connection between a particular emotion and the said mental states could conceivably fail to obtain. So, particular emotions are individuated (partly) by the likelihood to produce certain beliefs, desires, and so on, *unless something prevents the latter from obtaining*. Crucially now, this gives rise once more to the puzzle under discussion. For on the occasions in which the extra clause is in operation, what is the criterion for the presence of an emotion that does not lead to its normal mental effects, as opposed to the presence of an altogether different emotion that does not have such typical mental effects? Therefore, far from meeting the challenge being considered, the functional-role strategy appears to make it more salient. In turn, this shows that its shortcomings are not a by-product of the crude characterization used earlier. (For this reason, as the crude characterization is less cumbersome, it will be favoured when discussing the functional-role strategy vis-à-vis the relational conception of expression.)

Note further that the argument against the functional-role strategy does not rest on a confusion between dispositions and their actualizations. For as stated, the functional role of emotions can be crudely characterized in terms of the bodily and behavioural features that *would* be expressed under given circumstances. The point can be illustrated by considering a non-mental disposition such as fragility, instead. Somewhat crudely, fragility can be characterized as the set of pairings of breakings and circumstances, both actual *and counterfactual*, with the addition of an unless-breakings-are-suppressed clause. Here, the shortcomings of the functional-role strategy are replicated for the case of fragility, considered as distinct from its actualizations. For the problem remains that when all breakings are suppressed, functional roles do not provide the criterion for the obtaining of the fragility as opposed to the no-fragility condition.¹⁰

- Intentional content. Emotions have intentional contents, as with parents' joyfully smiling at their first-born, or scowling in anger at some offender. But this does not help the proponent of a relational conception of expression to meet the current challenge, for *ex hypothesi* in cases of suppressed emotional expression there is no smiling or scowling at anyone going on. Therefore, it remains unclear what the conditions of identity are for the presence of joy directed at a first-born, rather than the presence of anger directed at an offender, when all bodily and behavioural features are missing. Furthermore, a functionalist account of intentional content will not help either, for reasons already stated.
- Neural basis. All emotions have a neural basis, so cases of suppressed emotional expression must have one, too. On the plausible assumption that different emotions have different neural bases, could these differences not provide the criterion for the presence of one particular emotion rather than others in cases of suppressed expression? The main problem with this suggestion is that for it to work, a correspondence must be established between a neural condition and an unexpressed emotion, which in turn means that one already has the sought-after criterion (i.e. independently of neural basis). In that case, neural bases are either unnecessary (for

¹⁰ It does not follow that fragility, or for that matter emotions, are not functional-dispositional properties; only that a new understanding of functional properties is required. See section 5 below for a proposal that matches the non-relational conception of expression defended here.

one already has the criterion) or insufficient (since they will not provide one by themselves). Either way, they fail to provide informative conditions of identity to meet the current challenge.

Overall, the conclusion is that, once the relational conception of expression is assumed full on, none of the plausible candidates considered here succeed in providing informative conditions of identity for the presence of one particular emotion, rather than others, in cases of suppressed expression. This is a troubling result, for what is at stake is the very intelligibility of the standard cases of suppressed emotional expression under consideration. On the one hand, there must be a criterion for the presence of particular emotions; but on the other hand, if emotions are different items from their bodily and behavioural expression, as in the relational conception, there cannot be such a criterion. Since the contradiction follows from the assumption that emotional expression is to be conceived in terms of a relation between two sets of items, indeed a relation that could conceivably fail to obtain, the assumption must be discarded. To recapitulate, what needs to be rejected is not the claim that emotions are expressed in bodily and behavioural features, but rather the claim that expression must be construed as a relation between two sets of items, which could conceivably fail to obtain. Here ends the negative part of the argument from suppressed emotional expression.

In order to reach this negative conclusion, it does not matter much whether suppressed expression is temporary or permanent. Yet, it may seem that in temporary cases what precedes and succeeds a lapse of suppressed expression helps provide the criterion for the presence of one emotion rather than others. But this misconstrues the metaphysical puzzle under consideration. Thus, the challenge is to state the conditions of identity for the presence of one particular emotion at *t*, rather than others; whereas what happens earlier or later than *t* can provide at best indirect and inconclusive evidence for the presence of such conditions. Therefore, the difficulty dogging the relational conception of expression encompasses cases of temporary and permanent suppressed expression alike.

Moving on to the positive part of the argument, if emotional expression is not to be conceived as a relation between two sets of items, then how? Further reflection on standard cases of suppressed emotional expression suggests that the answer lies in a non-relational conception. Here is why. Standard cases of suppressed emotional expression are routinely identified for what they are – i.e. cases in which one particular emotion is present, despite the suppressor's best efforts to hide it. This is because, although the suppressor may manage to hide some of the bodily and behavioural features that normally express the emotion, other tell-tale bodily and behavioural features remain, and suitable observers can perceptually notice them, however subtle the tell-tale features. Therefore, the key to meeting the current challenge lies with such tell-tale features.¹¹

Now, it is tempting to conceive the tell-tale features as standing in a relation to the emotion itself, conceived as an extra item; a relation traceable by suitable observers. But for an already familiar reason, this is an unconvincing picture of the nature of standard cases of suppressed emotional expression identified as such. The familiar reason is that the relation between a particular emotion and the tell-tale bodily and behavioural features could fail to obtain, as a result of which the problem about the criterion for the presence of one particular emotion,

¹¹ The fact that no suitable observers are actually available is neither here nor there. The existence of bodily and behavioural differences is sufficient to ground the notion of a suitable observer – namely, one that would notice the existence of such differences.

rather than others, would surface again. The upshot is not that cases of suppressed emotional expression do not involve tell-tale bodily and behavioural features, but rather that they must not be conceived in relational terms. For conceived in relational terms, they fail to provide the sought-after criterion.

Fortunately, a better alternative is at hand – namely, to conceive the tell-tale bodily and behavioural features in non-relational terms; that is, as intrinsically expressive. As understood here, it is the claim that the emotional expressiveness of some bodily and behavioural vehicles need not be conceived as an extra item, but rather as an aspect of the expressive vehicles themselves. According to this, what happens in standard cases of suppressed emotional expression identified as such is that suitable observers notice the intrinsic emotional expressiveness of some tell-tale bodily and behavioural vehicles, i.e. that they are intrinsically expressive of one particular emotion that suppressors have tried to hide, to the best of their ability. As a result, the challenge of the criterion for the presence of one emotion rather than others is met. This concludes the positive part of the argument from suppressed emotional expression.

In a nutshell, this is how the argument goes:

1. In standard cases of suppressed emotional expression, there must be a criterion for the presence of one particular emotion, rather than others.
2. Only a non-relational conception of emotional expression can provide the required criterion.
3. Hence, emotional expression must be conceived in non-relational terms.

Premiss 1 sets up a constraint for the intelligibility of standard cases of suppressed emotional expression. Premiss 2 is the joint claim that a relational conception of emotional expression cannot satisfy the constraint, whilst a non-relational conception can. Together, they support a non-relational conception of emotional expression, according to which emotions are the intrinsic aspect of some bodily and behavioural features; or better still (to incorporate the insights from section 2 above), emotions are the intrinsic aspect of some totality of bodily and behavioural features in context.¹²

Before closing this section, let us return to the charge of behaviourism. For, what the argument from suppressed expression does is to help vindicate an anti-behaviourist view of emotions as mind-full behaviour, i.e. as intrinsic aspects of some totality of bodily and behavioural features in context. Hence, a reductive-behaviourist view of emotions that equates bodily and behavioural expression with behaviour *simpliciter* is avoided. And yet the claim that there is direct perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expression is not compromised. So the charge of behaviourism is avoided by the direct perceptual model defended here.

¹² An alleged problem with the argument is that it proves too much – namely, that there would be no criterion for the presence of any mental state, not just emotions, if they are conceived in relational terms. Now, this assumes that all mental states have typical expressions, something which has not been discussed here (see footnote 2). But if they did, and therefore a version of the argument from suppressed expression applied to all mental states, the result would be a unified view of mentality. To be sure, it would be a different view of mentality, but it is unclear that this alone provides any reason to object to the argument of this section.

4. Phenomenological character

The claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features can be objected to on the following basis: others' emotions have a distinctive phenomenological character, which cannot be perceived, let alone perceived directly (Green 2007, p. 91). Call this the objection from the phenomenological character of emotions. This section replies to the objection by arguing that the distinctive phenomenological character of emotions is an intrinsic aspect of other people's expression, as a result of which it can be directly perceived.

The thought that there is no (indeed, cannot be) direct perceptual access to the phenomenological character of other people's emotions stems from two joint sources: one, that phenomenological character is directly available from the first-person perspective alone; the other, that phenomenological character and expressive features are separate components of emotions. The overall picture goes as follows. Other people's expressive features can be deceptive, in that on occasion people appear to undergo particular emotions that they are not experiencing. On such occasions, people's expressive features lack the phenomenological character distinctive of particular emotions; hence the two come apart. But the subject undergoing a particular emotion cannot fail to notice (experience) its phenomenological character; therefore, only from the first-person perspective of the experiencing subject can the phenomenological character of emotions be accessed. This section will take issue with the overall picture by questioning the idea that phenomenological character and expressive features are separate components of emotions. The weight here will be borne by an argument from cases of deceitful expression, which mirrors the argument from suppressed expression.

Here is the argument from deceitful expression in full:

4. In standard cases of deceitful emotional expression, there must a criterion for the presence of a fake rather than a genuine emotion.
5. Only a non-relational conception of emotional expression can provide the required criterion.
6. Therefore, only a non-relational conception of expression can account for cases of deceitful emotional expression.
7. What characterizes cases of deceitful vs. genuine emotional expression turns on phenomenological character.
8. Therefore, a non-relational conception of expression can account for our direct perceptual access to the distinctive phenomenological character of other people's emotions.

As earlier, the notion of a criterion is meant metaphysically, so premiss 4 sets the following constraint on a conception of emotional expression: it must provide informative conditions of identity for the presence of a fake, rather than a genuine, emotion. For instance, in a situation in which another person is crying, wailing and so on, as if in distress, there must be something that their faking sorrow as opposed to their being genuinely sorrowful consists in. As these are different conditions, what is required is an account of the difference between the fact that one rather than the other condition obtains. Trivially, the difference lies in the undergoing or not

of a particular emotion, with its distinctive phenomenological character. The challenge, though, is to provide an informative account of the obtaining of this phenomenological difference. In our leading example, an informative account of what makes it the case that the person crying, wailing and so on is faking, rather than undergoing genuine sorrow.

Against this backdrop, the argument plays out as a contrast between a relational and a non-relational conception of emotional expression. According to a relational conception of standard cases of deceitful expression, phenomenological character is a different item from the expression itself. To meet the stated challenge, the defender of a relational conception of emotional expression can appeal to such putative criteria as first-person phenomenology, functional role, intentional content and neural basis. However, these candidates prove unhelpful, for reasons that parallel those offered earlier when considering suppressed expression. So as not to tire the reader with unnecessary repetition, only functional role will be briefly discussed now. Somewhat crudely, a characterization of the functional roles of (genuine) emotions must mention not only sets of pairings of expressive features and actual and counterfactual circumstances, but also an unless-deception-is-going-on clause. But what this means in effect is that cases of deceitful expression are off-limits for the functional-role strategy. For instance, in a situation in which someone is crying, wailing, and so on in apparent distress, both genuine sorrow and genuine joy whilst faking sorrow could be taking place, but the functional-role strategy is unable to provide informative conditions of identity for the obtaining of one condition rather than the other. The unless-deception-is-going-on clause means that the same pairings of expressive features and circumstances would be taking place, regardless of whether the genuine sorrow or the fake sorrow conditions obtained. Hence, the functional-role strategy fails to meet the current challenge.¹³

But if a relational conception of emotional expression fails to provide the criterion, what does? As before, a non-relational conception of expression helps out. For the fact is that standard cases of deceitful expression are characterized by the existence of tell-tale bodily and behavioural features, which suitable observers can pick up and by so doing identify cases of deceitful expression as what they are. So, it is the presence of such tell-tale features that provides the criterion for the obtaining of the fake rather than the genuine condition. However, such tell-tale features must not be conceived along relational lines, for the relation between a particular emotion and the tell-tale bodily and behavioural features could fail to obtain, as a result of which the puzzle over the criterion for the presence of a fake, rather than a genuine emotion, would return. Instead, the tell-tale features must be conceived along non-relational lines, i.e. as intrinsically expressive of some particular fake emotion. According to this, what characterizes standard cases of deceitful expression is the availability to suitable observers of some tell-tale bodily and behavioural features that are intrinsically expressive of one particular fake emotion, despite the deceiver's best efforts to hide them from others. As a

¹³ For reasons that parallel some mentioned earlier in section 3, a less crude characterization of the functional role of emotions as triads of circumstances, combinations of other mental states and expressive features will not help the defender of the relational conception of expression, either. Briefly, on the one hand, a functionalist account of the difference between genuine and fake emotions in terms of the causal relations between emotions and other mental states assumes the existence of a criterion for the existence of genuine as opposed to fake emotions. On the other hand, a view of genuine emotions as the likelihood to cause other mental states allows for the possible failure of the relation, which gives rise to the challenge under discussion all over again.

result, the challenge to provide the difference between the obtaining of one condition rather than the other is met.

To elaborate, in cases of deceitful expression, what suitable observers notice when they encounter the tell-tale, intrinsically expressive features of the case at hand, is the presence of one particular fake emotion. In our earlier example, when suitable observers see someone crying, wailing and so on in the appropriate circumstances, what they perceptually notice is that it is a case of fake rather than genuine sorrow, despite appearances. Now, the fake nature of the expression turns crucially on the distinctive phenomenological character of the other person's experience. Therefore, what suitable observers notice when they encounter the tell-tale, intrinsically expressive features of the case at hand is the phenomenological character of other people's fake emotional expression.

By parity of reasoning, when suitable observers encounter the tell-tale, intrinsically expressive features of some genuine emotion, it is the phenomenological character of other people's emotional life that they perceptually notice. The bottom line is that, on a non-relational conception, there is direct perceptual access to the phenomenological character of other people's emotions in a totality of bodily and behavioural expressive features in context. In turn, this shows that there is no objection from the phenomenological character of emotions to the claim that we have direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features.

The crux of the argument is that phenomenological character must not be conceived as a separate item from bodily and behavioural expression, if the puzzle over the conditions of identity of particular fake emotions in cases of deceitful expression is to be avoided. Yet, such a conception of phenomenological character is typically found to be very intuitive, not only because of cases of deceitful expression, but also because of the inverted-spectrum and zombie scenarios, which are readily conceded as intelligible. The latter are situations in which two subjects are identical with respect to their bodily and behavioural features, yet differ phenomenologically, either because their colour qualia are inverted (in the inverted-spectrum scenario), or because one of them possesses while the other lacks phenomenological properties (in the zombie scenario). This is normally taken to show that phenomenological character is an extra item, different from bodily and behavioural expression. However, for the reasons presented earlier these scenarios fail to support such a view of phenomenological character.

The reasons are that if phenomenological character is thought of along relational lines, there is no criterion to distinguish, on the one hand, between the inverted and non-inverted conditions, and on the other hand, between the zombie and normally-minded conditions. This is an application of the failure of such putative criteria as first-person phenomenology, functional role, intentional content and neural basis, as seen earlier. For illustration, consider only functional role. If somewhat crudely, colour qualia are characterized by distinctive sets of pairings of expressive features and given circumstances (both actual and counterfactual), an unless-the-spectrum-is-inverted clause must be included. However, this makes the appeal to functional roles useless; for it fails to distinguish between the presence of an inverted and a non-inverted quale, and as a result no criterion is provided for the obtaining of one condition rather than the other. (Similarly for the zombie scenario, *mutatis mutandis*.) Instead, if phenomenological character is thought of non-relationally as an intrinsic aspect of a totality of expressive features in context, a criterion is provided for the obtaining of the inverted rather than the non-inverted condition (and similarly for the zombie rather than the normally-minded

condition) – namely, the differences, however subtle, between the expressive features of the subjects involved, which are available to any suitable observer. Therefore, the intelligibility of the inverted-spectrum and zombie scenarios requires that phenomenological character and bodily and behavioural expression not be treated as separate items.

The overall result of this section is that the objection from phenomenological character fails to undermine the claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features. The objection assumes a relational conception of phenomenological character, according to which the latter is a separate item from bodily and behavioural expression. The existence of deceitful expression together with the intelligibility of phenomenological zombies and inverted qualia is meant to provide the evidence for this. However, the intelligibility of these cases has been shown to require a non-relational conception of phenomenological character instead, according to which phenomenological character is an intrinsic aspect of a totality of bodily and behavioural expressive features in context. In turn, what this means is that phenomenological character is directly available to suitable observers; hence, the claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features is cannot be objected to on phenomenological grounds.

One corollary of the argument of this section is that phenomenological character is not directly available from the first-person perspective alone. This can prompt questions such as: when there is a clash between what suitably skilled observers (e.g. therapists) say about people's emotions and what the latter avow (for instance, when they deny having the emotions attributed by the therapist), how is the discrepancy to be adjudicated? For, ruling in favour of skilled observers appears to undermine first-person authority, whereas saving the latter appears to undo the non-relational conception of expression defended so far. In the end, if it comes down to a choice between first-person authority and the non-relational conception, is the former not too high a price to pay for the latter? However, the non-relational conception of expression does not rule out first-person authority, as the following paragraph will briefly explain (see also García Rodríguez 2020).

First-person authority is often thought of epistemically, as a distinctive kind of access to one's own mind available to oneself alone. But an indication that something is amiss here is that an epistemic view of first-person authority does not quite capture what is going on in the case of the therapist. For subjects may well acknowledge the evidence provided by therapists who attribute certain emotions to them, and still in all honesty disavow having such emotions. This shows that the subjects' resistance is not an epistemic matter (for they appreciate and accept the evidence provided), but a different kind of phenomenon. But what phenomenon? Here is a suggestion: subjects' avowals are not the result of a special kind of access to their own minds not available to others, but rather an episode of their mental lives (perhaps a case of self-deception or wishful thinking, if they are motivated not to endorse the emotions attributed to them by the therapists). Of course, skilled therapists can notice that this is the case, in turn. But what bears emphasizing now is that in resisting the attribution made by the therapists, unlike the latter, subjects are not adopting the standpoint of an expert, i.e. someone who has a special kind of access to the matter at hand; instead, they are adopting the standpoint of agents expressing their mental lives. This matches the non-relational conception of expression defended here, according to which linguistic behaviour (in the current example, first-person avowals) are among the expressive features an intrinsic aspect of which in context are particular emotions. Therefore, there is no forced choice between the non-relational

conception of expression and first-person authority, non-epistemically conceived. (Note that this view of the nature of first-person authority does not rule out that, in addition, one can adopt the viewpoint of an expert towards oneself, as if one were one's own therapist. In that case though, one would relate to oneself as it were from outside, i.e. as one would to another person; hence, the first-person perspective would have been abandoned.)

5. Dispositional nature

Emotions have an episodic and a dispositional nature. For instance, there are episodes of anger, which take place at specific times or time intervals, when people break out in characteristic bodily and behavioural expression; and there is the disposition to be angry, without actually breaking out in any such expressive episodes. There is no problem with the idea that bodily and behavioural expression is directly available to perception. And according to the perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions recommended so far, it is also the case that we have direct and complete perceptual access to others' emotions in their expressive features. But this, it might be argued, covers only the episodic, not the dispositional nature of emotions. In so far as dispositions are different from episodes, given that we only have direct perceptual access to other people's emotional episodes in their expressive features, the dispositional nature of emotions must be beyond direct perceptual access; perhaps it is inferred, perhaps it is perceived indirectly (Smith 2010, pp. 740-1, 744-5). Call this the objection from the dispositional nature of emotions. If the objection is successful, the claim made throughout this paper, that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotional life in their expressive features must be retracted, or at least qualified, to accommodate the dispositional nature of emotions. However, this section argues that the objection fails to undermine the main claim of the paper. The crux lies in the fact that we do not just have direct perceptual access to other people's episodes of emotional expression, but rather to emotional patterns, which is what the dispositional nature of emotions amounts to. The details are spelled out next.

Consider any ordinary non-mental disposition; for instance, solubility or elasticity. Objects such as sugar cubes are soluble; and objects such as rubber bands are elastic. This means that they are likely to behave in certain specified ways in given circumstances, actual and counterfactual. (Likely, because of the implicitly built-in reference to normal conditions.) Thus, sugar cubes are likely to dissolve if submerged into a sufficiently large amount of unsaturated water; and rubber bands are likely to stretch if subjected to certain forces. On this basis, it is tempting to conclude that the solubility of sugar cubes is their likelihood to dissolve if submerged into a large enough amount of unsaturated water; and similarly for the elasticity of rubber bands. This is correct as far as it goes, but does not go far enough. A better proposal is that the solubility of sugar cubes is their likelihood to dissolve if submerged into a sufficiently large amount of unsaturated water, *and not otherwise*. For sugar cubes are also soluble before being submerged, and are still soluble afterwards, if taken out before they dissolve completely. The periods before and after the submersion must be included in the specification of the solubility of sugar cubes, which is what the and-not-otherwise clause does. Similarly, the elasticity of rubber bands is their likelihood to stretch if subjected to certain forces, and not otherwise. For rubber bands are also elastic when they lie at rest, before and after being subjected to the forces that stretch them. In general, non-mental dispositions are characterized in accordance with the following schema: likelihood to behave in specified ways in given actual and counterfactual circumstances, and not otherwise.

Non-mental dispositions such as solubility and elasticity provide a template to understand the dispositional nature of emotions. Thus, somewhat crudely, as a disposition, anger is the likelihood of breaking out in episodes characterized by specific bodily and behavioural features (what we call angry faces, gestures, behaviours and so on) in certain circumstances (actual and counterfactual), and not otherwise. For angry people need not express their anger, meaning that the circumstances for their angry gestures and behaviour need not obtain. Those periods in which angry people are as it were at rest, instead of busily expressing their anger, are part of their dispositional anger, which is why the and-not-otherwise clause is needed in the characterization of anger as a disposition. The point is perfectly general, and can be applied to other emotional dispositions. Therefore, in common with non-mental dispositions, emotions as dispositions must be characterized in terms of the following schema: likelihood to engage in specific expressive episodes in given actual and counterfactual circumstances, and not otherwise.

The latter means that a proper understanding of the dispositional nature of emotions requires a distinction between expressive episodes and emotional patterns. Expressive episodes are the shorter or longer temporal intervals during which a person undergoing an emotion engages in a characteristic set of bodily and behavioural features. Emotional patterns, by contrast, are made up of active episodes of expression and the in-between periods during which no active expression takes place, though the emotion is still present. On this basis, it is now submitted that, as dispositions, emotions are such patterns, i.e. the set of expressive episodes (in actual and counterfactual circumstances) together with the in-between periods.

This understanding of the dispositional nature of emotions as patterns matches our intuitions. For one, it fits the commonly-held distinction between a disposition and its actualization (in our case, expressive episodes). For another, it tallies with the evolving nature of emotions, as emphasized by defenders of the view that emotions are processes. For processes unfold over time, as some expressive episodes at certain times are followed by others, different though still related, after in-between periods without active expression. As an example, think again of the stages of grief. Finally, it is a naturalist account, not only for its conformity with non-mental dispositions, but also for its compatibility with the existence of neural bases, which reliably correlate with the said patterns.

For the purposes of this paper, though, the most important thing to note is that an understanding of the dispositional nature of emotions as patterns side-steps the objection raised at the beginning of this section – namely, that the dispositional nature of emotions cannot be perceived. Contrary to the gist of the objection, if qua dispositions emotions are patterns, there is no obstacle to their being directly perceived, as they unfold over time. For over time there is direct perceptual access not only to expressive episodes considered in isolation from one another, but rather to the whole pattern of successive expressive episodes separated by in-between periods. In the terms used earlier in the paper, the dispositional nature of emotions is an intrinsic aspect of a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context, i.e. the pattern of similar and related expressive episodes separated by in-between periods of no expression. In turn, this helps the perceptual model recommended so far. For if emotional patterns can be directly perceived over time, the claim that there is direct and complete perceptual access to other people's emotions in their expressive features is unobjectionable on dispositional grounds. Indeed, qua dispositions emotions cannot be perceived in an instant, but this is not an obstacle to their being directly and completely

perceived; thinking otherwise is the result of overlooking the temporally extended nature of emotions, qua dispositions.

As mentioned, grief is a case in point. Grieving for the loss of someone is a process that takes place over time. It includes episodes of more or less intense expression (including crying, sobbing and so on), followed by quieter or even silent periods (i.e. periods in which no expressive episode takes place), followed by new episodes of expression, and so on, for the duration of the emotion. This is what the griever goes through. In this respect, grieving is not a matter of undergoing one such episode or even a collection of such episodes, but rather the whole structured pattern of recurring episodes of expression separated by in-between periods. To be sure, there can be differences among grieving individuals regarding the frequency, intensity and variety of the expressive episodes or the length and frequency of the in-between periods. But these are individual differences within a grieving pattern made up of both expressive episodes and in-between periods. Similarly for other emotions, which fit the same mould; for instance, anger at someone for their offensive remarks. Thus, until the anger subsides there will be recurring episodes of long faces, recriminations and other distinctive forms of angry bodily and behavioural features, separated by in-between periods, over and over again. In both examples, during the in-between periods of no expression the subject is still angry or grieving, which is why the in-between periods belong in the temporally extended patterns of anger and grief, together with the expressive episodes.

A characterization of the dispositional nature of emotions as temporally extended patterns of expressive episodes and in-between periods fits the view that the perception of other people's emotions is a form of Gestalt perception. To see this, consider how we perceptually take in temporal patterns, both social and natural. For instance, we see the migrating patterns of some bird species, as well as the daily traffic patterns during a normal week. Traffic patterns are made up of busy rush-hour intervals separated by in-between lulls, and migration patterns are made up of yearly north- and south-bound in-mass flights separated by in-between periods of no migration. Suitably skilled observers do not only take in each individual episode of rush-hour traffic or north- and south-bound flying, but also the succession of such episodes, separated by the in-between lulls and pauses; i.e. they take in the whole pattern. This is similar to one of our earlier Gestalt examples – namely, the experience of listening to the main theme in a musical piece, in which a totality of temporally arranged notes is taken in, emerging over and over again separated by other notes or themes. Overall, then, suitably skilled observers can perceive such social and natural patterns as traffic flow and bird migration, respectively; and in doing so they exercise their abilities to perceive different Gestalts.

Likewise with the perception of the dispositional nature of other people's emotions in their expressive features, a form of Gestalt perception in which suitably skilled observers take in an emotional pattern, i.e. a totality of temporally extended expressive episodes and in-between periods. In grief, for instance, suitably skilled observers perceptually take in the successive expressive episodes of crying and sobbing, separated by the in-between quieter periods, taking place in a particular context (say, the loss of a loved one). As emotional patterns are made up of expressive episodes and in-between periods, suitably skilled observers perceive both each individual episode and the temporally extended pattern. In doing so, they exercise the same ability for Gestalt perception. Thus, at each expressive episode they perceptually take in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context; in the current example, the crying and sobbing, together with the withdrawn look and dropped shoulders, for instance at a funeral service. In addition, they also take in the totality of such expressive episodes at different times

and places, separated by in-between periods, in a temporally wider context; in our example, the crying and sobbing at the funeral service, the teary eyes in front a photograph back home after the funeral, and so on, separated by quieter periods of no active expression, in the days, weeks and months after the sad loss. Therefore, the claim that perceiving other people's emotions in their expressive features is a form of Gestalt perception covers the dispositional nature of emotions.

6. Conclusion

It is common in contemporary philosophy to view emotions as clusters made up of several components, some of which are available for direct observation by others (e.g. their bodily and behavioural expression), whereas others are not (e.g. their phenomenological character and dispositional nature). On this basis, proponents of a perceptual model of our access to other people's minds have claimed that, although there is direct perceptual access to other people's expressive features, there is neither direct nor complete perceptual access to other people's emotions as a whole. According to them, there is perceptual access to other people's emotions because by directly perceiving their expressive features their emotions are indirectly perceived. However there is neither direct nor complete perceptual access to others' emotions as a whole, because such components as phenomenological character and dispositional nature are not perceived.

This paper has taken issue with the claim that there is neither direct nor complete perceptual access to other people's emotions. On the one hand, the claim that there is no direct perceptual access to the emotions of others has been rebutted in two steps. First, it has been argued that the claim is based on a mistaken analogy with the perception of three-dimensional objects or physical processes, by directly seeing some of their parts alone. The analogy is mistaken in that it fails to accommodate all the phenomenological data for a perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions, in particular that we perceptually take in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context. To save the phenomenology, the second point that has been made is that the perception of other people's emotions in their expressive features is a form of Gestalt perception. This means that when we perceptually take in a totality of bodily and behavioural features in context, we directly perceive emotions as their intrinsic aspect.

On the other hand, the claim that there is no complete perceptual access to the emotions of others has been refuted by showing that both the phenomenological character and the dispositional nature of others' emotions can be perceived directly. This is so because they are both intrinsic aspects of the totality of bodily and behavioural features exhibited by others in context, which not only includes particular episodes of expression but also temporally extended patterns made up of such episodes and in-between periods without expression.

The overall result is a different cluster view of emotions, for though phenomenological character, dispositional nature and bodily-cum-behavioural expression are acknowledged to be components of emotions, they are not treated as separate items. Rather, as stated, phenomenological character and dispositional nature are intrinsic aspects of bodily-cum-behavioural expression. In turn, this shows the view of emotions defended in the paper not to be a form of behaviourism. For behaviourism reduces emotions to behaviour *simpliciter*, whereas a view of emotions as intrinsic aspects of bodily-cum-behavioural expression shows the latter to constitute a different genus, namely mind-full behaviour. The latter is here proposed as a sound view of emotions, both for its power to accommodate all the

phenomenological data for a perceptual model of our access to other people's emotions and for its resilience in the face of putative objections.

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