

Joel Krueger

Emotions and Other Minds

Can we see emotions? Initially, at least, one is probably inclined to answer in the negative. Whatever their ontology, emotions are generally taken to be mental states. And mental states are generally assumed to occur inside the biological borders of the subject *of* the mental state. When I become sad after receiving news of a friend's misfortune, it seems that my sadness is somehow located inside of me. It is *my* sadness; I have experiential access to it in a way that marks it as uniquely my own, and which makes it inaccessible to others. Yet emotions also seem to have a public face. My wife will say that she sees my sadness in my downturned shoulders, heavy posture, quiet speech, and the contours of my sorrowful facial expression; my demeanor betrays my sadness and makes it visible. The unrestrained laughter that makes a young child's joy so infectious seems to externalize the child's happiness itself. It is not as though the joy is confined *behind* the laughter; rather, it appears to somehow manifest itself precisely *within* the child's expressive behavior. So, we seem stuck between competing intuitions. Are emotions private or public entities?

I argue in what follows that they are in fact both. Put otherwise, emotions, I suggest, are primarily ways of engaging with the world, including the social world. As such, they are Janus-faced entities encompassing both public and private aspects. This might strike some as a relatively trivial thesis. I will further argue, however, that thinking of emotions this way helps make headway on a particularly stubborn philosophical problem: the epistemological problem of other minds. It does so by challenging the Cartesian assumption motivating this problem: the presumed split between an inner mental event (such as an emotional state) and its outer behavioral expression. Call this the "Unobservability Principle" (UP): the idea that the essence of mental phenomena (including emotional experiences) consist of intracranial events, states, or processes that are in principle unobservable and thus hidden from everyone but their owner. Drawing upon both philosophical and cognitive scientific approaches to emotion, this paper challenges UP. In so doing, it suggests a way for overcoming the epistemological problem of other minds.

Other minds: what's the problem?

The philosophical problem of other minds arises from the following dilemma: given that the mental life of others is hidden from view, things like thoughts, beliefs, intentions, emotions, etc., cannot be directly observed or known by

anyone other than their owner – how can we hope to justify our persistent belief that other people have minds like ours?¹ This “stark asymmetry”² between how I know my own mental states versus those of others generates the *epistemological* problem of other minds – again, the question of how I am justified in my belief that others are also subjects of experience. A related but distinct question is the *conceptual* problem of other minds. This is the question of how I come to acquire concepts of another’s mental states in light of this stark asymmetry. If I only have direct knowledge of my own pain, for example, how do I extend my concept of pain to encompass that of others?

This paper will not be concerned with addressing the conceptual problem of other minds. Its focus lies with the epistemological problem. Important for present concerns, however, is to first note that both problems rest on UP: again, the assumption that there exists an ontological distinction between unobservable experience (mind) and public behavior (body). This assumption is motivated by the fact that, whatever our reasons, we often successfully conceal our mental life from those around us. For example, I become angered by a colleague’s comment during a meeting but nevertheless maintain a stoic expression to mask this anger. Certain football players are notorious for taking dives and feigning injuries and pain behavior in the absence of any experienced pain; often, referees and spectators alike are taken in by their performance. The possibility of pretense shows us that behavior can be decoupled from experience. I can readily see the former but be mistaken about the latter. Therefore, it seems as though there is a distinction between patterns of behavior, which are available for public perception, and the private mental states standing behind them, which are not. If all I see are patterns of overt behavior, how can I be certain that there are in fact mental states behind them? Moreover, how can I be sure what sort of mental states they actually *are*?

According to this way of thinking, behavior such as scowling, smiling, shaking my fists, shrinking back in fright, etc. carries *information* about the emotional phenomena the behavior expresses (its type, intensity, target, dura-

1 Fred Dretske states the problem this way: “Some philosophers think there is a special difficulty about other minds because, to put it roughly, we cannot see other minds. They are unobservable. You can see the smile (at least the upturned mouth), but not the thought ‘behind’ it. You can see the perspiration, the flushed face, the wrinkled forehead, the squint, the jerky motion of the arms, the hunched shoulders, the clenched fist, and the trembling lips, but you cannot see the fear, the embarrassment, the frustration, the desire, the pain, or the anger that the other person (presumably) feels.” (Dretske, Fred. “Perception and Other Minds.” *Noûs* 7.1 (1973): 34–44, here 36.)

2 Hyslop, Alec. “Other Minds.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Fall 2010. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2010/entries/other-minds/> (28 October 2013).

tion, etc.) but is not a proper *part* of the emotional phenomena itself. Emotions and feelings, as internal states, are ontologically distinct from the expressive behavior that publically betrays them. What this means is that, even under ideal circumstances (my perceptual faculties are functioning properly, environmental conditions are optimal, etc.), I only have access to information about another's mental states within their expressive behavior. I have no means of perceptually accessing the mental state *itself*. Accordingly, in order to be certain that there are in fact mental states motivating another's behavior – and to begin to understand the various ways that different patterns of behavior express different sorts of mental states, which allows me to explain and predict further patterns of behavior and thus get on with others socially – I must utilize some kind of extra-perceptual cognitive mechanism. Within philosophy and psychology, this mechanism is most commonly said to be a theory of mind – specifically, a theory about the relation between mental states and behavior.³ This theory can take different forms. The discussion here is complex, ranging across both philosophy and cognitive science; I set aside particulars for the sake of space. The salient point is that according to this widely-held view, my belief in others' mental states is grounded in a hypothetico-deduction: an inference from publically-perceivable behavior (scowling, laughter) to the private mental states that best explain it (anger, happiness). Since I can neither observe nor know another's mental states directly, I must rely on inference both to ground my belief that others have minds as well as to sort out what they are thinking and feeling.

One objection to this view is that long before they are capable of making inferential judgments purportedly at the root of our theory of mind, infants nevertheless seem capable of detecting, responding to, and even predicting the mental states of others.⁴ Infants therefore seem to have rudimentary perceptual knowledge of other minds without possessing a theory of mind. In other words, they seem to get it simply by observing the face-to-face behavior of their caregivers – behavior which is generally characterized by a hyper-

3 Baron-Cohen, Simon. *Mindblindness: An Essay on Autism and Theory of Mind*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1995; Gopnik, Alison, and Henry M. Wellman. "Why the Child's Theory of Mind Really Is a Theory." *Mind & Language* 7.1/2 (1992): 145–171; Premack, David, and Guy Woodruff. "Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind?" *The Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 1 (1978): 515–526.

4 Gallagher, Shaun, and Dan Zahavi. *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science*. New York: Routledge, 2008; Hobson, Peter. *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking*. London: MacMillan, 2002; Reddy, Vasudevi, and Paul Morris. "Participants Don't Need Theories: Knowing Minds in Engagement." *Theory & Psychology* 14.5 (2004): 647–665.

expressivity intended to engage and refine the infant's burgeoning social abilities.⁵ Hence, our primary access to others is perceptual, not theoretical.

A response to this objection is that social inferences need not be explicit; the infant need not initiate, nor be consciously aware of, these inferences as they happen. Rather, the inferential processes at the root of social cognition are the result of innate mindreading modules hardwired in the infant's brain from birth.⁶ They are subpersonal processes that occur beneath the threshold of consciousness. So, the fact that infants – or anyone else, for that matter – are not aware of these processes as they happen, or fail to initiate them (since infants lack the requisite conceptual capacities), is not an objection to the view. These mechanisms are both subpersonal and hardwired from birth. Moreover, they are necessary for social cognition since, once again, we can never observe another's mental states but must therefore infer (explicitly or implicitly) their existence.

This inference-based view of social cognition has in recent years faced a great deal of criticism from a number of fronts in philosophy and cognitive science. I will not rehearse it here. Instead, I want to consider the idea mentioned previously: namely, that our access to other minds is necessarily inferential since mental states, including emotions, are exclusively intracranial entities and thus ontologically distinct from the external behavior that expresses them. While UP, at first blush, appears a thoroughly commonsensical view, does it stand up to scrutiny? In what follows, I want to challenge UP and argue that this picture might be questioned in at least two ways. First, it might be the case that some bodily expressions of emotion are *constitutive parts* of the emotion itself; hence, part of the emotion is publically perceivable and not completely hidden. Second, it might be the case that some emotions are forms of engagement that essentially involve others. In other words, they are *mutually negotiated*; hence, part of the emotion is publically perceivable and not completely hidden.

Emotions and their bodily expression

What happens when we experience an emotion? Generally speaking, we express it; the emotion is discharged in some sort of overt bodily action. When I am angry, I may frown, bare my teeth (if I am really angry) and gesture furtively. When I am happy, I might smile, raise my eyebrows, and assume a

5 Trehub, Sandra E. "Mothers Are Musical Mentors." *Zero to Three* 23.1 (2002): 19–22.

6 Baron-Cohen, *Mindblindness*.

more buoyant bodily posture; if I am especially elated, I may even jump for joy and pump my fists in the air. Bodily actions thus express felt emotions. However, as the previous discussion of pretense suggests – and as the inference-based approach to social cognition presumes – the bodily expression of emotion is ontologically distinct from the emotion itself. A skilled actor can feign a wide range of emotions simply by adopting their associated facial expressions. But she can do this without actually feeling the associated emotion. So, once again, it appears that emotions can be decoupled from expression. The public expression of emotion is something distinct from its private inner core.

While this is certainly a widely-held view – generally taken to be so obvious as to not require explicit argument – there is by no means universal consensus on this point. Some thinkers, particularly within the phenomenological tradition, have challenged this view. They argue that to see the expression of emotion is to literally see the emotion itself (or at least part of it) and not merely an expression *of* the emotion.⁷

Before considering this challenge to UP more carefully, it is important to get clear about how the term “expression” is being used in this context. Peter Goldie argues that an overt piece of behavior is a genuine expression of emotion only if it is not performed as a means to some further end.⁸ There are three ways that an expression of emotion can fail to satisfy this condition. First, it can be done insincerely – such as, for example, when I smile (and thus feign happiness) upon shaking hands with someone I strongly dislike.⁹ There is no authentic emotion motivating this expression; rather, it is performed mechanically, perhaps out of respect for the social norms governing that encounter and is thus inauthentic. Second, an expression can be genuine (a frown expressing anger) but performed calculatively, that is, to intentionally convey to others that one is experiencing *this* emotion (which then becomes the true end of the expressive act). This calculative performance removes the spontaneity at the heart of authentic emotional expression and thus trans-

7 Husserl, Edmund. *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology: From the Lectures, Winter Semester, 1910–1911*. Trans. Ingo Farin and James G. Hart. Dordrecht: Springer, 2006; Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Trans. Colin Smith. New York: Routledge, 2002; Scheler, Max. *The Nature of Sympathy*. Trans. Peter Heath. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954. See also Krueger, Joel. “Seeing Mind in Action.” *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 11.2 (2012), special issue *Empathy and Intersubjectivity*: 149–173.

8 Goldie, Peter. *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

9 Williams, Bernard. “Morality and the Emotions.” Bernard Williams. *Problems of the Self: Philosophical Papers 1956–1972*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973. 207–229.

forms it from an end to a means. Third, an expression cannot be done simply for pleasure: for example, kicking a table leg out of anger to feel better. Again, this would transform the expressive act from an end to a means; that is, the goal of slightly alleviating one's anger. So, for Goldie a genuine expression of emotion must be *sincere*, *spontaneous*, and *self-contained* (an end in itself).¹⁰

Even with this condition in place, the class of actions which are authentic expressions of emotion remains heterogeneous. It includes things like facial expressions (smiling, frowning, opening one's eyes wide in surprise), gestures (both while speaking and when silent), whole-body movements¹¹ (jumping for joy, rearing back in anger or surprise, surging forward to escape a fearful object or event), and spontaneous touches (kissing or stroking the face of one's beloved). Genuine expressions of emotion thus seem to inhabit a suggestive space between *bodily changes* (physiological changes such as responses of the autonomic nervous system, hormonal changes, muscular reactions, etc.) and *reasoned actions* that flow from emotions (actions made rationally intelligible by appealing to some combination of beliefs and desires).¹² Expressions of emotion seem to have an experiential significance that makes them more meaningful than the former; yet they do not seem to lend themselves to belief-desire rationalization quite like the latter.¹³ However, they seem to be a crucial aspect of emotional experience, and particularly its public face, and thus require explicit consideration.

The salient point for our purposes is that these instances of behavior, whether voluntary actions or involuntary reactions, are generally taken to be causal *expressions* of the emotion and not a proper part of the emotion itself;¹⁴ the "real" emotion remains hidden behind its behavioral expression.¹⁵ As

10 I will argue in the following section that these conditions, particularly the second one, are overly-restrictive. For now, however, I will accept them to help demarcate the phenomena under consideration.

11 See Sheets-Johnstone for a discussion of why movement is central for understanding emotional experience: Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. "Emotion and Movement. A Beginning Empirical-Phenomenological Analysis of Their Relationship." *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 6.11/12 (1999): 259–277.

12 Goldie, Peter. "Explaining Expressions of Emotion." *Mind* 109.433 (2000): 25–38.

13 In "Explaining Expressions of Emotion," Goldie further divides expressions of emotions into those which are actions (voluntary behavior like stroking the face of one's beloved) and those which are not (involuntary behavior like facial expressions). For reasons I discuss later, within the context of emotional experience, this distinction is helpful but relatively fuzzy.

14 Dretske, "Perception and Other Minds;" Goldie, "Explaining Expressions of Emotion."

15 This assumption informs two dominant approaches to emotion, cognitivist appraisal theories and neo-Jamesian approaches. According to the former, emotions consist of evaluative judgments; the latter, neurophysiological states of bodily arousal. Despite their many differences, both theories presume that the essence of emotion (evaluative judgments or physiological

already indicated, a number of phenomenologists have challenged this idea. They claim that to see an emotional expression is to literally see the emotion itself. Consider first the following well-known remark by Max Scheler:

For we certainly believe ourselves to be 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, with his rage in his gnashing of his teeth, with his threats in the clenching of his fist, and with the tenor of his thoughts in the sound of his words. If anyone tells me that this is not 'perception' [of the emotion itself], for it cannot be so, in view of the fact that a perception is simply a 'complex of physical sensations,' and that there is certainly no sensation of another person's mind nor any stimulus from such a source, I would beg him to turn aside from such questionable theories and address himself to the phenomenological facts.¹⁶

According to Scheler, we can in fact see the mental states of others within the dynamics of their expressive behavior. There is no need to posit an additional extra-perceptual cognitive mechanism (analogical inference, theory, etc.) as responsible for our detection of their mental states. Since mental states are observable, they can be directly perceived and engaged with. This sort of direct, non-inferential social perception is thus sufficient for accessing others minds directly and securing interpersonal understanding.¹⁷

Maurice Merleau-Ponty argues for a similar view. It is his position that I intend to look at more carefully. Though Merleau-Ponty does not say much about emotions explicitly – his discussions of emotions and affect are rather generally part of his larger treatments of themes such as aesthetics, infant cognition, intersubjectivity, and bodily expressivity¹⁸ – his persistent denial of UP in favor of a more integrative approach to embodied cognition makes him highly relevant to the present discussion. Like Scheler, Merleau-Ponty insists

“affect programs”) is internal to the subject of the emotion, and therefore that emotions are best understood from either a cognitive perspective (Nussbaum, Martha. *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; Solomon, Robert. “Emotions and Choice.” *Explaining Emotions*. Ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980. 251–281) or from a physiological perspective (Damasio, Antonio. *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Harper Collins, 1994; LeDoux, Joseph E. *The Emotional Brain*. New York: Simon & Shuster, 1996; Prinz, Jesse J. *Gut Reactions: A Perceptual Theory of Emotions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

16 Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 260.

17 Gallagher, Shaun. “Direct Perception in the Intersubjective Context.” *Consciousness and Cognition* 17.2 (2008): 535–543; Krueger, Joel. “Extended Cognition and the Space of Social Interaction.” *Consciousness and Cognition* 20.3 (2011): 643–657.

18 Cataldi, Suzanne L. “Affect and Sensibility.” *Merleau-Ponty: Key Concepts*. Ed. Rosalyn Diprose and Jack Reynolds. Stocksfield: Acumen, 2008. 163–173.

that mental phenomena are often directly visible in another's expressive behavior and manner of comportment. He writes that

We must abandon the fundamental prejudice according to which the psyche is that which is accessible only to myself and cannot be seen from the outside. My "psyche" is not a series of "states of consciousness" that are rigorously closed in on themselves and inaccessible to anyone but me. My consciousness is turned primarily toward the world, turned toward things; it is above all a relation to the world. The other's consciousness as well is chiefly a certain way of comporting himself toward the world. Thus it is in his conduct, in the manner in which the other deals with the world, that I will be able to discover his consciousness.¹⁹

I will say more of the idea of emotions as ways of comporting ourselves to the social world in the following section. For now, I want to consider Merleau-Ponty's specific remarks on emotions and bodily expression. Not only is our body "our general medium for having a world," according to Merleau-Ponty; additionally, "the body is essentially an expressive space."²⁰ He writes elsewhere that

I do not see anger or a threatening attitude as a psychic fact hidden behind the gesture, I read anger in it. The gesture *does not make me think of* anger, it is anger itself.²¹

I perceive the grief or anger of the other in his conduct, in the face or his hands, without recourse to any 'inner' experience of suffering or anger, and because grief and anger are variations of belonging to the world, undivided between the body and consciousness, and equally applicable to the other's conduct, visible in his phenomenal body, as in my own conduct as it is presented to me.²²

Precisely what sort of claim is Merleau-Ponty making here? By insisting that anger, for example, is not a psychic fact hidden behind the gesture but that it is, rather, the gesture itself – and that emotions such as anger and grief are thus "undivided between the body and consciousness" – Merleau-Ponty seems to reject the very idea of an ontological split between the "inner" emotion and its "outer" behavioral expression. In other words, Merleau-Ponty denies that emotion and expression are merely *causally* related (in the sense that the former is causally antecedent to the latter) but instead insists that their relation is one of *constitution*. Bodily expressions of emotional phenomena constitute proper parts of (at least some) emotions; the expression is partly constitu-

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *Sense and Nonsense*. Trans. Hubert L. Dreyfus and Patricia Allen Dreyfus. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964. 116–117.

²⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 169.

²¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 214.

²² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 415.

tive of what is expressed.²³ Seeing another's angry gestures is therefore to see part of their anger itself. And if this is so, the assumption that we require inference (or something else) to access another's "hidden" mentality is mistaken. Since some mental phenomena are embodied within expressive behavior, we can quite literally see mind in action. Perception is therefore sufficient to give us direct access to at least part of another's mind.

While initially somewhat implausible, perhaps, this idea appears to receive support from several different streams of empirical research. Consider first cases where the ability to facially express emotions is removed or profoundly compromised. Moebius Syndrome, a congenital form of bilateral facial paralysis, is one such case. Due to their condition, people with Moebius Syndrome are unable to facially express emotion.²⁴ As a result, many report a diminishment or flattening of their emotional lives. One person with Moebius reports that, as a result of his lack of expressivity, he is forced to intellectualize his emotions – "I sort of think happy or think sad, not really saying or recognizing actually feeling happy or feeling sad" – and that the qualitative character of his emotions, that is, their *felt* aspects, "are there but they are probably reduced."²⁵ Another person with Moebius claims not to have had emotion as a child but that she only learned to express and thus truly feel her emotions after starting to mimic gestures observed while on holiday in Spain. She reports that the phenomenological component of her emotions only emerged once she became adept at "using the whole body to express [her] feelings."²⁶ The narratives of others with Moebius are characterized by their adopting alternative strategies of embodied expression – prosody, gestures, vocalizations, painting, dancing, playing a musical instrument, etc. – in order to express, recalibrate, and share the qualitative character of their emotional experience.²⁷

23 To be clear, Merleau-Ponty is not saying that one's anger is *identical* to one's gesture in the sense that it is wholly *reducible* to it. This would be a crude behaviorism; Merleau-Ponty's view is more subtle than this, and readily concedes that *interiority* is an essential part of my own and others' experience (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 415, 424). For a longer response to this objection, see

Joel Krueger and Søren Overgaard (forthcoming).

24 Bogart, Kathleen, and David Matsumoto. "Living with Moebius Syndrome: Adjustment, Social Competence, and Satisfaction with Life." *The Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal* 47.2 (2010): 134–142; Briegel, Wolfgang. "Neuropsychiatric Findings of Mobius Sequence: A Review." *Clinical Genetics* 70.2 (2006): 91–97; Cole, Jonathan, and Henrietta Spalding. *The Invisible Smile: Living without Facial Expression*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

25 Cole, Jonathan. "On 'Being Faceless': Selfhood and Facial Embodiment." *Models of the Self*. Ed. Shaun Gallagher and Jonathan Shear. Charlottesville: Imprint Academic, 1999. 301–318, here 308.

26 Cole and Spalding, *The Invisible Smile*, 154.

27 Bogart and Matsumoto, "Living with Moebius Syndrome."

Without the ability to spontaneously express their emotions via the face, part of the emotion appears to be missing, rendering it experientially incomplete.

Not all facial paralysis is congenital.²⁸ For example, patients who have voluntarily undergone Botox injections, which inhibit facial expressions, report a decrease in the felt intensity of emotional experience,²⁹ along with increased difficulty in processing emotional language that refers to facial expressions requiring the paralyzed muscle.³⁰ An individual with Bell's Palsy, a progressive and potentially reversible form of facial paralysis, reports a similar experience.³¹ He describes himself as inhabiting an "emotional limbo" while the paralysis was at its strongest; however, as he gradually regained facial animation over several months, the phenomenology of his emotions was accordingly recalibrated. Individuals who have suffered severe spinal cord injuries likewise report less intense feelings of high-arousal emotions like fear, anger, or sexual arousal.³² Other studies suggest that manipulating facial expressions generates emotion-specific autonomic activity and produces a corresponding change in emotional phenomenology.³³

28 The following examples assist in responding to the objection that, since their facial paralysis is congenital, people with Moebius Syndrome have no benchmark against which to measure "proper" emotional phenomenology and thus are not in a position to make reliable judgments about its purported diminishment.

29 Davis, Joshua Ian, Ann Senghas, Fredric Brandt, and Kevin N. Ochsner. "The Effects of BOTOX Injections on Emotional Experience." *Emotion* 10.3 (2010): 433–440.

30 Havas, David, Arthur Glenberg, Karol Gutowski, Mark Lucarelli, and Richard Davidson. "Cosmetic Use of Botulinum Toxin-A Affects Processing of Emotional Language." *Psychological Science* 21.7 (2010): 895–900.

31 Cole, Jonathan. *About Face*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1998. 150.

32 Chwalisz, Kathleen, Ed Diener, and Dennis Gallagher. "Autonomic Arousal Feedback and Emotional Experience: Evidence from the Spinal Cord Injured." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 54.5 (1988): 820–828; Hohmann, George W. "Some Effects of Spinal Cord Lesions on Experienced Emotional Feelings." *Psychophysiology* 3.2 (1966): 143–156; Mack, Herbert, Niels Birbaumer, Hans-Peter Kaps, Andreas Badke, and Jochen Kaiser. "Motion and Emotion: Emotion Processing in Quadriplegic Patients and Athletes." *Zeitschrift für Medizinische Psychologie* 14.4 (2005): 159–166. James Laird discusses some competing studies that, while methodologically problematic, nevertheless seem to (happily) suggest that "the effects of spinal cord injuries on the intensity of emotional feelings are not dramatic, and after spinal cord injury, people can have quite normal and satisfactory emotional lives." (Laird, James D. *Feelings: The Perception of Self*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. 76.)

33 See, for example, Davis, Joshua Ian, Ann Senghas, and Kevin N. Ochsner. "How Does Facial Feedback Modulate Emotional Experience?" *Journal of Research in Personality* 43.5 (2009): 822–829; Laird, *Feelings*; Levenson, Robert, Paul Ekman, and Wallace V. Friesen. "Voluntary Facial Action Generates Emotion-Specific Autonomic Nervous System Activity." *Psychophysiology* 27.4 (1990): 363–384; Niedenthal, Paula M. "Embodying Emotion." *Science* 316 (2007): 1002–1005.

To be clear, the point of the studies briefly canvassed is to motivate the idea that, at least at times, emotions may extend into the expressive dynamics of the visible, tangible body. In this sense are some emotions visible to others. To see another's scowling and abrupt gesture is to literally see part of their anger itself; I can access it directly within their facial expressions and overt behavior. If the behavioral expression is removed or somehow inhibited, the qualitative character of the emotion is accordingly diminished. It is thus misleading to presuppose a tidy ontological division between the inner "core" of emotion and its outer behavioral expression; rather, the two are intimately linked.³⁴ Moreover, since I have perceptual access to at least part of the emotion itself – again, I can directly see aspects of the emotion embodied within expressive behavior – I do not need to resort to inference to figure out what the other person is thinking. Part of their emotion is publically present, ripe for perception.

However, this is not to say that bodily states of physiological arousal – or even their public behavioral manifestations – are *sufficient* for emotional experience. This stronger claim overlooks, among other things, the fact that emotional expressions are always situated within various social contexts involving others (both real and imagined). In other words, because emotions are embodied within their behavioral expression and thus publically perceivable, they solicit interpersonal feedback from others. To express is to express *for* someone, even if (1) the expression is spontaneous (not intentionally oriented toward another), and (2) done in a solitary situation, that is, where the other is implicit or implied.³⁵ In this way does the social context play a central role in shaping the character of the emotional process. In other words, many – perhaps most – emotions are public in that they involve both an expressive behavioral aspect as well as an aspect of negotiation between individuals.³⁶ Exploring this latter idea is the topic of the next section.

Emotions as engagements

Characterizing emotions as mental states can be misleading. Not only can this sort of talk potentially over-intellectualize emotions, both by underplaying

³⁴ See Krueger (forthcoming) for a longer discussion of this idea.

³⁵ Fridlund, Alan J. "Sociality of Solitary Smiling: Potentiation by an Implicit Audience." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 60.2 (1991): 229–240.

³⁶ Hinde, Robert A. "Was 'The Expression of the Emotions' a Misleading Phrase?" *Animal Behaviour* 33.3 (1985): 985–992.

their felt bodily character as well as over-emphasizing the extent to which they are located exclusively in the head. Additionally, it can lead to a “snapshot” conception of emotions according to which emotions are decomposed into sequential chains of discrete physiological episodes (states) that intervene between environmental stimulus and behavioral response. This is misleading, however. More often than not, emotions are a much messier affair. They tend to be compositionally complex, evolve over time, generally emerge from reciprocal causal *loops* as opposed to linear causal *chains*, and are often tightly interwoven with one another.

Attending carefully to the phenomenological character of emotions highlights the fact that emotions often blend into one another, making it difficult to neatly tease them apart experientially speaking. Consider the following example. Imagine that I am in the grip of an angry episode. Convinced that my wife has cheated on me with another man, my imagination swells with fleeting images of how, precisely, I imagine this betrayal to have unfolded. Each new image only intensifies my anger. But things are not quite that simple. For anger is rarely a free-standing state. Along with my anger, I actually experience an interwoven constellation of various other emotions: *jealousy* in the face of her betrayal; *shame* at my naïve (and unwarranted) trust; *humiliation* at the thought of others finding out; *sadness* at a long-term commitment undermined by this act of unfaithfulness; *disgust* at the thought of her being physically intimate with another, etc. Within the throes of this episode, any of these emotions may at any moment take precedence over the others – without, however, thereby cancelling out their phenomenal presence. The particular felt character of my anger in this context is thus conditioned by the simultaneous upwelling of a flurry of other emotions, making this instance of anger experientially distinct from, say, my anger that morning at (yet again) burning my toast. Not only does the intentional object of these distinct episodes differ: my wife’s unfaithfulness versus my burnt toast. Additionally, the phenomenal complexity or felt texture of this latter episode is vivified via the mutual occurrence of other conditioning emotions. Later, however, after some reflection and cooling off, my weary sadness may assume phenomenological prominence without completely effacing the anger that had previously burned so intensely. And when discussing the situation even later with friends, my shame and humiliation may then come to the fore, preserving the anger but modifying its felt texture by diminishing its intensity and introducing a more prominent shame-dimension.

Emotions are thus complex and very often long-term – potentially “lasting even for years or a lifetime and occupying several levels or dimensions of

consciousness.”³⁷ As the example above suggests, however, they are also social. Emotions emerge and fluctuate as we negotiate various social contexts. Additionally, emotions are often modulated by these social contexts *as* we negotiate them. In other words, as socially mediated, many emotions are inter-actively constituted in the sense that “our emotional states are often interwoven with those of one or more persons immediately present.”³⁸ My shame and humiliation when describing my wife’s unfaithfulness to friends takes on the character of *their* responses; *their* hurt becomes deeply interwoven with mine; *their* anger suddenly rekindles and interlaces with my own anger, which had diminished as it gave way to a more pervasive sadness.

The above example harbors several lessons. First, *contra* a “snapshot” conception of emotions, it reaffirms the dynamic and process-oriented character of emotional experience – again, the idea that emotions are both *structurally complex* (interwoven with other emotions, and potentially consisting of different dimensions like physiological arousal, cognitive judgments, intentionality, felt affect, etc.) as well as *essentially temporal* (they evolve and develop over time).³⁹ To return to the above example: when sharing my anger over my wife’s infidelity with friends, my visible anger itself – including my expressive behavior, and not merely the *object* of my anger (my wife’s infidelity) – solicits an angry response from them, which heightens my own anger, which in turn further animates theirs, etc. Merleau-Ponty describes this reciprocal link between an organism and its milieu as one of “circular causality.” He writes that

the fate of an excitation (for instance, an emotion) is determined by its relation to the whole of the organic state and to the simultaneous or preceding excitations, and (therefore) the relations between an organism and its milieu are not relations of linear causality but of circular causality.⁴⁰

37 Solomon, Robert. “Emotions in Phenomenology and Existentialism.” *A Companion to Phenomenology and Existentialism*. Ed. Hubert Dreyfus and Mark Wrathall. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006. 291–309, here 303.

38 Downing, George. “Emotion Theory Reconsidered.” *Heidegger, Coping, and Cognitive Science: Essays in Honor of Hubert L. Dreyfus, Volume 2*. Ed. Mark Wrathall and Jeff Malpas. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000. 245–270, here 263.

39 This view stands in contrast, for example, to Carroll Izard’s characterization of emotions as brief responses (Izard, Carroll E. “Emotions, Human.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 15th ed. Chicago. 1974. Vol. 18. 248–256), and Joseph LeDoux’s characterization of emotions as rapid neurological (amygdala) responses, distinct from the cerebral activity that generally follows them (LeDoux, *The Emotional Brain*). See also Damasio, Antonio. *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1999, and Panksepp, Jaak. *Affective Neurology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.

40 Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. *The Structure of Behavior*. Trans. Alden L. Fisher. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1963. 40.

Since they generally unfold within interpersonal contexts, many emotions likewise emerge from reciprocal feedback loops coupling interactants – that is, sequences of mutually-modulating expressive signals (gestures, facial expressions, vocal cues, etc.) that ground basic levels of emotional coordination. These dynamic processes establish the emerging temporal structure and interpersonal context of our emotional experiences. In this sense, then, do some emotions seem to gradually emerge quite literally *between* interactants, within this ongoing mutual adjustment of action, emotion, and intention.⁴¹

Merleau-Ponty is similarly attuned to the coordinative bodily structures at the root of our social engagements. He notes that: “The communication or comprehension of gestures comes about through the reciprocity of my intentions and the gestures of others, of my gestures and intentions discernible in the conduct of other people. It is as if the other person’s intention inhabited my body and mine his.”⁴²

Much research indicates that we enact this bodily reciprocity Merleau-Ponty speaks of from birth. For example, newborns are capable of facial mimicry,⁴³ including emotionally relevant facial expressions.⁴⁴ Beyond facial expressions, they are also perceptually attuned to the temporal correspondence of facial movements to their own activities;⁴⁵ infants become highly distressed when previously expressive interactants abruptly assume a non-expressive “still face” during a face-to-face interaction, or when the temporal rhythm of a facial and vocal exchange is noticeably disrupted.⁴⁶

Babies are already attuned to the natural rhythm and flow of interpersonal exchanges. Very young infants are also surprisingly skilled perceivers, able to

⁴¹ Fogel, Alan, and Andrea Garvey. “Alive Communication.” *Infant Behavior and Development* 30.2 (2007): 251–257.

⁴² Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 215.

⁴³ Meltzoff, Andrew N., and M. Keith Moore. “Imitation of Facial and Manual Gestures by Human Neonates.” *Science* 198 (1977): 75–78.

⁴⁴ Haviland, Jeannette M., and Mary Lelwica. “The Induced Affect Response: 10-Week-Old Infants’ Responses to Three Emotion Expressions.” *Developmental Psychology* 23.1 (1987): 97–104; Kugiumutzakis, Giannis. “Genesis and Development of Early Infant Mimesis to Facial and Vocal Models.” *Imitation in Infancy*. Ed. Jacqueline Nadel and George Butterworth. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 36–59.

⁴⁵ Parkinson, Brian, Agneta H. Fischer, and Antony S. R. Manstead. *Emotions in Social Relations*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005.

⁴⁶ Murray, Lynn, and Colwyn Trevarthen. “Emotional Regulation of Interactions between Two-Month-Olds and Their Mothers.” *Social Perception in Infants*. Ed. Tiffany M. Field and Nathan Fox. Norwood: Ablex, 1985. 101–125; Tronick, Edward, Heidelise Als, Lauren Adamson, Susan Wise, and T. Berry Brazelton. “The Infant’s Response to Entrapment between Contradictory Messages in Face-to-Face Interaction.” *Journal of the American Academy of Child Psychiatry* 17.1 (1978): 1–13.

reliably discriminate their mother's face and voice⁴⁷ and track the frequencies of adult utterances by changing their intonation with different speakers (higher with mother, lower with father).⁴⁸ But this bodily coordination is not confined to infancy; it continues as we age, and assists in establishing emotional rapport and shared understanding.⁴⁹ The salient point is that these shared patterns of expressive coordination provide the temporal structure for emerging emotions. Emotions are not pre-fabricated states but time-sensitive processes that "emerge as a result of specific interactions between [...] individuals and inputs from a changing environment" – most immediately, the expressive inputs of fellow interactants.⁵⁰ From birth, my emotions are largely mediated by the responses of others.⁵¹ They play a key role in shaping my emotional experience by, among other things, confirming or disrupting expectations, motivating or interrupting ongoing sequences, and arousing conflicting motivations.⁵² Bodily expressions are the vehicle by which these processes are enacted.

The second important lesson drawn from the example at the start of this section is that emotions are *forms of engagement*, that is, "variations of belonging to the world," as Merleau-Ponty puts it.⁵³ They generally involve others,

47 Field, Tiffany M., Debra Cohen, Robert Garcia, and Reena Greenberg. "Mother-Stranger Face Discrimination by the Newborn." *Infant Behavior and Development* 7.1 (1984): 19–25.

48 Lieberman, Philip. *Intonation, Perception, and Language*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967.

49 Chartrand, Tanya, and John A. Bargh. "The Chameleon Effect: The Perception-Behavior Link and Social Interaction." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 76.6 (1999): 893–910; Kendon, Adam. "Movement Coordination in Social Interaction: Some Examples Described." *Acta Psychologica* 32 (1970): 101–125; Lakens, Daniel, and Mariëlle Stel. "If They Move in Sync, They Must Feel in Sync: Movement Synchrony Leads to Attributions of Rapport and Entitativity." *Social Cognition* 29.1 (2011): 1–14.

50 Griffiths, Paul, and Andrea Scarantino. "Emotions in the Wild: The Situated Perspective on Emotion." *The Cambridge Handbook of Situated Cognition*. Ed. Philip Robbins and Murat Aydede. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. 437–453, here 446.

51 Reddy, Vasudevi. *How Infants Know Minds*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008.

52 Berscheid, Ellen, and Hilary Ammazzalorso. "Emotional Experience in Close Relationships." *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Interpersonal Processes*. Ed. Garth J. O. Fletcher and Margaret S. Clark. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2007. 308–330.

53 Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 415. Toward the end of his life, Robert Solomon argued for a similar view, which he suggested was consistent with his earlier well-known cognitivist approach to emotions but which nevertheless more prominently emphasized their nature as *engagements*, that is, ways of cognitively grappling with the world (Solomon, Robert. "Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings: Emotions and Engagements with the World." *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*. Ed. Robert Solomon. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. 76–88; Solomon, "Emotions in Phenomenology and Existentialism"). However, Solomon was primarily interested in establishing how emotions, as judgments, can be (at times) nonpropositional and bodily, in addition to, at other times, propositional and

both real and imagined. We thus often use emotions to modify and negotiate various aspects of our relationships with other people.⁵⁴ However, as the previous discussion indicates, since these processes involve others they are collaborative processes. Once more, many emotions emerge *between* interactants as part of these collaborative negotiations.

To look at just one example of this phenomenon, consider the influence of audience effects on emotional experience. In a well-known study, ten-pin bowling players were found to smile significantly more after producing a positive event (bowling a strike or spare) when they turned to face their friends than when they were still facing the pins.⁵⁵ Beyond simply expressing an inner state (happiness at having bowled a strike), the smiles indicated a strong social motivation: to share one's happiness and to relish the development of this experience as mediated by the affiliative displays of others. A similar effect was observed in ten-month-old prelinguistic infants left in a room where they could direct attention either toward their mother or an attractive toy.⁵⁶ Significantly more smiles were directed toward the mother than the toys when mothers were interacting with the child; but when mothers were disengaged, such as when reading a magazine, smiling was equally directed at both mothers and toys. Another study found that the availability of an attentive social partner – whether the infant's mother or a complete stranger – resulted in significantly more smiling in eighteen-month-old infants.⁵⁷ Spanish soccer fans issue authentic smiles ("Duchenne smiles") in response to goals only when facing one another.⁵⁸

This was even the case for Olympic athletes, who tended to smile during medal ceremonies almost exclusively when actually receiving their gold

articulate, whereas my emphasis is on emotions as social engagements or ways of negotiating interpersonal contexts. Despite this difference in emphasis, the present discussion is clearly indebted to Solomon's analysis.

54 Hinde, "Was 'The Expression of the Emotions' a Misleading Phrase;" Maclaren, Kym. "Emotional Clichés and Authentic Passions: A Phenomenological Revision of a Cognitive Theory of Emotion." *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 10.1 (2011): 45–65.

55 Kraut, Robert E., and Robert E. Johnston. "Social and Emotional Messages of Smiling: An Ethological Approach." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37.9 (1979): 1539–1553.

56 Jones, Susan Scanlon, Kimberly Collins, and Hye-Won Hong. "An Audience Effect on Smile Production in 10-Month-Old Infants." *Psychological Science* 2.1 (1991): 45–49.

57 Jones, Susan Scanlon, and Tarja Raag. "Smile Production in Older Infants: The Importance of a Social Recipient for the Facial Signal." *Child Development* 60.4 (1989): 811–818.

58 Fernández-Dols, José Miguel, and María Angeles Ruiz-Belda. "Spontaneous Facial Behavior During Intense Emotional Episodes: Artistic Truth and Optical Truth." *The Psychology of Facial Expression*. Ed. James A. Russell and José Miguel Fernández-Dols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. 255–294.

medal – and thus interacting with officials and the public – as opposed to non-interactive contexts, for example before the ceremony (by themselves in the tunnel, away from TV cameras) or while facing their country's flag during the playing of the national anthem.⁵⁹ Winning a gold medal is, presumably, the highlight of an athlete's professional career and surely one of the most satisfying achievements of their entire lives. It is safe to assume, therefore, that gold-medal winners are exceedingly happy during this ceremony, overflowing with positive affect.⁶⁰ But if behavioral expression is sufficient for emotional experience, one would expect to see fairly consistent smiling throughout the ceremony. There is little incentive to inhibit or suppress the emotion in this context; on the contrary, one would assume that they could barely hide their supreme happiness. Yet, like the smiles in the previous studies, Olympians' smiles seem to be affiliative gestures that are part of social signaling strategies. They are offered to motivate interaction and to establish a particular sort of relationship with others – they are an emotional tool for negotiating that social context, in other words – and not simply the expressive aspect of an intensely felt “inner” emotion. Studies of audience effects on emotional experience thus suggest that facial displays and other bodily expressions of emotion are mediated by the extent to which individuals can fully interact in social situations.⁶¹ It often takes the presence of others to draw an emotion out of us and help us complete it, as it were. And in enacting these

59 Fernández-Dols, José Miguel, and María Angeles Ruiz-Belda. “Are Smiles a Sign of Happiness? Gold Medal Winners at the Olympic Games.” *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 69.6 (1995): 1113–1119.

60 An independent panel of gold medal winners rated levels of happiness during the gold medal ceremony at more than nine on a ten-point scale. Cf. Fernández-Dols and Ruiz-Belda, “Are Smiles a Sign of Happiness,” 1115.

61 Chovil, Nicole. “Social Determinants of Facial Displays.” *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 15.3 (1991): 141–154. This is not to deny, of course, that we never smile or feel happy, for example, when alone. But audience effects are also present in these “solitary” contexts, which are shaped by an implicit sociality (Fridlund, “Sociality of Solitary Smiling”). Even when alone, we interact with others via imagination or memory (reliving a past exchange with a good friend), anticipation or forecast (smiling before entering a room; rehearsing an anticipated conversation) – or we might even take ourselves as an interactant (talking to or hitting ourselves), or anthropomorphize animate or inanimate objects (pets, stuffed animals, etc.). A similar idea of implicit sociality is behind Merleau-Ponty's insistence that we experience the social world “not as an object or sum of objects, but as a permanent field or dimension of existence. I may well turn away from it, but not cease to be situated relatively to it. Our relation to the social is, like our relationship to the world, deeper than any express perception or any judgment [...]. The social is already there when we come to know or judge it.” (Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 421–422.)

processes, we are participating in collaborative processes of creating and modifying interpersonal relationships.

These studies also suggest an alternative understanding of the emotional deficits reported by individuals with Moebius Syndrome and severe spinal cord injuries.⁶² While part of their diminished emotional phenomenology may in fact result from an inability to facially or bodily express the emotion, it is also likely that these individuals regularly receive diminished social feedback from others. Many people are simply ill-equipped to deal with facial difference.⁶³ Perhaps not surprisingly, Moebius patients routinely report feeling socially impaired, and experience adjustment difficulties as well as a lack of empathy from others.⁶⁴ Children and adults with severe spinal cord injuries offer similar narratives.⁶⁵ But it is possible that these social struggles are as much a function of an impaired interpersonal *context* as they are an impaired ability to physically *express*. Because their respective disabilities modulate the way that others interact with them – this is especially so for MS subjects since their condition is congenital, unlike those with severe spinal cord injuries who may acquire their disability much later in life – these individuals may lack the repertoire of embodied-expressive social skills that most of us take for granted: things like coordinating eye gaze patterns, generating and responding to expressive contingencies (facial expressions, movement, touch, etc.), and modulating our own and others' affective responses. From birth, the bodily character of the social milieu in which most of us learn these skills – face-to-face interaction – is fundamentally altered.

For example, some young children with Moebius Syndrome are assumed to be retarded because of difficulty in feeding, drooling, and dysarthric

⁶² I am grateful to Kathleen Rives Bogart (personal communication) for pressing this point.

⁶³ Cooke Macgregor observes: "Because we rely so much on feedback by way of facial expression and the transitory movements of muscles (there are some 100 of them) that indicate agreement, surprise, interest, and other nonverbal messages to which we in turn respond, we are disconcerted when these modes of communication are impaired. Unable to 'read' the other person and frustrated by the ambiguity that is created, we become hesitant and awkward. While some impairments lead to false clues and interpretations, others provide no clue at all [...]. Since there is little to no feedback, attempts at interchange [with Moebius subjects] have been likened to 'talking with a statue.'" (Cooke Macgregor, Frances. "Facial Disfigurement: Problems and Management of Social Interaction and Implications for Mental Health." *Aesthetic Plastic Surgery* 14.1 (1990): 249–257, here 253–254.)

⁶⁴ Bogart and Matsumoto, "Living with Moebius Syndrome."

⁶⁵ Cole, Jonathan. *Still Lives: Narratives of Spinal Cord Injury*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004; Klaas, Sara J., Erin H. Kelly, Julie Gorzkowski, Erica Homko, and Lawrence C. Vogel. "Assessing Patterns of Participation and Enjoyment in Children with Spinal Cord Injury." *Developmental Medicine & Child Neurology* 52.5 (2009): 468–474.

speech.⁶⁶ And for those whose faces do not conform to the norm, the negatively altered character of this circular social causality (a history of being looked at strangely, taunted, or generally ignored) becomes a source of stress, anxiety, and anguish, which negatively effects the development of these bodily skills, as well as both personality functioning and mental health.⁶⁷ The lesson, simply put, is that the social disabilities are *shared*: they are not simply located in the physical deficit *itself* (an unexpressive face or impairment of mobility). This latter view ignores the circular causality at the heart of our social development, and overlooks the extent to which social interaction and emotional experience is a collaborative process that emerges over time, between interactants.

A final thought before concluding this section. The previous discussion requires that we now qualify Davies's constraint on what counts as a genuine emotional expression. Recall that, for Davies, an emotional expression must be spontaneous – it cannot be performed calculatingly, in the sense that a genuine expression of anger, for example, is performed not to express anger but rather to make it clear to others that one is in fact angry. For Davies, this transforms the expression from an end to a means and thus compromises the spontaneity required for authentic expressions of emotions. But the previous discussion highlights a way in which this requirement is too strict. First, Davies's discussion presupposes UP: the core of the emotion is the unobservable inner affect, while the behavioral expression is a secondary public manifestation.⁶⁸ But for various reasons, we have seen that this presupposition is suspect.

Second, Davies seems to be working with a “snapshot” conception of emotions, understood as involuntary, fleeting responses sandwiched between environmental stimulus and behavioral response. But many expressions lie somewhere in the middle of the continuum between voluntary and involuntary responses. And taking seriously their social dimension highlights how emotional experiences can simultaneously be composed of both. So, for example, while a certain emotional experience might begin as an involuntary reaction – I become flushed, my heartbeat quickens, and I spontaneously frown in anger – voluntary aspects can enter into, and thus extend, deepen, and perhaps modulate the emotion. The feeling of making a face (frowning), along with the associated physiological and neurological responses, as well as cer-

⁶⁶ Meyerson, Marion D. “Resiliency and Success in Adults with Moebius Syndrome.” *The Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Journal* 38.3 (2001): 231–235.

⁶⁷ Cooke Macgregor, “Facial Disfigurement.”

⁶⁸ Goldie, “Explaining Expressions of Emotion.”

tain events in the social situation, might ‘start’ the emotion, as it were; but conscious and reflective posturing (assuming a more aggressive stance, frowning more deeply) extends the emotional process and gives it a more explicit social texture and communicative function.⁶⁹ Both voluntary and involuntary aspects of emotional experience have significant phenomenological consequences. Together, they shape and bring texture to our emotional experiences as they emerge and develop over time – and crucially, as we engage with the world and with others. Davies’s insistence that emotional expressions must be spontaneous thus neglects the fundamentally process-oriented character of emotional experience, and the way that both voluntary and involuntary aspects are unified within emotional experiences. Additionally, it is a relatively static model in that it fails to do justice to the various ways, some of which were discussed above, that emotions emerge and are modulated by the interactive dynamics of our social world. In sum: *contra* Davies, it is not clear why an emotion cannot start as an involuntary expression (an end in itself) but then take on a communicative-collaborative character as it develops over time (a means to a further social end) without becoming something other than an emotion.

Emotions and other minds

I want to conclude by briefly returning to the question of other minds. Recall that the epistemological problem of other minds as traditionally formulated in philosophy assumes an ontological split between inner mental states, including emotions, and their outer behavioral expression. Since only the subject *of* the state has direct access *to* this inner state, it is assumed, the rest of us on the outside are forced to infer the existence of another’s mentality. According to Alec Hyslop, “what is striking is that we never have direct knowledge that other human beings are in whatever mental state they are in. It is this stark asymmetry that generates the epistemological problem of other minds.”⁷⁰

How might the above discussion of emotions help make headway on this issue? In two ways, I think, both of which have already been suggested. First, as should now be clear, it offers reasons for doubting UP, which generates the problem of other minds. Second, in challenging UP, it indicates that we can, at least at times, attain direct (non-inferential) knowledge of others’ mental state, including their emotions – and it does so, crucially, without having to

⁶⁹ Solomon, “Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings.”

⁷⁰ Hyslop, “Other Minds.”

implausibly deny the kernel of truth in the observation about the asymmetry between how I access my own versus others' mental states.

To begin with the first point: the various strands of empirical research discussed above offer reasons for rejecting the ontological split between mind and behavior UP presupposes. Emotions, it seems, can be distributed across the expressiveness of the visible, tangible body. Again, this is not a crude behaviorism; the idea that publically available expressive aspects are proper parts of some emotions does not entail that this is all there is to emotions. Individuals with Moebius Syndrome, Bell's Palsy, or severe spinal cord injury, for example – all of whom have lost the ability to behaviorally express emotions in some important sense – do not thereby lose *all* affect. Rather, the lesson from these studies is that some emotions (and possibly other mental processes) are hybrid: they are composed of both internal (neural, psychological, and phenomenological) and external (bodily) aspects or processes that together form an integrated unity. So, by acknowledging the latter's role in driving some emotional processes we are by no means committed to rejecting the simultaneous presence of the former. Removing an individual's brain will have clear effects on their emotional life. Having a working brain thus appears to be a necessary condition for having emotions. In certain cases, however, it appears that so, too, is being able to bodily express them. By removing the physical vehicle of expression, such as facial mobility, part of what is expressed likewise disappears. It thus appears that emotions are dynamically unfolding processes which, in addition to their neural and physiological basis, involve "interaction with the world around and responsiveness to feedback from the world" – including, crucially, the expressive feedback of others.⁷¹

Second, if we do directly perceive (at least at times) aspects of others' mental life directly, this view seems to relegate inference to a secondary way of knowing others, parasitic on a more fundamental and primary *perceptual* access. Again, if aspects of some mental states are observable within overt behavior, we do not have to *infer* what we can directly *see*. To deal with the epistemological problem of other minds, we do not have to see everything about another's mental life; nor do we have to see every mental state or emotion another person has. Again, all that is needed is that, in principle, we can see another's experience, including their emotions. If so, we do not have to rely fundamentally on inference to get us (indirect) access to their mental life. Rather, we can get direct access simply by looking.

With respect to the point about the asymmetry of access, it is certainly true that the sort of access I enjoy with respect to my own emotional experien-

71 Stout, Rowland. "Seeing the Anger in Someone's Face." *Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume* 84.1 (2010): 29–43, here 40.

ces, say, differs from the access I have to the emotional experiences of others. Merleau-Ponty, for instance, does not seem to deny the stark asymmetry between how I access my own mind versus those of others.⁷² For clearly “[t]he grief and anger of another have never quite the same significance for him as they have for me. For him these situations are lived through, for me they are displayed.”⁷³ When I am angry, I generally *feel* that anger immediately (even if the responses of others are often crucial for helping me grasp the *extent* of my anger, say); when another is angry, I do not feel it (at least in the way I feel my own) – rather, I *see* it. So, I cannot assume the same first-person perspective another subject enjoys with respect to their mental states; I instead access them from an external vantage point, insofar as they are embodied in another’s expressive behavior. Yet the crucial point, once again, is simply put: in both cases the anger – whether my own or another’s – is *directly known*. Since aspects of another’s expressive behavior constitute a proper part of their anger themselves, and since I have direct perceptual access to this embodied aspect, I can come to *know* (see) their anger directly, immediately, without having to fall back on inference or imaginative projection.⁷⁴ Moreover, since many emotions are collaborative processes of interpersonal negotiation, both interactants have direct perceptual access to the expressive and collaborative dynamics of this process (its circular causality) and the emotions that emerge from it.

Additionally, Merleau-Ponty does not claim that the *totality* of another’s mental life becomes available within their expressive behavior. Clearly the possibility of pretense suggests otherwise. But it does not follow from these observations that my way of *knowing* my own anger versus that of another is somehow more direct. When I feel my anger or introspect it, I access my anger directly; likewise, when I perceive another’s angry gesture, I access their anger (or at least part of it) directly. So, while the *mode* of direct access might differ

⁷² It is easy to overstate this, however. While introspection often yields self-knowledge, it is neither infallible nor exhaustive. We sometimes access our own minds via others in the sense that they disclose things about us to ourselves, things that we did not perhaps previously know (or care to admit), such as my being infatuated with a coworker – my colleague might tell me out of exasperation: “Look, we all see it. It’s high time you admit it to yourself!” – or my insisting loudly that “I am not angry!” as my wife nods in solemn faux-agreement. Our motives, desires, preferences, emotions, etc. are often hidden from ourselves and thus require the mediation of another to come to light. Cf. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 238–264.

⁷³ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 415.

⁷⁴ Of course, I might be deceived in my perception of their anger. I might be subject to hallucination, illusion, or make an error of judgment and mistake the angry behavior of my friend on the other side of the street for excitement, but this is a problem for all forms of perception and not just cases where I directly perceive another’s mentality.

in these cases (introspection or direct feeling of my own emotions versus perceiving those of others), the directness of knowing is nevertheless the same. And this is ultimately what matters in resolving the epistemological problem of other minds.⁷⁵

It therefore appears that, at least on some occasions, I can in fact secure direct knowledge of aspects of another's mental states. I do not have to know *everything* they are thinking and feeling; nor do I have to be correct on every occasion. Rather, it is sufficient that parts of these mental states are perceptually present, available to be known directly within embodied patterns of expressive behavior. Thinking of the relation between emotions and expression this way helps make sense of Merleau-Ponty's suggestive remark that "[i]nside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself."⁷⁶

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⁷⁵ This is not to deny the obvious point that we do sometimes need to infer, guess, or imagine what another person is up to, in cases, for instance, of pretense or sorting out another's hidden motives. But all that is needed is to dissolve the epistemological problem of other minds, once again, is to establish that, at least sometimes, we do enjoy direct, non-inferential access to the mental life of others.

⁷⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 474.

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