

# ***The Perceptibility of Emotion***

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*Perceptibility* is the claim that suitably placed and endowed observers can perceive others' emotions. In §1 I distinguish *Perceptibility* from some other claims with which it is liable to be confused. In §2 I set out a first constraint on *Perceptibility*: that the perception of emotion is only possible via the perception of some distinct entity, paradigmatically an expression of the emotion in question. This rules out views according to which we perceive others' emotions 'directly'. In §3 I set out a second constraint: that *Perceptibility* must respect the fact that there exists an explanatory relation between emotion and emotional expression. This rules out views according to which we can perceive emotions via their expressions because the former are grounded in the latter. In §4, by far the longest section, I set out a third constraint: that the claim that we perceive entities of a certain sort must cohere with the most plausible account of the ontological category that such entities fall into. I go on to argue that since there is reason to accept the claim that emotions are states and expressions are processes, we must reject the view that we can perceive emotions via their expressions because the latter are parts of the former. In §5 I propose a version of *Perceptibility* that meets these constraints. This is the view that we can perceive emotions via their expressions because the latter are manifestations of the former.

## **1. Perceptual accounts of emotion recognition**

*Perceptibility* is a claim that may form a part of a perceptual account of emotion recognition.<sup>1</sup> Consider a situation in which *A* perceives *B* who is screaming in terror and, on this basis, judges *B* to be afraid. Perceptual accounts of emotion recognition are united in the claim that, in suitable circumstances, this belief can

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<sup>1</sup> For perceptual accounts of emotion recognition (or mindreading more generally) see (Dretske, 1973; McDowell, 1982; Cassam, 2007, ch.5; Green, 2007; Green, 2010; Stout, 2010; McNeill, 2010).

be grounded non-inferentially, by the perceptual experience itself. But this can be fleshed out in a number of non-equivalent ways, among which we can distinguish between the following:

***Perceptibility***: *A* perceives *B*'s fear

***Perceptibility-that***: *A* perceives that *B* is afraid

***Perceptibility-as***: *A* perceives *B* as afraid

***Appears***: *B* appears afraid to *A*

The relations between these are controversial (Dretske, 1969; Maund, 2003). In particular, some will deny that *Perceptibility-as* and *Appears* really represent distinct claims. Whatever one supposes about that question, though, it seems reasonable to suppose that *Perceptibility* is not equivalent to any one of the others. To see this, consider what I will take to be the uncontroversial claim that *A* can perceive *B*s screaming. That *A* perceives *B*s screaming does not entail that *B* appears to *A* to be screaming, for she might appear to be singing. Nor, for the same reason, does it entail that *A* perceives *B* as screaming. Further, on the supposition both that *A* takes her perceptual experience at face value and that *B* appears to be singing, it would not be true that *A* perceives that *B* is screaming. Nor is there an entailment in the other direction. From the fact that *A* perceives that *B* is screaming, it does not follow that she perceives *B*'s screaming, since she may perceive that *B* is screaming by way of perceiving her shadow. From the fact that *A* perceives *B* as screaming, or that *B* appears to *A* to be screaming, it does not follow that *A* perceives *B*'s screaming, for *A*s perceptual experience may be illusory in this respect. It seems, then, that *Perceptibility* is not equivalent to any one of the other claims and that if *Perceptibility* is to play a role in a perceptual account of emotion recognition it will be a role distinctive to it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> I defend a version of *Perceptibility-as* in (Smith, 2010), a version of *Appears* in (Smith, 2015), and a version of *Perceptibility-that* in (Smith, forthcoming)

That we can perceive others' emotions is a claim that has recently been advanced by a number of philosophers. Here are three examples,

not only can we know of one another's emotions; in some cases we can also literally perceive them (Green, 2007, 89)

We somehow directly see another's mental life, including their thoughts, emotions, intentions, etc. (Krueger, 2012, 150)

What displays or manifestations of the anger do is to *reveal* his state of mind without *being* his state of mind; one perceives his anger by perceiving displays of it. (Cassam, 2007, 165)

In each case is articulated a perceptual account of emotion recognition (or mindreading more generally) that endorses something like *Perceptibility*. It is with these claims that I shall be concerned.

A number of factors might motivate defenders of a perceptual account of mindreading to adopt *Perceptibility*. First, we should not downplay the fact that we do actually speak this way. There is nothing more natural than to say that we see the fear in someone's eyes or the joy in their smile, that we hear the disgust in someone's voice, and so on. If we are interested in preserving surface appearances, then it may seem that a defense of *Perceptibility* is the right way to go.

Second, since 'perceives' is factive, if *A* perceives *B*'s fear it follows that *B* is afraid. Since many defenders of perceptual accounts of mindreading are interested, ultimately, in our *knowledge* of others' psychological states, and knowledge requires truth, this fact can make *Perceptibility* seem attractive. More attractive, perhaps, than claims couched in terms of the non-factive 'perceives-as' or 'appears'.

Third, it is plausible to suppose that perceiving is non-inferential and at least relatively immune from top-down effects (cf. the papers in Zeimbekis & Raftopoulos, 2015). An answer to the question of whether *A* perceives *o* need not refer to *A*'s beliefs or conceptual capacities. It is at least debatable whether the

same can be said regarding the question of whether *A* perceives that *o* is *F*, the question of whether *A* perceives *o* as *F*, and the question of whether *o* appears *F* to *A*. Non-inferentiality is typically deemed crucial to perceptual knowledge and, thereby, perceptual accounts of mindreading. In this vein, McNeill (2012) argues that a successful defense of *Perceptibility-that* actually depends on *Perceptibility*.

Combining these features, as it does, *Perceptibility* might seem to be the strongest claim that a proponent of a perceptual account of mindreading might seek to defend. In what follows I will not further consider the motivations for or significance of *Perceptibility*.<sup>3</sup> At the very least, though, we have reason to determine whether it is a plausible view.

## 2. Emotion perception is indirect

The above quotation from Cassam highlights a puzzle for *Perceptibility*, one that points towards a constraint on an acceptable account. It is, let us suppose, unproblematic that one can perceive emotional expressions.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the perception of emotional expressions is the paradigm case to which defenders of *Perceptibility* appeal. We say, after all, that we see the fear *in* the expression. Such emotional expressions, however, are evidently not identical to emotions. Rather, they express those emotions. But if an emotional expression is not identical to an emotion, as Cassam explicitly claims, we need to know how it can be that the perception of the expression amounts to the perception of the emotion. How can *A*'s perceiving *B*'s screaming amount to her perceiving *B*'s fear?<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> I outline what I take to be some limitations of the claim in (Smith, 2015).

<sup>4</sup> I argue below that emotional expressions are dynamic entities that occur over time. As such, the claim that they can be perceived, whilst taken by many as a phenomenological datum, is not without difficulties. For discussion of the sorts of issue that arise with respect to the perception of dynamic entities, see (Phillips, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Jacob's dilemma, 'either another's overt bodily expressions do constitute her emotional or affective experiences or they do not. If they do not, then clearly by perceiving another's expressive behavior, one does not thereby perceive the other's emotional or affective experience. But if they do, then it is quite unclear how the [...] model can distance itself from behaviorism. (Jacob, 2011, 531)

Defenders of *Perceptibility* must claim, then, as Cassam does, that it is possible to perceive one thing by, or in virtue of, perceiving another. In particular, they must claim that one can perceive an emotion in virtue of perceiving its expression, despite the fact that these are not identical. This is to say that there is a sense in which the perception of others' emotions must be indirect. One sees someone's fear in virtue of seeing their facial or other bodily expression. The converse is not true: one sees someone's joy *because* one sees their smile, but one does not see their smile *because* one sees their joy.

The claim that emotion perception is indirect due to its resting on expression perception must be distinguished from the claim that emotion perception is indirect due to its resting on the perception of representations or other psychological entities. There is no suggestion in the above considerations of the 'indirect realist' theory of perception here (although there are parallels to be drawn with Jackson's (1977, Ch.1) view). Rather, the claim is that one perceives one aspect of a person (their emotions) in virtue of perceiving others (the bodily behaviour that expresses them).

Some defenders of *Perceptibility* claim that one can 'directly perceive' the emotions of others (e.g. Gallagher, 2008). If by this they mean to deny the above point, then their positions are, in that respect at least, implausible. That some philosophers have thought that *Perceptibility* is false (e.g. Jacob, 2011) is testament to the fact that we see others' emotions, at most, indirectly. Were the emotions of others seen directly, in just the same way as are expressions of emotion, say, then there would be no more temptation to deny *Perceptibility* than there is to deny that one can see the smile of another. That is, there would be no temptation at all. If we are seeking to defend the manifest image of our awareness of the emotional life of others, then we must recognise that we perceive others' emotions in virtue of perceiving their bodily behaviour and, paradigmatically, their expressive behaviour. The question is not *whether* the perception of emotion is indirect, but *how* it is. That is, what we want to know is what relation holds between emotion and expression such that it can be true that one perceives the former by perceiving the latter.

### **3. Emotions explain emotional expressions**

If asked to explain why someone is smiling, we might respond that they are smiling because they are happy; if asked why a person is scowling, we might cite their anger; and so on. In short, emotions explain expressions. This can be expanded in two ways. On the first, emotions explain their expressions at least in part because they cause them: Joy explains smiling as cause explains effect. On the second, the explanation is of the non-causal variety typically referred to as 'grounding' (Fine, 2012). We often use the term 'because' in non-causal contexts, for example I am in pain because my c-fibres are firing. On this second view, joy explains smiling as ground explains grounded. Both of these relations—causation and grounding—are asymmetric. Thus, whichever way one fleshes out the view, the point is that emotions explain expressions, but not vice versa.

I propose this as a part of our ordinary folk conception of the relation between emotion and emotional expression. It can, of course, be challenged. For example, some subscribe to an account of emotions as feelings of bodily reactions to stimuli (James, 1884). According to this view, the standard picture of emotions as explaining, causally or otherwise, emotional expressions gets things exactly backwards. Despite our ordinary talk seemingly presupposing the opposite, it is in fact the smile that explains the joy, the frown that explains the anger, and so on. This is not the place to argue against the Jamesian view of the relation between emotion and emotional expression. The view has been criticised extensively elsewhere (e.g. Deonna & Teroni, 2012). I just add that the view is inconsistent with most accounts of what it is that makes a piece of behaviour an expression of emotion (e.g. Green, 2007).

I will simply assume the falsity of the Jamesian picture, and the truth of the common-sense claim that emotions explain expressions.<sup>6</sup> This claim places a constraint on *Perceptibility*. If emotions are perceptible, they are so in virtue of the perceptibility of their expressions. Our question is what relation, holding between emotion and expression, could explain this. Given that, as mentioned above, grounding is a relation that supports explanation, one might be tempted to suppose that grounding will do the work here. That is, one might point out

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<sup>6</sup> See (Pickard, 2003) for a Jamesian account that discusses some issues closely related to those that follow.

that one can perceive grounded entities by perceiving their grounds.<sup>7</sup> So, for example, one might perceive a city by perceiving a group of streets, buildings, and so on. The idea would be that the existence of the city is grounded in the existence of its streets, houses, etc. Another example, somewhat closer to our present concern, would be the claim that an appropriately situated neuroscientist could see someone's pain in virtue of seeing the firing of c-fibres.

The fact that emotions explain their expressions constrains *Perceptibility* and it does so in such a way as to rule out the possibility that one may perceive an emotion in virtue of perceiving the expressions that ground it. For this proposal gets the explanatory connection back to front. If there exists a grounding relation between emotions and their expressions, it is the former that ground, and so explain, the latter. But one cannot perceive grounding entities by way of perceiving that which they ground. I do not perceive the buildings in virtue of perceiving the city, or the c-fibres in virtue of perceiving the pain. Of course, it may be that there are cases in which I perceive both the ground and the grounded but, insofar as I perceive the former, it is not because I perceive the latter. Grounding, it seems, is not the relation that the defender of *Perceptibility* is looking for.

#### **4. Emotions, expressions, and the part-whole relation**

A general and entirely plausible constraint on *Perceptibility* is that claims about the scope of perceptual experience, about what we perceive, should be sensitive to ontology. That is, a claim that we perceive entities of a certain sort must cohere with the most plausible account of the ontological category that such entities fall into. In this way, ontology may constrain what we may feasibly claim can be perceived. Thus, whatever relation accounts for the possibility of perceiving an emotion via perceiving its expression must be consistent with the

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<sup>7</sup> This may seem like an odd suggestion if, as many think, grounding is a relation between facts. Since my concern is not to make any positive claims about grounding, I will allow that there is a legitimate sense in which all manner of entities (objects, properties, processes), may ground and be grounded in others.

best available account of the ontology of emotion and expression. This innocuous constraint, I will argue, rules out a popular view.

#### 4.1 *The Part-Whole View*

Some defenders of *Perceptibility* assert that the relation that enables one to perceive an emotion by perceiving its expression is the part-whole relation. That is, they claim that expressions are parts of emotions, and that, quite generally, one can perceive a whole by perceiving one of its parts. So,

I defend the view that some mental states and processes—or at least some *parts* of mental states and processes—are at times visible, capable of being directly perceived by others. This is because some forms of expressive behaviour constitute proper parts of some mental phenomena. (Krueger, 2012, 151)

in some cases we perceive emotions by means of part-whole perception...a facial signature of anger is a characteristic component of anger (Green, 2007, 89)

This 'part-whole view' combines two claims and derives a third: we can perceive emotional expressions; emotional expressions are parts of emotions; so we can perceive emotions. Thus is *Perceptibility* vindicated.<sup>8</sup>

Let us assume that we can see objects in virtue of seeing their parts. Some might hold that in every case in which we see an object, we do so by way of seeing one of its parts, namely its facing surface (cf. Jackson, 1977, Ch.1). One need not endorse that claim, however, to suppose that one can on occasion see an object by seeing only a part of it, for example in cases in which it is partly occluded.<sup>9</sup> For the sake of argument, we can also assume that this claim is true

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<sup>8</sup> For an earlier formulation of the view, see Tormey (1971, Ch.2).

<sup>9</sup> Green's formulation employs the phrase 'characteristic component'. On his view, it is not possible to perceive an object by perceiving just any old part; only certain parts will do. On his definition, a characteristic component is a part the perception of which justifies one in inferring



for any other sensory modalities for which *Perceptibility* might want to be asserted.

The success of the part-whole view rests on the plausibility of the claim that emotional expressions, for example screaming, are parts of emotions, for example fear. Such a way of speaking is encouraged by certain approaches to emotion taken within the cognitive sciences where, as Scherer says, 'there is now increasing consensus on a componential approach to emotion' (2009, p.1307). For example, in their introduction to the psychology of emotion, Parkinson and Coleman speak for many when they write that,

Emotion is conceived as a syndrome of more or less integrated components usually including the following four factors: cognitive appraisals, bodily reactions, action tendencies, and expressive movements. (Parkinson and Colman, 1995, xii)<sup>10</sup>

Such componential accounts might be thought to lend support to the part-whole view. Indeed, this element of Green's perceptual account of mindreading relies on the view, which he takes to be supported by cognitive scientific work, in particular that of Ekman, that 'the basic emotions are complex, coordinated, and automated' (2007, 88), including expression as a part. It can seem, then, that the part-whole view is on solid ground.

#### *4.2 Dynamic Entities, Static Entities, and the Parts*

The following line of argument can be mounted against the part-whole view: If something is part of a static entity, it is itself static. Emotions are static. Expressions, however, are not static but dynamic. It follows that componentialism is false; expressions are not parts of emotions. From this it

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the existence of the whole (2007, 86). This isn't really elaborated much further, although he is clear that what counts as a characteristic component is relative to context. I won't be concerned with this issue but will simply assume that if expressions are parts of emotions then they meet whatever conditions there are on being the *right sort* of part.

<sup>10</sup> Also see Scherer (1987; 2001)

follows that the part-whole view fails; perceiving an expression does not, via part-whole perception, enable us to perceive an emotion.

Each element of this argument requires some elaboration and I begin with the distinction between static and dynamic entities. The most familiar way in which this distinction is made, and one that I rely on, is that these two sorts of entity differ with respect to the way in which each occupies time. This can be summarised by saying that dynamic, but not static, entities occur or happen. As things that occur, dynamic entities are extended in time, either taking or going on for a certain period of time. Static entities, on the other hand, are not extended in time; rather they persist through time. My travelling from Manchester to London takes time, my being on the train does not take time; rather it persists or obtains for an amount of time. The former is a dynamic entity, unfolding over time through the happening of successive phases; the latter is a static entity that I instantiate for the duration of that process. This is a difference in what Steward (1997) calls an entity's 'temporal shape'.

The category of dynamic entities includes events and processes<sup>11</sup> The category of static entities includes properties or states, and property instances or tropes. For the most part in what follows, the differences between entities that fall within the broad categories of the static and dynamic will not much matter, my concern being with what unites the categories, i.e. the difference between occurring over time (or at a time), on the one hand, and persisting through time, on the other.

How are we to determine whether any given type of entity is static or dynamic? This is a specific instance of the more general question of how we are to determine the ontological category of some entity. There are, no doubt, various ways to proceed. However, here I adopt a thought of Austin's on the relation between linguistic and metaphysical distinctions. He writes that,

our common stock of words embodies all the distinctions men have found worth drawing, and the connexions they have found worth marking, in the lifetimes of many generations: these surely are likely to be more

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<sup>11</sup> On these distinctions, and further sub-distinctions, see Vendler (1957), Kenny (1963, Ch.8), and Mourelatos (1978).

numerous, more sound, since they have stood up to the long test of the survival of the fittest, and more subtle, at least in all ordinary and reasonably practical matters, than any that you or I are likely to think up in our armchairs of an afternoon—the most favoured alternative method. (Austin, 1956, p.8)

In the first instance, following Austin's recommendation, I shall turn to the way in which ontological distinctions are marked in language. The distinction between the dynamic and the static is indeed marked in the way in which we speak. As such, linguistic indicators give us a defeasible reason to determine whether some entity is static or dynamic. Whilst I do not suppose that the linguistic considerations that follow are conclusive, they surely do some significant work in shifting the burden of proof onto those that wish to deny their deliverances.

A number of linguistic markers of the dynamic/static distinction have been proposed. Dynamic, but not static, verbs: typically accept the progressive aspect; can serve as infinitival complements of perception verbs; and allow for anaphoric reference via 'to happen'.<sup>12</sup>

Dynamic verbs typically take the progressive aspect, a device used to indicate that something is now occurring:<sup>13</sup>

A is running

A is thinking

A is smiling

A is screaming

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<sup>12</sup> Here I draw on the work of Maienborn. See her (2005) for a full discussion in which she also claims that static verbs can combine with neither locative and temporal modifiers, nor with manner adverbials, instrumentals, or comitatives.

<sup>13</sup> Vendler (1957, pp.146-148) claims that achievement verbs (such as 'reach the top') do not take the progressive whilst nevertheless picking out entities that are (in my terms) dynamic. It is for this reason that I say that dynamic verbs *typically* take the progressive. Since I assume that nobody will wish to claim that emotions are achievements, I do not think that this matters too much for present purposes. As it happens, I agree with Parsons (1989, fn.25) that Vendler's claim is 'far from obvious'.

Static verbs, however, never do:

! A is believing

! A is knowing

! A is being happy

! A is being afraid

This is *prima facie* evidence that the referents of static verbs are not things that can be happening now.<sup>14</sup> Related to this is the seeming fact that only dynamic verbs allow for anaphoric reference via 'to happen' (Maienborn, 2005). So,

A ran for the bus. This happened while...

A thought about kittens. This happened while...

! A believed that *P*. This happened while...

! A knew French. This happened while...

Again, the thought is that only dynamic verbs refer to entities that happen.

Finally, dynamic verbs can serve as infinitival complements to perception verbs; indeed various forms are available<sup>15</sup>:

A saw *B* run(ing)

A saw *B*'s running

A heard *B* think(ing)

A heard *B*'s thinking

A saw *B* smile(ing)

A saw *B*'s smiling

A heard *B* scream(ing)

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<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the unavailability of past-tense variants ('I was knowing') supports the more general thought that they cannot happen.

<sup>15</sup> It is worth emphasizing that the point here concerns grammaticality, not the possibility of truth.

*A heard B's screaming*

Static verb, however, cannot; only the nominalised adjectival is acceptable:

! *A saw B believe(ing) that P*

! *A heard B know(ing) French*

! *A saw B be(ing) happy*

! *A heard B be(ing) afraid*

*A saw B's happiness*

*A heard B's knowledge of French*

*A saw B's belief that P*

*A heard B's fear*

The fact that this behaviour pairs with that concerning the progressive and anaphor via 'to happen', gives us a further way of testing for whether a given verb is static or dynamic.<sup>16</sup>

I will assume that, in the absence of compelling reason to suppose otherwise, a dynamic verb picks out a dynamic entity while a static verb picks out something static. Thus, running is dynamic; its occurrence is extended in time. Believing, on the other hand, is not; a person may hold a belief for a certain amount of time, but that belief is not itself something that unfolds over time. As Vendler puts it,

This difference [static/dynamic] suggests that running, writing and the like are processes going on in time, i.e., roughly, that they consist of successive phases following one another in time[...]But although it can be true of a subject that he knows something at a given moment or for a certain period, knowing and its kin are not processes going on in time. It may be the case that I know geography now, but this does not mean that a

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<sup>16</sup> The fact that only the nominalised adjectival form is acceptable suggests that insofar as some static entities are perceptible, these are property instances, or tropes, which are plausibly the referents of nominalised adjectivals.

process of knowing geography is going on at present consisting of phases succeeding one another in time. (Vendler, 1957, 145)

The fact that static and dynamic entities occupy time differently suggests a constraint on what can count as a part of a state. If a part  $p$  of a whole  $w$  occurs, then it follows that that  $w$  occurs, for it must take, or go on for, at least as much time as does  $p$ . Since static entities do not occur, it follows that no part of any static entity occurs. Thus, all the parts of a static entity are themselves static or, at least, non-occurring entities. If, then, some  $w$  has a dynamic part, what Vendler calls a phase, it follows that  $w$  is itself dynamic. Another way to make this point would be to borrow the 'wholly present' terminology familiar from discussions of universals. So, static entities are wholly present at each time at which they exist whereas dynamic entities, since they have temporal parts, are not. Since a static entity is wholly present, there is no point during its existence at which some (part) of it has not yet happened. It follows that states cannot have dynamic entities as parts.<sup>17</sup> This is important in what follows.

#### *4.3 (Most) Emotions are static, expressions are dynamic*

As is suggested by the above examples, emotion verbs, or at least the large majority of them, are static and so, if static verbs pick out static entities, emotions are static. 'A is being happy' is ill-formed, as are, 'A is being afraid', 'A is being angry', and 'A is being sad'.<sup>18</sup> Of course, there are readings of some of these according to which they are not illicit. For example, 'A is being sad' can mean 'A is

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<sup>17</sup> It does not follow that every part of a dynamic entity is itself dynamic. I will remain neutral on whether dynamic entities can have non-dynamic parts. I do not, therefore, assume that Steward (1997, 73) is right to suppose that all of an entity's parts must possess the same temporal shape as it does.

<sup>18</sup> In passing, Arpaly and Schroeder (2014, pp.26-27) provide a lovely discussion of the grammaticality of 'I'm loving'. The fact that 'I'm loving' is frequently used in popular culture (e.g. MacDonaldis, 'I'm loving it') may be evidence that there is, 'a linguistic change in process' (2014, p.27). Perhaps this is so. Compare the way that 'begs the question' is often used to mean 'raises the question'. What this reminds us of in the present context is the provisional nature of the conclusions reached via the Austinian method of metaphysics.

being a loser', but then 'sad' does not denote an emotion.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, in the case of emotion verbs we cannot use anaphor via 'to happen', so 'A was happy. This happened while...' is illicit. Finally, whilst 'A saw B's happiness' is acceptable, 'A saw B be(ing) happy' is not. According to these tests, then, emotion verbs are static.

That emotions are states that people are in, rather than events or processes that people undergo, is I assume the default position.<sup>20</sup> Of course, as with the journey from Manchester to London, static and dynamic entities are often related. So, whilst being afraid is static, persisting without occurring, becoming afraid and getting over one's fear are both dynamic. One's fear itself, however, persists without occurring.<sup>21</sup> Further, one may go through a number of sorts of fear, from mild concern to abject terror. There is something here that

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<sup>19</sup> One emotion verb admitting of the progressive picks out grief, as in 'A is grieving'. This lends at least some support to Goldie's (2011) contention that grief is a process. Perhaps there are others. Richard Dub has tried to convince me that examples such as 'I am admiring the painting' qualify. I am less than sure since I suspect that these are typically used to pick out expressive actions (the act of looking closely, etc.). Nevertheless, I set such cases aside, focusing on less cognitively sophisticated emotions such as fear, sadness, and joy.

<sup>20</sup> This point speaks to a distinction commonly made between episodic and dispositional emotions (see, for example, Deonna and Teroni, 2012, Ch.1). It might be thought that my claim that emotions are states is inconsistent with the way that this distinction is typically understood. There are some subtle issues here that I can only gesture at. First, there is no reason to suppose that the claim that emotions are states is inconsistent with the distinction between, say, being afraid of *this snake now* and being afraid of snakes. Second, it is sometimes suggested that the distinction between episodic and dispositional emotions is at the same time a distinction between emotions that do, and emotions that do not, reside within the stream of consciousness. O'Shaughnessey (2000), for example, would take the claim that emotions are states to entail that they are not experiences, since only processes can be experiential. Wollheim (1999) who, although employing a different terminology, argues that emotions are states, would probably agree. Soteriou (2013), on the other hand, allows for experiential states. I will remain neutral on this question. Also, see above for a related point regarding emotional feelings.

<sup>21</sup> I therefore disagree with Scherer when he says that, 'the term "emotional state" is misleading' (2009, p.1320). I do not, however, take my claim that emotions are states to be inconsistent with the central insights of his account, since his view can be construed in a number of ways, including as the view that (modal) emotions are *grounded* in what he calls 'component processes', i.e. appraisal, feeling, etc. For the notion of a process-grounded state, see §4.4.

may justly be called an emotional process but it is a process consisting in the transition between different emotional states (cf. O'Shaughnessy, 2000, Ch.1). It is not itself an emotion. Finally, there are a number of dynamic entities that are very closely associated with emotion. For example, when angry I may experience a number of bodily and non-bodily 'emotional feelings' that we might collectively refer to as 'feeling hot under the collar'. The acceptability of sentences such as 'A is feeling hot under the collar', 'B saw A feel(ing) hot under the collar', and 'A felt hot under the collar. This happened while...' suggests that such feelings are dynamic and so not identical to emotions themselves (cf. Scherer, 2009, p.1318 ff.).<sup>22</sup>

Again, as suggested by the earlier examples, expression verbs are dynamic and so, on the assumption that dynamic verbs pick out dynamic entities, emotional expressions are dynamic. 'A is smiling', 'A is screaming', 'A is scowling', and 'A is weeping' are all perfectly well formed, each indicating that the smiling, screaming, etc. is happening now. Emotional expressions occur. In fact, in many cases, they are things that we do.<sup>23</sup> A smile, for example, consists in a series of successive phases—voluntary or involuntary movements of the facial muscles—the accomplishment of which takes a period of time. Similarly, in the case of expression verbs we may use anaphor via 'to happen', so 'A smiled. This happened while...' is fine. Finally, both 'A saw B's scream' and 'A saw B scream(ing)' are acceptable. According to these tests, then, expression verbs are dynamic.

So, quite plausibly, emotions are static and emotional expressions are dynamic. If, as I claimed above, static entities cannot have dynamic entities as parts, it follows that emotional expressions are not parts of emotions. This is not a contingent matter, but follows from a consideration of the ontological category

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<sup>22</sup> Some may wish to defend the view that some such processes can be perceived in virtue of the perceptibility of their expressive parts. I will not discuss that view here other than to point out that it is unlikely to aid a defense of *Perceptibility* or perceptual accounts of emotion recognition more generally. For the reasons already presented, feeling hot under the collar (an occurring entity) is not a part of being angry (a state).

<sup>23</sup> According to Kenny's (1963) performance/activity distinction, most expression verbs will be activity-verbs, although some expressive actions will be associated with performance-verbs (for example, jumping for joy).



that each occupies. If so, then the part-whole view should be rejected. It is not the case that perceiving an expression is perceiving a part of an emotion, so we as yet have no adequate answer to the question of how perceiving an expression amounts to perceiving an emotion. This is not to say that such an answer cannot be given. Rather, it is to say that the part-whole view cannot provide one.

#### 4.4 Homogeneity and process-grounded states

The claim that expressions are dynamic entities might be challenged on the grounds that they are homogeneous down to their instants, a feature that some take to be a defining feature of the static. On this view, despite passing the above-mentioned linguistic tests for being dynamic, expression verbs would nonetheless pick out static entities.<sup>24</sup>

Suppose that some object  $o$  is  $F$  for the period  $t_1-t_n$ . If  $F$  picks out a homogeneous entity, it follows that  $o$  is  $F$  for every sub-interval, down to instants, of  $t_1-t_n$ . If  $F$  picks out a non-homogeneous entity, this does not follow. So, for example, if  $A$  knows French for the period  $t_1-t_n$ , it follows that  $A$  knows French for any sub-interval of that period. Freeze time at any point during  $t_1-t_n$  and it will be true, at that time, that  $A$  knows French. However, if  $A$  is running for the period  $t_1-t_n$ , it does not follow that  $A$  is running for every sub-interval of that period, since there are intervals too small for it to be the case that  $A$  is running during that interval.

It might be maintained that at least some emotional expressions are homogeneous in this sense.<sup>25</sup> So, if  $A$  is smiling for the period  $t_1-t_n$ , it follows that  $A$  is smiling for any sub-interval of that period. Freeze time at any point during  $t_1-t_n$  and it will be true, at that time, that  $A$  is smiling. If so, and if we think that a

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<sup>24</sup> Maienborn (2005) argues for the existence of what she calls 'Davidsonian-state verbs' which, whilst accepting the progressive and happily serving as infinitival complements to perception verbs, do not allow for anaphoric reference via 'to happen', and pick out homogeneous, so static, entities. In this category, Maienborn includes the verbs *sit*, *stand*, and *sleep*. Expression verbs, such as *smile*, do not fit neatly into this category so defined, since, as I pointed out above, they do allow anaphoric reference via 'to happen'.

<sup>25</sup> Only some since I take it that there is little to recommend the thought that screaming, for example, is homogeneous down to its instants.

sufficient condition of something's being static is that it is homogeneous, then perhaps at least some emotional expressions, e.g. smiles, are static after all. This result might be bolstered by consideration of pictorial representations of smiles: a smiley face is smiling, yet there is no event or process involved.

But this has moved too fast. First, the obvious point is that just as a picture of a pipe is not a pipe, the 'smile' of a smiley face is not a smile but a representation of a smile, and it certainly isn't an expression of emotion, at least not in the sense with which I am concerned. What, then, makes a real smile a smile? That is a difficult question to answer but one highly plausible thought is that whether or not some facial muscular configuration is a smile depends in part on the movements that brought it about (and perhaps also whether and how it will continue to develop). It is not incoherent to suppose that if we froze a smiling face it may be indiscriminable from a similarly frozen grimacing face. The one face, however, would be smiling whilst the other grimacing. The point here is that *if* smiling is homogeneous down to its instants, then it is plausible to hold that, at those instants, a face is smiling in part because of the facial movements occurring before (and perhaps after) that instant.

Compare Steward's (1997, p.72) example of temperature. As she points out, the temperature of a gas depends on the movements of its constituent molecules. If a gas is a certain temperature for  $t_1-t_n$ , then it follows that it is that temperature for any sub-interval of that period. So temperature is homogeneous. But, certainly when it comes to instants, it will only be so in virtue of certain movements occurring at times other than that instant. Temperature is 'process-grounded' (cf. Soteriou, 2013).

On this picture, however, even if smiling is homogeneous it will not be *strictly*-homogeneous. Let us say that an entity  $F$  is strictly-homogeneous if and only if when an object  $o$  is  $F$  for the period  $t_1-t_n$  then for any instant  $t$  falling within  $t_1-t_n$ ,  $o$  is  $F$  at  $t$  and its being so is grounded in entities existing at  $t$ . I take it that smiling is not strictly-homogeneous.

The question now is which, if either, of homogeneity and strict-homogeneity is sufficient for being static. The answer to this question, I suggest, is strict-homogeneity. I said above that if  $A$  is running for the period  $t_1-t_n$ , it does not follow that  $A$  is running for any sub-interval of that period, since there may

be intervals too small for it to be the case that *A* is running during that interval. But one might deny this. That is, one might deny that the fact that an instant during  $t_1-t_n$  does not contain the grounds for the fact that *A* is running entails that *A* is not running at that instant. This would be to claim that running is, despite what was suggested above, homogeneous. For all that, though, it will not be strictly-homogeneous. But since running is evidently a process, passing the test for homogeneity cannot be sufficient for being static. So, since smiling, even if homogenous, is not strictly-homogenous, it is not static.<sup>26</sup> Considerations of homogeneity, then, give us no reason to doubt the earlier conclusion that expressions of emotion are dynamic.

## 5. The manifestations of emotion

I have set out three constraints on *Perceptibility*. The first is that the perception of the emotions of others must be indirect, proceeding via the perception of emotional expressions. The second is that it must be consistent with the fact that emotions explain expressions, not vice versa. The third is that it must be consistent with the correct account of the ontology of emotion and expression, in particular it must respect the fact that emotions are static while expressions are dynamic. With these constraints in mind, it is possible to elaborate *Perceptibility* in a way that looks back to the previously noted fact that some explanation is

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<sup>26</sup> The persistent might still deny that 'smiling' always names a process. For it may be claimed that there is some static entity grounded in the processes of smiling which. Call this process-grounded state 'smiling<sub>s</sub>'; an initial grip on which we can gain by consideration of pictorial representations of smiles. As mentioned above, a smiley face is smiling in some sense. It further might be argued that smiling<sub>s</sub>, being a state, could happily be a part of happiness.

This move would not help the defender of *Perceptibility*, however, for the reason that smiling<sub>s</sub> cannot both be grounded in smiling and a part of happiness. In §3 I claimed that since emotions explain expressions, not vice versa, it cannot be that emotions are grounded in expressions. It is furthermore plausible that if *A* grounds *B*, and *B* is a proper part of *C*, then *A* (partly) grounds *C*. Thus, if smiling grounds smiling<sub>s</sub>, and smiling<sub>s</sub> is a proper part of joy, then smiling (partly) grounds joy. But this is, once more, to get the explanatory relation the wrong way around. Happiness is not grounded, even partly, in smiling. The present suggestion reverses this order of explanation in the manner of the Jamesian picture of emotions as feelings of bodily responses to stimuli. To this extent, the view is deeply at odds with common-sense.

causal. The idea, in short, is that we can perceive an emotion via perceiving its expression because the former causes the latter. More than this, the latter is a manifestation of the former.

I have argued above that (most) emotions are states. But more can be said. I suggest that emotions are *functional* states, individuated by their pattern of stimulus conditions (inputs) and manifestations (outputs). That is, an entity is an instance of emotion, *e*, if it instantiates the particular pattern of inputs and outputs definitive of *e*. In short, an entity is an instance of *e* if it realises the relevant causal profile. Exactly what the relevant inputs and outputs are for any given emotion is an open question. However, quite plausibly, the list of inputs will include evaluative appraisals and the list of outputs will include emotional expressions (Scherer, 2001; 2009). For example, the inputs definitive of joy are likely to include positive evaluation of some object or event, the outputs are likely to include the exhibition of a genuine, or Duchenne, smile. This is not to say that every instance of joy causes smiling. Rather, it is to say that joy is partly defined by its tendency to cause smiling.<sup>27</sup>

Assuming the above, I propose the following as a sufficient condition of the perception of others' emotions:

Where *Fness* is a functional/dispositional state, *S* indirectly perceives *o*'s *Fness* if *S* perceives (a sufficient number of) the manifestations of *o*'s *Fness* (the *Gness* of *o*, the *Hness* of *o*, etc.)<sup>28</sup>

By 'the manifestations of *o*'s *Fness*', I mean those features, including property instances, that *o*, and perhaps other objects, instantiate in virtue of *o*'s possessing

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<sup>27</sup> Of course, this is just a thumbnail sketch, for more details of the general approach to functional states, see (Whittle, 2008). For functionalism as applied to emotion, see (Nussbaum, 2003). For the application of the approach in an account of *Perception-as*, see (Smith, 2010).

<sup>28</sup> Note that this does not require that *S* perceive *o*. One might suppose that one can perceive *o*'s *Fness* without perceiving *o*. Consider seeing the strength of a hidden magnet by seeing iron objects flying towards it. The same point may, arguably, hold for direct property perception. Consider seeing *o*'s redness by glimpsing some small part of *o*, too small for it to be true that one sees *o*.

*F* and being in the appropriate stimulus conditions.<sup>29</sup> The above condition is perfectly general, offering an account of how it is that one may perceive functional properties. Consider, for example, poisonousness. Suppose that one sees a person ingesting a poisonous substance that has an immediate visible effect. Since this effect is a manifestation of the functional state of poisonousness, the above condition allows (but, given the 'sufficient number' condition, does not mandate) that in such a scenario, one sees (but need not see-that, see-as, etc.) the poisonousness of the substance. There will, of course, be objections to this picture but this is not the place for a full defence.<sup>30</sup> Rather, in what follows, I will sketch how the account meets the three constraints on *Perceptibility* elaborated earlier.

The first constraint is that the perception of the emotions of others must be indirect, proceeding via the perception of emotional expressions. This constraint is evidently met by the manifestation view. On this view, one perceives an emotion (but need not see-that, see-as, etc.) in virtue of perceiving a sufficient number of its manifestations. Thus, when one perceives the emotion one does so indirectly, on the back of the direct perception of, for example, its expressions.

The second constraint is that the account must respect the fact that emotions explain expressions, not vice versa. This is built into the account. The functionalist view of emotional states sees emotional expressions as on the output side of the causal profile definitive of the emotions in question. Put in

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<sup>29</sup> The 'sufficient number' condition is intended to allow for the possibility that attributions of indirect property perception are context sensitive.

<sup>30</sup> For one objection, since properties interact in an indefinite number of ways, the account would probably have to rely on some distinction between a property's 'core' and 'peripheral' manifestations. For another, if we think of the colours as functional/dispositional properties, won't even redness be perceived only indirectly? Well, such a view wouldn't immediately follow from the account, for it depends on what the manifestations of redness are, and whether they are perceived. On the view that the relevant manifestations of redness are colour experiences, one might reasonably deny that they are perceived. I leave a consideration of these issues to another occasion. For alternative, more detailed, accounts of the visual perception of functional/dispositional properties, see (Cohen, 2010).

terms of explanation, the idea is that one sees the emotional state in virtue of seeing a sufficient number of the things that it explains, including expressions.

The third constraint is that the account must be consistent with the fact that emotions are static while expressions are dynamic. The functionalist view sketched above is an account of what it is that individuates states of a certain kind, the key claim being that functional states are those that are individuated by their causal profile. As an account of functional states, it evidently respects the fact that emotions are static. Beyond this, the account leaves as an open question the ontological category into which the relevant stimuli and manifestations fall. In all likelihood, there will be no single answer to such a question. For example, it is plausible to suppose that the manifestations of joy will include both smiles (processes) and other emotional and cognitive states (gratitude, the desire for more of the same, and so on). The account, then, is neutral with respect to the ontology of emotional expression, and the constraint is met.

The manifestation account meets the three constraints on *Perceptibility* that I set out above. The account is, of course, merely a sketch and I have done nothing to defend the functionalism on which it depends. Nevertheless, the fact that the constraints are met, and in an intuitive way, puts the account ahead of the rivals that I discussed in §§2-4. Tentatively, then, I suggest that suitably placed and endowed observers can see others' emotions by way of seeing a sufficient number of their manifestations.

## **6. Conclusion**

Whether *Perceptibility* plays an important role in a complete account of emotion recognition, and if so what, is a question that I have not addressed here. There is, nevertheless, some reason to think that it might be true. The plausible constraints on a defence of *Perceptibility* that I have outlined can be met, but not by all existing views. In particular, I suggest that the popular suggestion that we perceive emotions in virtue of perceiving their (expressive) parts is mistaken, paying insufficient attention to more general issues concerning the ontology of emotion. Nor are emotions directly perceived, or perceived via the perception of their grounds. They are perceived via the perception of their manifestations. I

hope that I have made this position seem plausible and if not, at the very least, to have displayed the importance of approaching the question of the perceptibility of emotion—one typically addressed from a purely epistemic or phenomenological standpoint—with a clear view of the ontology of emotion.<sup>31</sup>

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