

Please cite the published version in the *British Journal of Aesthetics*, available at Oxford via <https://doi.org/10.1093/aesthj/ayw092>

On the Virtual Expression of Emotion in Writing

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1. Introduction

Richard Wollheim claims that ‘Language is regarded as expressive if and only if it displays certain characteristics that in the first instance pertain to [nonverbal] behaviour.’¹ What makes an utterance of ‘I am furious’ an expression of anger is the fact that it is spoken in an angry tone of voice or with an angry gesture, and not the fact that this sentence means that the speaker is angry. Had the speaker uttered this sentence in a somber tone of voice or with a gleeful smile, the thinking goes, then it wouldn’t have been an expression of anger at all. And had the speaker uttered a completely different sentence, even one that had nothing to do with anger, such as ‘That’s unfair!’, but in an angry tone of voice, then it would also have been an expression of anger.² We may summarize Wollheim’s thesis as follows: speech acts express emotions always in virtue of *how* they are said, and never solely in virtue of *what* they say.³

¹ Richard Wollheim, ‘Expression’, in G.N.A. Vesey (ed.), *Human Agent, Royal Institute of Philosophy Lectures, 1966-67* (New York: Macmillan; St Martin’s Press, 1968), 227-244, at 228.

² As we shall see in §2, the expression of *emotion* is different from the expression of *semantic content*, and thus the way that delivery affects meaning (as in cases of sarcasm or irony) is different from the way that delivery affects emotional expression.

³ There are two ways of interpreting Wollheim’s claim, and only one is consistent with my summary. On the interpretation I reject, Wollheim is suggesting that utterances are expressive in virtue of characteristics that once pertained only to nonlinguistic phenomena, but which may now pertain also to linguistic phenomena. This interpretation leaves room

If language expresses emotion only when it is accompanied by emotional tones of voice or gestures, however, then it would seem to follow that most *written* language may not be regarded as expressive at all. For when I type ‘I am furious’ into an email and press ‘send’, the recipient can neither see my body nor hear my voice, and thus there is no nonverbal behavior present to make my language expressive. Were I to call the person up on the phone and howl ‘I am furious’, then my tone of voice would express my fury. Were I to march up to the person’s door and scowl these words, then my facial expression would display my ire. But when I type these words into an email and press ‘send’, all nonverbal behavior is seemingly lost. And without nonverbal behavior, Wollheim implies that there can be no expression.

This consequence of Wollheim’s thesis is troubling, to say the least. Who could deny that we can and often do express our emotions in writing? After all, we encourage angsty teenagers to express their emotions in diaries, and we celebrate poets who can express complex feelings with great clarity. Writing, along with the visual and performing arts, is championed as an especially constructive means of self-expression. If Wollheim’s thesis entails that we cannot express our emotions in writing, then Wollheim’s thesis must be false.

In this paper I shall argue that Wollheim’s thesis, far from contradicting the possibility of written expression, in fact sheds new light on how individuals can and do express their emotions in writing. In short, an author must employ a variety of techniques within appropriate contexts to substitute for the nonverbal behaviors that would express her emotions physically. This

for utterances to be expressive independently of how they are said, which is precisely what I wish to deny. On the interpretation I favor, Wollheim is suggesting that paradigmatic cases of expression are purely nonlinguistic (that is, do not involve any language at all), while allowing for there to be cases of expression that involve language, as long as they also involve a behavioral manifestation of emotion (such as an accompanying facial expression, gesture, or tone of voice). I am led to this interpretation because Wollheim’s examples of expressive utterances are shouts and screams (Wollheim, ‘Expression,’ 229, 231), and because later in the text, he asserts that we are justified in calling an utterance an expression only if it is ‘highly impassioned or emotive in its overall character’ (ibid., 232). In any case, my aim in this paper is not to provide the most faithful interpretation of Wollheim’s claim, but rather to explore the implications of one particular way of making sense of it, which I believe to be promising independently of Wollheim’s (apparent) endorsement of it.

substitution constitutes a *virtual expression* just in case it empowers readers to vividly imagine the production of these behaviors.⁴

Consider the following line of dialogue from Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*: 'De Lord God Amighty fogive po' ole Jim, kaze he never gwyne to fogive hisself as long's he live!'⁵ Twain could have written: 'The Lord God Almighty, forgive poor old Jim, because he [is] never going to forgive himself as long as he lives'. Both sentences say the same thing, but the former says it differently: it substitutes for an expressive speech pattern in a way that the latter does not. By writing the dialogue in this way, Twain empowers his readers to imagine Jim speaking these words himself. We hear Jim's accent, but also his affect. To borrow a metaphor from Wittgenstein, Jim's emotions 'come alive' in this dialogue, due in no small part to how Twain has rendered his speech.⁶ It's not *what* Jim says that makes his utterance an expression of regret, it's *how* he says it, which is precisely what Wollheim's thesis predicts. The rest of the paper is dedicated to motivating and fleshing out the details of this proposal.

2. The Analysis of Emotional Expression

To begin, why should we even take seriously Wollheim's claim that 'Language is regarded as expressive if and only if it displays certain characteristics that in the first instance pertain to [nonverbal] behaviour'? We should take it seriously, I suggest, because we have very good reason to think that it's true. For when we consider what it means for a speech act or behavior to 'express' an emotion, we find that the most plausible analysis entails Wollheim's thesis. Granting, then, that Wollheim's thesis is true, the need to square this claim with the possibility of the written expression of emotion becomes all the more urgent.

⁴ My thesis is influenced by Shapin's analysis of virtual witnessing and Levinson's analysis of musical expression. Steven Shapin, 'Pump and Circumstance: Robert Boyle's Literary Technology', *Social Studies of Science* 14:4 (1984), 481-520. Jerrold Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996).

⁵ Mark Twain, *Mark Twain: The Dover Reader* (New York: Dover, 2014), 130.

⁶ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), §537.

In what follows, I'll consider three attempts to analyze the concept of emotional expression. The first construes expression as a *causal* relation between an emotion and a behavior. The second construes it as an *indicative* relation. And the third construes it as a *perception-enabling* relation. I'll argue that the limitations of the first two analyses lead us to adopt the third, and that the third entails Wollheim's thesis.

Before jumping into an analysis of 'emotional expression', however, I should say something about emotions. What is an emotion, anyway? This question has proven notoriously difficult to answer. Philosophers have proposed many different definitions, yet none has achieved consensus.⁷ Thankfully, the nature of *emotional expression* swings independently of the nature of *emotion*, and I will not need to make any assumptions about what emotions really are to make my case. Indeed, each analysis of emotional expression that I consider below is consistent with every major theory of emotion currently on the table. I will assume only that emotions are the sorts of things that can be expressed, and that certain expressions may be regarded as non-essential components of emotions (more on this later). But I will not make any assumptions about the essence of emotion, if there even is such a thing. This paper is concerned with the nature of emotional expression, not that of emotion.

The Vagaries of Expression

Expressions, like emotions, are difficult to define. Alan Tormey begins his classic monograph, *The Concept of Expression*, with the following remark:

Few terms in the language have found more diversified use than 'expression'; and the occurrence of a single term in divergent roles is fair warning to the philosopher that clarity has been sacrificed to facility. No single work, of course, can hope to account for all the vagaries of 'expression', but the present study is centered upon what

⁷ Peter Goldie, *The Emotions* (New York: OUP, 2000); Paul Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jesse Prinz, *Gut Reactions* (New York: OUP, 2004).

is perhaps its most paradigmatic role: that of marking a relation between human behavior and certain characteristic states of a person.⁸

Like Tormey, I acknowledge that ‘expression’ is used in many ways, and like Tormey, I will focus on one use in particular. Much ink has been spilled trying to explain how *music* expresses emotion, but here I shall be interested in how *speech acts* – written or spoken – express emotion.⁹

Speech acts may be called ‘expressions’ in at least three different senses of the term. First, a speech act may be called an ‘expression’ insofar as it has semantic content. Sentences ‘express’ propositions and other sentential contents, and so by uttering a sentence one has thereby engaged in an act of semantic expression.¹⁰ But that’s not the sense of ‘expression’ that is at issue here. I am concerned with the expression of *emotions*, not the expression of *propositions*.¹¹

Second, a speech act may be called an ‘expression’ insofar as it evokes an emotion in an audience.¹² Every time I read the opening stanza of Paul Celan’s ‘Todesfuge’, for instance, I am nearly moved to tears on account of how *expressive* the language is. This sense is closer to the one that is at issue here, since the object of expression is an emotion, but I am concerned with the expression of the *speaker’s* (or *author’s*) emotions, not the elicitation of the *audience’s* emotions.

Finally, a speech act may be called an ‘expression’ insofar as it signifies the emotion that the speaker (or author) purportedly feels at the time of

⁸ Alan Tormey, *The Concept of Expression* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1971), xv.

⁹ See, for instance, Peter Kivy, *The Corded Shell* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980); Levinson, *The Pleasures of Aesthetics*.

¹⁰ Wilfrid Sellars, ‘Language as Thought and as Communication’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 29:4 (1969): 506-527, at 520-521; Dorit Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind* (New York: OUP, 2004), 216

¹¹ As Dorit Bar-On has persuasively argued, many speech acts express *both* emotions and propositions. Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind*.

¹² R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art* (New York: OUP, 1947), 109-111; Kivy, *The Corded Shell*, 29-33.

expression.¹³ A trembling utterance of ‘You are frightening me’ expresses the speaker’s occurrent fear, while an enthusiastic cry of ‘I am elated’ expresses the speaker’s occurrent joy. This is the sense of ‘expression’ that is at issue here, but it’s still an open question as to how that concept ought to be analyzed. To answer this question, it will be helpful to take a step back and to ask how so-called ‘natural expressions’ – smiles of joy, snarls of anger, and sobs of sadness – express emotions, since natural expressions are the simplest and clearest examples of this sense of expression. I’ll consider three different answers to this question.

Expressions as Symptoms

What makes a smile an expression of joy, a snarl an expression of anger, and a sob an expression of sadness? We may at first be tempted to answer that these behaviors are expressions of emotions insofar as they are *caused by emotions* – that a smile is an expression of joy just in case joy causes a person to smile.¹⁴

¹³ Several philosophers have argued that this category breaks into two smaller categories, depending on whether the expression is intentional or not. (Some of these philosophers reserve the term ‘expression’ for intentional acts.) See Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 121-124; Wilfrid Sellars, ‘Language as Thought and as Communication’, 520-521; Wayne Davis, ‘Expression of Emotion’, *American Philosophical Quarterly* 25:4 (1988): 279-291, at 279; and Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind*, 216. I focus on the broader category that includes both intentional and non-intentional expressions.

¹⁴ Several philosophers have developed this basic line of thought. In a passage that would greatly influence both Darwin and Freud, Herbert Spencer writes that ‘[emotional] excitation always tends to beget muscular motion; and when it rises to a certain intensity, always does beget it’ (‘The Physiology of Laughter’, in *Illustrations of a Universal Progress* [New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1875], 194-209). He then analyzes ‘emotional expressions’ as all and only those behaviors that are ‘beget’ by emotional excitation. Similarly, J. L. Austin observes that ‘When we are angry, we have an impulse, felt and/or acted on, to do actions of particular kinds, and unless we suppress the anger, we do actually proceed to do them’ (‘Other Minds’, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes* 20 (1946), 148-187, at 152). Like Spencer, Austin concludes that any and all behaviors that result from this felt impulse would be ‘expressions’ of anger. And Dorit Bar-On, who develops the most nuanced version of this analysis to date, states that a person expresses an emotion whenever her behavior ‘comes directly from’ that emotion (*Speaking My Mind*, 254), which is to say that the emotion is either a brute or a rational cause of that behavior (*ibid.*, 249). When the

The problem with this analysis is that causation turns out to be neither necessary nor sufficient for expression. To begin, it's not necessary. Wayne Davis notes that if expressions must be causally connected to emotions,

then insincere expressions of emotion would be impossible. But people often express love, for example, without meaning it, that is, without being in love. 'S expressed fear' must therefore be distinguished from 'S expressed *his* fear'. The latter implies that S is in fact afraid, and excludes insincerity; the former does not.¹⁵

In this paper, I shall be concerned with a concept of 'emotional expression' that allows for the possibility of insincere expression. An utterance of 'I am elated' can express joy, for instance, even if the speaker does not in fact feel joy. Thus, some speech acts express emotions without being caused by them.

Causation is not sufficient for expression either. A person's sadness may cause her to stay in bed all day, to listen to sad songs, and to write 'do not disturb' on a sign posted to her door, yet none of these behaviors is an expression of sadness. Philip J. Koch helpfully distinguishes the act of 'expressing' an emotion from the act of 'coping' with an emotion.¹⁶ Emotions are causes of both, yet that doesn't make coping behaviors 'expressions' of emotion. Something more is needed to make a behavior an emotional expression.

Finally, although we tend to assume that the experience of emotion is generally sufficient to cause an expression, empirical evidence suggests otherwise. Studies show that people are much less likely to express their emotions when alone than when in a group, leading some scientists to conclude that emotional expressions evolved to serve a communicative, rather than a physiological, function.¹⁷ In other words, the reason why a person expresses an emotion isn't simply that she feels that emotion, but

expression is spontaneous, the emotion is a brute cause; when the expression is intentional, the emotion is a rational cause. In either case, the emotion is the reason why the expression occurred.

¹⁵ Davis, 'Expression of Emotion', 280.

¹⁶ Philip J. Koch, 'Expressing Emotion', *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly* 64 (1983): 176-191.

¹⁷ Alan Fridlund, *Human Facial Expressions* (New York: Academic Press, 1994), 145-168.

rather that she would benefit from others *thinking* that she feels it. This brings us to the second analysis.

Expressions as Signals

Perhaps the expressing relation isn't a causal relation between an emotion and a behavior, but rather an indicative relation. Perhaps what makes a smile an expression of joy is the fact that a smile occurs *for the sake of indicating joy to observers*. Snarls express anger and sobs express sadness insofar as they too occur for the sake of indicating those emotions.¹⁸ This analysis avoids the problems facing the first, since insincere expressions occur for the sake of indicating emotions (albeit falsely), and since coping behaviors do not occur for the sake of indicating the emotions that cause them.¹⁹

The problem with this analysis is that it fails to capture what is distinctive about expression. To begin, compare John's utterance of 'I am angry' with my utterance of 'John is angry'. Both indicate John's anger, yet only the first can express it. The second may 'report' John's emotion, but it cannot 'express' it, since only John is in a position to express his anger.²⁰ Thus, the indication of emotion is not sufficient for the expression of emotion. (Advocates of this analysis may respond by stipulating that behaviors count as expressions only when they indicate *the agent's own emotions*, and no one else's, but intuitively, the act of expressing an emotion is very different from

¹⁸ Many philosophers have built upon this basic idea. O.H. Green writes that 'a person's behavior, verbal or nonverbal, is an expression of emotion when and only when it provides evidence for saying that the person presently has the emotion expressed' ('The Expression of Emotion', *Mind* 79:316 [1970]: 551-568, at 551). Alan Tormey suggests that a behavior expresses an emotion just in case 'there is a warrantable inference from [the behavior] to [the emotion]' (*The Concept of Expression* [New Jersey: Princeton University Press 1971], 43). Wayne Davis defines an emotional expression as 'a publicly observable act indicating that [an agent] has [an emotion]' ('Expression of Emotion', 287-288). And Mitchell Green analyzes *self*-expressions as behaviors that both signal and show an agent's occurrent mental state (*Self-Expression* [New York: OUP, 2007], 212). There are important differences between these various formulations, but all of them construe expression as an indicative relation between a behavior and an emotion.

¹⁹ Davis, 'Expression of Emotion', 288.

²⁰ Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind*, 217.

that of reporting an emotion, and hence there must be more to expression than indication.²¹⁾

Moreover, it's possible to indicate one's own emotions without expressing them. Think of all the different ways in which a person can communicate that she is sad. She can say 'I'm sad', or 'I'm having a terrible day', or 'I'm not happy', or 'This is the third day in a row that I'm feeling sad; therefore, I must be depressed'. She can nod when asked if she is sad, or even point to a sad face when given a chart of facial expressions and asked to identify her feelings. All of these actions indicate that the speaker is sad, yet we needn't say that all of them 'express' sadness, at least not in the sense that tears express sadness.²² To express an emotion is to communicate an emotion in a particular sort of way, not to communicate an emotion in any way whatsoever. Consider the injunction, 'Don't just tell me you love me; show me your love!'²³ Mitchell Green comments: 'What is being called for is an expression of love not a report of it, and that expression had better embody some love'.²⁴ In sum, there is more to expression than mere indication, and this analysis has failed to identify that special ingredient. This brings us to the third and final analysis.

Expressions as Manifestations

On my view, a behavior is an expression of an emotion just in case it *enables the perception of that emotion*.²⁵ Thus, a smile is an expression of joy just in case an observer can see joy in that smile, and a snarl is an expression of

²¹ Green, *Self-Expression*, 212; Davis, 'Expression of Emotion', 280.

²² Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 160-161.

²³ Green, *Self-Expression*, 24.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ My use of the term 'enabling' is technical: A enables the perception of B just in case the perception of A is *sufficient* for the perception of B. Thus, whereas 'enabling' is ordinarily a transitive relation, my sense of 'enabling' is a non-transitive relation. If my scowl enables the perception of my anger, and your act of pointing enables the perception of my scowl, then your act of pointing would enable the perception of my anger only in the ordinary sense of 'enabling'. In my sense, your act of pointing would not enable the perception of my anger. Only my scowl enables the perception of my anger, and indeed, only my scowl is an expression of my anger. See Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind*, 275; Author (redacted).

anger just in case an observer can hear anger in that snarl. Expression is, at its core, neither a causal nor an indicative relation between an emotion and a behavior; rather, it is a perception-enabling relation.²⁶

But how does an expression enable the perception of an emotion? A classic argument provides one answer.²⁷ Emotions, on most accounts, are more than just feelings; they are complex processes that include expressions as non-essential parts.²⁸ If expressions are parts of emotions, however, then in perceiving a part of an emotion, one has thereby perceived the emotion

²⁶ An early proponent of this analysis was Ludwig Wittgenstein, who writes that, “‘We see emotion.’ – As opposed to what? – We do not see facial contortions and *make the inference* that he is feeling joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features’ (*Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980], §570). Similarly, the German phenomenologist Max Scheler asserts that ‘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... If anyone tells me that this is not “perception”... I would beg him to... address himself to the phenomenological facts’ (*The Nature of Sympathy* [London: Archon Books, 1970], 260). And in a passage that recalls Wittgenstein’s contrast between perception and inference, Charles Taylor observes that: ‘When I know something or something is plain to me, through an inference, there is something else which I know or which is plain to me in a more direct way, and which I recognize as grounding my inference... It is characteristic of expression that it is not like this. I see the joy on your face, hear the sadness in the music. There is no set of properties that I notice from which I infer to your emotions or to the mood of the music’. (‘Action as Expression’, in C. Diamond & J. Teichmann (eds.), *Intention and Intentionality: Essays in Honour of G.E.M. Anscombe* [Brighton, MI: Harvester Books, 1979], 74) Finally, Dorit Bar-On (*Speaking My Mind*; ‘Expressing as “Showing What’s Within”: On Mitchell Green’s *Self-Expression* OUP 2007’, *Philosophical Books* 51:4 (2010): 212-227) and Mitchell Green (*Self-Expression*) have argued that *natural expressions* of emotion, including spontaneous facial expressions and gestures, enable the perception of emotion, although they deny that all emotional expressions do so, and hence they deny that ‘expression’ ought to be analyzed as a perception-enabling relation more generally.

²⁷ Stuart Hampshire, ‘Feeling and Expression’, in J. Glover (ed.), *The Philosophy of Mind* (New York: OUP, 1976), 73-83, at 74-5; Tormey, *The Concept of Expression*, 47-8; Green, *Self-Expression*, 84-93; James Sias and Dorit Bar-On, ‘Emotions and their Expressions’, in C. Abell & J. Smith (eds.), *The Expression of Emotion: Philosophical, Psychological, and Legal Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

²⁸ Carroll Izard, *Human Emotions* (New York: Plenum Press, 1977); Paul Griffiths, *What Emotions Really Are* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1997), 77; Klaus Scherer, ‘What are Emotions? And How Can They Be Measured?’ *Social Science Information* 44:4 (2005): 695-729; Green, *Self-Expression*, 88-90.

itself.²⁹ Green dubs this way of perceiving emotion the ‘part-whole perception’ of emotion.³⁰

This argument accounts for why certain spontaneous expressions enable the perception of emotion, but it does not account for why deliberate (including insincere) expressions enable the perception of emotion. The reason is that only the former qualify as parts of emotions. To be a part of an emotion, an expression must be a coordinated response in the peripheral nervous system.³¹ Only spontaneous facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice fit this description.³² Deliberate (including insincere) expressions may involve the same movements of the same muscles, but because these movements are not coordinated emotional responses in the peripheral nervous system, they are not parts of the emotions they express, and hence they do not enable the part-whole perception of emotion.

On my analysis, there are in fact two ways in which expressions can ‘enable the perception of emotion’, corresponding to the philosophical distinction between *perception* and *perceptual experience*. Perception is factive. I cannot perceive a dog unless there really is a dog in front of me. Perceptual experience, however, is non-factive. I can have the experience of seeing a dog even if there is no dog present. Perhaps I have mistaken a small wolf for a dog, or perhaps I am hallucinating. In either case, my perceptual experience may be indistinguishable from the perceptual experience that I would have had upon really perceiving the dog. Given this distinction, my view is that spontaneous expressions enable the *perception* of emotion, whereas deliberate (including insincere) expressions enable the *perceptual experience* of emotion.³³ When a woman puts on a false smile, she ‘looks’ happy to normal observers. When a man deliberately snarls, he ‘sounds’

²⁹ It follows neither that one has perceived every part of that emotion nor that one is aware of having perceived it.

³⁰ Green, *Self-Expression*, 86-87.

³¹ Izard, *Human Emotions*, 48-49; Scherer, ‘What are Emotions?’, 698; Klaus Scherer, ‘The Dynamic Architecture of Emotion: Evidence for the Component Process Model’, *Cognition & Emotion* 23:7 (2009): 1307-1351, at 1309.

³² Izard, *Human Emotions*, 62-63

³³ Author (redacted).

mad. And when a trained actor sobs on stage, he ‘looks’ and ‘sounds’ sad.³⁴ These expressions are not parts of felt emotions, but they resemble characteristic parts of felt emotions, and observers may not be able to tell the difference.³⁵ The enabling of the perceptual experience of emotion – like the enabling of perception – is sufficient to make something an expression of that emotion.

This analysis avoids all the problems facing the previous analyses. Insincere expressions enable the perceptual experience of someone as emotional, even when she is not. And behaviors that cope with or indicate emotions without expressing them enable neither the perception nor the perceptual experience of those emotions. You don’t see (or have the experience of seeing) a person’s sadness when you read her ‘do not disturb’ sign, even if you can correctly infer that she is feeling sad. And you don’t hear (or have the experience of hearing) a person’s anger in her calm report that she is angry.

If this analysis is correct, then Wollheim’s thesis follows. For while facial expressions, gestures, and tones of voice can enable both the perception and the perceptual experience of emotion, language can enable neither, since language, *per se*, neither is nor resembles a characteristic part of an emotion.³⁶ A *speech act* can be an expression, to be sure, but only if it is spoken with a facial expression, gesture, or tone of voice that is or resembles a part of an emotion. Thus, granting that something must enable the perception or the perceptual experience of emotion to count as an emotional expression, it follows that ‘Language is regarded as expressive if and only if it displays certain characteristics that in the first instance pertain to [nonverbal] behaviour.’

This brings us to an important objection against my analysis. I claim, with Wollheim, that speech acts express emotions always in virtue of *how* they are said, and never in virtue of *what* they say. Yet surely we can express emotions in speech without relying on an emotional tone of voice or gesture. Sometimes, people express anger by saying, ‘I’m angry’ in a calm, composed

³⁴ Cf. Joel Smith, ‘The Phenomenology of Face-to-Face Mindreading’, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 90:2 (2015): 274-293; Wittgenstein, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, §570.

³⁵ Author (redacted).

³⁶ Cf. Bar-On, *Speaking My Mind*, 295-297.

tone of voice. Sometimes, people express sadness by saying ‘I’m sad’ with a perfect poker-face. If my analysis cannot accommodate these purely linguistic expressions of emotion, then perhaps my analysis is incorrect.³⁷

In response, I reiterate a claim that I made earlier: we can *communicate* our emotions in a rich variety of ways that do not necessarily amount to *expressions* of those emotions. To express an emotion is to communicate an emotion in a very specific way, not to communicate it in any way whatsoever. When a person says ‘I’m angry’ in a calm, composed tone of voice, my intuition is that the person has surely ‘reported’ his emotion, but that he hasn’t ‘expressed’ it in the relevant sense.³⁸ On my view, a speech act expresses an emotion if and only if it manifests it, which is to say that it enables the perception or the perceptual experience of that emotion. (For the sake of convenience, I shall at times use the term ‘perception’ more broadly, to include both perception and perceptual experience.)

I’ve reviewed three analyses of emotional expression in order to situate Wollheim’s thesis within the broader literature on emotional expression. Although one may challenge Wollheim’s thesis on the grounds that it assumes an incorrect analysis of emotional expression, I’ve argued that competing analyses face objections, and thus that there are costs to rejecting it. In any case, my primary aim in this paper is not to justify Wollheim’s claim, but rather to demonstrate that it is consistent with – and even illuminates – the expression of emotion in writing.

3. Virtual Presence and Virtual Expression

Granting that Wollheim’s thesis is true, how is it possible to express an emotion in writing? I propose that an author may express an emotion in writing by creating a *virtual presence* in her text, namely by substituting for the nonverbal behaviors that physically express that emotion in speech. This virtual presence constitutes a *virtual expression* just in case it empowers readers to imagine the author (or character) performing these expressive behaviors. The expression is ‘virtual’ because the reader doesn’t literally

³⁷ Cf. Bar-On, ‘Expressing as “Showing What’s Within”’, 223-224.

³⁸ Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, 111-112; Wollheim, ‘Expression’, 228, 231.

perceive (or have the perceptual experience of) an emotion in the written text; rather, she *imagines* herself perceiving (or having the perceptual experience of) that emotion.³⁹

The creation of a virtual presence typically involves two things. First, it involves the implementation of various *techniques*, whose function is to empower readers to imagine the physical presence of the author (or character).⁴⁰ Some of these techniques are *lexical*: diction and syntax can be used to evoke a detailed image in the mind of the reader. Others are *typographical*: punctuation marks and even emoji can be used to call attention to how the author (or character) would speak the words that are written, thereby aiding the reader in her imaginative effort. Second, the creation of a virtual presence involves a suitable *context*, whose background norms improve the efficacy of the above techniques. In other words, a reader ought to approach the text on the assumption that the author (or character) may be attempting to express himself or herself, thereby making it appropriate for the reader to imaginatively engage the text. I'll have much more to say about technique and context below. But first, several clarifications are in order.

First, it's important to note that the imaginative efforts of the reader are not *necessary* for the creation of a virtual presence in writing. Just as I can express my joy by smiling, even if no one perceives me smiling, so too can I virtually express my joy by writing 'the sun smiled down on me', even if my reader does not imagine me smiling. The metaphor virtually expresses my joy because it *empowers* – or licenses and scaffolds the ability of – readers to imagine me smiling. However, readers, like observers, can be lazy, distracted, or dense, and their whimsies do not undermine my ability to express my emotions, whether physically or virtually. Thus, I define virtual presence in terms of what a reader is empowered to imagine, rather than in terms of what a reader does in fact imagine.

³⁹ In 'Pump and Circumstance', Shapin argues that Boyle's methodical descriptions of his experiments allow his readers to virtually witness them. They don't actually see the experiments taking place, of course, but they can imagine seeing them, just as readers imagine seeing emotions in virtual expressions.

⁴⁰ Whether readers imagine written texts being spoken is an empirical question, which can be – and has been – tested in the lab. See D.N. Gunraj, A.M. Drumm-Hewitt, & C.M. Klin, 'Embodiment during Reading: Simulating a Story Character's Linguistic Actions', *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory & Cognition* 40 (2014): 364-375.

Second, the imaginative efforts of the reader are not *sufficient* to create a virtual presence in a text either. Readers can imagine anything they like, but imagining an author speaking in a terrified tone of voice will not, in and of itself, constitute the text as a virtual expression of terror. At the very least, the author must purposively employ the techniques of creating a virtual presence in order to virtually express his or her emotion.⁴¹ If the text doesn't antecedently empower the reader's ability to imagine the author's nonverbal behavior, then the reader's imagination won't enable the author's virtual expression of emotion either.

Third, I should be careful to clarify the relationship between virtual presence and virtual expression. In general, our bodies convey a great deal of information about ourselves, and only a fraction of this information pertains directly to our emotions. Skin color, clothing, and accent, for example, convey information about who we are and where we come from, without conveying any information about what we are currently feeling. Even facial expressions are a mixed bag of information. Smiles, frowns, and pouts express our emotions, but winks, puckered lips, and outstretched tongues convey information about intentions rather than emotions. It is important to keep in mind that while authors sometimes create a virtual presence in order to virtually express their emotions, they often create a virtual presence in order to convey other nonverbal information, which has nothing to do with emotion. I can use nonstandard spellings to help my reader to imagine my accent, just as I can use a winking emoji to help my reader to imagine my flirtatious tone.

Finally, I should clarify the relationship between emotional expression and self-expression. A person can express many different parts of herself. Besides her occurrent thoughts and feelings, she can also express her personality, her character, her worldview, and her ideals. Thus, while emotional expression is a species of self-expression, it is far from being the only species. A firefighter who risks her life expresses her courage, but does not necessarily express any particular emotions in the process. An essayist who pens a biting social commentary expresses his own perspective on an issue – a perspective that may include strong emotions, to be sure, but that

⁴¹ I would argue that these techniques needn't be *consciously* or *deliberately* employed, however. Writers may also empower their readers by signaling that the writing occurs in a suitable context, even if none of the techniques discussed below are employed.

also may not. Wollheim's thesis, as I am interpreting it, pertains specifically to emotional expression. When he claims that 'Language is regarded as expressive if and only if it displays certain characteristics that in the first instance pertain to [nonverbal] behaviour'. I take him to mean only that language is *emotionally* expressive under these conditions. Language can surely be used to express other parts of one's self – including one's personality and perspective – without occasioning any specific nonverbal behaviors. This is an important qualification to keep in mind as we continue. I am offering an account of *emotional* expression of emotion in writing, not one of *self*-expression more generally.

In what follows, I will detail a variety of techniques that authors use to create a virtual presence (in general) and to virtually express emotions (in particular), as well as the contexts that facilitate these efforts.

Lexical Techniques

The first technique that authors use to create a virtual presence in writing is *imagery*. A textured description of a character – literal or figurative – can evoke a detailed image of that character in the reader's mind. And as we shall see, the establishment of a *point of view* helps to constitute that image as an imagined perception.

Observe how Shakespeare uses figurative and perspectival language to enable us to perceive Juliet through Romeo's eyes:

Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?–
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand.
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,

That I might touch that cheek!⁴²

Romeo's figurative description of Juliet's eyes and cheek allows us to construct a mental image of Juliet's face, but, crucially, his use of perspectival language allows us to imagine that we perceive Juliet's face from Romeo's particular vantage point. We are told that the brightness of Juliet's eyes stands out from the brightness of all the stars surrounding her. Thus, it is clear that Romeo is looking *up* at Juliet, with the night sky behind her. Furthermore, we know that Romeo has roughly a three-quarters view of Juliet's face because he perceives two eyes, but only one cheek. And we know that Juliet is leaning toward Romeo, because it is the visible cheek that leans onto her hand. This text constructs a virtual presence because we don't just imagine Juliet's face; we imagine *seeing* Juliet's face.

The virtual presence becomes a virtual expression once it becomes clear that Juliet's act of leaning her cheek on her hand is an expression of her longing for Romeo. She opens her mouth to say 'Ay me', and after a pause, she utters the famous line, 'O Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?' As we imagine seeing Juliet's face and hearing her voice, we imagine seeing and hearing her emotions as well. Shakespeare's expert use of imagery allows Juliet's emotions to 'come alive' in the text. He doesn't just *tell* us what Juliet feels; he *shows* us.

Authors can also use imagery to express their own emotions. Consider the following stanza of a love sonnet by Pablo Neruda:

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where,
I love you directly without problems or pride:
I love you like this because I don't know any other way to love,
except in this form in which I am not nor are you,
so close that your hand upon my chest is mine,
so close that your eyes close with my dreams.⁴³

⁴² William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare* (New York: OUP, 2005), 379.

⁴³ Pablo Neruda, *The Essential Neruda: Selected Poems* (California: City Lights Books, 2004), 143.

This poem expresses love, but not for the mundane reason that Neruda claims to be in love. (Recall Green’s comment, ‘What is being called for is an expression of love not a report of it, and that expression had better embody some love’.) To express love, the sonnet must empower its reader to imagine the behavioral manifestation of that love. And it does this, I suggest, through a sophisticated change of perspective. The first three lines invite the reader to take Neruda’s perspective: to imagine feeling, with him, the strength of his love. In the fourth line, the perspective shifts. We go from imagining Neruda’s thoughts and feelings to imagining the appearance of his body, locked in an embrace with his lover. We ‘see’ the lover’s hand placed upon Neruda’s chest, and we ‘see’ their eyes closing in unison. The sonnet empowers us to imagine the perception of a body that is open, without reservation or qualification, to the embrace of another – in short, a body that manifests love, and does not merely report it.

Another, related technique that authors use to express emotions in writing is *personification*. In place of describing expressive behavior directly, poets can project this behavior onto something else, and then construct a textured image of the latter. Shakespeare, once again, is the master of this technique:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.⁴⁴

Here, Shakespeare maintains a first-person perspective – we see the sunrise and sunset through his eyes – but he projects his own expressive behavior onto the landscape. The image of a golden sun rising to kiss the bright green meadows enables us to imagine his beaming, joyful face. The image of dark, ugly clouds occluding the sun’s retreat beneath the horizon enables us to imagine him hiding his pale, dejected face in his hands. Shakespeare’s use

⁴⁴ William Shakespeare, ‘Sonnet 33’, in *The Oxford Shakespeare* (New York: OUP, 2005), 783.

of personification enables us to ‘see’ his emotions in the rising and setting sun.

The techniques that I’ve considered thus far depend entirely on the meanings of the words used. Shakespeare’s textured description of Juliet’s face enables us to picture it because we grasp the words’ meanings. In theory, we could replace all the words with synonyms, or even translate them into another language, and still produce the same effect. Other lexical techniques depend on the sounds of the words used. *Consonance*, *assonance*, and *onomatopoeia*, for instance, can be used to substitute for physical sounds or movements. Consider the opening lines of ‘The Raven’:

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore –
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
‘Tis some visitor,’ I muttered, ‘tapping at my chamber door –
Only this and nothing more.’⁴⁵

When we read this poem, we ‘hear’ the raven’s tapping, not merely in Poe’s description of the sound, but in the sounds of the words themselves. Were we to replace the words ‘tapping’ and ‘rapping’ with non-onomatopoeic synonyms, they would cease to make the sounds virtually present in the text. This is an example of a virtual presence that is not emotionally expressive, since the bird’s tapping is not itself an expression of emotion. However, Poe also makes the behavior of the narrator virtually present, and this behavior is emotionally expressive. The words, ‘Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary... While I nodded, nearly napping’, create an assonating rhythm that empowers us to imagine the heavy, drooping features of the melancholic narrator. Again, it’s not merely Poe’s description of the narrator’s behavior that enables us to imagine seeing it; it’s also the sounds of the words he uses in this description.

In §2 I argued that expression is but one of many ways of communicating an emotion. (A person who nods in response to the question ‘Are you sad?’ communicates her sadness, but she does not express it, at least not in the sense

⁴⁵ Edgar Allan Poe, *Complete Stories and Poems of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 754.

that a sob expresses sadness.) What distinguishes expression from the other means of communicating emotion is that an expression manifests – or enables the perception of – that emotion. This distinction holds for writing as well. Authors can communicate emotions in a rich variety of ways without at the same time expressing them virtually. Consider D.H. Lawrence’s depiction of Walter Morel’s grief at the death of his son, William:

Morel and his wife were gentle with each other for some time after the death of their son. He would go into a kind of daze, staring wide-eyed and blank across the room. Then he would get up suddenly and hurry out to the Three Spots, returning in his normal state. But never in his life would he go for a walk up Shepstone, past the office where his son had worked, and he always avoided the cemetery.⁴⁶

This passage is devastatingly sad. But it does not, I claim, ‘express’ sadness. (To be clear, it may ‘express’ sadness in the sense of evoking feelings of sadness in the reader, but it does not ‘express’ sadness in the sense of manifesting the characters’ sadness.) Instead, this passage communicates sadness by describing behavior for which grief is the most likely explanation. It can be tempting to label every act of communicating an emotion an ‘expression’ of that emotion, but the ability to make principled distinctions between these terms allows us to think more subtly about the relationship between literature and emotion. On my view, ‘expression’ should not be used as a catch-all term to describe the emotionality of writing, but should instead be used to pick out one particularly interesting way in which authors can communicate emotions to readers, namely by empowering them to imagine the perception of emotionally expressive behaviors.

The techniques that I’ve discussed so far are deployed frequently in literary texts – in poems, novels, and plays – but only rarely in more mundane texts – in personal correspondences or diaries. The reason is that these techniques are very difficult to implement successfully. Words are, it turns out, an ill-suited means of emotional expression. Expressions represent iconically, by enabling the perception of emotion. Words, by contrast, represent logically, by encoding propositions. To use language as a means

⁴⁶ D.H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* (Norwood, MA: The Plimpton Press, 1913), 175-176.

of virtual expression, then, one must be able to use words iconically – to encode propositions or represent sounds in such a way that readers are empowered to imagine that they have perceived a behavioral expression of emotion. This is an unusual and highly specialized use of language, which requires great skill to master.

Most ordinary people have neither the training nor the desire to craft an evocative metaphor or a textured, multimodal description, yet ordinary people, no less than poets, are able to express their emotions in writing. How, then, does a love letter express love or a diary express angst, given the constraint that an author must do more than merely report an emotion to express it virtually? I shall now turn to a second set of techniques – typographical techniques – which serve the same expressive function as the lexical techniques, yet which are much easier to implement, and are more often deployed in non-literary texts.

Typographical Techniques

Let's return to Wollheim's claim that 'Language is regarded as expressive if and only if it displays certain characteristics that in the first instance pertain to [nonverbal] behaviour.' I've interpreted this claim to mean that a speech act expresses an emotion just in case it is accompanied by a facial expression, gesture, or tone of voice of that itself expresses that emotion. For an utterance of 'I am furious' to express fury, for instance, the speaker must say this sentence furiously, or with a furious glower or growl. The question is whether a person can express fury by writing this sentence in place of speaking it. And the answer is that a person can do so only if she can find a way of substituting for the glower or growl. I shall now consider a series of techniques that authors use to substitute directly for those gestures and sounds that express emotions in speech.

The first technique involves the use of *punctuation marks*. Commas (','), ellipses ('...'), and dashes ('-', '—') can be used to mark pauses within sentences, which can substitute for natural pauses in speech. When Nietzsche writes that 'Madness is something rare in individuals – but in groups, parties, peoples, and ages, it is the rule', the dash prompts the reader to dwell on the

joke's setup in first clause before moving on to the punchline in the second.⁴⁷ Similarly, exclamation points (!) deliver sentences as though they were spoken in an excited, emotional tone of voice.⁴⁸ Consider this passage from Oscar Wilde: 'Words! Mere words! How terrible they were! How clear, and vivid, and cruel! One could not escape from them. And yet what a subtle magic there was in them!'⁴⁹ Despite the fact that Wilde describes words as 'terrible' and 'cruel', and as things that 'one could not escape from', we get a sense for Wilde's attraction for words even before the final sentence, when he attributes to them a 'subtle magic'.

Typographic stylings, such as italics or bolding, can likewise be used to emphasize words in a way that mimics emotional tones of voice. Take the sentence, 'How could you do this to me?' which is emotionally ambiguous. To create a virtual expression of anger, we could render it as 'How could *you* do this to me?' To create a virtual expression of sadness, we could render it as 'How could you do this to *me*?' And to create a virtual expression of surprise, we could render it as '*How* could you do this to me?' In each case, we imbue the sentence with expressive significance by emphasizing the words that we would emphasize, were we to speak them aloud.

Phonetic spellings provide yet another means of substituting virtual behaviors for physical ones. Recall the passage from *Huckleberry Finn*: 'De Lord God Amighty fogive po' ole Jim, kaze he never gwyne to fogive hissself as long's he live!' By writing the dialogue in this way, Twain empowers us to 'hear' Jim speaking these words.⁵⁰ The words communicate *what* Jim says; the spellings communicate *how* he says it.

⁴⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 156.

⁴⁸ In a recent empirical study, researchers found that when authors of text messages end emotional statements with a period rather than with an exclamation point, readers tend to interpret the statement as insincere, or as not expressing an emotion. D.N. Gunraj, A.M. Drumm-Hewitt, E.M. Dashow, S.S.N. Upadhyay, & C.M. Klin, 'Texting Insincerely: The Role of the Period in Text Messaging', *Computers in Human Behavior* 55B (2016): 1067-1075. See also J. Hancock, C. Landrigan, & C. Silver, 'Expressing Emotion in Text-Based Communication', *CHI Proceedings: Emotion & Empathy* (2007): 929-932.

⁴⁹ Oscar Wilde, *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde: The Picture of Dorian Gray : the 1890 and 1891 texts* (New York: OUP, 2005), 184.

⁵⁰ Empirical studies suggest that readers really do engage in this imaginative effort. Gunraj et al., 'Embodiment during Reading'.

Finally, even *emoji* can be used to substitute for facial expressions in a text. By inserting a smiley-face at the end of a text message, for instance, an author calls upon the reader to imagine her speaking the message with a smile, which may help the reader to grasp its meaning. It's worth noting that while some emoji are used to express emotions virtually, others are used to create a virtual presence that is not straightforwardly emotional.⁵¹ One of the most popular emoji, the winking-smiley, is used to indicate flirting or teasing, and although many emotions are bound up with both, the winking-smiley is not an expression of emotion in the same way that the smiley and frowny emoji are expressions of emotions. What emoji do, in the first place, is substitute for the facial expressions that normally accompany spoken language.⁵²

The techniques discussed in this section require little skill to implement. If an author wishes to express her love in a letter – and not merely report it – then she needs only to select a typographical marking that conventionally substitutes for a behavioral expression of love. She might end her declarations of love with exclamation marks, or use alternative spellings and dashes to emphasize how she would have spoken the words she has written. In any case, the function of these markings, like that of the evocative metaphor or the textured multi-modal description, is to empower the reader to imagine the perception of an emotionally expressive behavior.

Context

I have just detailed a number of techniques – some lexical, others typographical – for the virtual expression of emotion. It is important to note that these techniques will not always be effective. To be effective, they must be implemented in contexts that are conducive to the creation of a virtual

⁵¹ E. Dresner & S. Herring, 'Functions of the Nonverbal in CMC: Emoticons and Illocutionary Force', *Communication Theory* 20 (2010): 249-268.

⁵² S.K. Lo, 'The Nonverbal Communication Functions of Emoticons in Computer-Mediated Communication', *Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking* 11:5 (2008): 595-597; J.B. Walther, & K.P. D'addario, 'The Impacts of Emoticons on Message Interpretation in Computer-Mediated Communication', *Social Science Computer Review* 19:3 (2001): 324-347.

presence in the first place. In other words, they ought to be implemented in contexts where the reader knows (or at least ought to know) that she should engage the text imaginatively. Otherwise, they will not get the uptake they call for. So what contexts are conducive to the creation of a virtual presence?

In the empirical literature, a distinction is often drawn between ‘*socio-emotional*’ and ‘*task-oriented*’ contexts of communication.⁵³ The former are contexts in which communicators share social or emotional information about themselves. The latter are contexts in which communicators coordinate to accomplish a particular goal. These categories certainly bleed together, and often overlap, but many examples fall squarely in one or the other. Readers typically rely on *genre conventions* to discern context. If a text is organized into a series of short imperative statements (e.g. ‘Peel and mince the garlic’), then it is probably a recipe, and probably task-oriented. If a text is organized into a series of short rhyming lines, then it is probably a poem, and probably socio-emotional. If a text begins with a salutation (e.g. ‘Dear John’), then it is probably a letter, and depending on whether it is a private or business letter, it may be either socio-emotional or task-oriented.

Research has found that the typographical techniques are far more effective in socio-emotional contexts than in task-oriented contexts.⁵⁴ This result is hardly surprising. When one writes (or reads) a text for the purpose of completing a concrete task, the physical characteristics of the author are relatively unimportant. When one writes (or reads) about an author’s thoughts, feelings, perspectives, or experiences, on the other hand, the physical characteristics of the author are of the utmost importance. This point gives rise to one final technique for the creation of a virtual presence.

By utilizing genre conventions to *signal* a socio-emotional context of writing, an author can encourage readers to engage a text imaginatively, even without using any of the above techniques. Consider the first lines of Elizabeth Barrett Browning famous sonnet, ‘How Do I Love Thee?’:

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

⁵³ This distinction can be traced back to Robert F. Bales, *Interaction Process Analysis* (Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1950).

⁵⁴ E.g. O.T. Yigit, ‘Emoticon Usage in Task-Oriented and Socio-Emotional Contexts in Online Discussion Board’, M.S. thesis, The Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL, 2005.

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of being and ideal grace.
I love thee to the level of every day's
Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.⁵⁵

This poem utilizes none of the techniques that I've listed thus far. However, we can see immediately that it is a love sonnet, and that Browning is attempting to express her love, so we may be willing to engage the text with our imaginations. If in reading this poem we imagine seeing or hearing Browning's love, then we may treat it as a virtual expression of that love. If in reading it we do not imagine any expressive behaviors, however, then we may regard it as an eloquent 'declaration' of Browning's love, perhaps, but not as a virtual 'expression' of it. For the poem to express love, it must do more than simply report love; it must *manifest* it.

4. Conclusion

I began this paper with a worry. If Wollheim's thesis is true, and speech acts express emotions always in virtue of *how* they are said, and never solely in virtue of *what* they say, then it would seem to follow that we cannot express our emotions in writing. We can see now that this worry is misguided. Not only is Wollheim's thesis consistent with the possibility of the written expression of emotion, but it helps us to explain how it is possible.

To express an emotion in writing, an author must create a virtual presence in the text by substituting for the facial expressions, gestures, or tones of voice that express that emotion physically. This virtual presence constitutes a virtual expression of emotion just in case it empowers readers to imagine the perception of those gestures and tones of voice. In writing, as in speech, it's not just *what* you say that matters for expression, it's also *how* you say it.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from the Portuguese and Other Poems* (New York: Dover, 1992), 26.