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# The Part-Whole Perception of Emotion

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## 1. Introduction

Imagine that you are driving to work. You take your eyes off the road for just a second to change the radio station, and when you look up again you see that the car in front of you has come to a sudden stop. You slam on the brakes, but it's too late. Your car skids into the back of the car in front of you, knocking it forward. A second later, the driver throws open his door, stomps over to the crumpled hood of your vehicle, and begins slamming his fist on it while shouting at you. His face is red, his veins bulge, and his eyes stare daggers at you. "Boy is he angry," you think to yourself as you shrink behind the steering wheel.

What makes you think that the man is angry? Obviously it has something to do with his behavior and the events leading up to it. But what is the cognitive process that generates this belief? Philosophers have proposed three different answers to this question:

1. According to the *Theory Theory* (TT), you judge that the man is angry because you (subconsciously) apply a folk psychological theory of emotion that predicts that people who are hit by cars and who shout, stomp, and slam their fists are angry (Carruthers 1996).
2. According to the *Simulation Theory* (ST), you judge that the man is angry because you (subconsciously) place yourself in his shoes and judge that you would be angry if someone hit your car and you responded by shouting, stomping, and slamming your fists (Gordon 1986).

3. According to the *Direct Social Perception Theory* (DSP), you judge that the man is angry because you can directly perceive his anger in his shouting, stomping, and fist slamming (Gallagher & Zahavi 2012).

At first blush, DSP seems utterly implausible. *Emotions are not the sorts of things that can be perceived.* Indeed, much of the motivation for adopting TT and ST derives from the commonsense assumption that emotions are hidden from the senses and so must be inferred on the basis of something else.<sup>1</sup> But is the falsity of DSP really so certain?

An old but clever argument purports to show that it *is* possible to perceive emotions directly in their expressions (Hampshire 1976, 74-75; Tormey 1971, 47-48; Green 2007, 84-93; Green 2010).<sup>2</sup> It runs as follows:

#### ***The Clever Argument***

1. Some emotional expressions are parts of the emotions they express.
2. In perceiving a part of something, one can perceive the whole.
3. Therefore, in perceiving some emotional expressions, one can perceive the emotions they express.

To get a sense of how this argument is supposed to work, consider an analogy. When I look next to my computer, I see my coffee mug. I don't see *all* of my coffee mug, however; I see only *part* of it. More specifically, I see the part of its outer surface that faces me. The other parts of the coffee mug are, at the moment, hidden from my senses. Yet it seems obvious that when I look next to my computer, I see my coffee mug. We could spell out the reasoning as follows:

#### ***The Mundane Argument***

1. The mug's outer surface is a part of the coffee mug.
2. In perceiving a part of something, one can perceive the whole.
3. Therefore, in perceiving the mug's outer surface, one can perceive the coffee mug itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Carruthers (2015) argues, however, that DSP and TT are ultimately compatible. Gallagher (2015) questions this compatibility.

<sup>2</sup> To be clear, this is not the only argument that supports DSP, nor is it necessarily the most persuasive.

Advocates argue that the Mundane Argument is sound, and thus that the Clever Argument must be sound too, assuming that the first premise is true. Critics point out that the second premise is ambiguous, and that the reading of it that supports DSP is false (Spaulding 2015). From the fact that I have perceived a person's smile it follows neither that I perceive the person *as happy* nor that I perceive *that the person is happy*. Perhaps I mistake the smile for a smirk, or perhaps I make nothing of the smile. Insofar as DSP is ultimately a claim about our epistemic access to the emotions of others, the Clever Argument comes up short. Advocates respond by arguing that the perception of emotions via their expressions can meet whatever further conditions are necessary for the subject to perceive a person as emotional or to perceive that the person is emotional (Smith 2015; Newen et al. 2015; Spaulding 2015).

I won't intervene on the ongoing debates about premise 2 here. Rather, my aim is to assess premise 1. Are some expressions *really* parts of the emotions they express? Historically, philosophers have sought to defend premise 1 by appealing to theories of emotion that support it. Stuart Hampshire (1976, 74-75) cites a simple form of Behaviorism, which reduces emotions to behaviors. Alan Tormey (1971, 47-48) adopts a Wittgensteinian form of Constructionism, which defines emotions as constellations of private mental states and public behaviors. And Mitchell Green (2007, 84-93; 2010) calls upon Paul Griffith's (1998) interpretation of Basic Emotions Theory, which identifies emotions with "affect programs," or synchronized psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses to emotional stimuli. Each of these theories classifies some emotional expressions as parts of the emotions they express, and thus each of them supports the truth of the Clever Argument's first premise. The problem is that Behaviorism is now defunct, Wittgensteinian Constructionism has been supplanted by newer forms of Constructionism, and Basic Emotions Theory faces an onslaught of recent critics. How well does premise 1 of the Clever Argument hold up today?

In this paper I will survey the major theories of emotion in philosophy and psychology to determine the extent to which they support the first premise of the Clever Argument. What I find is that the theories are divided. Philosophers tend to adopt theories that identify emotions with introspectable mental states, and so tend to deny that expressions are parts of emotions.

Psychologists tend to adopt theories that identify emotions with coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions, and so tend to affirm that expressions are parts of emotions. (There are exceptions on both sides.) Who's right?

In reflecting on this divide, I conclude that it is as much a disagreement over the *meanings* of emotion terms as it is a disagreement over the *nature* of emotion. Those who affirm that expressions are parts of emotions hold that emotions are natural kinds, and (implicitly) adopt an *externalist* perspective on the meanings of natural kind terms. That is, they hold that emotion terms refer directly to whatever emotions really are (namely, coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions), and deny that the meanings of these terms are fully grasped by competent speakers. Even though people consistently think of emotions as introspectable mental states, it turns out that they are mistaken. The truth is that introspectable mental states are but parts of emotions.

By contrast, those who deny that expressions are parts of emotions (implicitly) adopt an *internalist* perspective on the meanings of emotion terms. Some affirm that emotions are natural kinds; others deny this. But in any case, they hold that emotion terms mean whatever competent speakers use them to mean (namely, introspectable mental states). Often, advocates of this approach consider the identification of emotions with introspectable mental states to be *a priori*. Psychologists may have discovered that these introspectable mental states are parts of complex biological reactions, but even then the word "emotion" picks out only the mental states. We could call the complex reactions "affect programs" or something similar, but we ought to reserve the word "emotion" for the thing we ordinarily use the word to mean, namely the introspectable mental state.

These reflections help to demystify the Clever Argument. At first blush, the claim that we can directly perceive emotions in their expressions is surprising. It is natural to respond with incredulity, because we ordinarily think of emotions as introspectable mental states, which are not the sorts of the things that can be perceived. However, the claim becomes much less surprising once we recognize that the word "emotions" refers here not to introspectable mental states but to coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions. The ability to hear anger in a shout now seems no

more incredible than the ability to hear digestion in a stomach gurgle. What this thesis gives up in radicality, it gains in plausibility.

The demystification of the Clever Argument has at least one important consequence for contemporary discussions of DSP: *any argument for DSP that appeals to the view that expressions are parts of emotions must give up (1) the commonsense view that emotions are introspectable mental states, and (2) the philosophical view that competent speakers have an intuitive grasp of the meanings of emotion terms.* The claim that expressions are parts of emotions is a boon to DSP—a number of recent arguments for DSP make use of it (e.g. Newen, et al. 2015; Spaulding 2015)—but this claim comes at a price. This price is not especially high, since the views that emotions are natural kinds and that natural kind terms denote these kinds are both popular, but it is a price that must be paid. As a result, no argument for DSP that appeals to the view that expressions are parts of emotions can support the conclusion that we can directly perceive emotions qua introspectable mental states; at best, these arguments can support the conclusion that we can directly perceive emotions qua coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions. Affirming that expressions are parts of emotions thus reframes the debate over DSP in a way that forces advocates and critics alike to reexamine their positions on emotion, language, and social cognition.

## 2. The Clever Argument

I begin by clarifying the content and scope of the Clever Argument. The first premise states that *some emotional expressions are parts of the emotions they express.* This premise makes two controversial claims about the nature of emotion: (1) that emotions are complex, consisting of parts; and (2) that some emotional expressions are some such parts. Premise 1 is incompatible with theories of emotion that hold emotions to be simple states, which lack distinct parts, as well as with theories that hold emotions to be complex, yet which do not include expressions among their component parts.

The first premise does not state that expressions are *essential* parts of emotions, only that they are parts. Thus, it is consistent with the view that we can experience emotions without expressing them. (Compare: the handle of my coffee mug is not an *essential* part of it—I could break it off and throw

it away—yet in perceiving the attached handle of my coffee mug, I can see my coffee mug.) Furthermore, this premise does not state that *all* expressions are parts of emotions; it claims only that *some* are. As such, the premise is consistent with the view that some emotional expressions are not parts of the emotions they express. Insincere expressions would definitely not count as parts of emotions, and conventional expressions would arguably not count either. Finally, the first premise does not state that *all* emotions have expressions as parts; it claims only that *some* do. It is thus consistent with the view that some emotions are inexpressible, as well as with the view that some emotions can be expressed only through expressions that are not parts of those emotions. One could argue, for instance, that some emotions can be expressed only through conventional means (such as language or dance), and that conventional expressions are not parts of the emotions they express.

The second premise states that *in perceiving a part of something, one can perceive the whole*. We should not take this premise to imply that in perceiving a part of something, one can thereby perceive *every* part of it. Instead, we should take it to mean that in perceiving a part of something, one can thereby perceive that of which it is a part. In seeing my dog's tail sticking out from under the couch, I see *my dog*, even though I don't see his limbs or his snout.

As I mentioned previously, critics point out that the second premise is ambiguous. To tease apart the two readings of it, recall Dretske's (1993) distinction between *epistemic* and *non-epistemic* seeing. My dog can see my tattered copy of Plato's *Republic*, but he neither sees the object *as* Plato's *Republic* nor sees *that* it is Plato's *Republic*. Epistemic seeing (which includes seeing as *x* and seeing that *p*) involves cognition of what one has seen; non-epistemic seeing (which includes simply seeing *x*) does not. In perceiving a part of something, it immediately follows that one has *non-epistemically* perceived the whole, but it does not immediately follow that one has *epistemically* perceived the whole. To epistemically perceive the whole, one must be cognizant of the whole as a whole.

Because Direct Social Perception Theory is ultimately a claim about our epistemic access to the mental states of others, the reading of the second premise that supports this theory is false. In perceiving an emotional expression, it does not immediately follow that one can perceive the emotion as an emotion or that one can perceive that the emoter is experiencing the

emotion expressed. However, advocates argue that whatever further conditions are necessary for the epistemic perception of emotion can be met. Smith (2015) argues that we perceive someone as joyous when we register similarities between a person's smile and paradigm expressions of joy. Newen, Welpinghus, and Juckel (2015) argue that emotion recognition is a form of pattern recognition, and that we perceive that someone is joyous when we recognize a pattern of behavior that is distinctive of joy. As I said above, I will not intervene on debates about the epistemic perception of emotion here. Instead, my aim is to determine the extent to which contemporary theories of emotion support the claim that expressions are parts of emotions.

One final qualification: advocates of DSP often argue that it is possible to perceive other mental states besides emotions, such as beliefs and intentions (e.g. Pacherie 2005; Gallagher 2008; De Jaegher 2009; Krueger and Overgaard 2012). However, the Clever Argument purports to demonstrate only the perceptibility of emotions, based on specific theories of emotion. I take the Clever Argument, so construed, to offer no support whatsoever for the claim that we can perceive other mental states besides emotions (see Spaulding 2015).

### **3. Emotions and Embodiment**

Philosophers often carve up theories of emotion based on whether these theories classify emotions as representational states. *Cognitivist* theories affirm that emotions represent, while *Non-Cognitivist* theories deny this. For my purposes, this distinction is immaterial. More germane is the question of whether these theories classify emotional expressions as (essential or non-essential) parts of emotions. Let us call any theory that affirms that expressions are parts of emotions *Embodied*, and any theory that denies this *Disembodied*. Embodied theories support the first premise of the Clever Argument; Disembodied theories undermine it.

Historically, philosophers have favored theories of emotion that identify emotions with introspectable mental states. *Feeling Theory* (FT) identifies emotions with feelings or sensations, and individuates emotions based on their phenomenal character (Descartes [1649] 1989, 32-34; Locke [1695]

1975, 229-230; Hume [1739] 1978, 275-276). *Judgment Theory* (JT) identifies emotions with judgments or beliefs, and individuates emotions based on their representational content (Solomon 1993; Nussbaum 2003). Finally, *Perceptual Theory* (PT) identifies emotions with perceptions or construals, and like JT, individuates emotions based on their representational content, but unlike JT, denies that this content is always propositional (Roberts 2004; Prinz 2004). Each of these theories holds that a specific type of introspectable mental state is both necessary and sufficient for emotion, and thus all of them—barring a turn to an Embodied or Enacted theory of mind—outright deny that emotional expressions are parts of emotions. Expressions may be causally linked to emotions, on these views, but they are not parts of the emotions themselves. They are external to them. Advocates of FT, JT, and PT are thus likely to reject the first premise of the Clever Argument out of hand.

What all these theories have in common is the idea that philosophical introspections or intuitions ought to be authoritative in delineating the nature of emotion.<sup>3</sup> As such, arguments for and against these theories tend to take the form of thought experiments. Recall William James' famous argument for FT: "If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no 'mind-stuff' out of which the emotion can be constituted" (James 1884, 193). Or consider one of Robert Solomon's arguments against James' view: "One can be angry without feeling anything in particular, without doing anything in particular and without displaying any physiological symptoms of a unique syndrome for that emotion" (Solomon 1977, 44). These arguments presuppose that theories of emotion are ultimately answerable to our introspective or intuitive grasp of what emotions are. Philosophers working in this tradition have argued forcefully that many folk psychological ideas about emotion (e.g., that emotions are feelings) in fact run counter to careful consideration of what emotions really are.

However, starting with Behaviorism, a new approach to emotion emerged, which does not take philosophical introspections or intuitions to be authoritative in delineating the nature of emotion. John Watson articulates this new approach in an incisive critique of James:

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<sup>3</sup> See Deigh (1994) for an insightful account of how philosophical approaches to emotion traded introspections for intuitions in the middle of the twentieth century.

Thus we see that according to James the best way to study emotions is to stand stock still while having one and begin to introspect. The result of your introspection might take the following form: I have a “sensation” of a slowed heartbeat, a “sensation” of dryness in my mouth, a group of “sensations” coming from my legs, etc. This group of “sensations,” this conscious state, *is* the emotion of fear. Each man has to make his own introspections. No experimental method of approach is possible. No verification of observations is possible. In other words, no scientific objective study of emotions is possible. (Watson 1924, 111).

Watson reasons roughly as follows: emotions are the sorts of things that ought to be studied using the methods of natural science; introspectable mental states cannot be studied using the methods of natural science; therefore, emotions are not identical to introspectable mental states. Famously, Watson proposes that emotions are identical to patterns of observable behavior. Anger, for instance, is an aggressive behavior that occurs in response to an injury in a context where needs have formerly been satisfied (McGill & Welch 1946, 103). Behaviorism flies in the face of philosophical intuitions about emotion, not to mention common sense, but to its credit, it defines emotions in a way that makes them easy to identify and investigate using observation and experiment.

Today most philosophers and psychologists reject Behaviorism, but many accept the idea that emotions are *natural kinds*, or groupings that exist in nature and that can be discovered and investigated using natural scientific methods, and many are open to the possibility that philosophical intuitions fail to carve nature at its joints. As we shall see, a number of contemporary theories of emotion deny that emotions are identical to introspectable mental states, and affirm instead that emotions are identical to complex biological reactions that include expressions as parts. These theories support the first premise of the Clever Argument. I turn now to one such theory.

## 4. Basic Emotions Theory

Over the past fifty years, a shadow has been cast over the psychology of emotion by one theory, often called Basic Emotions Theory (BET; Plutchik 1962; Izard 1977; Tomkins 1984; Ekman 1994). Here is how Paul Griffiths summarizes BET in his influential interpretation of it:

The central idea...is that emotional responses are complex, coordinated, and automated. They are complex because they involve several elements. These are usually taken to include (a) expressive facial changes, (b) musculoskeletal responses such as flinching and orienting, (c) expressive vocal changes, (d) endocrine system changes and consequent changes in the level of hormones, and (e) autonomic nervous system changes. Emotion feelings and cognitive phenomena such as the directing of attention are obvious candidates to be added to the list. The...responses are coordinated because the various elements occur together in recognizable patterns or sequences. They are automated because they unfold in this coordinated fashion without the need for conscious direction. (Griffiths 1998, 77)

When a person sees a bear, she will experience a sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach, endure various hormonal and endocrinal changes, and exhibit certain behavioral expressions. According to BET, fear *just is* this cascading reaction to seeing the bear, which Griffiths, following Ekman, calls an “affect program.” Each part of the reaction is, accordingly, a part of the emotion. Behavioral expressions differ from the other parts in that they are publicly observable, and these expressions may have evolved for the sake of signaling emotions to observers.

BET is what we might call a *revisionary theory of emotion*. It treats emotions as natural kinds that need to be discovered, and holds that folk and philosophical intuitions about emotions are misguided (see Scarantino 2012a). In particular, it rejects the widespread view that emotions are identical to introspectable mental states. BET instead identifies emotions with coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses. The primary motivation for defining emotions as complexes, which include

expressions as parts, is the idea that emotions have homologues in other species and admit of an evolutionary explanation. Plutchik writes that emotions, qua objects of natural scientific inquiry, should:

1. have relevance to basic biological adaptive processes;
2. be found *in some form* at all evolutionary levels;
3. not depend for their definition on particular neural structures or body parts;
4. not depend for definition on introspections (although introspections may be used);
5. be defined primarily in terms of behavioral data. (1962, 56)

There is a difference between *having* an emotion and *feeling* an emotion, on this view, and although humans tend to feel emotions when they have them, simpler creatures may have emotions without ever feeling them.

BET clearly supports the claim that expressions are parts of emotions. However, according to Griffiths' interpretation of BET, the basic emotions make up only a fraction of those episodes that we call "emotions." On his view, the folk concept of emotion breaks down into three more precise categories: *basic emotions*, *higher-cognitive emotions*, and *socially-constructed emotions* (Griffiths 1998, 14-17, 241-242).

1. Basic emotions are brief, automatic, and highly stereotyped reactions to evolutionarily significant stimuli. The list usually includes joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise. These emotions are hypothesized to be universal in humans and to have homologues in other animal species.
2. Higher-cognitive emotions, by contrast, may be longer lasting, may lack stereotypical behavioral outputs, and may involve more complex cognitive activity. The list usually includes guilt, envy, jealousy, *Schadenfreude* (German: pleasure derived from someone else's misfortune), and *amae* (Japanese: pleasure derived from being dependent on someone else), among many others. These emotions may or may not be universal in humans, and probably do not have homologues in other animal species.

3. Finally, socially-constructed emotions are transitory social roles, or patterns of behavior that are meaningful within particular societies. The list usually includes romantic love and *amok* (Malay: a frenzy caused by a perceived dishonor), among many others. These emotions are culturally specific and are certainly not found in other animal species.

Griffiths argues that all three categories get lumped together as “emotions” because all are characteristically passive episodes that befall the subject following a significant life event.

Although I listed joy, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise as basic emotions, Griffiths insists that, depending on the circumstances, these names may also pick out higher-cognitive or socially-constructed emotions. An episode of anger (or sadness or fear) may be a basic emotion, a higher-cognitive emotion, or a socially-constructed emotion, depending on the circumstances. It will be a basic emotion only if it is complex, coordinated, and automated in the way specified by BET. One way we can tell that an emotion is basic is that its expression takes a pancultural form that is homologous to emotional expressions found in other animals.

BET supports the first premise of the Clever Argument, but (assuming we accept Griffiths’ interpretation) it shows only that a fraction of those episodes that we call “emotions” include expressions as component parts. BET would not classify any expression of jealousy as a part of jealousy, for example, since jealousy is not a basic emotion (but see Sabini & Silver 2005). This support is better than what the theories considered in the last section offer, but it is less than what many advocates of the Clever Argument may have expected.<sup>4</sup> To be clear, I’m not saying that jealousy expressions shouldn’t be considered parts of jealousy; rather, I’m saying that Griffiths’ interpretation of BET doesn’t support this claim. In order to show that jealousy has behavioral components, we’d need a theory of the higher-cognitive emotions that supports this assumption.

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<sup>4</sup> Green attempts to expand the argument to show that other behaviors, even those that do not fit BET’s description of the components of affect programs, ought to be considered as parts of emotions (2007, 92, 141, 145). However, Griffiths anticipates this move, and argues that behavioral responses that deviate from BET’s descriptions would be indicative not of a basic emotion, but of a higher-cognitive emotion (Griffiths 1998, 120-132).

So far I have assumed that Griffiths is right that BET is a theory of some, but not all, of those events that are properly called “emotions.” What if Griffiths is wrong? There are two possibilities, and both provide grist for the Clever Argument’s mill. One possibility is that BET can account for more emotions than Griffiths gives it credit for (e.g., Ekman 1992, 191-192; Sabini & Silver 2005). Another possibility is that some of the things that parade under the name “emotion” shouldn’t be counted as emotions at all (Ekman 1992, 193-195). One might argue, for instance, that BET can account for the so-called higher-cognitive emotions and that the so-called socially-constructed emotions aren’t really emotions at all. In this case BET would be a theory of all, and not only some, of those events that are properly called “emotions.” Thus, while even Griffiths’ restrictive interpretation of BET supports the Clever Argument, other more permissive interpretations would provide even greater support.

## 5. Appraisal Theory

Although BET has reigned supreme for half a century, there is a competing view of emotion in psychology, often called Appraisal Theory (AT). AT holds that emotions are syndromes of coordinated responses that are directed by context-sensitive appraisals (Arnold 1960; Scherer 1984; Frijda 1986; Lazarus 1991; Moors, et al. 2013). Thus, a person sees a bear, rapidly appraises the situation, and then undertakes a synchronized response that constitutes fear. This synchronized response typically includes feelings, physiological changes, and, most importantly for our purposes, behavioral expressions.

AT is similar to BET in that it identifies emotions with coordinated suites of psychological, physiological, and behavioral changes, but whereas BET considers emotions to be *modular*—that is, to be systems that are domain-specific, informationally encapsulated, automatic, and have a relatively fixed neural architecture (Fodor 1983)—AT considers emotions to be *non-modular*—that is, to be systems consisting of a dynamic interplay of processes that are not emotion-specific or informationally encapsulated, and which may not have a fixed neural architecture (Brosch 2013). AT admits this flexibility by dropping the requirement that “emotion should be

conceived of as relevant to the entire evolutionary scale” (Plutchik 1962, 67-68) and by proposing alternative explanations for why emotions are nonetheless homeostatic property clusters (see Prinz 2004, 83-86; Boyd 1999).<sup>5</sup> As such, AT rejects BET’s search for a small set of basic emotions that have homologues in other species and looks instead for family resemblances among the myriad emotional reactions in humans (Scherer 1994).

We can interpret AT and BET either as competitors or as complements. As competitors, these theories offer incompatible descriptions of the same emotional episodes. If one theory is right, then the other theory must be wrong. As complements, these theories offer compatible descriptions of different emotional episodes. We might say that BET describes the functioning of the basic emotions whereas AT describes the functioning of the higher-cognitive emotions. Both theories can be right, on this approach, since there may be two different kinds of psychological processes that parade under the name “emotion.” Just as the name “jade” was given to two different mineral compositions (jadeite and nephrite) before they were discovered to be distinct, so too was the name “emotion” given to two different psychological kinds (basic emotions and higher-cognitive emotions) before they were discovered to be distinct (but see Prinz 2004, 97-100).

Either way, contemporary versions of AT count more expressions of more emotions as parts of those emotions than does Griffiths’ interpretation of BET. The latter claims that only the highly stereotyped outputs of a small number of basic emotions are parts of emotions. AT, by contrast, claims that any coordinated psychophysiological change that is directed by an emotional appraisal is part of an emotion. Jealousy expressions can be parts of jealousy, even if these expressions are idiosyncratic or conventional. Although advocates of the Clever Argument frequently cite Griffiths’ interpretation of BET in support of their claim that expressions are parts of emotions (e.g., Green 2010, 50), they may stand to gain more by hitching their wagons to AT.

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<sup>5</sup> To be clear, many advocates of BET also hold that emotions are homeostatic property clusters (e.g. Griffiths 1998), but whereas BET hypothesizes that the properties cluster because emotions are modular systems found across species, AT looks for other causal mechanisms, including those unique to human cognition, to explain why the properties cluster.

I shall now argue that there are two contemporary theories of emotion which may appear to support the first premise of the Clever Argument, but which, under closer inspection, do not. What leads them to reject this premise is, I claim, a commitment to an internalist semantics of emotion terms. Emotion terms mean what we use them to mean, and we don't use them to mean anything beyond an introspectable mental state.

## 6. Psychological Constructionism

In 1994, James Russell published a scathing critique of BET, arguing that the evidence commonly marshalled in favor of BET comes up short (Russell 1994). Russell argues that the evidence is consistent with another view of emotion, often called Psychological Constructionism (PC). On this view, emotions are not natural kinds, which occur independently of us talking about them; rather, they are social kinds, which exist precisely because we talk about them (Barrett 2006). An emotion is constituted by the act of conceptualizing an experience as an emotion (Russell 2009; Barrett 2011). Fear may involve a sinking feeling in the pit of one's stomach, but this feeling only becomes fear once the subject (consciously or subconsciously) applies the concept of fear to it.

Although PC denies that emotions are natural kind, it posits that *core affect*, or the “neurophysiological state that underlies simply feeling good or bad, drowsy or energised” (Russell 2009, 1259), is a natural kind. Whereas emotions differ categorically (e.g., anger vs. fear), core affect varies dimensionally across along the axes of pleasant/unpleasant and activation/deactivation (Barrett 2011, 368). Core affect becomes a discrete emotion once the subject categorizes it as such, drawing on culturally- and contextually-variant folk categories of emotion. The same core affect might be categorized as one emotion in one context/culture but as another emotion in another context/culture (Schachter and Singer 1962). Thus, Constructionists typically hold that the meanings of emotion terms are determined by common usage, or as Alan Tormey puts it, by the “crucial and pivotal position” that emotion terms occupy in our language (1971, 47).

Advocates of PC often claim that emotions, qua constructions, are complexes that include expressions as component parts, and thus PC may at

first appear to support the first premise of the Clever Argument. Russell, for instance, claims that emotions are constructed out of a motley collection of “manifest components,” including “facial and vocal expression, changes in the autonomic nervous system, subjective experience, and so on” (Russell 2009, 1268). On his view, there is no single underlying process—an emotion—that gives rise to all of these components; instead, each component is brought about through an independent, non-emotional process. When these components fit a culturally meaningful pattern, however, people tend to categorize the event as a specific emotion, such as fear or sadness. Russell argues that psychologists ought to study core affect and the other “manifest components” but treat emotions as social constructs, much like money and marriage, which fall under the purview of social scientists and humanists (Russell 2009, 1263). Along the same lines, Lisa Feldman Barrett writes that “if people agree that a particular constellation of facial actions (e.g., a scowl), cardiovascular response (e.g., a blood pressure increase), and an appraisal (e.g., a feeling of offense) is anger in a given context, then it *is anger* in that context” (2012, 420; emphasis added).<sup>6</sup> Like Russell, Barrett claims that emotions are complexes that include expressions as parts.

What’s more, there’s a well-known philosophical argument that appears to support the conclusion that if emotions are constructions, then they must include expressions as component parts (Tormey 1971, 47). This argument is Wittgenstein’s famous private language argument, or more specifically, his claim that “an ‘inner process’ stands in need of outward criteria” (2006, 280). In short, Wittgenstein argues that the acquisition of emotion concepts (e.g. “anger,” “sadness,” “joy”) cannot be a matter of matching words with feelings—since we have no way of knowing whether we have matched them correctly or incorrectly—but rather must be a matter of matching words with situations and behaviors (de Sousa 1987, 44; Scheman 1993, 40). I learn to attribute *fear* to a person, for instance, if I observe that she has just become aware of an imminent threat and if she responds by shuddering, shrieking, cowering, or hiding. Once I have learned to identify when *I* am afraid, based on matching my situation and behavior with the archetype, then I may begin to associate specific feelings with this emotion, at which point these feelings may serve as additional criteria for the concept of fear. Many Constructionists take Wittgenstein’s argument to demonstrate that emotions

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<sup>6</sup> I’d like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing my attention to this passage.

must involve public behavior in addition to private experiences (Tormey 1971, 47; Scheman 1993, 40).

However, in his assessment of Wittgenstein's private language argument, O.H. Green argues that it is a mistake to infer from the premise that inner processes require outward *criteria* to the conclusion that inner processes thereby have outward *constituents*:

In order to indicate the scope of a componential understanding of emotion, a distinction between criteria and constituents of emotions needs to be made. Criteria are items of definitionally backed behavioral evidence for emotions. Constituents are the psychological states and dispositions which make up emotions... Constituents tell us what an emotion is; criteria tell us when a person has an emotion. (Green 1979, 263)

In other words, even if Wittgenstein is right that we cannot meaningfully say that a person experiences *fear* unless there are certain behavioral patterns that serve as "definitionally backed behavioral evidence" for fear, it doesn't follow that the behavior is a part of the emotion. (Compare: red litmus paper may be a criterion for an acidic compound, but red litmus paper is not thereby a constituent of an acidic compound.) The point of Green's argument is not to show that a Constructionist may not regard expressions as constituents of emotions; rather, it is to show that the private-language argument doesn't provide any support for this claim.

That being said, Constructionists often have deeper commitments that count against classifying expressions as constituents of emotions. Many hold that the meanings of emotion terms are determined by common use (Barrett 2011, 362-364; Tormey 1971, 47). The meaning of the English word "anger," for instance, is determined by the accepted ways in which English speakers use this word. If English speakers use the term "anger" to describe everything from mild feelings of irritation to intense feelings of rage, then all of these feelings are proper referents of the word "anger." And if English speakers draw categorical distinctions between anger and disgust, then the referents of "anger" are distinct from the referents of "disgust." "Anger," on this view, means whatever competent speakers use it to mean.

If common usage determines the meanings of emotion terms, however, then common usage also determines whether expressions are parts of emotions or not. Unfortunately for the Constructionists, the English word “emotion” is not ordinarily used to designate complex states that include expressions as component parts. An insightful description of this word may be found in Gilbert Ryle’s *The Concept of Mind* (1961):

[T]he word “emotion” is used to designate at least three or four different kinds of things, which I shall call “inclinations” (or “motives”), “moods,” “agitations” (or “commotions”) and “feelings”. Inclinations and moods, including agitations, are not occurrences and do not therefore take place either publicly or privately. They are propensities, not acts or states. They are, however, propensities of different kinds, and their differences are important. Feelings, on the other hand, are occurrences, but the place that mention of them should take in descriptions of human behaviour is very different from that which the standard theories accord to it. (Ryle 1961, 83)

Ryle observes that, ordinarily, people do not use the word “emotion” to refer to behavior. Instead, people use the word “emotion” to refer to occurrent or dispositional mental states, which they presume to be the cause of emotional expressions and other behaviors.<sup>7</sup> Behaviors can serve as *evidence* of emotion, to be sure, but that doesn’t make them *parts* of emotion, as we have seen. Thus, to the extent that Constructionists hold that the meanings of emotion terms are determined by ordinary use, they ought to reject the first premise of the Clever Argument.<sup>8</sup> And because Constructionism is premised on the denial that emotions are natural kinds, it is unlikely that Constructionists would ever abandon this view of the meanings of emotion terms.

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<sup>7</sup> Other insightful analyses of the ordinary use of emotion terms can be found in Solomon (1993, 77-88), Goldie (2000), and Roberts (2004, 60-64). But see Russell’s (1991) claim that the ordinary use of emotion terms is too messy to be given a clear conceptual analysis.

<sup>8</sup> Barrett is correct to claim that “if people agree that a particular constellation...is anger in a given context, then [according to PC] it is anger in that context” (Barrett 2012, 420), but I’ve argued that the antecedent is always false. Ordinary people don’t, as a matter of fact, agree that facial expressions are parts of emotions. They agree only that we often ascribe emotions to people on the basis of witnessing their facial expressions.

## 7. Somatic Feeling Theory

In *Gut Reactions* (2004), Jesse Prinz defends a Somatic Feeling Theory (SFT) of emotion. Inspired by James, Prinz argues that emotions are the perceptions of bodily changes that occur in response to an “exciting fact” (James 1884, 189). Upon seeing a bear, a person’s heart will begin to race, and the feeling of this physiological change as it occurs *is* the emotion of fear.

Prinz describes his theory as “embodied” insofar as it emphasizes the importance of bodily changes (2004, 18-20, 77-78). We describe fear as a sinking feeling in the pit of the stomach, for example, because fear is quite literally the feeling of something taking place in our stomachs! That being said, it would go too far to say that bodily changes are necessary for emotions, since Prinz allows for the possibility of emotions occurring without corresponding bodily changes. At times, the brain is “duped” into thinking that bodily changes are occurring, and so generates an emotional feeling, despite the fact that these bodily changes are not actually occurring (2004, 72). Thus, Prinz holds that even a disembodied brain in a vat can experience emotions.

Although Prinz’ theory places great emphasis on embodiment, it is not an Embodied theory of emotion in my sense of the term. Prinz holds that the *perception* of bodily changes is both necessary and sufficient for an emotion, and thus he denies that the bodily changes are themselves parts of the emotion. The sun is not part of a sunburn, and neither is an expression part of an emotion (Prinz 2004, 17). Thus, Prinz’ version of SFT is inconsistent with the first premise of the Clever Argument.

Prinz’ rationale for identifying emotions with the perceptions of bodily changes is that, although he conceives emotions as natural kinds (Prinz 2004, 102), he thinks that folk and philosophical intuitions are useful in isolating the *essence* of emotions (Prinz 2004, 4). He objects that “multicomponent theories” like BET and AT face a “Problem of Parts”: in claiming that emotions consist of coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions, these theories fail to isolate the essence of emotion (2004, 3-4, 18-19). Prinz then relies on folk and philosophical intuitions to establish that *feelings* are most essential to emotions. He cites research suggesting that, except for college philosophy majors, the majority of people identify emotions with feelings (2004, 4). And in support of his own somatic feeling

theory, he repeats James' famous subtraction argument (2004, 4, 56, 91, 206): "If we fancy some strong emotion, and then try to abstract from our consciousness of it all the feelings of its characteristic bodily symptoms, we find we have nothing left behind, no 'mind-stuff' out of which the emotion can be constituted" (James 1884, 193). I take Prinz' reliance on folk and philosophical intuitions to show that Prinz is ultimately an internalist about the meanings of emotion terms. We can figure out what we mean by "emotion" by introspecting and by attending to how we ordinarily use emotion terms, and it turns out that by "emotion" we mean an introspectable mental state, which, Prinz argues, is more specifically the feeling of bodily changes.

However, there is another version of SFT that is consistent with the first premise of the Clever Argument. Antonio Damasio (2003) argues that emotional *feelings* are the perceptions of bodily changes as they occur, but he maintains that *emotions* are those bodily changes themselves (see Prinz 2004, 5-76). On his view, "emotions are actions or movements, many of them public, visible to others as they occur in the face, in the voice, in specific behaviors" (2003, 28). Some animals, including humans, feel their emotions, while others, including spiders, do not. The spider's fear is its flight response to a predator. Damasio sums up the distinction between emotion and emotional feeling with a pithy slogan: "Emotions play out in the theater of the body. Feelings play out in the theater of the mind" (2003, 28).

Damasio is primarily concerned with giving an account of emotional feeling, however, and his view of emotion is based on BET. His list of "primary emotions" includes "fear, anger, disgust, surprise, sadness, and happiness"—which is identical to Ekman et al.'s (1982) list—and he writes that "These emotions are easily identifiable in human beings across several cultures and in non-human species as well. The circumstances that cause the emotions...are also quite consistent across cultures and species" (2003, 44-45). Damasio's theory is thus consistent with the first premise of the Clever Argument. Note that, unlike Prinz, Damasio is unconcerned with violating our intuitions about what emotions are (2003, 27). If psychologists say that emotions are coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses, then that's probably what they are. For Damasio, then, emotion terms refer directly to what emotions really are, regardless of what competent speakers have in their heads when using these terms.

## 8. Conclusion

Arguments for DSP—again, the claim that we can directly perceive the emotions of others—are often built on the assumption that *some emotional expressions are parts of the emotions they express* (Hampshire 1976; Tormey 1971; Green 2007; Green 2010; Newen, et al. 2015; Spaulding 2015). Advocates defend this assumption by asserting that contemporary theories of emotion support it, and then cite a theory, such as Basic Emotions Theory, which does indeed support it. However, it is worth reflecting on how widely accepted this assumption really is, and on what baggage it brings along with it.

I have surveyed the dominant theories of emotion in philosophy and psychology, and found that the theories are divided. Some affirm that expressions are parts of emotions, while others deny it. Furthermore, I have found that some theories *appear* to support the assumption, yet under closer inspection do not. Advocates of Psychological Constructionism, for instance, tend to classify emotional expressions as parts of emotions, yet I have made a case for why Constructionist theories are ultimately incompatible with this classification. What lessons may we draw from these findings?

First, we should acknowledge that the view that expressions are parts of emotions is highly controversial, and does not enjoy the high degree of support that some advocates of DSP have supposed. For every major theory that affirms this view, there is another major theory that rejects it. Although there are good reasons to endorse the theories that affirm this view, some advocates of DSP may discover that their loyalties lie with a theory that rejects it, and others may prefer to pursue independent lines of argumentation, which do not depend on controversial theories of emotion.

Second, we learn that the dispute over whether expressions are parts of emotions is as much a disagreement over the *meanings* of emotion terms as it is a disagreement over the *nature* of emotion. The theories that support the claim that expressions are parts of emotions (implicitly) adopt an *externalist* perspective on the meanings of emotion terms. They consider emotions to be natural kinds, and they hold that emotion terms refer directly to those kinds, regardless of what competent speakers have in their heads when they speak of emotions. Thus, advocates of these theories are not deterred by the fact that competent speakers tend to think of emotions as introspectable mental

states, which do not include expressions as parts, since it is possible that competent speakers are downright mistaken about the nature of emotion.

By contrast, those theories that reject the claim that expressions are parts of emotions (implicitly) adopt an *internalist* perspective on the meanings of emotion terms. They consider the meanings of emotion terms to be determined by the ways in which competent speakers use these terms, and thus they consider the intuitive identification of emotions with introspectable mental states to count against the claim that expressions are parts of emotions. On this approach, there is no possibility of competent speakers being completely mistaken about the nature of emotion.<sup>9</sup>

Semantics matter, because it turns out that the Clever Argument does not support the view that we can directly perceive emotions qua introspectable mental states, which is the view that critics of DSP are most keen to reject. Instead, the Clever Argument supports the view that we can directly perceive emotions qua coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses. There are good reasons to prefer this latter conception of emotion, but adopting this conception comes at a price: once we deny that folk and philosophical intuitions carve emotions at their joints, we cannot fall back on intuitions to say which emotions have which expressions as component parts. Tabloid readers may swear up and down that they can see Amanda Knox’s guilt on her face, but it’s ultimately up to the psychologists to determine whether there is a natural kind named by “guilt” and if so, whether a particular facial expression is a part of that emotion. As with the claim that emotions are identical to introspectable mental states, intuitions may mislead us about which emotions exist and about which facial expressions are parts of the emotions that do exist.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> People might be wrong about *which kind* of introspectable mental state is identical to emotion—hence the debate between Feeling Theory, Judgment Theory, and Perceptual Theory—but, the thought runs, they can’t be wrong about emotions being identical to *some kind* of introspectable mental state.

<sup>10</sup> For similar reasons, the Clever Argument may not be a friend to phenomenological approaches to DSP (Scheler 1970; Gallagher 2005; Zahavi 2007; Overgaard 2007). Phenomenological arguments for DSP typically begin from observations about meaning-making practices and conditions of intelligibility, which supervene on facts about human cognition rather than on facts about emotions qua natural kinds. The set of basic perceptual beliefs about others’ emotions supported by the phenomenological arguments will likely be different from the set of basic perceptual beliefs about others’ emotions supported by the Clever Argument. Because of this, the phenomenologically-minded may prefer to part ways with the claim that expressions are parts of emotions than to share a bed with it.

My aim in this paper has been to show that there is much at stake in affirming or denying the claim that expressions are parts of emotions. Advocates of DSP often build their arguments on this claim, yet I've argued that some should be wary of doing so, since this claim carries baggage that they may not want to accept. At the same time, the views that emotions are natural kinds and that emotions terms refer directly to these kinds are both popular, and so some past critics of DSP might find themselves drawn to DSP, now interpreted as the claim that we can directly perceive emotions qua coordinated psychological, physiological, and behavioral responses. I haven't settled the debate over DSP once and for all, but I've reframed the debate in a way that forces advocates and critics alike to reexamine their commitments and to rethink what it would mean to perceive an emotion in its behavioral expression.

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