

Expressive Perception as Projective Imagining

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Abstract: I argue that our experience of expressive properties (such as the joyfulness or sadness of a piece of music) essentially involves *the sensuous imagination (through simulation) of an emotion-guided process which would result in the production of the properties which constitute the realisation of the expressive properties experienced*. I compare this proposal with arousal theories, Wollheim's Freudian account, and other more closely related theories appealing to imagination such as Kendall Walton's. I explain why the proposal is most naturally developed in terms of simulation and briefly comment upon the impact of work on cross-cultural perception of facial expression, modularity and autism for the proposal.

We perceive works of art to be expressive of sadness, joy, longing and many other emotions. This may not be the only way we discern the expressive properties of a work. In the case of poetry, or literature more generally, we may infer that a work is expressive of an emotion from the content of the thoughts expressed. Straightforward experience of them is rarer. I set such cases aside although I will note a possible extension to my approach to cover them in section 6. Primarily I'm interested in those occasions where works of art *seem* to have expressive properties in that mention of these properties figures in the appropriate characterisation of the perceptual states we have of the works in question. Music is an obvious case but painting and sculpture also provide examples. For the latter, the expressive properties of a work may be distinct from the expressions of the figures represented. A work's expressive properties don't imply that the creator of a work has actually undergone the emotions expressed any more than having a sad expression implies

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that the person is sad. A work does not have expressive properties simply by representing the property said to be expressed. I can flatly report that I am happy without expressing my happiness.

Various philosophical tasks are involved in the proper understanding of the putative fact that works of art have expressive properties. The key element, which is the focus of this paper, is an account of our *experience* of expressive properties (hereafter, expressive perception). Most, if not all, theories of expressive properties deny that they are present in the world literally as they are experienced. Some hold that they are powers to produce expressive perceptions in appropriately informed perceivers in suitable circumstances (e.g. Levinson, 1996; Wollheim, 1987). Others take expressive properties to be structural properties of objects—e.g. contour theorists—which in some way resemble those features of the human face and body which are expressive (Kivy, 1980; Kivy, 1990, p. 176; Davies, 1994, p. 239; Davies, 1997, pp. 96–99). Even in this case, though, expressive perception is not taken to involve the representation of expressiveness in the world in just the way that ordinary perception might involve the representation of squareness (say). Rather the relevant structural similarities are part of the explanation as to why we experience both works of art and human faces and bodies as expressive. Our experience of these structural similarities involves something more. So, apart from its intrinsic interest, developing a better understanding of the nature of expressive perception is a good place to start in seeking a defensible account of expressive properties.

In the first section of this paper, I identify two distinct tasks involved in providing an account of expressive perception which can be confused: specifying its phenomenal content and providing an explanation of its character. I argue that claims about the nature of expressive properties and/or the proper explanation of expressive perception have distorted assessment of the proper characterisation of its phenomenal content, which we should take to be *sui generis*. I then turn to the task of providing an explanation of this character in the remainder of the paper. In sections two and three, I consider potential two competitors to the approach I go on to defend: arousal and Freudian genetic theories of expressive perception. I find the first wanting—although articulating an important intuition to which I return—and the second, when developed, no longer a competitor but just involving the addition of a contentious causal explanatory dimension. In section four, I defend a theory of expressive perception based upon imagination. The successful development of such a theory requires the proper specification of the content of what is imagined and the kind of imagining involved. In brief, my claim will be that *expressive perception essentially involves the sensuous imagination (through simulation) of an emotion-guided process which would result in the production of the properties which constitute the realisation of the expressive properties experienced*. When we experience a piece of music as joyful we imagine how this emotion feels and how this character would guide the development of the piece in one direction rather than another. It is because we do this that we hear the music as expressive of the emotion in question. The remaining sections of the paper consider how this proposal should be understood and developed, and how empirical research may bear upon it.

1. The Phenomenal Content of Expressive Perception and its Explanation

One task in providing a proper account of expressive perceptions is the characterisation of their phenomenal contents, that is, what it is like to experience them. The phenomenal content of a perceptual experience will include all that we naturally take to be presented in experience: colours, shapes, motion, spatial organisation, including anything we recognise which is presented as such in our experience, for example chairs, tables, cars, the houses of parliament. So it may be conceptually informed. In the case of imaginative experiences, the phenomenal content will include all that we sensuously imagine, such as items from the list just given. In the case of expressive perceptions in particular, for instance our experience of a piece of music, the question is whether it is experienced to be a human utterance or behaviour expressive of emotion as Peter Kivy and Stephen Davies suggest in the following passages:

... we hear ... musical sounds as appropriate to the expression of sadness. And we hear them as appropriate to the expression of sadness (in part) because we hear them as human utterances, and perceive the features of these utterances as structurally similar to our own voices when we express our own sadness in speech (Kivy, 1980, p. 51);

... expressiveness of music depends mainly upon a resemblance we perceive between the dynamic character of music and human movement, gait, bearing, or carriage (Davies, 1994, p. 229).

Or whether it is experienced as the emotion itself as Malcolm Budd, drawing on an insight from Schopenhauer (1818), recommends:

... when you hear music as being expressive of emotion E—when you hear E in the music—you hear the music as sounding like the way E feels; the music *is* expressive of E if it is correct to hear it in this fashion (Budd, 1995, p. 136).

Or whether, finally, it is heard as the expression of a musical persona as Jerrold Levinson suggests in the following passage:

... a passage of music P is expressive of an emotion or other psychic condition E iff P, in context, is readily and aptly heard by an appropriately backgrounded listener as the expression of E, in a *sui generis*, 'musical', manner by an indefinite agent, the music's persona (Levinson, 1996, p. 107, see also Vermazen, 1986, pp. 199–200, 207).

My own view is that the proper characterisation of the phenomenal content of our expressive perceptions generally involves distinctive *sui generis* types of

realisations of expressive properties. Obviously that does not mean that ‘*sui generis*’ figures in the specification of the content. Rather the general form of our expressive perceptions is that S (a subject) experiences O (the expressive object e.g. piece of music, painting, face, bodily gesture etc.) to be expressive of E (an emotion) in way W (as specified by a complex array of properties of O which constitute the realisation of the expressive property).¹ The claim is simply that we should not take W to involve important similarities across cases of expressive properties, for instance, similarities with emotion or human behaviour. Of course, there may be exceptions such as Levinson’s suggestion that the timpani in the scherzo of Beethoven’s Ninth expresses aggression partly because the playing of timpani involves striking (Levinson, 2002, p. 144). The point is just these similarities are not required in general.

I agree with Kivy and Levinson that we experience music to be *expressive of* emotion rather than the emotion itself. There are points of resemblance between pieces of music and emotions but these are not enough to establish Budd’s position. Our experience of human gesture may be legitimately characterised as an experience of a body moving in the way an emotion feels. Nevertheless, that does not mean that our experience of its expressive properties is appropriately given this content: *gesture g is like the way emotion e feels*. There need be no comparison made as part of the content of the experience and, at least prima facie (which is what I need), gestures are taken to be distinct from emotions.

A resemblance, however strong, is not sufficient to explain how something is heard as expressing that which it resembles. At best, resemblance makes something appear expressive if it resembles something which is expressive. This is not to say that such resemblances alone are responsible for expressive perception. Certain kinds of perceptual processing may be required for the perception of expressive properties in both cases (Ridley, 1995, pp. 120–121; Matravers, 2003, p. 354). It is human behaviour, and not the emotions themselves, which is expressive. So, if the intent is to appeal to resemblances to account for our experience of expressive properties, Budd also seems to have identified the resemblance at the wrong point (Trivedi, 2001, pp. 412–413).

My disagreement with Kivy and Levinson arises from their insistence on reflecting, in the phenomenal content of expressive perception, features which, at best, are part of the explanation of expressive perception or analytic commitments of our notion of expression. Kivy seems to suppose that the best explanation of the expressive properties of music is that it resembles human behaviour and elicits similar processing in its auditors. Even if that were right, it would not follow that the content of our experience of music involves the idea that it resembles behaviour. Resemblances required for similarity of processing do not have to be filtered through into similarities in the phenomenal content attributed and our experience suggests that they are not. For example, it has been said that speech perception

¹ I am grateful to an anonymous referee for insisting that I be clearer about all this.

may involve recognition of certain common properties of utterances in the production of different consonants, which we are entirely unaware that we process, in order to attribute certain words with certain meanings to utterances. Recognition of this fact may explain why, in later work, Kivy seems to moderate his claims and note that perception of the resemblances 'must lie at some deeper, nonconscious and pervasive level, although we can, of course, bring it to consciousness by analysis and scrutiny' (Kivy, 1989, p. 173). The qualified theory is no longer a proposal as to the phenomenal content of expressive perception.

In the case of Levinson, the assumption seems to be that, if expressive properties characterise apparent or as-if expression, and if expression involves, at the minimum, something outward giving evidence of something mental, then the phenomenal content of our expressive perceptions should involve a persona expressing him or herself (Levinson, 2005, p. 192). However, even supposing that this analysis of expressive properties is correct (something I shall challenge in section 4), there is no reason why the phenomenal content of our expressive perceptions should bear witness to it and our experience suggests that it does not. We don't expect the analyses of other items to show up in experience. For instance, suppose a causal theory of perception is true. We would not require that the objects of our perceptual experience reveal themselves as causes in our experience. The same point applies to functional analyses of mental states or dispositional analyses of colours. How these items are experienced does not provide a knock down consideration in favour or against these analyses. Turning to the case at hand, the fact that pieces of music, say, may license nothing so sophisticated as the ascription of a persona, and yet be found to be expressive, should be taken at face value. It neither provides a consideration against Levinson's favoured analysis nor should be questioned if the analysis is independently plausible. That is not to rule out the possibility that experiencing complex emotions in a piece of music requires experience of a musical persona (see e.g. Levinson, 1990; Karl and Robinson, 1995). My point is just that appeal to persona is not required for expressive perceptions in general.

Levinson argues that our *imagining* a persona *explains* how we experience a piece of music *as* expressive (Levinson, 2000, p. 613). Even if that is right—a matter I shall also examine later in section 4—it does not establish that what we imagine is embedded into the phenomenal content of our expressive perceptions. To illustrate with another kind of case, if we imagine we are walking down a gloomy hallway, we may only imaginatively experience a shadow as threatening if we imagine that the shadow is cast by an aggressive lurking individual. Nevertheless, the phenomenal content of our imaginative experience—a visualisation of the hall and the threatening shadow—may not include the lurking individual. The same point applies to Saam Trivedi's suggestion that, when we don't imagine a musical persona, we imagine a piece of music as an acoustic creature expressing its emotions (Trivedi, 2001, pp. 414–416). Levinson also talks of an auditor being committed to hearing or imagining an agent in the music in hearing the expressive properties of a piece of music (Levinson, 2005, pp. 193). But people can fail in their

commitments without this affecting the correct specification of the content of their states.

Faced with these objections, proponents of the persona view are apt to insist upon the minimal nature of the requirement they impose on the proper characterisation of the content of our expressive perceptions. For instance, Levinson writes:

... this agent or persona, it must be stressed, is almost entirely indefinite, a minimal sort of person, characterised only by the emotion we hear it to be expressing and the music gesture through which it does so (Levinson, 2005, pp. 193–194).

As the persona becomes thinner, it is reasonable to question the utility of the idea. Has the persona become so thin as to remain a possible expressing thing? If not, then we have no explanation of how the expressive properties could be present. Pressure to fit with the phenomenology leads to the abandonment of a genuine explanation and the vitiation of the programme.

If, as I recommend, we draw a sharp distinction between the proper specification of the phenomenal content of expressive perception and the explanation of its possession of this phenomenal content, then having recognised the *sui generis* character of the phenomenal contents in question, we need to explain how expressive perceptions possess such contents. This will be the focus for the remainder of the paper. The proper treatment of this question is a collective exercise for philosophers and psychologists. My concern will be to assess the philosophical proposals that have been made and defend a development of one of them. I will consider how empirical work may bear upon it in the last section of the paper.

2. The Arousal Theory of Expressive Perception

Works of art arouse emotions in us due to their expressive properties. Proponents of an arousal theory of expressive perception say something more than this. They claim that we experience an expressive property E in an artwork because it has properties which tend to give rise to the corresponding emotion, E (or an appropriate alternative emotion, in Matravers' extension of the idea) in us (Matravers, 1998, p. 146, 162–164, 182; Robinson, 1994).

As an explanatory analysis of expressive perception into its basic elements, the proposal seems wanting. Why should *expressive* properties figure in the content of a perception in virtue of a tendency for emotions to be *aroused*? An answer to this question does not seem available a priori nor, once posed, does it seem obvious that the connection must be so in all possible worlds even if it were true in this one. Indeed, appeal to emotions aroused is more plausible as an analysis of how properties of arousal, such as being sexually stimulating, irritating or disgusting, embed in the content of perceptual experience. Doubts deepen when we note the

following familiar points. First, it seems we can experience a piece of music as expressive without apparently having the feelings putatively aroused, for instance, hearing a piece of music as sad without being sad. This may be challenged but it provides a ready explanation of why our experience of negative emotions expressed in a work is not as unpleasant as they would otherwise be. The objection does not rely, as Matravers suggests, on the claim that we only seek the pleasurable. It is rather that arousal theorists provide a mistaken assessment of the unpleasantness of our experience of certain works of art (Matravers, 1998, pp. 156–158).

Second, the feelings aroused don't necessarily match up with the expressive properties of a work, for instance, we feel pity in response to something which is expressive of sadness. If we appeal to Matravers' idea that the phenomenal content of our expressive perception may be determined by an appropriate emotional response to the emotion expressed, rather than simply the corresponding emotion (e.g. pity for sadness; fear for anger), there is the danger that we have no explanation of how works of art can express the appropriate emotional response rather than the emotion to which it is the appropriate emotional response (e.g. how would pity or fear then be expressed).

Third, arousal theorists are committed to denying that a causal explanation of the feelings aroused by a work are its expressive properties since, according to them, we only experience a work's expressive properties if we are aroused. Yet, *prima facie*, this is an explanatory stage that we recognise.

Finally, people's feelings can be aroused in the way that arousal theorists take to be required for expressive perception (e.g. not simply produced by drugs) and yet no expressive perception takes place. For example, a careful and coldly reasoned incitement to anger (so often the hallmark of departmental politics) may be perceived to have no expressive properties and yet the feelings produced can be *strong, predictable and reliant upon conscious attention for the effect to take place*—the features Matravers takes to be required for expressive perception (Matravers, 1998, pp. 177–185; Matravers, 2003, p. 360).

Rejection of an arousal theory of expressive perception does not mean that we must deny that being aroused enables us to perceive the expressive properties of the work more sharply or with greater engagement (see e.g. Ridley, 2003, pp. 221–222). The point is just that, given the previous comments, that is all we are doing. Arousal is not the basis for expressive perception though the fact that this can seem otherwise is something for which I shall try to account when outlining my own proposal.

3. Wollheim's Freudian Theory of Expressive Perception

Richard Wollheim argues that we perceive works of art to have expressive properties because a disposition has been set up in us to project emotions onto particular receptive properties in the world through anxiety. If we are feeling something negative, we want to get rid of it so we project it onto something else.

Similarly, if we are feeling something positive, we are afraid it will go away so we try to preserve it by making the world supportive of it. These operations originate in Freudian phantasy—non-accidentally inaccessible states in which the world is represented as conforming with the demands of one's motivational states—which is responsible for entrenching the disposition (e.g. see Wollheim, 1987, Lecture II, esp. p. 84).

The simplest kind of projection involves projecting your own feelings on to other people and experiencing them to have them. For instance, your hatred of a certain individual makes you experience them as hating you. This won't do for the case of expressive properties of artworks. Hence Wollheim claims that they are a result of *complex* projection in which we experience something as *of a piece* with our emotion (which seems to be taken to be an analytical primitive).

I will not question the scientific standing of Freudian theory nor make anything of its speculative application in the present case—one which, for instance, seems to ignore the peculiar delights of *Schadenfreude* or the robust feeling of health obtained from being the only healthy person surrounded by the sorrows of sickness. Even putting these qualms aside, Wollheim's theory faces some clear difficulties.

First, it may be questioned whether we must always have the kind of anxiety indicated above in order to perceive expressive properties. In his later work, Wollheim accepts that we needn't, writing:

... those experiences of projective properties which do not intimate their own history nevertheless intimate how experiences of such a sort originate, they intimate that such experiences originate in projection (Wollheim, 1993, p. 153).

He now appears to be taking his theory to provide a specification of the phenomenological content of expressive perception in terms of properties which *would have originated in projection due to anxiety if this had taken place* rather than an explanation of expressive perception. As such, it certainly seems dubious whether all of our expressive perceptions have this character. Even if Wollheim were right, we would still need an explanation of why we have expressive perceptions in the cases where anxiety is not responsible.

Indeed, the explanatory difficulties of his account are greater than this. According to Wollheim, our experiences attribute to items in the world expressive properties that they do not possess *as experienced*. But we are looking for an explanation of the phenomenal content of expressive perception. Wollheim seems simply to be helping himself to the fact that they have such contents and providing, at best, a causal explanation of why we have such experiences. In point of fact, then, Wollheim's account and my own to be outlined later are not in competition.

Wollheim's focus on a disposition rooted in anxiety also seems inadequate to explain expressive perception resulting from our understanding of the mind of an artist. As Ernest Gombrich points out, Piet Mondrian's *Broadway Boogie-Woogie* (1942/1943) only looks as if it expresses the frenetic activity of, or feelings related

to, Jazz, rather than the more ordered character of Bach's work, if we have previously appreciated such compositions as *Composition with Red, Black, Blue, Yellow and Grey* (1920) and *Painting I* (1926) (Gombrich, [1960] 1977, pp. 311–314, 319).

Expressive perception can rest on our knowledge of mental life more generally. Suppose that an artist wishes to paint a picture of a summer's day that reveals how, amidst all that sunshine, one's mood can remain a contrasting one of sadness and despondency. It would not do to paint the day as sad and despondent because then we would lose the contrast. Rather the day must be painted bright and joyous. The mood will be conveyed by features upon which a sad and despondent person would focus, knowledge of which would enable us to see the emotion expressed in the picture.

I develop these points about the role of knowledge and the mechanism of projection further in the exposition of my own theory below.

4. Imagination of an Emotion-Guided Creative Process

Along with a number of others, my favoured approach to expressive perception takes it to involve a certain kind of imagining. Appeal to imagination in the explanation of expressive perception is phenomenologically apt in two ways. First, our perceptual experience of expressive properties, while attributing them to objects, does not have the immediacy of our perceptual experience of colours say (Levinson, 1996, p. 91; Elliot, 1967, p. 146). It is striking that the content of our sensuous imaginations, for instance sensuously imagining a colour, fails to have the same immediacy as the content of the corresponding perceptual experience. If expressive perception involved imagination, we would have an explanation of this. Second, and even more strikingly, our experience of expressive properties seems to be the result of engagement. It is possible to hear music as inexpressive noise, or merely as what people call 'sad', especially if you are not attending to it. It is tempting to think that the difference arises from whether or not our imaginations are engaged. The fact that our imaginations are relatively under our control explains how it is also relatively under our control whether we experience expressive properties. When we merely hear the music as what people call 'sad', we are just recognising the features—e.g. being in a minor key—that on other occasions we hear as expressive of sadness.

Appeal to imagination raises two issues: the kind of imagination involved and the content of the imagining. There is a familiar distinction between sensuous imagining, such as visualising and its auditory and olfactory equivalents, and propositional imagining which may be equivalent to simply supposing that something is the case (an issue which partly depends upon the outcome of the imaginative resistance literature) (see e.g. Moran, 1994; Gendler, 2000, Currie, 2002; Currie and Ravenscroft, 2002, pp. 33–38). The distinctive feature of sensuous imagining is that a condition of its success is to recreate the sensory experience of the thing imagined. As my remarks in the previous paragraph suggest, I think that

sensuous imagination has an important role to play in expressive perception. However, I shall postpone discussion of this, the first issue, until the end of this section of the paper. I will begin by focussing on the content of the imagining. Obviously there are links between the two issues but the need to appeal to sensuous imagination is clearer after the second issue has received some attention.

My proposal is that when we perceive expressive properties in a work of art, we imagine a particular kind of creative process which, when the expressive properties are those of emotions, is guided by emotions. We don't necessarily imagine that we have a particular emotion. Nor do we imagine that somebody else has the emotion either. Instead, we imagine how an emotion would be manifested through that creative process in non-expressively specified features of the artwork which realise the expressive property.

The proposal is apt to seem implausible partly because creative processes are often envisaged to have considerable complexity. I have something more basic in mind, described by R. G. Collingwood in the following passage.

When a man is said to express emotion, what is being said about him comes to this. At first, he is conscious of having an emotion, but not conscious of what this emotion is. All he is conscious of is a perturbation or excitement, which he feels going on within him, but of whose nature he is ignorant. While in this state, all he can say about his emotion is: 'I feel ... I don't know what I feel.' From this helpless and oppressed condition he extricates himself by doing something which we call expressing himself ... the emotion expressed is an emotion of whose nature the person who feels it is no longer unconscious (Collingwood, 1938, p. 109).

The key idea is that there are processes which take emotion as an input and use features of the emotion to guide the development of a process the end product of which articulates the features guiding the process. I dub these processes *emotion-guided creative processes*. Imagining emotions guiding a process does not require that we should be aware of the features which guide the process in question. The guidance may be a sub-intentional purposive activity. The results of such processes are actions in the same sense that Rosalind Hursthouse has defended the scratching out the eyes of a rival in a photograph as an action (e.g. Hursthouse, 1991, pp. 57-59). They are hard to fit plausibly and non-trivially into the framework of belief-desire explanation but should not to be written off as mere happenings.

Unlike Collingwood, I very much doubt that artworks are the products of a single emotional state guiding the creative process behind them. Nor do I think that artistic creative processes simply take this form rather than involve means-end planning and feedback. I also do not share Collingwood's view that expressive behaviour is essential for us successfully to identify the nature of the emotions we are undergoing. Sometimes it may help but nothing more than that is warranted. Rather, my thought is simply that elements of an artwork, like elements of a performance, may be products of emotion-guided creative

processes. This is hard to resist once one recognises that the emotion-guided creative processes Collingwood has in mind need be no more complex than those behind gestures (Collingwood, 1938, p. 285). Since gestures have expressive properties, if it were possible to develop a proposal which emphasises the commonality of our *response* to certain features of a work of art and gestures, then the expressive properties of the former would be no more puzzling, and susceptible to the same kind of explanation, as the latter. If we listen to, for example, the 'Badinerie' of Bach's *Second Orchestral Suite BWV 1067* and hear it as expressive of joy, we are imagining how joy may manifest itself in that way just as we see how someone's bodily behaviour expresses joy by imagining the twitch to prance about and caper.

Talk of emotion-guided processes has fairly minimal commitments concerning the character of emotions. The basic idea is that emotions have a certain causal profile which may include their typical basic behavioural manifestations, patterns of thought, related emotions and patterns of feeling. It is the character of this causal profile which guides the process yielding, since gestures and the production of artworks are behaviours too, more complex behavioural manifestations.

My suggestion is that our perception of expressive properties essentially involves imagining the emotion-guided creative processes which would have resulted in particular nonexpressively specified features of an artwork so that, when we perceive these features, we see the work as having the expressive properties they realise. This does not mean that a work of art is only correctly perceived to have these expressive properties if an emotion-guided creative process did result in the relevant nonexpressive features. A work of art may have these expressive properties if the artist intentionally produced the nonexpressive features of the relevant type in order for the artwork to have certain expressive properties. The production of these nonexpressive features may be unrelated to any emotions the artist has and it is no part of our experience of these expressive properties that they attest otherwise. Expressive properties are those whose realisation we experience to be such that, if an emotion-guided process were in play, the realising properties would be the result. They are not those properties we experience to be such that an emotion-guided process did result in their realisation. These points about the kinds of processes which would give rise to properties which realise expressive properties, and the kind of experience these realising properties should generate, provide a fix on the conditions in which expressive properties are realised. However, they are not meant as an account of expressive properties and are compatible with a number of different views of their nature.²

It is instructive to compare this proposal with other suggestions about the content of our imaginings. Some hold that we should imagine that we are experiencing a behavioural expression of emotion, for instance, the human voice, in order to experience the expressive properties of a piece of music (Elliott, 1967, p. 151). It is no part of the idea of an emotion-guided creative process that it

² I am grateful to an anonymous referee for urging me to be clearer on this point.

should be limited to these type of behavioural manifestations and hence there is no reason to require that one's imagining may only concern them. Others emphasise an egocentric element. Thus it is said that we should imagine that we are experiencing an emotion from within which *we* are expressing in the music (say) or that introspecting our auditory sensations is introspecting *our* emotions or that *we* are experiencing an emotion in experiencing the music (Elliott, 1967, p. 153; Walton, 1988, p. 359; Budd, 1989, p. 134 respectively). In contrast to these, my proposal does not make the content of imagining egocentric. Although it is committed to a subject imagining an emotion-guided creative process *from within*, it does not insist that the subject imagines that *he or she* is undergoing the emotion. It can be neutral on this score.

Imagining an emotion-guided creative process *from within* is imagining something from the perspective that each person has on their own experiences: the first person perspective. Nevertheless, when we imagine an emotion-guiding a creative process from within, we do not have to suppose that we ourselves are undergoing the process. We can imagine other people's mental lives in this way. For example, I can imagine the perspective I have adopted to be that of Tony Blair and that the emotions I am imagining to be had from his perspective. In such circumstances, I am not imagining that a certain individual, PN, is Tony Blair (Velleman, 1996, pp. 39–40). The fact that emotions require an emoting subject does not imply that the default assumption is that, when we are imagining emotions, we are imagining our own emotions as opposed to emotions from the first person perspective of some subject or other. Often, when we are imagining an emotion-guided process, we are imagining a process which would result in features not currently being produced and, unless one is the artist, never in fact produced by us. Here it seems clear that we are not imagining emotions being undergone by us and expressed in the work. To suppose otherwise, would be to lose an important dimension of our experience of it. So it is hard to see why imagining that we are expressing an emotion the work should be a pre-requisite of experiencing something as expressive. Nor does it seem right to suppose that we imagine that we are introspecting or experiencing our emotions, not only for this reason, but also because our experience of music seems less directly tied to emotion than that.

Conversely, my approach is stronger in one respect to those I have just been considering. It requires that we imagine the relevant kind of emotion-guided process and not simply that we imagine that we are expressing an emotion in the music. My justification for this is that we need to capture how we experience something as *expressive*. Imagining the emotional guidance of the creative process seems to do the trick where simply imagining that we are expressing the emotion cannot. The thought is that, while I'm not expressing my emotion, something is certainly elicited from me as expressed by features of the work: the emotion-guided creative process.

The emphasis upon imagining the expressive process distinguishes my approach from those who hold that we should imagine that we are experiencing an emotion,

not necessarily our own, in experiencing the music (Budd, 1989, p. 135). I don't deny it is possible to imagine a piece of music as an emotion. The question is whether it is plausible to suppose that, in so doing, the first is experienced as expressive of the second. This does not seem a general feature of imagining X as Y. X must have features which are conducive to this. At worst, it is not clear that pieces of music have these features and, at best, it only does so because they are the outcome of emotion-guided creative processes (see Levinson, 1996, pp. 94-95; Davies, 2001, p. 179 for the first point).

Those who reject the idea that any emotion expressed *must* be imagined as our own tend to hold that, when it is not so imagined, we must imagine a persona expressing their emotion in the artwork (Walton, 1988, p. 359; Levinson, 2000, p. 613; Levinson, 2005, pp. 192-195). This has the peculiarity that, should a persona be difficult to imagine for a particular artwork, we are compelled to imagine that we are introspecting our own emotions in order to appreciate its expressive properties. That does not seem to be right. However, noting that it seems implausible does not get to the nerve of the issue.

As I have already indicated, the appeal to a persona rests upon the analysis of expressive properties as characterising *apparent* or *as-if* expression (Levinson, 1996, pp. 107-117). According to this view, although their instantiation does not require an expresser, it would be incoherent to imagine them to be instantiated without also imagining there to be a persona. I reject the analysis. Expressive properties should not be understood in terms of *as-if* expression but rather in terms of properties with *expressive potential*. We experience certain properties *as if they could be used to express something* and, it is in virtue of this potential, that the properties in question are part of the realisation of expressive properties. That's why we talk of experiencing *expressive* properties rather than *expressing* properties. A similar thought is present in Ismay Barwell's article in which she talks of certain properties being well suited to express something (Barwell, 1986, pp. 179-180, and earlier still, in Wollheim, 1968, 1980, pp. 27-28).³

Properties with expressive potential may fail to be the expression of anything because they are unconnected with any mental life. In those circumstances, it is not *as if* they are expressive but, in fact, are not. They are still expressive. It is because they are expressive that it seems as if they express something when, in fact, they don't. For this reason, analysing expressive properties in terms of their realisation by properties with expressive potential better captures the immediacy and relatively unreflective character of our experience of expressive properties. We don't think about whether they have been used to express something, for example, by imagining an expresser. Rather we simply experience the fact that they could be used to express something in much the same way that the potential uses of many things in our environment signal themselves to us. In this case, the essential

³ I am grateful to two anonymous referees for reminding me about Wollheim's work and drawing Barwell's work to my attention respectively.

means by which we do this is through imagining the emotion-guided creative process that would result in them.⁴

A natural concern to have at this point is that, when we experience a Newfoundland dog's face as sad or hear musical chords as happy or sad, we are not imagining anything, certainly nothing as complex as my description suggests. There are a number of points to make. The first is that imagining an emotion-guided creative process is relatively automatic and something of which we are not explicitly conscious unless we focus on what we are up to in experiencing something as expressive. I outline this thought further in the subsection of the last section of this paper on modularity. Second, it makes little sense to suppose that something may be experienced as expressive quite independently of how we respond to it; that our experience of expressiveness can be simply an experience of features of the world. When we deliberately control our imaginative engagement with a work of art or somebody's facial expression, we can experience these things as inexpressive: just noise or just a particular facial form. This attests to the role of imagination even if we are unaware of it. So, while we may note that the dog's face or the chords are what people call 'sad', we only experience the face of the dog or the chord in question as expressive of sadness if we respond to the character by imagining how sadness may manifest itself in that expression or select that chord as appropriate.

I rejected other accounts of the imaginative content in expressive perception by claiming, in part, that it did not seem to us as if we were engaging, or must engage in, imaginings of these types. However, it might be thought that this kind of criticism involves a double standard if I'm prepared to counter the charge that we do not imagine emotion-guided creative processes in certain circumstances by saying we needn't be explicitly conscious of them.⁵ Here it pays to distinguish between judgements about whether or not we are imagining and judgements which concern the content of the imagining if, indeed, we are doing so. We may well be wrong about what state we're in without being wrong about what the content of that state is, given that we are in it. My claims about the plausibility of attributing one content or another are thus independent of the question of whether or not we are aware that we are imagining. Thus we might be mistaken about whether we *believe* that p (or desire that p) although it is clear to us what p, is or what it is not, if it is the content of one of our states. My criticism of other accounts of the content of imagining have rested on prima facie plausible claims about what p is not together with criticism of the grounds for supposing that these prima facie claims should be revised. My argument in favour of my own approach has rested upon its promise as a basis for understanding how we could experience something as expressive: its drawing out of us an imagined expressive process. A piece of

⁴ I'm grateful to an anonymous referee for pressing me on the question of whether we would immediately experience something as expressive according to my account.

⁵ I'm grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this issue and, indeed, the application of my account of expressive perception to dog's faces and chords.

music seems expressive of an emotion because we imagine that emotion guiding the selection of its music features (and so on in other types of artwork).

My account of our experience of expressive properties in nature has the same status as David Hume's answer as to why we take there to be necessary connections in nature. According to Hume, we take a cause to necessitate an effect because our mind is invariably carried from an idea of the cause to an idea of the effect (Hume, 1739, p. 156; Hume, 1748, p. 75). Likewise, we may wonder, how can an arrangement of non-expressive features in the world appear to hint at something else—an emotion—which may be expressed in them? My answer: we imagine the emotion-guided process that would result in their production. The experience of expressiveness *is* the evidence that this is what we are doing.

This thought can be developed in, at least, one of three ways. We might take the type of representational property responsible for the representation of expressiveness to *be* imagining an emotion-guided creative process. Here expressive properties would be part of the representational content of our perceptual experience. Alternatively, we might take imagining an emotion-guided creative process to characterise a different way of perceiving what are, in fact, non-expressive properties. According to this view, expressive properties would not literally be part of the representational content of perceptual experience. A third option would be to suppose that our imagining an emotion-guided creative process determines a non-representational phenomenal content of perceptual experience (for general considerations against such a view, see e.g. Noordhof, 2003).

Each option provides us with a way in which we can understand the idea that our *imaginings* project expressive properties onto the world. Certain properties have expressive potential because they would be the natural result of emotion-guided creative processes. We take these properties to realise expressive properties because, when we perceive them, we imagine the emotion-guided processes which would lead to their instantiation. Whether this projection is veridical or illusory depends upon the theory of expressive properties adopted.

In his discussion of Hume's approach to the idea of causal necessitation, Mark Sainsbury suggests that Hume is most plausibly taken as proposing a theory of the second kind regarding the generalisations which are supposed to cover genuine cases of causation. As Sainsbury notes, there is no difference in content between accidental generalisations and causal regularities. It is just that the latter are the content of beliefs with a certain resilience or grip on our cognitive mental lives (Sainsbury, 1997, 2005). Perhaps this captures the peculiar fact that, on the one hand, we are prepared to agree with Hume that we can't perceive causal necessities and yet at the same time balk (for a little while at least) at his alleged conclusion that there are no necessities in nature. By contrast, my proposal regarding expressive properties is best developed in the first way. It seems literally true that expressive properties are part of the content of our perceptual experience. Moreover, our experience of expressive properties presents them to be features of the world. Hence expressive properties cannot be dismissed as merely part of the nonrepresentational phenomenal content of expressive perception (in the style of option three).

The difference between the first and second options identified can be marked by the different kinds of imagination involved. So we come to the first issue that I identified in the development of the approach recommended here. In the case of causation, there is no appeal to sensuous imagination of the way in which a cause necessitates an effect. Hume's appeal is simply to the transition in the mind. By contrast, my thought is that we sensuously imagine the emotion-guided creative process whose result is the instantiation of certain properties of the artwork. Part of this imagining will involve states with phenomenally similar (but not identical) content to our experience of our own emotions. There will be phenomenal dissimilarities due to the loss of detail which is the hallmark of all sensuous imagining and the fact that sensuously imagined states will have a truncated causal role with regard to their initiation of other mental states and behaviour. The phenomenal similarities will be those that are supportive of the causal role regarding the guidance of the creative process. In brief, we will sensuously imagine the phenomenal skeleton of an emotion that guides the creative process.⁶ Since what is represented in our experience is the *potential* for expression, and not the actuality, it will not be necessary to suppose that there exists an emotion-guided creative process in the imaginary world (so to speak) even if you are otherwise convinced that sensuous imagination requires imagining perceptual experiences (for discussion, see Noordhof, 2002).

The appeal to sensuous imagining addresses a difficulty that has led some to insist upon the importance of first person imaginings to capture what is going on when we vividly imagine something (Walton, 1990, p. 242). I may feel little engagement if I imagine that a bear is coming after PN. If I sensuously imagine its large bulk and sharp bared teeth, things are rather different, presumably because of the tendency to respond immediately to sensory contents of all types. Indeed, without such sensuous imaginings, it is hard to see how simple appeal to first person imagining, even first person imagining from the inside, could make our imaginings vivid. I may imagine that I believe that a bear is coming after *me* and remain disengaged.

Two problems with appeal to imagination for my purposes is that, first, as I have already acknowledged, it seems we can imagine almost anything as something else and, second, when we do so, we don't necessarily have an integrated experience which reflects what we imagine. For example, when perceiving the duck aspect, we can imagine the duck rabbit figure as a rabbit without the aspect flipping to a rabbit. Appeal to sensuous imagination can ameliorate these problems. Regarding the first, it provides constraints upon what can be imagined since it involves a process with a similar phenomenal content to our experience of an emotion-guided creative process to result in certain features of the artwork. Regarding the second, if it is plausible that sensuous imagination may be a partial determinant of the phenomenal content of perceptual experience, then the result will be an

⁶ I am grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this issue.

integrated experience. Successful sensuous imagining regarding the content of our current perceptual experiences will have, as their success conditions, this result.

5. Imagining Emotion-Guided Creative Processes: Simulation versus Theory Theory

Imagining an emotion-guided creative process and seeing something as an upshot of this process draws upon our knowledge of minds. There are competing ways of characterising this. A theory theory approach would hold that the means by which we sensuously imagine a particular emotion-guided creative process resulting in features of the artwork involves an appeal to a theory relating process to product (those sympathetic to theory-theory include Dennett, 1982 and Stich and Nichols, 1992). A simulation approach takes our sensuous imaginings to involve off-line or facsimile emotions guiding off-line or facsimile processes (those sympathetic to simulation theory include Heal, 1986; Gordon, 1986, 1995; Goldman, 1989). Although the emphasis is on the subject's own emotions, or facsimiles of them, being used to provide information about the psychological life of others, it doesn't follow, given what I have argued earlier, that such simulation must involve imagining that *one* has the emotions as opposed to utilising the emotions, or their facsimiles, in a distinctly first person way in order to predict the behaviour of others. I shall argue that it is plausible to take sensuously imagining an emotion-guided creative process to be a case of simulation. A standard consideration in favour of simulation theory is particularly relevant to its application to the perception of expressive properties and developing my approach in this way enables it to capture some of the intuitive support for the arousal theory in, for example, our experience of music.

First, proponents of the simulation approach have argued that it is particularly well suited to describe how we arrive at explanations of 'ineffable' behaviour, for instance, a strange expression on someone's face. Our current inability to characterise this expression means that we will not be able to plug it right into a theory and see what the theory suggests its antecedents will be. We don't have such a theory. Instead, the proposal is, we use simulation to derive the appropriate characterisation of a piece of behaviour or its products. In support of this thesis, Robert Gordon has cited contested empirical work in which babies and very young children engage in non-cognitive imitation of the expression of others seemingly enabling them to pick up the emotions the others are feeling. In adults the mimicry is suppressed, nevertheless, there is a pattern of detectable corresponding motor innervation (Gordon, 1995, pp. 729-733; Gordon, 1996—he refers to the work of Meltzoff and others in support, see Meltzoff and Gopnik, 1993).

The properties of artworks which realise expressive properties will also count as ineffable behaviour in this sense. Just as we are unable to give a precise characterisation of the configuration of someone's facial features, so we are similarly unable, in general, to give a precise characterisation of the arrangements of properties which are responsible for the realisation of an expressive property in an

artwork. There may be exceptions to this, for instance, particular chords which are expressive of sadness. However, this would only establish that a theory theory approach may have the resources to deal with this particular case. It would not have general application. If our imagination of emotion-guided creative processes is a relatively automatic response to features of the world, then it is unlikely that how they are imagined will be sensitive to whether or not the imagining could be implemented in particular cases by appeal to theory. So, in general, we should expect that the perception of an artwork triggers in us imaginative imitation in the form of simulations of emotion-guided creative processes.

Second, although I was critical of the arousal theory, I noted that it would be important to capture the insight behind the theory. If simulation involves running an emotion off-line, then we have emotion-generation without the full state of arousal which would be present if the emotion was run online with its full causal profile. If simulation involves facsimile emotions, then we have an alternative way of characterising the insight behind the arousal theory. Arousal theorists are right in thinking that there is some kind of feeling going on, it is just facsimile feeling. Either way, it is no surprise that the arousal theory has the plausibility it does.

By the same token, we can capture the familiar idea that we are taken along with a piece of music without this involving our actually having the emotion that a sympathetic response requires (e.g. Scruton, 1997, pp. 357–359). Moreover, because subjects are running emotions off-line or producing facsimile emotions, we also have the beginnings of an explanation of how arousal of a sympathetic response takes place when it does. Arousal would, from this perspective, be the transition of genuine emotions from being offline to online or the transformation of facsimile emotions into real emotions through their utilisation of the same processes. We also have a mechanism by which we can understand our apparently irrational emotional responses to works of art that derives from our perception of their expressive properties.

Simulation theorists emphasise that the same processes which govern the succession of non-simulated cases of mental states are at work when we are simulating (for the importance of this feature of simulation, see Davies, 1994, p. 117; Peacocke, 1994, pp. xxiii–xxiv). If the content of our sensuous imaginings involves a phenomenal skeleton which supports the causal profile of an emotional state, then the same processes which are guided by the emotional state may be guided by our sensuous imagining of it. Matters would be different if our sensuous imaginings had as their content, not the phenomenal skeleton but introspective experience of the phenomenal skeleton in the way that some have argued that our visualising of a F (a tree, for example) involves imagining a perceptual experience of a F (see Peacocke, 1985; Martin, 2002 for arguments in favour of this claim and, in response, Williams, 1973; Noordhof, 2002). Nothing in the development of the proposal suggests that the processes identified should be introspective-experience-of-emotion-guided creative processes rather than emotion-guided creative ones. So not only is the development in terms of simulation theory attractive, there is nothing to rule it out.

6. Further Defence and Development of the Proposal

Taking expressive perception as, necessarily, involving the simulation of an emotion-guided process resulting in features of the artwork experienced, has a number of other attractive features.

First, if the perception of the expressive properties of artworks has the same basis as those of gestures, we have an explanation of why music can express certain emotions—e.g. agony and ecstasy—and not others—e.g. envy or guilt—without assistance (Walton, 1988, p. 354; Davies, 1997, p. 98). Some arousal theorists have sought to explain the limited number of emotions perceived to be expressed by noting that expression involves the arousal of feelings (rather than cognitively complex emotions). They note that differences between cognitively complex emotions don't always involve differences in the feelings involved. Hence the expressive range of music (say) will be limited (Matravers, 1998, pp. 152–153). The problem for this alternative explanation is that it is by no means clear that differences readily expressed by gesture correspond to differences in feeling. Where it does not, the expressive limitations of music seem to be explained by similarities and differences in gesture. For instance, there *need* be no difference in *feeling*, as opposed to more general causal profile, between being very excited and angry. Nevertheless, there will be differences in gesture as a result which it seems clear that music can capture. That does not mean that the difference between being very excited and angry can never be differentiated phenomenologically. My point, rather, is that there are shades of anger and excitement that at the border will not be differentiated phenomenologically but will show up in slight differences of gesture. Hence the accusation that others can make that you are angry when you sincerely deny it and say you are only excited. Similarly, there may be a difference in feeling between envy and guilt but it is still hard to see how this may be expressed in music.

A second attractive feature of my proposal is that it avoids a difficulty which faces the contour theory (or appearance emotionalism) (Kivy, 1980, 1990; Davies, 1997, pp. 96–99). As I have already noted, contour theorists claim that music's *capacity* to express emotions derives from its resemblance to (similarity in contour with) behavioural expressions of emotion. Just as certain behaviours, comportments, physiognomies are experienced as expressive without necessarily expressing emotions (e.g. basset-hounds are sad-looking dogs), so music is experienced as expressive without necessarily expressing emotions (in addition to the passages quoted in section 1, see Davies, 2001, p. 181). A question that proponents of this approach need to answer is: Why do these resemblances outweigh the many, many failures of resemblance that, one would have thought, undermine the expressiveness of works of art? My response is that emotion-guided creative processes find certain features natural for expression and others not. This is a brute fact. The resemblances which matter are to be characterised by their appeal to this kind of process. There may be no explanation in nature apart from this for why pieces of music and human behaviour share expressive properties.

Of course, the proponents of the contour theory can, and do, make a similar kind of manoeuvre. They may just hold that certain resemblances trigger the appropriate kind of processing in spite of the many simultaneous failures of resemblance. Indeed, it is possible for them to take my theory as providing a further characterisation of the kind of processing involved. In which case, they are left with the claim that part of the explanation of why the imagination of these emotion-guided creative processes are triggered is due to the resemblance of pieces of music with human behaviour. They may be right. I just make three points. First, it is by no means obvious that they are right. All that may unite human behaviour with pieces of music is that they both trigger the imaginings of the processes that would have them as a result. Second, the phenomenology of our expressive perceptions supports this point because if the resemblances did trigger a certain type of imagining, one might suppose that we would be aware of them as the *outcome* of the process imagined. The difficulty contour theorists have in identifying the precise resemblances (not shared with other things which fail to trigger the imaginings) suggests that this is not the case for them (nor is it the case for me). That is not to deny that we cite certain features of the music as bound up with our perception of the music's expressive properties. Indeed, we might cite these features to explain and partially justify our responses (see Boghossian, 2007). Nevertheless, I doubt that the features we identify are both specific enough to explain why our imaginings are triggered by a piece of music but not the pattern of rainfall on the roof, and yet general enough to be common to all those works which have a certain expressive property.

Third, even if as a matter of fact, contour theorists are right about how things are with the expressive perceptions of us humans, it is not clear why they must be right about the expressive perceptions of any possible creature. In which case, the general explanation of expressive perception involves an appeal to imagining a certain kind of creative process even though particular explanations of why this process is imagined may differ.

One difficulty which contour theory faces might also seem to afflict my own approach. Although I have discussed music at some length, I conceded at the outset that paintings and, indeed, we may go further, even landscapes can be experienced as having expressive properties too. Here the resemblance to human behaviour seems attenuated. Can I avoid this criticism and make sense of the idea that paintings and landscapes are the imagined products of emotion-guided creative processes?

The expressive perceptions of landscape involve issues best treated in the next section but those of paintings raise complexities I need to recognise here. Some features of painting—for instance, the character of the brushstrokes or the depiction of faces and figures—possess expressive properties in virtue of pretty much a straightforward application of the model I have supplied so far. These may interact to yield distinct expressive possibilities as Walton nicely illustrated with one of Van Gogh's self-portraits (Walton, 1999, p. 430). However, another dimension of the

expressive character of painting derives from our knowledge of the features of the world the artist has chosen to focus on and, as we saw in the case of Mondrian's work, the artist's stylistic repertoire. Here is one clear area where simulation draws upon theoretical knowledge of various kinds.

Similar points apply to a possible extension of my proposal to cover our perception of expressive properties in literature. In this case, we will imagine an emotion-guided process which yields certain characteristic patterns of thought, and a certain focus of attention, captured by the aspects of the scene the writer chooses to describe (see e.g. Stecker, 1984, pp. 411–413). The considerations which lead some to envisage a musical persona have led others to claim that we must suppose that there is a narrator undergoing the emotion and expressing it in the work. It seems to me that many of the questions I have raised over whether this is required in the case of music apply here too. A difference is that, in the case of a piece of writing, more effort is made to describe a coherent world and hence it is more likely to be the case that a narrator is suggested by the writer.

A third attractive feature of my proposal, in the light of the observations just made, is that it both identifies a unity in expressive perception while, at the same time, recognising variety across the arts (see Stecker, 1984, pp. 409–418). A similar mechanism is in play but differences arise due to the type of artistic medium involved and the information available to the audience.

Although perception of properties expressive of emotion is probably the primary case, it is arguable that expressive perception does not limit itself to emotion. Mondrian's painting *Broadway Boogie Woogie* may be taken to be expressive of jazz, Mendelssohn's *Hebrides Overture* and Debussy's *La Mer*, expressive of the movements of the sea—for instance, the swirling of waves—Velvet Underground's *Heroin*, expressive of the hit of heroin, and so forth. One response to this is to identify an emotion for every such counterexample, for instance, the carefree feelings of jazz. However, it is not clear how this would apply to the case of the swirling movements of the sea (is there a special swirling sea-feeling?). An alternative is to claim that, in such cases, features of the sea are *represented* rather than expressed. Yet, a piece of music does not just say the waves are swirling around. It attempts to capture—in musical form—the swirlingness of the waves.

My proposal can be extended to deal with these cases. We can replace talk of imagining an emotion-guided creative process with talk of imagining a sensuous-idea-guided creative process. The sensuous idea might be our musical experience of jazz or our experience of the heaving of the sea. It is because we imagine sensuous ideas of this kind guiding a creative process that we are able to experience an artwork as expressive of the rhythm and energy of jazz or the swell and swirl of the sea. My aim is not to convince you that experience of such expressive properties exists. It is rather that, if you are convinced, you should not take this as presenting an obvious challenge to my account of expressive perception.

It might be wondered whether a particular work of art has to be, at least potentially, expressive of a sensuous idea in order for it to be the result of a sensuous-idea guided creative process. In which case, the charge is, appeal to the

latter ceases to be explanatory.⁷ The first point to make is that the fact that some feature is potentially expressive does not imply that it will be *experienced* as expressive. The appeal to imagining a sensuous-idea-guided creative process is addressed to the latter. The second point is that, if we abstract from the question of which features, in fact, elicit this kind of imaginative act, then the expressive potential of an artwork's features are much too indeterminate. There are many resemblances which may be the bases for expression and many differences which, equally, may undermine it. The overall score on this front is settled by which features, in fact, we are able to imagine as the outcome of a sensuous-idea-guided creative process.

Some hold that it is simply a mistake to suppose that jazz or the swirling of the sea is the kind of thing which can be expressed. This is a distinct issue from the question of whether we *perceive* artworks as expressive of jazz (in the case of *Broadway Boogie Woogie*) or the swirling of the sea in the case of *La Mer* or the *Hebrides Overture*. Nevertheless, my talk of sensuous ideas guiding creative processes provides a way of understanding how, in a derivative sense, these other things can be expressed in an artwork. They are expressed in virtue of their sensuous ideas being expressed. The latter would fit Levinson's general characterisation of something outward giving evidence of something mental (Levinson 1996, drawn from Vermazen, 1986 and Tormey, 1970).⁸

Let me close this section by considering four possible sources of concern about my proposal. The first is that we can appreciate the expressive properties of a work of art without simulating an emotion or sensuous idea guided creative process. My response is that the charge trades upon a vagueness attaching to the word 'appreciate' to achieve its plausibility. It is no part of my theory that a subject can only recognise expressive properties if they are simulating emotion-guided creative processes. Once we have the capacity to detect certain expressive properties, through having simulated the relevant emotion-guided process, we are in the position of being able to identify the features which are taken to be expressive of a particular emotion even if we don't perceive the expressive properties at the time in question (for a like qualification regarding our identification of emotion, see Goldman, 1989, p. 88). If appreciation involves no more than this, then my theory does not set its face against it. However, if 'appreciate' is taken to mean 'have an expressive perception', then I am committed to denying that this is possible without simulating an emotion-guided creative process. I don't see that this denial is particularly implausible.

A second worry is that someone can be guided by his or her emotions to create a work which expresses a very different emotion e.g. sadness giving rise to joyous music. Some of Schubert's music may provide examples.⁹ Two related points may explain what is going on here. First, although composers may be sad—and hence sadness directs the compositional choices they make—the sadness may involve

⁷ An anonymous referee raised this query.

⁸ I'm grateful to two anonymous referees for pressing me on this issue.

⁹ I'm grateful to an anonymous referee for raising this interesting issue.

them in wishing to express lost joy or the acceptance and affirmation of life which involves sadness. In which case, it is entirely possible that sadness will initiate imagining joy-guided creative processes. Second, emotions are often very mixed. Sadness can arise and dwell on matters which have joyful elements elicited by cherishable moments. Even if the composer imagines a sadness-guided creative process, it is entirely possible that some elements of this process will be guided by features of joy.

A third worry with my proposal may stem from my claim that simulating emotion-guided creative processes enable us to perceive rather complex expressive properties which are the result of sophisticated artistic activity. Are all of us really up to it? There are two points to make. The first is that artists and audiences share imaginative experiences through which they may express their emotions. What we (the non-artists) may lack in skill over the manipulation of an artistic medium may be made up for by imagining what it would be like to have the capacity to manipulate the artistic medium and our common experience of expressing our emotions in imagination. Second, in simulating an emotion-guided process we don't have to initiate a complex creative process for ourselves. Rather we free-ride on the creativity of others. We take their products—the artworks—and imitate the emotion-guided creative process we suppose led up to them.

The fourth worry concerns the way in which we alight on the emotion-guided process which leads up to a particular artwork. Walton suggests that we would utilise a theory to select between alternatives (Walton, 1999, pp. 420–421). That would make simulation play, at best, a role in theory testing. I don't have to reject this charge. I am happy to acknowledge that neither the simulation nor the theory theory approach need be the whole story. My claim is simply that, whatever role for theory there may be, simulation of the emotion-guided creative process is required for the reasons given earlier.

7. Impact of Empirical Work

Philosophers should be wary of postulating mechanisms to resolve philosophical problems in case the world comes back to bite them by indicating that there are no grounds for thinking that such mechanisms exist. In this, the final section of the paper, I outline three areas in which empirical work might be thought to have an impact upon the proposal I have advanced.

7.1 Facial Expression and Cross-Cultural Commonalities

By suggesting that a similar type of process may be at work in our perception of expressive gesture, facial expression and artistic expression, I invite questions concerning whether observations in one field also show up in the others. One instance of this would be whether there are the same cross-cultural commonalities in musical expression (say) as there are in facial expression. Apparently little

empirical work has been done on this but what evidence there is suggests that our perceptual experience of expressive properties of basic emotions in music transcends cultural boundaries (e.g. see Balkwill and Thompson, 1999; Peretz, 2001).

In Balkwill and Thompson's experiment, thirty Westerners unfamiliar with Hindustani ragas were asked to identify the emotions expressed in four, identified by experts as expressing joy, sadness, anger and peace. Although the Westerners were markedly better at identifying joy and sadness, overall they displayed the same pattern of results as experts. In this respect, the findings are similar to those regarding our perception of facial expression (for a recent summary, see e.g. Ekman, 1999). So there is no clear evidence that it is mistaken to emphasise commonalities in response, regarding our perception of the expressive properties of the human body and our experience of the expressive properties of works of art. Moreover, there is also room, in the details of my proposal, for some cross-cultural variation due to the appeal to theory at certain points and the idea that the different elements of the causal profile of a particular emotion—not simply those relating to its characteristic behaviour—guide the creative process. Both of these last two factors plausibly vary across cultures.

If variation is allowed, why the interest in any commonalities? Clearly there is no straight entailment from absence of commonalities to the falsity of the idea that expressive perception involves the simulation of emotion-guided processes. Nevertheless, two points are in order. First, the existence of a similar pattern of results for facial expression and the perception of expressive properties in art works suggests that the approach may be on the right track. Second, just because cross-cultural variation is allowed, it does not mean that there is total cross-cultural diversity. Thus, we need an explanation of the pattern of commonality and diversity which my proposal is in a position to supply.

7.2 Modularity

One consequence of our recognition that simulation of emotion-guided processes can be informed by knowledge concerning the artistic medium, other artworks, and facts about our experience of the world, is that such simulation lacks a central feature of synchronic modular processes: informational encapsulation (Fodor, 1983, pp. 55–61). Information about all kinds of things have an impact upon the process of simulation, in addition to the properties constituting the realisation of expressive properties (the putative inputs to the module). Equally, our background information about the character of an individual can make a smile which would otherwise be seen as expressive of friendliness seem menacing instead. Such observations raise a question mark over Greg Currie and Kim Sterelny's claim that there might be a social module taking as inputs the results of perceptual modules and attributing expressive properties amongst other things (Currie and Sterelny, 2000, pp. 153–154). I should note the claim is one they are prepared to see qualified for the kinds of reasons I discussed (Currie and Sterelny, 2000, p. 157). On the assumption that the cognitive processes involved in imagining emotion-guided

processes are part of our understanding of minds, that means that the cognitive processes involved in our understanding of minds—whether properly described by theory theory or simulation theory—are not modular.

Two considerations might seem to support the opposite conclusion, namely that there is a module either relating to our understanding of minds or, simply, to the attribution of expressive properties. First, when we observe an actor, we have an illusion that they have certain mental states (those acted) even though we believe that they are just acting. The fact that this belief does not have an impact upon our attribution of mental states suggests informational encapsulation (Segal, 1996, p. 147). However, this consideration is weak grounds for claiming that perceiving expressive properties involves a module since no one denies that the actor's face has the expressive properties we take it to have. These can be present regardless of whether or not the actor is undergoing a certain emotion. Once this is recognised, we have an explanation of our illusion that actors are undergoing mental states. The question is whether there is any reason to suppose that the illusion is deeper than this. Here the evidence is far from clear. As Currie and Sterelny point out, even in this case nobody acts precisely as if the actor really has the emotions attributed even though beliefs about the mental states of others are meant to be the output of the module. So we don't have the appropriate encapsulation. Indeed, we can be aware of the actorliness of a performance. The belief that the actor is only acting has an influence (Currie and Sterelny, 2000, pp. 150–151). Compare this with our experience of perceptual illusions such as the Müller-Lyer. These are remarkably resistant to our beliefs about the actual circumstances.

A second consideration is our tendency to attribute expressive properties to things which we don't believe are produced by intelligent agents, for instance, landscapes, the sea, and the sky. However, this tendency simply reveals that the kind of imagining, in which we engage in perceiving expressive properties, is very natural: the default processing of surrounding data. Referring to Fodor's characterisation of modularity, it is *relatively* mandatory processing (Fodor, 1983, pp. 52–55). We are continually looking for signs of agency. For this reason, it is a common fantasy that there are beings which have control over the landscape and weather. Thunderstorms have been thought to be the expression of the anger of gods, brooks have been thought to be burbling merrily and so on. Our attribution of supernatural agency reveals that we can imagine emotion-guided creative processes which take as their output environmental changes. Information about our tendency to anthropomorphism is data about the scope of our emotion-guided creative processes.

Nevertheless, although *relatively* mandatory, the processing of features to enable them to be seen as expressive properties can be turned off or its output altered. As I have already indicated, it is possible to disengage and fail to see things as expressive even while noting the presence of expressive properties due to our capacity to classify things in this way. Our expressive perception of features of landscape and the weather certainly has this feature. So, although the imaginative

processing in expressive perception has some module-like features, taken in the round, it is implausible to suppose that we have the workings of a synchronic module. I should note that nothing I have argued here undermines the thought that cognitive processes involving understanding minds display a developmental or diachronic modularity by a systematic pattern of maturation and breakdown (Segal, 1996, pp. 150–156).

It is an attractive feature of my proposal that it has the resources to deal with these less obvious cases of the attribution of expressive properties rather than simply reject them as not robust (see Vermazen, 1986, p. 205).

7.3 Autism

Proponents of simulation theory explain the failure of autistic children, and children below the age of four, in the false belief test by suggesting that they lack the ability to *project themselves into another person's position*. In the standard false belief test, these children fail to take into account that an absent person has not seen a particular item removed from one hiding place and put into another. They assume that the person would look for the item in the new place. There are various hypotheses for why this might be so. Goldman suggests that it involves a failure to keep their beliefs isolated (Goldman, 1993, pp. 193–194). A perhaps rather too ready generalisation would suggest that these children might find it difficult to experience expressive properties of emotions they are not currently feeling and, in particular, the expressive properties which derive from knowledge of an artist's body of work or derived from working out their perspective in selecting certain pictorial elements.

The picture is complex. When presented with pictures of facial expressions, Baron-Cohen notes that autistic children:

... could recognise the simple emotions, but they had difficulty in recognising the belief-based emotion of surprise (Baron-Cohen, 1995, p. 78).

This would suggest that, by default, both autistic and, indeed, ordinary below four year old children imagine an emotion-guided process when presented with facial expressions even for emotions they are not currently undergoing. One consequence of this is that there would be no particular problem for my proposal if it turned out that autistic children could detect basic expressive properties in artworks. There is some empirical evidence that this is the case for music (Heaton, Hermelin and Pring, 1999). Autistic and ordinary children of the same age prove equally adept at matching the expressive properties of pieces of music to either happy or sad facial expressions. A second consequence is that the failure of autistic and below four-year-old children in the false belief test cannot be explained by a general failure to place oneself in another person's position. The reflections in this paper provide further support to the thought that a more precisely specified deficit is required.

7.4 Concluding Remarks

My tentative conclusion in this section is that there are no empirical results that throw the proposal into question. It further supports questions which have been raised about the plausibility of the idea that our knowledge of minds is modular and underlines the fact that the simulation approach to autism is in need of refinement. The absence of empirical disconfirmation, together with this further supporting role, I take to add to the attractiveness of the approach to expressive perception I have developed and defended in the previous sections of this paper.

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