Expressions, Looks and Others' Minds[1]

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1. Introduction

We often express our emotions. Indeed, we may often find it very hard to avoid expressing our emotions. We also often find ourselves aware of others' emotions - our friend's anger, their rival's joy. How is it that we become aware of these states? What is the relationship between our emotions, their expression, and others' knowledge of how we feel?

Certainly we sometimes have to infer how people are feeling - from the tear-stained letter or the unexpected hanging up of the phone. We may find ourselves reflecting on what these signs mean; find ourselves piecing together various strands of what we know of the person.

But that is not always how things unfold. Our sensitivity to each other's mental lives often lacks that cerebral or effortful character of conscious reasoning. Our awareness may be psychologically spontaneous or immediate. In greeting your friend you find yourself unreflectively realising that she is angry. Or even without attending to it you realise later that in your interactions with her you displayed a certain sensitivity to her anger. Even when your sensitivity is just in the background it can play a central role in guiding how you interact.

So you sometimes secure effortless knowledge of aspects of others' mental lives. And the conditions in which you gain such knowledge are many and varied. There are those canonical outbursts of anger or fits of laughter. But there are also those times when it's clear that the anger is feigned or the laughter merely polite. There are the times when it's obvious that your friend is upset in spite of their stoicism, where you reflect on why your colleague might be trying to conceal their disappointment.

Such sensitivity is a part of our everyday social lives. And I take it that only on some such occasions can you reconstruct any very plausible basis on which you're able to tell what you do.

Sometimes there are the stage props, knowledge of the game you're involved in or what's written in that letter in their hand. But sometimes when pressed you'll find yourself admitting that 'there was just something about her'. This is one of the *problems* of other minds: that we so often appear to know things about each other's mental lives while having little clue of *how* we know them.

Your ability to pick up on people's emotions in all these different kinds of situation manifests the fact that your ability is both *robust* and *fine-grained*.[1] There is a huge variety of different things that might be going on in situations where you can tell that someone is angry. And you can sometimes tell of two people behaving similarly that only one genuinely *is* angry.

None of this is to suggest that you never make mistakes. Your friend might strike you as being angry even if they are in fact just concentrating particularly hard. The person next to you in the train might seem happy even while they're actually just feeling nervous. Mistakes are a fact of life. But they come against a backdrop of relatively seamless success.

The question here is how you come by all that effortless, robust and fine-grained knowledge of others' mental lives, in the kinds of situations in which you do in fact come by it.

The Perceptual Hypothesis

There has been a recent wave of interest in the view that such effortless knowledge may sometimes be genuinely *perceptual* knowledge. An initial difficulty for this claim is that there is no uncontroversial view as to what it takes for knowledge to count as perceptual.

There is, however, some agreement as to which are the central cases of perceptual knowledge. Suppose that you are a visually unimpaired colour-sighted perceiver. You look at a book in good light and you come to know that the book is red. Very few would deny that the knowledge you secure here is perceptual.

One thing that such knowledge requires is that you see the red book.[2] But your seeing the red book itself does not provide us with a satisfactory account of how you know that it is red. You can see the book if you're colour-blind. Indeed armed with some relevant background information you might come effortlessly to know that the book is red, even if you're colour-blind. In that case your knowledge that the book is red would certainly not count as a *central* case of perceptual knowledge.

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[1] Cf. McNeill 2015

[2] For my current purposes I will treat it as a condition on securing genuinely perceptual knowledge that *o* is *F* that you *see o*. However see e.g. Dretske 1969. He draws a distinction between primary and secondary perceptual knowledge. Secondary perceptual knowledge is knowledge that *o* is *F* where the object perceived is some distinct object *g*. In McNeill 2012b I argue that secondary perceptual knowledge is inferential in a way that primary perceptual knowledge is not.

We capture the difference between the two cases by noting that in the first example you see the book's colour while in the second you would not. The natural suggestion is that in central cases where you know perceptually that *o* is *F* you see not only *o* but also *F*.

This provides us with a simple interpretation of the view that our knowledge of each others' mental states is sometimes perceptual. We could treat it as the claim that sometimes you see not only your angry friend but also their anger; not only your friend's rival but his rival's joy. Call this the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* (SPH). In relation to knowledge by sight:

[SPH] Sometimes, you see not only a subject *S* but also some aspect of their mental state, *M*. By seeing *S*'s *M* you come to know that *S* is *M*.

As stated SPH would make our spontaneous awareness of others' mental features akin to our visual knowledge of something's colour.

But while the view that we sometimes secure genuinely perceptual knowledge of aspects of each other's minds has gained ground, the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* has at best secured only niche support. Even amongst those who accept that we secure perceptual knowledge of each other's mental features there is a certain hesitancy. Implicitly or explicitly, it tends to be accepted that there is a difference in kind between our visual knowledge that some book is red and our spontaneous knowledge that, for example, the person before us is anxious.

In identifying how we describe our contact with others' mental lives Green notes that 'we often say such things as that we could see the anxiety on someone's face, feel the trepidation in her handshake, and hear the exuberance in her voice' (2010: 45).[1] For Stout emotions are 'manifest in their expression' (2011: 135). We can 'literally perceive someone's anger in his face' (2010: 29). McDowell takes common sense to suggest that 'one can literally perceive, in another person's facial expression or his behaviour, that he is in pain' (1978: 136).

Perseus survived Medusa's deadly stare by viewing her in the polished surface of his shield. If doing this had involved *seeing Medusa* he would have been turned to stone. The claim that we see someone's emotion but only *in* their facial expression or bodily behaviour does not imply – or even suggest – that we *see their emotion*.

As Parrott notes, "when I report that I 'see Granny Smith in the photograph' or 'see the Battle of Waterloo in the painting', nothing I have said implies that I am perceptually acquainted with either Granny Smith or the Battle of Waterloo, both of which may not exist" (2017: 23-24).[2]

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[1] Cf. e.g. Scheler 1954: 260
[2] Cf. Martin 2010b, p82.

Moreover, we do not say that we *see the chair in its facing surface*. Nor do we say that we see the book's colour *in* its surface or *in* the light array. We see the chair. [1] We see the colour of the book. What comes naturally to us is to say that we see emotions but only *in* people's expressions or behaviours. And this suggests an intuitive perceptual distance between us and each other's emotions. It suggests a level of perceptual indirectness that does not intuitively hold between us and common objects or their colours. And it suggests a mediating role for people's expressions and other behaviours for which there is no analogue in central cases of perceptual awareness or knowledge.

And indeed common sense does suggest that our awareness of each other's expressions and expressive behaviours plays a central role in securing our knowledge of each other's feelings. In talking about our awareness of mental states we often talk explicitly about their expression:

> 'I expressed my anger in no uncertain term'.
> 'The expression of pain on her face was almost unbearable'.

We also talk in ways which don't explicitly mention expressions but which in one or another way appear to invoke them.

> 'She certainly *looked* happy'.
> 'His face was a picture of anger'.

One reason to reject the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* is that it fails to capture the explanatory role of these expressions. Intuitively, expressive behaviours are not merely aspects of our environment which stand between us and others' mental states, as photons stand between us and things' colours. Intuitively it is our *awareness* of each other's expressive behaviours which allows us knowledge of each other's mental lives.[2] If that is right then SPH is implausible:

Implausibility

> SPH is counter-intuitive. It does not capture the explanatory role which our awareness of others' expressive behaviours plays in accounting for our knowledge of each other's mental lives

Implausibility gives us a reason to deny SPH. At the same time it suggests a less radical-sounding hypothesis concerning how we know about each other's' mental lives by looking, the *Expressive Hypothesis*:

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[1] Cf. Stout 2010: 32 – 'it is very unnatural to say that we see an apple *in* its facing surface'.

[2] Another reason is the view that mental states are fundamentally imperceptible – hence that it is *impossible*, in some strong sense, to perceive another's mental state. In my 2012a & 2012b I argue against this form of pessimism. Mental states are not *objects* that must reflect light and be differentiated from a background in order to be perceived. They are features of objects. And there is as yet little agreement as to what features of objects are perceptible or by what principle we can distinguish perceptible from imperceptible features. [refs]

[EH] When we know by looking that *S* is *M*, this is because we are aware of *S*'s *expressing M* – in their face or bodily behaviour. By seeing their expression *E* we come to know that *S* is *M*

EH appears more plausible than SPH for two reasons. On the one hand it captures our intuitions about the role our awareness of expressions plays in accounting for our knowledge of each other's mental lives. In this way it doesn't fall to *Implausibility* in the way that SPH did. On the other hand, EH only invokes perceptual acquaintance with states that are supposed to be unproblematically perceptible – expressions and other bodily behaviours. These are things that are 'on the surface' and in this sense open to view. 'It is', says Smith, '… unproblematic that one can perceive emotional expressions' (Smith *forthcoming*: 4).[1]

EH is compatible with differing views as to whether our knowledge of each other's mental lives is genuinely perceptual. We might accept that while you can get perceptual knowledge of people's expressive behaviours, the extra step involved in securing knowledge of the mental states thus expressed makes your knowledge non-perceptual.[2] To say this would be to accept that people's expressions *veil* the mental states they express.

On the other hand we might think that the role of expressive behaviours is to *reveal* people's mental states, or at least to reveal the fact that people are in those mental states.[3] In this way we might treat our knowledge as perceptual even if, as EH has it, that knowledge is grounded in our awareness of the ways people look or behave.[4]

What these different views share is the idea that others' expressive behaviours and your awareness of them will be essential components of an explanation of how you know what you do. In one way or another this sets up an important contrast between our knowledge of each other's mental lives and central cases of perceptual knowledge.

You are very rarely aware of the light rays which mediate your awareness of objects' colours. You are perhaps never aware of the photons. So it cannot be that *your awareness* of such things would form a part of an explanation of how you know that things are red by looking. And for

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[1] Cf. Parrott 2017: 25

[2] Cf. e.g. Parrott 2017; Gomes, this volume.

[3] Cf. e.g. McDowell 1978 especially at p373, Cassam 2007 ch. 5

[4] Cf. e.g. Smith 2015. For a difficult case see Dretske (1973) – as well as Avramides (2015) for further discussion. Dretske argues that we can have perceptual knowledge of others' mental states. And he treats such knowledge as being no different in kind to much of our perceptual knowledge. At the same time he accepts that mental states themselves are imperceptible: 'his frown is visible and his anger is not' (p. 42). And he suggests that in securing knowledge of his anger we rely on 'how he looks or behaves' (p. 44). On one reading he treats such expressions as *looks* – the view I consider and reject in §3. On another reading he treats our knowledge of others' minds as secondary ,but considers this not especially problematic - see McNeill 2012a for further discussion. On yet another reading he treats us as being able to secure knowledge of others' minds no less direct than our knowledge of a thing's colour or shape - SPH.

reasons that I allude to later it is also unclear whether those mediating patterns of light rays themselves (let alone your awareness of them) will form part of an explanation of how you know of things' colours by looking.

In what follows I accept that EH has intuitive appeal. And I also accept that expressions play an important role in our social interactions. At the same time I argue that our knowledge of each other's mental states can be more direct than EH would suggest. Patterns of expressive behaviour are causal intermediaries between others' mental lives and our awareness of their mental states. But their role in *explaining* how it is that we secure knowledge of others' mental lives is limited.

We can individuate expressions in different ways – as more or less tightly associated with the mental states they express, as communicative signals or merely characteristic marks of particular mental states. On none of these interpretations would an awareness of others' expressions provide us with the tools to build a satisfactory account of our ability to know *by looking* how others feel or what they are thinking.

I begin by considering communicative expressions (§2). I argue that we can sometimes come effortlessly to know of others' mental states *in spite of* their communicative expressions. We can find ourselves effortlessly aware of the anger that it was the role of the smile to conceal. In this way we may come to know not only of the anger, but also of an intention to keep it hidden. Such information is social gold dust. But explaining how we capture it requires that we can sometimes see *through* people's communicative expressions.

In attempting to defend EH against this thought, it is tempting to broaden which states we count as expressions or expressive behaviours. I claim that so understood expressions can be treated as a particular class of appearance property. And then EH becomes a specific manifestation of a wider view in the philosophy of perception – that it is via awareness of objects' appearances that we secure our perceptual knowledge. I call this more general thesis the *Looks View*. Treating EH as manifesting the *Looks View* might seem to have some plausible ramifications. But in §3 I argue that there is a more general problem with the *Looks View*. In identifying that more general problem I set the stage for a tentative defence of SPH.

2. Expressions

I have accepted (§1) that the *Expressive Hypothesis* is more intuitive than the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* - it identifies a positive role for our awareness of others' expressions. In order to fully understand that intuition what is needed is a better understanding of the nature and role of expressive behaviours. And there is little agreement on this front.

Green (2007), for example, argues that expressions are essentially communicative. Whether by intention or adaptation our expressions are those aspects of our behaviour which are designed to communicate features of our mental lives to others.

Martin (2010b) argues that there is a broader category of expressive behaviour. That bulging vein in your forehead is not a communicative signal of anger. The red flush of your cheeks might be a mere by-product of the adrenaline which comes with being angry. Nonetheless 'it is', says Martin, 'entirely natural to treat the bulge and the blush as aspects of the expressive dimensions of mind.' (2010b: 87) In general 'what classifies together various overt physical behaviors as expressive is just that we do so treat them as what we must track when discerning the mind of an agent.' (87-88)

Another dimension of ambiguity concerns the relationship between expressions and mental states. We sometimes individuate expressions in part by reference to the mental states they express. If it is true that James is *expressing his anger* it follows that James really is angry. Call expressions of this sort *m-expressions*. Talk of m-expressions captures something of Austin's claim that expressions have a 'peculiar and intimate relationship' (1946: 180) to the mental. We treat expressions as more than merely contingent consequences of people's mental states.

At the same time we do sometimes talk of expressions coming apart from the mental states they are supposed to express. Jill might wear an expression of happiness while in fact feeling gloomy: while she's feeling gloomy she's nonetheless acting in ways we associate with those who are happy. In acting his part on stage Arthur might in a sense *express anger*: while Arthur feels perfectly content the audience are clear as to which emotional state is being portrayed -they may even find themselves being taken in by it. Call such expressions *b-expressions*. In the following section, I shall elaborate on Green's proposal that expressions are communicative.

Communicative Expressions

The view that expressions are communicative has some intuitive appeal. To say that I expressed my anger is to say that I made it known that I was angry. Expressions of this kind are *activities*. The aim of the action is to make public an aspect of your mentality.

Not all expressions are intentional actions of this sort. Someone may be expressing their anger without intending to or while intending not to. Nonetheless we might think that there is a communicative end even to such natural expressions of emotion.

Green for example argues that an episode of behaviour *b* by a subject *S* is an *expression* of some mental feature *M* just if it signals the presence in *S* of *M*. In turn a *signal* is 'any cue that was designed for its ability to convey the information that it does' (2007: 5).

Design comes in a variety of forms. The signal might be adaptive. The honey bee's distinctive figure-of-eight dance signals the location of food. Alternatively the signal might be agential. In expressing my anger in no uncertain terms, I intentionally display that anger to others.

The view that expressions are communicative would provide us with a way to understand the peculiar and intimate relationship between expressions and the mental. At the same time it would provide us with a way to understand how the association between expressions and the mental sometimes breaks down.

If expressions are communicative then other things being equal a close association between expressions and the mental states they signal is what we would expect. 'Although in any given case a signal can misrepresent a state of affairs and may even deceive its receiver, it is important to the stability of any signalling system that it be on the whole reliable' (Green 2007: 6).

Yellow and black stripes signal noxiousness. The hoverfly takes advantage of this. But the hoverfly can only take advantage of this if there is a reliable enough correlation between yellow and black stripes and noxiousness. Remove all the bees and wasps and flood the countryside with harmless hoverflies. The sense in which yellow and black stripes signal noxiousness will begin to break down.

While the communicative view of expressions gives us a model of the 'peculiar and intimate' relationship between expressions and the mental it also suggests that not all expressions of *M* reflect the presence of *M*. In general communicative signals are liable to highjacking. To the extent that *b* signals the presence of *m* it is possible for an audience perceiving *b* to be misled as to the presence of *m*. Yellow and black stripes signal noxiousness. The hoverfly is adapted to take advantage of this signal without producing anything noxious. In shouting and baring your teeth you might signal anger in order to get your children to play further from the busy road. Meanwhile you might feel nothing but parental concern. Given that communicative expressions do not entail the presence of the mental state they signal, communicative expressions are b-expressions.

In sum, on the communicative view expressions are *b-expressions* whose intimate relationship with the mental is explained by way of their communicative function. Yet it is unsatisfactory to read the *Expressive Hypothesis* as treating just *these* kinds of expressions as the intermediaries that allow us our effortless knowledge of each other's mental lives. We should expect perceivers to be able to tell more about each other's minds by looking than they can discover via acquaintance with each other's communicative expressions.

There is, we're taking it, an evolutionary advantage in being able communicatively to express your emotions. Once we appreciate this, we should also appreciate that there can be no *less* of an advantage in being able to come to know what emotions others are in. And I take it that this

advantage is independent of any advantage that accrues from being able communicatively to express your emotions. For example, cases of deception suggest that communicatively expressing your emotion is, to some extent at least, voluntary. In cases where you intentionally hide your emotion others will find it no *less* advantageous to discover that emotion.

So we have an evolved ability to express our emotions. And we have an evolved ability to tell what emotional state others are in. The norms which guide these two abilities push in very different directions.

Wasps and bumble bees make their noxiousness *obvious*. Their yellow and black stripes are adaptive not only because they are clearly visible to potential predators but because they are relatively constant both across individuals and through time. This increases the chances that predators will react appropriately to those visible patterns by avoiding their wearers. Analogously communicative expression encourages shared, discernable, reidentifiable, and stable expressive behaviours of the kinds which are distinctive of different emotions. There are some relatively stable patterns of behaviour which are associated with anger or joy. The stability of these patterns across time and across individuals is crucial to their status as communicative signals.

But the norm which governs perceivers is simply to *get it right* across as many contexts and ways of behaving as possible. It pays to know that others are angry, even from behind or at a distance – occasions where adaptive signals are not perceptually manifest. And it also pays to know that others are angry even in cases where they're stoical or dissembling.

So it would be unsurprising if we could recognize others' emotions even when they were not being communicatively expressed or where their communicative expression were not perceptually manifest. And it would be unsurprising if we could sometimes recognize a person's communicative expression while being aware that their emotions were not *as* communicatively expressed. And this is what we find. Consider a particular case:

Unconvincing Grin

> You walk into a room and see Jane. Jane is smiling and laughing. Nonetheless on looking at Jane you're struck by the fact that Jane is disappointed about something. There's just 'something about her'. Given this you subtly try to elicit what's wrong so that you can cheer her up.

I take it that this would not be a particularly implausible or surprising situation for you to be in. While of course we're sometimes taken in by dissemblers we can often see through the pretence. I take it moreover that this is not a situation you can only find yourself in if there are obvious defeaters around: stage props or silly wigs; background knowledge of the terrible phone call Jane has just had. You can sometimes *discover* that someone is unhappy by looking at them, even when they're beaming. It is sometimes in this way that you are motivated to find out about what might

have gone wrong. It is sometimes in this way that you are motivated to find out why they're not happy for others to know that things are not all well.

In a perfectly natural sense you know that Jane is disappointed, and your knowledge here is effortless. At the same time there is a natural sense in which Jane's expression is a happy one. She looks as happy people typically do. She appears a way which is characteristic of being happy. Her expression is one we suppose people would not normally manifest were they not happy. In short, her expression is one which communicates happiness.

The fact that communicative expressions sometimes come apart from the mental states it is their role to communicate provides you with a *source* of information about how people are. You can not only discern that Jane is disappointed. You are also aware that she is smiling and laughing, and that these are communicative signals of happiness. Intuitively your *awareness* of such mismatches can be a positive goldmine of information.

Jane communicatively expresses that she is happy while nonetheless feeling disappointed. This provides you with the information that Jane wishes her disappointment not to be discovered. Perhaps she considers her disappointment unwarranted or embarrassing. Perhaps she believes it would appear hurtful. Such wishes and thoughts are just more of the mental features about which it is important for you to know.

A subject's behaviour may function to communicate their mental state. Then again it might be designed to mislead. Perceivers have an interest in making use of communicative signals in ascertaining the truth. But that interest provides a reason for perceivers neither simply to rely on nor be restricted by the communicative expressions to which they might attend.

If this is right then we have grounds for thinking both that you can be aware of people's communicative expressions and that you can sometimes *see through* them. But if *that* is right then it is possible to know by looking that someone is happy or disappointed not *by* their communicative expression but *in spite of* it. And then EH would at least not capture *all* of the effortless knowledge it was supposed to explain.

For this among other reasons the communicative view might be thought overly restrictive of what is to count as an expression in this context. After all there is *something about* Jane, we want to say, your awareness of which allows you to realise that she is disappointed in spite of her laughter. The fact that you can tell by looking at her that she is disappointed might suggest that her behaviour is *somehow* expressive of that disappointment, even if it lacks this communicative role.

And there is a natural sense in which someone's bulging vein, for example, could be expressive of their anger even if bulging veins are not evolved communicative signals of anger. Bulging veins have in common with communicative signals of anger that they are stable, discernable and

characteristic of anger. In this way they are still in a position to signal *to* a perceiver that there is anger.

In broadening what is to count as expressive behaviour what we have done is to set aside questions of what a person (adaptively or agentialy) *aims* to express in favour of questions simply about *how they appear*. It is then natural to treat expressive behaviours as that class of *appearance property* which, in the right circumstances, would put you in a position to know some aspect of another's mind.

To do so would be to treat EH as manifesting a broader view in the philosophy of perception – what in the context of visual perception I will call the *Looks View*. It is common sense to say that when you know by looking that some *o* is *F*, this is because of the way *o looks*. The *Looks View* capitalizes on this intuition.[1]

 In the context of accounting for our knowledge of each other's minds, the *Looks View* has two prima facie benefits. On the one hand it would account for our knowledge that *S* is *M* without invoking any perceptual acquaintance with the mental state *M* itself. And by invoking an awareness of others' facial and behavioural *appearances* in its account of our knowledge it would also respect *Implausibility*.

Yet on the other hand it would make our knowledge as close to perceptual as is possible. It opens up the possibility that our knowing by looking that someone is angry be no less perceptual than our knowing by looking that something is an apple, for example. In that way the *Looks View* would appear to respect the *effortlessness* of our knowledge of others' mental features. It would also respect the hesitant perceptual claims that motivated EH.

In the next section I first outline the *Looks View* and clarify some of its commitments. I then argue that the *Looks View* does not in fact provide us with a plausible interpretation of EH in the way we might have supposed. That argument brings out two things. On the one hand it calls into question the *Looks View* itself.[2] On the other hand it brings out a similarity between our knowledge of others' mental features and our knowledge of basic observational properties like colour and shape.

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[1] For an early example see Dretske's 1969 account of perceptual knowledge. Dretske's account of the role of looks was purely counterfactual: that *o* would not look as it does were it not *F*. That counterfactual approach is unsatisfactory. To an appropriately trained colourblind perceiver, the red book might look a way it would not were it not red. Hence Dretske's approach would not be able adequately to distinguish colour sighted from colourblind knowledge that some book was red. Contemporary approaches need to give some positive account of the way objects look, such that we can know by their looks that they are *F*.

[2] You might reject the *Looks View* as a general theory of visual perceptual knowledge while nonetheless wishing to accept that it gives the right account of our effortless knowledge of each other's mental features. I will argue that it doesn't work either as a general theory of perceptual knowledge *or* in the particular case of our knowledge of each other's minds.

If I'm right then we cannot provide an account of expressions that would make EH plausible. As we shall see, the reasons why we cannot provide such an account put the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* in a surprisingly plausible light. I end in §4 by sketching some thoughts about the relation between the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* and those intuitions which motivated EH.

3. Looks

It is common sense that you can secure perceptual knowledge that the thing on your desk is an apple. But it is far from obvious that *being an apple* is a property of the apple with which you can be perceptually acquainted. Whether or not something is an apple depends on its genetic make-up and causal history. These are aspects of the apple which are not perceptually available to you.

When by looking you do know that something is apple it is natural to say that you know this from the way the apple looks. And that sets up the apple's appearance as a potential intermediary between you and its being an apple. It is a visual intermediary which we might suppose helps us to *account* for your knowledge. Likewise even if we're uncomfortable with the idea that you see James' anger, in the right circumstances perhaps you can tell just by looking that James is angry from the way James *looks*. The suggestion is that the way James and the apple *appear* explains how you know what you do about them.

The *Looks View* is that *S* can secure visual knowledge that an *o* is *F* only if:

(i)   *S* sees *o*
(ii) *S* is perceptually acquainted with *o*'s visual appearance or look *L*
(iii) *o*'s *F*ness is appropriately related to *L*
(iv) in the circumstances having *L* is distinctive of being *F*
(v)   by visual acquaintance with *L S* judges that *o* is *F*

Suppose that *o* has the distinctive look of an apple. But suppose that the lighting is such that I do not see *o*'s red and green look, and I see *o* through a distorting lens such that I do not see *o*'s roundish shape. Then *o*'s look is not perceptually manifest to me and condition (ii) is not met. And then whether or not I judge that *o* is an apple I do not judge that *o* is an apple on the basis of how it looks.

Suppose that *o* shares its look with apples. However, suppose the context is such that there are a large number of fake plastic apples jumbled in with the real ones. Then *o* shares its look not only with the apples but also with the fake apples. Given the context *o*'s look is not distinctive of apples. It would follow that I could not tell by looking that *o* is an apple. Whether or not I judge that *o* is an apple I do not secure visual knowledge that *o* is an apple unless *o*'s look really is distinctive of apples. For this reason condition (iv) is necessary.

Condition (iii) blocks potentially deviant associations between *o*'s look and its being *F*. To take Parrott's (2017) example: suppose you have just one apple to display at the village show. And suppose it is a complete mess – a warped, brown-and-yellow abomination. In order to save face you carefully dress the apple in such a way that it looks as perfectly standard apples do. The thing *is* an apple, and it has the *look* of an apple. But we want to resist the claim that the judges can tell by looking that it is an apple. Its look is not in this case appropriately associated with its being an apple.[1]

I will argue that the *Looks View* is not going to give us a satisfactory account of the *Expressive Hypothesis*. First I need to draw out some important commitments of the *Looks View* and take stock.

Objectual & Psychological Looks

Books can have a red appearance. This feature of a book is its objectual look. It is a feature a book can have irrespective of whether there is anyone looking at the book, whether the book is bathed in natural light or left forgotten in a box deep in your attic. To have this appearance is to have an objectually red look.

Sometimes things look red to you. In good light and other things being equal, a book which has a red appearance will look red to you. But things can only look red to you if you're looking at them. While the book in the box keeps its red appearance it looks no way to you. While you might see the book on your patio table at twilight, in that light it may not look red to you. In good cases there will be a causal connection between an object's objectual appearance and how it looks to you. Yet having an object look red to you has something to do with you and is not a feature of the object itself. In identifying the way an object looks to you we identify something psychological.[2]

The sense of looking which the *Looks View* employs is objectual as opposed to psychological. It was the purpose of the *Looks View* to explain how things strike you as they do. The thing strikes you as an apple *because* of its visual appearance. James strikes you as angry *because* of the way he looks. But if the apple's look were just the way the apple looks *to you* then the apple's look could not explain why things strike you as they do. For then the apple's look would be identical to the psychological look it was the purpose of the *Looks View* to account for.

So the *Looks View* is that when we visually know that *o* is *F* this is by way of acquaintance with *o*'s objectual looks. This fits well with treating EH as a specific manifestation of the *Looks View*. For expressions and expressive behaviours are features of the people we see, not aspects of our psychological reaction to seeing them. Moreover, the *Looks View* would provide an account of that

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[1] Cf. Smith 2013: 285

[2] Cf. Millar 2000. There is a question here about whether psychological looks are perceptual seemings - non-doxastic perceptual states – or whether they are judgements made on the basis of perception. For comprehensive discussion see Tucker (2013). I leave these questions aside in what follows.

peculiar and intimate connection between expressions and mental states. Given that by looking we secure lots of knowledge about each other's mental lives our expressive behaviours must generally be suitably distinctive of our mental lives. Nonetheless our expressive looks are b-expressions. Just as something can have the look of an apple while failing to be one, a person might have an angry look while failing to be angry.

Interestingly, though, if the looks to which the *Looks View* refers are objectual the possibility opens up that we can get objects' looks wrong in the same way that we can get other features of an object wrong. If a white cube is misleadingly illuminated it may strike you as red – it might look red *to you*. But it would not follow that the white cube *had the red look*; that it objectually looked red. It is open to us to say that in this situation the cube's look is not perceptually manifest to you. Nonetheless you might mistakenly judge that the cube has that look.

The objectual nature of the relevant looks properties generates another important question. As with any of an object's features you can fail to spot an object's look. And as with any of an object's features you can get its look wrong. Yet the *Looks View* has it that you can be visually acquainted only with an object's looks and not any of its other features. On the *Looks View* the looks things manifest are the *gatekeepers* to your visual awareness of any further properties of those things.

What is it, then, which distinguishes those properties of an object which count among its *looks* from those which do not? Why is it that *being an apple* is not amongst an apple's objectual looks - the properties of it with which you can be visually acquainted? Call this the question of *perceptual privilege*.

Basic Looks Properties

In answering the question of perceptual privilege what is needed is a principled means of distinguishing between those properties of an object which count amongst its objectual looks and those properties which do not.

A simple strategy is to employ the visual duplicate test.[1] The overall look of an object is its overall visual appearance. So take two objects. If no amount of visual inspection would enable you to distinguish them, then they are visual duplicates. Visual duplicates (doppelgängers or ringers) are objects which are alike in all aspects of visual appearance. So visual duplicates are objects which share their overall look. The properties that these two objects must share, in virtue of which they are visually indistinguishable, are what I will call their *basic looks properties.*

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[1] Taken from Martin 2010a: 200ff

A pair of objects which pass the visual duplicate test might differ in that one of them is an apple while the other is a visually perfect replica of that apple. Being an apple, then, is not among either objects' basic looks properties.

Given that our duplicates share their overall look, if either object has the look of an apple then the other object will also have that look.[1] Nonetheless the properties in *virtue* of which the two objects are visually indistinguishable are the usual suspects – colour, shape, and reflectance. The craftsman need only get these properties to match in order to create the visually perfect replica. There is no further task of getting the replica to have the apple look. Given this the apple look is not a basic looks property.

Two things emerge when we set things up this way. The first is that the *Looks View* cannot explain our perceptual knowledge of things' colours or shapes. The second is that if the *Looks View* does have a subject matter then there must be objectual looks properties which are *not basic*.

If *F* is a basic looks property then it *just is* an *L* with which you can be perceptually acquainted. And then it cannot be *by* being visually acquainted with *L* that we account for your awareness of *F*. The *Looks View* presupposes an acquaintance with basic looks properties, so is in no position to explain that acquaintance.

An apple's redness is among its basic looks properties. It is one of those properties that a forger would have to accurately reproduce if they were to succeed in creating a perfect visual replica of the apple. It follows that the apple's red look is not an intermediary between you and the apple's redness. It just is the apple's redness. And then the claim that you're perceptually acquainted with the apple's red look adds nothing to our account of how you know that the apple is red over and above the claim that you saw its redness.

To see this note that for basic looks properties we could simplify the conditions set out [above](#) on securing visual perceptual knowledge that *o* is *F*. For basic looks properties there are no doppelgangers, so we can drop clause (iv). Given that the relation between an object's basic looks properties and its look is one of identity, we can skip clause (iii). For the same reason we can replace clauses (ii) and (v) with no loss of explanatory value as follows:

(ii*) *S* is perceptually acquainted with *o's Fness*

(v*) by visual acquaintance with *o's Fness S* judges that *o* is *F*

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[1] Note that this claim is compatible with only one of the two objects having the *distinctive* look of an apple. Whether or not a look is distinctive of being F is a matter of context – the presence or absence of doppelgangers.

Of course it is tempting to distinguish being red and looking red by pointing out that a thing may strike you as being red when it is not. But the ways objects strike us on particular occasions are a matter of our psychology. And the *Looks View* needs to make use of objectual as opposed to psychological looks.

Similarly it is still tempting to say that you know that the apple is red *from* the way it looks. And this suggests that the apple's appearance is still playing some role in explaining how you know that it is red. There's a sense in which that is right. To say that you know that the apple is red because it *looks* red sets up a contrast between you and someone who is colourblind – someone for whom the apple's redness – its apparent colour – is not perceptually manifest. And it sets up a contrast between your knowledge on this occasion and other ways you may have come to know – by testimony or the distinctive tone of your aural spectrometer, for example. Such contrasts manifest ways in which the claim that you know that the apple is red because it looks red is explanatory. But neither contrast sets up the apple's visual appearance as a *means* of being aware of its colour. Similarly, it cannot be that you see the book *by means of* seeing the book. You do not see the book in *virtue* of seeing the book. By contrast, however, it *does* make sense to say that you became aware of a thing's being an apple *in virtue of* its visual appearance.

To sum up, the *Looks View* does not explain our perceptual knowledge of objects' basic looks properties. I return to this fact later. At the same time of course, *being an apple* or *being angry* are not amongst an object's basic looks properties. Hence we still have no account of how the *Looks View* could support EH.

Non-Basic Looks

If the *Looks View* is explanatory this must be because it helps us to understand how we can secure perceptual knowledge of objects' *non*-basic properties – their being apples or being angry. Suppose then that the *Looks View* can account for our knowledge of non-basic looks properties. It will have to provide us with a more sophisticated understanding of objects' looks than we get from the visual duplicate test.

You can tell by looking of an indefinite number of apples that they are apples. And it may be that none of these apples share an overall look. Each might differ from every other in some visual respects – different shapes and sizes, different patterns of colour, different marks, bruises and so on. Nonetheless according to the *Looks View* you can tell of each of these particular apples that it is an apple *by way* of its look. Call any such look *non-basic.*

Accept for the moment that your acquaintance with the looks of apples is to account for your ability to tell of them that they're apples. Then while apples differ in their overall looks these looks must have something in common which distinguishes them from those things which are visibly

not apples. If an apple might look just any way then acquaintance with its look could not hope to explain how you knew by looking that it was an apple.

In other words the relationship between non-basic and basic looks properties cannot be one of mere supervenience. Mere supervenience is compatible with there being no pattern connecting the various basic looks properties on which a non-basic look L supervenes over and above their being supervenience bases for L. But then your ability to re-identify L could not be explained in terms of the basic visual properties which are perceptually manifest to you. And then we could not account for L's *perceptual privilege*. We could no more understand how you could visually identify L than how you could identify the object as *being an apple*. And then non-basic looks would not be in a position to play the intermediary explanatory role they were designed to play.

If the *Looks View* is correct then there must be some *stability* or *regularity* in the looks of apples that you can visually identify. As Millar put it 'something has the appearance of an F … relative to a given sense, if it appears relative to that sense the way an F typically does'. (2000: 78) For Smith if you perceptually know that some objects are F 'there must be regularity to the way they look'. (2016: 2)

So that characteristic *apple look* cannot be any *particular, determinate* overall look. And it cannot be a property which could supervene on any gerrymandered disjunction of such looks. Rather it must abstract away from the ways in which all those things which are visibly apples visibly differ.

When you see the apple crate at your local supermarket there *are* obvious visual similarities among the apples in the crate. They're of roughly the same size, roughly the same colour, have roughly the same surface reflectance. Even though no two apples are visual duplicates there is a pattern of determinable basic looks properties which the apples in the crate do have in common. The suggestion, then, is that we treat non-basic looks as patterns of determinable basic looks properties.[1]

Let's sum up. The *Looks View* is committed to there being non-basic looks. These non-basic looks must be *perceptually privileged*, they must be *distinctive* (from (iii)) and they must also be *characteristic* of the feature F with which they're associated. And on the *Looks View* if such looks are not perceptually manifest to you then you cannot know by looking that an o has F.

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[1] This is simplistic. There are many varieties of apple. A particular variety may be visually very dissimilar from the others. And then learning to identify members of that variety as apples would require explicit training. First identify the non-basic look characteristic of this variety. Then learn by non-visual means to associate them with the broader class of apples. Compare Martin's case of learning to recognise the taste of French cheese (2010a: 177). However, such a disjunction of non-basic looks must be *contained*. You cannot succeed in learning of an indefinite number of determinable looks that they are members of some further class of object. That's simply too much to learn.

The problem is this: suppose we hold on to the claim that non-basic looks have a very tight association with basic looks properties. That would give them a perceptual privilege over properties like *being angry*. Yet these looks would not account for the knowledge you get of people being angry by looking. You can tell by looking that someone is angry even when they lack a characteristic or distinctively angry look. You can tell by looking that people are not angry even if they manifest a look which is characteristic and distinctive of being angry.

But suppose instead that we privilege the association between having an angry look and visibly *being angry*. Then we are in imminent danger of individuating the *angry look* by reference to your ability to spot anger itself by looking. And then as a property, having the angry look will have no more perceptual privilege than simply being angry. Your ability to spot the *look* of anger will be no more explicable in terms of your acquaintance with peoples' basic looks properties than your ability to spot anger. So introducing talk of your seeing the look of anger would explain no more clearly how you knew that your friend was angry than claiming simply that you saw their anger.

I turn first to the case of other minds. I show that we cannot individuate appropriate looks in that case. I then show that the problem generalises. We find it wherever our recognitional ability is sufficiently honed or mature. We find it in the case of apples. Realising this brings out an important similarity between our ability to recognize apples or bouts of anger and our ability to visually discriminate colours.

Looks and the Expressive Hypothesis.

On looking at people you can often tell which basic emotional state they are in. You can tell that people are happy, sad, angry and so on. And intuitively there are ways that the happy, sad or angry look which are both characteristic and distinctive of those emotions. Someone is clenching their fists, their cheeks are red and the area around their lips white. Their brow is furled. And when you look at them you come to know that they are angry. It is by having such appearances perceptually manifest to you that you might come to know that others are angry.[1]

Similarly, in normal circumstances smiling tends to come with happiness and happiness tends to come with smiling.[2] So consider the following example:

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[1] Cf. e.g. Millar 2000: 83ff, Smith 2013, 2016, *forthcoming*

[2] In truth I'm not sure about this. I accept it for the sake of argument.

Happy Smile

> You see Sylvia. Sylvia is beaming. On seeing Sylvia and her expressive behaviour you come to know that she is happy.[1]

You see Sylvia, so condition (i) is satisfied. Sylvia manifests a look *L* which is both characteristic and distinctive of people who are happy, and Sylvia's manifesting *L* is a non-deviant consequence of her being happy. So conditions (ii) – (iv) are satisfied. On looking at her, and while having *L* perceptually manifest to you, you come to judge that Sylvia is happy (v). The conditions of the *Looks View* have been met. If we accept the *Looks View* we can say that you know just by looking that Sylvia is happy. We explain how you know this by noting your perceptual acquaintance with something other than Sylvia's happiness – her expression or *look*.

The example of Sylvia is *canonical*. It is the kind of example that we are presented with as we're learning to recognise when people are happy. It is the look you find in the picture books and in Ekman's classic photographs.[2] And there is a natural way of capturing Sylvia's look on which it could neither explain why we judge that Sylvia is happy nor how we could *know* that Sylvia is happy.

Reflect first on Ekman's photographs. When presented with a photograph of canonical happiness the person strikes you as looking happy. You are disposed to judge that they look happy. But it is far from clear that you would judge them to *be* happy; even though they strike you as looking happy. The claim that the person in the photograph is happy *looking* is compatible with the claim that they're neutral or that one has no idea about their mental state. As Stout puts it:

> observers succeed in recognizing the emotional type in a facial pattern whether the picture is of a real emotion or a faked emotion. But the question at issue is whether one can actually see someone's real emotional state in their facial expression. (2010: 34)

Call the happy look we identify in Ekman photographs the *canonical look of happiness* – CL_H. Acquaintance with CL_H does not account for how you come to know by looking at people that they are happy.

For a start we have noted cases where you are perceptually acquainted with CL_H but where you're not even disposed to judge that the people who manifest CL_H are happy. And one aim we might plausibly expect the *Looks View* to have is to help explain why you judge as you do on particular occasions.

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[1] The example is adapted from Smith 2015, p277.
[2] See e.g. Ekman & Friesen 2003

If you're asked why you judged that Sylvia was happy or that the thing on your desk was an apple, you're inclined to say that this was because of the way the object looked. Yet if perceptual acquaintance with CL_H does not incline you to any particular judgement about whether people are happy it is unlikely that *it* could be the look you're referring to here.

But even if we treat the *Looks View* as simply giving an account of how you know what you do by looking, CL_H cannot play the required explanatory role. Reflect once more on *Unconvincing Grin*. In that example Jane intentionally manifests a communicative expression of happiness. There is a natural sense in which she looks happy. And her expression, we take it, is visually similar to Sylvia's expression.

The canonical look of happiness is a determinable look. It is, let's say, a look typical of the happy, hence a look that is shared among many people with very different determinate overall looks. So even though Jane and Sylvia do not share their overall look, it would be natural to characterise them both as manifesting the canonical look of happiness.

Nonetheless you know that Sylvia is happy and you know that Jane is not. So it cannot be your acquaintance with CL_H, which they share, that accounts for how you know these different things about Sylvia and Jane.

Rather the different things you know about Jane and Sylvia must be responsive to the *differences* in how they look. At least, on the *Looks View,* this is how things must be if you can tell by looking that Jane is disappointed while you can tell by looking that Sylvia is happy.

Given this it is tempting to suppose that there is some look L_S that Sylvia manifests but which Jane does not. Of course there is such a look. After all there is a look which Sylvia manifests which *no one* else might manifest. As Smith put it 'no two smiles look exactly alike'. (2016: 5) Yet by perceptual acquaintance with L_S you are supposed to know that Sylvia is happy. If so L_S must be a non-basic determinable look which can be manifest by many people whose looks are determinately different. This is because L_S is supposed to be *characteristic* of happiness. Otherwise your acquaintance with it could not explain how you know that Sylvia is happy.

So L_S could not be so specific a look as to *exclude* those who look similar to Sylvia and who we can tell are happy by looking. Given that L_S must abstract away from what makes Sylvia's look specific it is hard to see how it could exclude Jane's look, which we've agreed is visually similar in relevant ways. The more general the look we identify the less likely it is to capture those specific differences which set Sylvia and Jane's looks apart. But the more specific the look we identify the less likely that look is to be characteristic in the way the *Looks View* requires.

Reflect on one further example:

Contained Joy

> You turn a corner to see Genevieve. She is not beaming – there are no smiles and there is no laughter. Nonetheless there's 'something about her'. She strikes you as being very happy. You judge that she's very happy. In a quite ordinary sense, you *know by looking* that she's happy.

As with *Unconvincing Grin* I take it that it would not be particularly implausible or surprising for you to find yourself in this kind of situation. And being in such a situation does not require the presence of any neat background information – of lottery wins, promotions or what-have-you. You can sometimes *discover* that someone in Genevieve's state is happy by looking at them. Such discoveries can be what prompts you to find out what the person has to feel so happy about. Such discoveries can be what prompts you to find out why that person is not happy to *look* happy

There is a natural sense in which Genevieve does not look happy. She does not look a way happy people tend to look. Her expressive behaviour is not canonical of happiness – it does not manifest any stable determinable patterns of basic looks property that we would treat as being characteristic of happiness. At the same time there is a natural sense in which Genevieve *does* look happy. At least on looking at her it strikes you that she's happy. She appears happy to you.

If we focus solely on their visual appearances, Sylvia has far more in common with Jane than with Genevieve. Both have in common that they look a way happy people tend to look. Meanwhile if we focus just on Genevieve's visual appearance we would be forced to accept that she has far more in common with the emotionally neutral than with the happy. Nonetheless we come to tell by looking that Sylvia and Genevieve are happy while Jane is not.

If people's expressive looks are natural patterns of basic looks properties then acquaintance with them cannot account for what you know of people's mental states just by looking. Yet to the extent that Genevieve and Sylvia are visibly similar – they both appear happy – that visible similarity is not down to any distinctive pattern of determinable basic looks that they have in common. If their visible similarity is a non-basic *look* it is one with no closer connection to Sylvia and Genevieve's basic looks than to their being happy. And then it would be no more explanatory to say that you are acquainted with that shared look than that you are acquainted with Genevieve and Sylvia's happiness.

At this point three responses are common. One is to question whether what you have in Jane and Genevieve's cases is really *knowledge*. Another is to question whether Genevieve's overall look – as opposed merely to her facial expression – is really uncharacteristic of the happy. A third is to question whether what you have in those cases is really knowledge *by looking*. There is a danger that the motivation in all three cases is question-begging. If the *Looks View* were unquestionable we would be forced to accept either that you didn't have knowledge in these cases, that your

knowledge was secured in virtue of acquaintance with *some* look characteristic of the relevant emotion, or that your knowledge was explicable in some other way. But the *Looks View* is precisely what I am questioning.

We might be tempted by the thought that in Jane and Genevieve's cases you would be less *certain* in your judgement, more open to doubt, more prepared for retraction. But it is not clear what difference this would really make. Knowledge neither is nor requires certainty. And in the case of others' minds we tend in general to be wary. It is not clear whether – or if so *why* – your judgement in Sylvia's case should be any less open to doubt or revision.

We might want to broaden what we take to be the relevant *looks*. We still want to say that there is *something* about Jane and Genevieve that explains how we can tell that the first is disappointed while the second is happy. Perhaps their overall bodily behaviour reveals what their facial expression alone would hide.

While this strategy is tempting it actually makes the problem harder to resolve. Broadening our understanding of Genevieve's overall look makes it easier to see what is *specific* about her behaviour on this occasion. But what is specific about her current behaviour cannot be something which is *characteristic* of the happy.

The third temptation is to suppose that there simply must be some contextual clues or background information – however subtle – which are at work in accounting for your judgements in Jane and Genevieve's cases.

One response is that it is unclear what reason we would have to think this *except* an existing commitment to something like the *Looks View*. After all the point of the examples is that we're often at least unaware of any such contextual information. Our discovery is made by looking at Jane and Genevieve. Our discovery *prompts* us to investigate the context. The theorist could go searching for contextual information in this case. But their methodology would suggest an expectation that something like the *Looks View* is true; that our knowledge by looking is restricted by our acquaintance with people's stable, distinctive and characteristic expressive looks.

Another response would be to accept that there was bound to be contextual information at work but to argue that this is the case even in central cases of perceptual knowledge and hence unimportant. After all many visual illusions work by confusing the contextual clues. You might think that what visual illusions tell us is that even the visual perception of colours, lengths and shapes is massively sensitive to context.

A final move at this point would be to accept the *Looks View* of visual knowledge and deny that we have any such knowledge of each other's mental features. To do so would be to deny both the *Perceptual* and *Expressive* Hypotheses and adopt some form of *Inferentialism*, even in canonical cases.

However, the reflections above threaten the *Looks View* more generally. Consider the following example:

Wonky Apple

> You see a yellowy-green object with brown patches. It is lumpen. It has odd bulges and dark warts. On looking at it you know it to be an apple – albeit a very wonky one.

On one natural reading the *Wonky Apple* does not look as apples typically look. It is hardly an exemplar. In this sense the *Wonky Apple* does not look like an apple. Nonetheless by looking you know that the thing is an apple. Label the typical or canonical look of an apple L_{AP}. If the wonky apple does not manifest L_{AP} then it cannot be by discriminating L_{AP} that you become aware in this situation that the thing is an apple.

We know that being an apple and having the look of an apple can come apart. A thing can have the look of an apple without being an apple. It is also possible to *be* an apple without having the look of an apple. Similarly, 'there can be individual tomatoes that do not have the look characteristic of a tomato' (Martin 2010a: 205). In general 'there is no determinable look that is associated with being a tomato that is exemplified by determinations of all the ways of looking that tomatoes might have' (205-6).

But the problem here does not stem directly from the thought that not all individual fruits look the way fruits they are typically look. Some apples are beyond the pale. They're so mangled, so rotten or unusual that you cannot tell of them by looking that they're apples. And I take it that no such apple has a look characteristic of apples.

Rather the problem is that we sometimes *can* tell by looking what some very unusual-looking objects are. In *Wonky Apple* we have an apple that appears not to manifest any characteristic, distinctive look of an apple. It's pattern of basic looks properties is as saliently similar to a mouldy potato as it is to the perfect apples in the posh supermarkets. But you can nonetheless tell by looking that the object is an apple – potentially with no less ease than you manage to identify its more stereotypical and saleable cousins.

The Limits of Looks

What *Unconvincing Grin*, *Happy Smile* and *Contained Joy* are designed to draw out is that our ability to recognise each other's emotional states is both robust and fine-grained. You can tell of two people behaving in very different ways that they are both happy *by looking*. And you can tell by looking, of two people behaving in very similar ways, that only one is happy. If we focus on the basic visual properties or expressions with which you're acquainted in all these cases they do not help us to account for such knowledge. And we don't consistently find that there are neat contextual clues or background beliefs that would pick up the slack.

The situation might seem perplexing. But I have argued that it is not something which is specific to our knowledge of other people's mental states. We come up against this problem whenever our recognitional capacities are robust and fine-grained. We can spot apples across huge variations in the basic looks properties they perceptually manifest to us. Similarly we can distinguish apples from fakes even when their visual appearances are very similar. Patterns of basic looks properties do not help us to account for such knowledge. And we don't consistently find the kinds of contextual clues or background beliefs that would fill in the gaps.

This too might seem perplexing. It might be considered a reason to reject the idea that we can know about *any* of an objects' non-basic looks properties just by looking. One thing that happens if we follow this path, though, is that the *Looks View* ceases to have any subject matter. The *Looks View* does not give us an account of how we're visually aware of an object's basic looks properties. That is because there is no appearance property that mediates your awareness of an object's basic looks properties. Indeed we don't account for your perceptual awareness of a thing's colour by reference to awareness of any intermediary between you and the properties of which you're aware. Where awareness of basic looks properties is concerned there is *perceptual constancy*.

Perceptual constancy is the phenomenon that things can perceptually strike you as being *constant* in their properties even through wide variations in the signal that mediates your awareness of those properties. You can tell that things are red across massive variations in lighting and other environmental conditions, hence across massive variation in the light array that stimulates your retina. You can tell of two swatches that they're the same colour even if the painter would have to mix very different paints to represent them; where spectrographic analysis would produce wildly different results.[1] In the right circumstances you can tell by looking that two objects which are producing *the same* light array are different in colour.

The light array mediates our awareness of objects' colours but not in a way which *accounts* for how we know what we do of a thing's colours. In discovering what pattern of stimulation you received on any particular occasion where you could tell that a thing was red we do not understand how you've managed to tell of many other things that they are also red. For we are not put in a position to understand how you reidentify redness in different contexts – how you *go on* as you do. In this way we are not led to understand how your current judgement fits into a reliable pattern of judgement. To frame things differently, we're not being shown in what sense the look on this occasion is a *reason* to judge that the thing is red.

As with our ability to recognise colours, our sophisticated ability to recognise people's mental features by looking manifests *constancy*. This is what it means to say that our ability is both fine-

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[1] For an aberrant example that nonetheless shows that this is possible see the checker-shadow illusion.

grained and robust. Given this we should not expect to be able to account for your recognitional knowledge by reference to your awareness of particular expressive behaviours. While others' behaviours mediate our awareness of their mental lives, this behaviour does not account for all of the knowledge we secure. We therefore have reason to reject the *Expressive Hypothesis*.

But that reason also lends some plausibility to the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis*. Clearly, mental properties are not basic looks properties. It is possible for only one of a pair of visual duplicates to be happy. Nonetheless as with your ability to spot colours and apples, your ability to spot people's emotions manifests *constancy*. And in this way your ability to spot people's emotions is crucially similar to your ability to spot colours. There need be no *x* which both mediates our awareness of another's mental features and in terms of which our awareness of those features is explicable. So for the same reasons that we should reject the *Expressive Hypothesis*, we can accept that you might *just see* Jane's disappointment, while also seeing her happy expression; that you *just see* Genevieve's happiness, while also being aware of her neutral expression.

4. Others' Minds

Not infrequently we get each other wrong. You think someone is angry but it turns out they're really just feeling glum and a bit distracted. Yet we do quite often get each other right. And while we're prone to doubt we are surprisingly good at getting each other right. While you might allow yourself to buy into the fiction, you know *really* that your friend was disappointed by the meal. It's easy to buy into the fiction because she protests that she loves it – as usual – and if you go to describe her behaviour everything can seem to fit with that thought. Yet even in such an informationally poor situation as this – you *know*. It is these sorts of example rather than the neat and simple stereotypes that I take to favour the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis*.

However, in section 1 I gave reasons to think that the *Simple Perceptual Hypothesis* is implausible. Intuitively we *are* aware of each other's expressive behaviours. Intuitively our awareness of each other's mental lives *comes via* our awareness of such expressions.

Nonetheless it is common sense that we're sensitive to pretence. A person can successfully *signal* anger while failing to fool us. In picking up on both the signal and the pretence we learn more about them. This suggests that we can sometimes tell by looking how people feel in spite of their expression.

In such situations we are aware of an expression. And we are aware of a mismatch between that expression and the person's mental state. To be aware of that mismatch involves being aware the person's mental state. Yet attempts to classify their expressive look in ways which account for this fail. For such attempts either undermine the link between expressive looks and people's basic looks

properties, or they fail to create the needed link between expressive looks and what we know by looking. If the former, the *Looks View* and EH become explanatorily irrelevant, and we're pushed towards SPH. If the latter, the *Looks View* and EH don't account for our knowledge, and we're again pushed towards SPH.

It doesn't follow that there is no role for expressions or *looks* more generally. You can be and often are aware of others' b-expressions. If in specific situations there is a reliable connection between someone's b-expression and their mental state then – in those circumstances – awareness of that mental state may come directly via awareness of their b-expression, as the *Looks View* suggests.

And your awareness of people's expressions can play an important role in your understanding those around you even in less simple situations. In order to learn all you did about Jane and Genevieve you needed to be aware of their communicative expressions and the mismatch between those expressions and their mental state. Even in simpler cases such as *Happy Smile* your awareness of Sylvia's happy expression might inform you, for example, that she's *content* to appear happy; that she's relaxed, and so on. Identifying people's communicative b-expressions tells you a lot about those aspects of their mental lives that have to do with social interaction.

Also, awareness of others' b-expressions plausibly plays a crucial role in *learning* to spot people's mental features by looking. It is common sense that in order to be able to tell that something is an apple by looking you need to know what apples look like. Generally, *learning* to associate some determinable looks with the concept *apple* requires exposure to paradigm examples of those determinable looks – whether in supermarkets or in picture books.

Likewise it is plausible that learning to recognize happiness or anger by looking generally involves exposure to some paradigm examples of the typical determinable looks with which those emotions are associated. But this is compatible with the claim that our mature ability to tell by looking which things are apples – or which things are angry – is not captured by our visual acquaintance with looks which are characteristic of those properties. To the extent that our mature ability allows us to spot and track such features across wide variations in things' overall looks we've outgrown the picture books. That mature ability manifests *constancy*. And constancy is exactly what you'd expect of a perceptual capacity.

If we can perceive others' mental states in spite of, or in the absence of stable cues and signals, why is it that EH is common sense and not SPH? I have argued that communicative expressions have a particular importance, both from the perspective of the person whose expressions they are and from the perspective of their audience. And a fuller treatment of the current question would take more space than I have – as well more reflection on my part.

But a natural bias towards EH seems unsurprising. We tend to treat our own mental states as private (see Snowdon, this volume). And I take it that it is no coincidence that we tend also to defer to others' authority regarding their own mental lives. Independently we're also aware of the real possibility of getting others wrong and of the potential costs involved in doing so.

Such tendencies and difficulties do not preclude our securing knowledge of each other's mental features. Nonetheless we would expect them to decrease our confidence; to make us ready to retract or revise our judgements. This would suggest two reasons for our focus on expressions.

Firstly the distance this would mark lines up with our own sense of psychological privacy. Intuitively expressions are public, the mental is private. People cannot see into our minds, we want to say, even if we sometimes allow them knowledge of our minds via our expressions. Secondly we can be right about people's b-expressions but wrong about their mental lives. Focusing on such expressions allows us to retract any claims or insinuations which prove unhelpful or which are put into genuine doubt. 'Sorry – you just *looked* a bit upset, that's all.'

It was one of the problems of other minds that we so often have knowledge of each other's mental lives while seeming to have little clue *how* we know what we do. On the current view the source of our knowledge of others' mental features may sometimes be genuinely impossible to articulate. If I cannot offer reasons for asserting that Genevieve is happy this may be because there really are no reasons. I just see her happiness – or things are to me just as if I do.

If you ask me how I can tell that Genevieve is happy the best I might be able to do is to steer you in the right direction – to note the perceptual modality by way of which I secured my belief and thus the dimensions along which my claim is robust or open to defeat – 'she somehow *looked* happy'. There may be no better way to defend my claim, nothing more useful I can do to persuade you.

We come up against the same problem with respect to our knowledge of objects' colours. I can tell you that the object looked red. But that does no more than tell you that my claim to know is grounded in how things look to me; that my knowledge is visual and not testimonial, for example. There is little here to offer the sceptic.

Our effortless knowledge of each other's minds is surely far more fragile than our visual knowledge of objects' colours. Yet it is not implausible that this has more to do with the subject matter and its social context than with our *way* of knowing about it. We get others' wrong more often than we do things' colours. And the social stakes are often high. Mistakes can be costly.

Moreover we do not usually have many tools that would allow our claims to be checked. If there is doubt about the colour of a particular swatch of fabric you can carry it to better light. Yet

it is often logistically difficult – often socially unacceptable – to attempt to make someone's anger any more obvious. Plausible deniability is a real possibility.

Such difficulties play on the inarticulability of so much of our knowledge of each others' mental lives. And they can provide for a sense that there is some special sceptical question which holds sway over that knowledge. But it is a *kind* of scepticism that holds sway over all our foundational knowledge.

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