# INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATIONS OF EMOTIONS:

## THE CHEWONG

Progress has been slow in the cross-cultural study of emotions. From the scientific viewpoint - examining what is 'really' happening in emotional life - it is not clear whether there are universal emotions of a distinct kind, or what should be included in this category. From the indigenous viewpoint - examining how members of societies comprehend the emotions - it is not clear what significance should be attached to the multitude of ways in which the emotions are understood and handled, or how these differences should be explained. And perhaps least progress of all has been made in integrating the scientific and indigenous approaches, to establish, for example, the role played by indigenous formulations in organising and managing emotional life.

Research in Western laboratories by experimental psychologists suggests that the nature of emotions and how they are managed is to a considerable extent *constituted* and regulated by cultural factors. This means that ethnographic investigation of what is probably the most relevant cultural factor, the conventions of emotion-talk, is of some consequence. Investigation of this variety should help elicit the broader characteristics of emotional life, and so pertain to the Lévy-Bruhlian issue of whether or not the idea of psychic unity applies to the emotions.

The first step towards the goal of establishing whether or not certain emotions are culture-specific thus involves obtaining as good an idea as possible of the nature of how emotions are represented. In this paper I concentrate on the representations of one of the handful of preliterate cultures whose psychologically significant language has been well-recorded, namely the Chewong of the Malaysian interior. My intention is to discuss what is involved in characterizing Chewong 'emotion'-talk, and then to indicate how emic findings can help illuminate the nature of

Chewong emotional life. This culture is particularly interesting, I suggest, in that the emotions are largely ignored. Signe Howell, the ethnographer on whom I rely, has arrived at a somewhat different interpretation. Having worked closely together, we have decided that she will reply to this paper: interpretation is so difficult that it seems best for me to concentrate on the 'ignoring emotions' theme and for her to elaborate on the theme that the Chewong 'acknowledge' (Howell 1981:143) psychological states.

*Characterization*

Chewong or any other ethnography of 'emotion'-talk can be characterized in terms of the following options:

First, and most basically, whether what appears to be emotion-talk is actually about the emotions. Rodney Needham suggests that

> it may be that terms for inner states are social more than they are experiential; in other words, that they are useful for the ascription of virtues and demerits to the characters of other individuals rather than as socially contrived instruments by which individuals are enabled to assess their own inner experiences (1981:77).

In deciding what counts as emotion-talk, I include *whatever* means are used for talking about the emotions *so long as* these means are understood, *by participants*, to function (whatever other functions they might have) as ways of discriminating between emotions as *inner experiences*. I take it for granted that emotions are essentially inner experiences.[1] They cannot be reduced to physiological arousal or behaviour (the former being too non-specific, the latter not necessarily occurring). But because emotions are bound up with physiological arousal, and generally involve behaviour, it is possible to infer emotion-talk when it does not operate. As we shall see, 'emotional' behaviour need not imply acknowledgment of emotions. My rule is that representations which appear to us in the West as being about emotions (such as talk of particular forms of behaviour which we associate with anger) do not qualify as emotion-talk in other cultures unless there is evidence that inner experiences are brought to mind.

Second, what is the degree of elaboration of emotion terms? That is, how many emotions are identified?

Third, we have to ascertain how emotions are classified,

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[1] For discussion of the fundamental issues involved in using terms such as 'emotion' and 'behaviour' in comparative enquiry, see Ardener (1973). An important consideration is that the meaning of such indigenous terms has changed with time. Is our objectivity merely a historical illusion?

including psycho-moral considerations to do with how they are evaluated. Which core (positive/negative) emotions are emphasized, and which configurations appear? Is a culture more Apollonian or more Dionysian in orientation?

Fourth, there is the question of which vehicle or mode is used to talk about what could be emotions. Moving from the internal to the external, and illustrating from our own culture, vehicles include direct reference to emotions as inner experiences ('I feel angry'; 'I hide my fear'), use of physiological phenomena ('I tingled with fear'), use of bodily parts including organs ('I vented my spleen'), use of behavioural manifestations ('her smile said it all'), appeal to context of arousal ('you can imagine how I felt when the car skidded'; 'that was joy-making'), and finally use of metaphors and other figures of speech ('love is like a red red rose').

Fifth, attention is directed to the locus of emotions. Again moving from the internal to the external, emotions can be seated in mentalistic, physiological, biological and behavioural domains, or in external agencies and phenomena. Questions of *locus* differ from questions of mode in that whereas any mode can plausibly be held to refer to emotions (defined as inner experiences), this is less likely with regard to *loci*. One would have to demonstrate, for example, that 'emotions' grounded in an organ, say the liver, are grounded in an organ which, according to participants, can experience inner states. Or again, 'the wind is violent' is a case of emotion-talk only if it is held that the *wind* can *be* angry.

Sixth, what are the contexts of use and the functions of emotion-talk? Options here include use to explain motivation (whether of normal or abnormal behaviour), use in a more exploratory or existential fashion (to make sense of and report to others what is going on in the self), use in remedial activities (as in the discourse of psychotherapy), uses in socialization, the encouragement of good behaviour ('you do not want to feel guilty, do you?'), and in general to manage the self, and use in wholly conventional fashion (as when one feels obliged to say that one was happy at a party). When conventions are involved, it will be noted, 'emotion' terms need not refer to emotions: 'I fear it will not rain', or ethnographic instances of obligatory 'emotional' expressions during rituals.

Finally, we have to establish the nature of emotional display. What are the rules governing display, and what are the consequences? (The latter include punishment, feelings of release, and bringing harm to others.)

Deciding between these possibilities raises awkward problems of interpretation. Bearing in mind Needham's point that 'we tend to interpret exotic psychological observations as the varied expressions of universal inner states...' (1981:76), care is required if we are to characterize accurately alien representations. Degree of elaboration, for example, appears to be an easy matter to settle: one simply counts emotion terms. But that presupposes establishing which terms are understood to refer to emotions. Or

again, one has to decide whether talk in a particular mode, say behaviour, has more to do with behaviour than with what behaviour might imply, at the emotional level, for us in the West. Such problems are discussed in the following examination of Chewong indigenous psychology.

## *Chewong 'Emotion'-Talk*

Among the Chewong 'emotion' terms are poorly elaborated; 'emotions' are in the main viewed negatively; the mode of 'emotion'-talk is organic and the locus is ultimately behaviour; the functions of 'emotion'-talk are to explain and handle behaviour; and many 'rules' function to hold potentially dangerous 'emotional' display firmly in check.

I argue that what appears to be emotion-talk is best characterized in another fashion. This leads to my conclusion that, in the etic frame of reference, the Chewong representations function to dampen and channel emotional arousal.

On any standard, Chewong do not explicitly acknowledge many emotions. Howell's 'vocabulary of inner states' contains only a handful of candidates for registration as emotion words: *chan* ('angry'), *hentugn* ('fearful', 'frightened'), *punmen* ('like [something]'), *meseq* ('jealous'), *lidva* ('ashamed, shy'), *hanrodn* ('proud'), *imeh* ('want'), and *lon* ('want very much') (1981:134). None of the Malay or Malay-derived terms given in this vocabulary list have to do with emotions, although Howell elsewhere refers to *sedap* ('pleasant', 'nice', 'agreeable', 'fine' (1980:207,240)). Malays, it is interesting to note, consider two hundred and thirty or so terms to refer to emotion states (see Boucher 1979:170).

That the Chewong have such an impoverished vocabulary of the 'emotions' clearly suggests that they are not much concerned with the intricacies of emotional life. However, emotions can be talked about in ways other than by use of what I have called 'direct' emotion terms. Together with words which might function as bodily expressions of emotions, for example *abud* ('hot [body]') and *sedeig* ('cool [body]')(Howell 1981:134), there remains the possibility that Chewong employ behavioural, contextual and more metaphorical idioms in much the same way as we do.[2]

As another step, is it possible to argue that the Chewong lack the linguistic means to talk of the emotions as inner experiences? The liver (*rus*)[3] provides the mode and, to some

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[2] This possibility is ruled out for bodily expressions ('the lack of...a language of bodily expressions'; Howell 1981:135), and Howell has told me that Chewong never speak of the liver as hot, etc. However, 'homesickness' is spoken of in terms of *moni* ('smell') (Howell 1980:204).

[3] Liver-talk is common in South East Asian societies, as well as elsewhere (see e.g. Burton 1972:150 orig. 1621).

extent, the locus of 'emotion'-talk: and there does not appear to be evidence that what the liver is used to convey has anything to do with inner states. In the absence of evidence it is appropriate and parsimonious to assume that what it refers to should be sought elsewhere - a consideration returned to once I have discussed what liver-talk does not do.

Howell observes that,

> The liver, *rus*..., is the seat of both what we call 'thoughts' and 'feelings', and they do not make any conceptual distinction between the two. In fact they have no word for 'think' or 'feel'. Whenever they do express verbally emotional and mental states and changes, this is done through the medium of the liver. Thus they may say, 'my liver is good' (I am feeling fine), or 'my liver was tiny' (I was very ashamed), or 'my liver forgot' (1981:139).

She comes to the conclusion that 'in their concept of the liver as the seat of all consciousness they have a means, albeit a limited one, for describing their inner states' (*ibid.*: 143). As Howell elsewhere writes, *rus* 'has super-physiological attributes, being the seat of individual consciousness, and the medium via which emotional and mental states are expressed' (1980:208).

I am not convinced that liver-talk performs this descriptive function. First, why should 'my liver is good' be glossed as 'I am *feeling* fine' when the Chewong have no word for 'feel'? Does not this linguistic incapacity suggest that 'my liver is good' is a perfectly adequate translation, not standing in need of further interpretation? 'Good' and other such terms, as I hope to show later, make more sense if they are regarded in terms of appropriate (or deviant) behaviour. Second, states of the liver, an organ which most people do not experience, provides a curious idiom for talking about inner experiences. If the Chewong were to use the vehicles of 'heart' or 'bowels' (cf. Onians 1973), one would be more inclined to accept that inner experiences were implied: these organs are physiologically significant. That they use the liver idiom, which is not experienced physiologically and so does not enter into emotions, surely implies a high degree of dissociation from the emotions. Third, it is not as though the liver provides a metaphorical way of talking about emotions which can be otherwise conceptualised as inner states (as when we are able to unpack 'I vented my spleen' as 'I released anger'). For, as Howell affirms, 'psychological states are *only* expressed via the medium of the liver...' (1981:139, my emphasis). The dissociation is complete. And fourth, why should the Chewong want to talk of inner states - excepting, according to Howell (*ibid.*: 141), 'fear' and 'shyness' - when, as the ethnographer emphasises, Chewong culture adopts the philosophy of suppressing the self (*ibid.*:141)? At least, that is, to the extent of not articulating inner states. Given the fact that 'thoughts' and 'feelings' are not distinguished, what applies to the former presumably applies

to the latter: and in the former 'thinking' ('saying it in the liver', *bad lam rus*) and expression of thoughts is not distinguished (1980:260).

To repeat an important point: representations are only about the emotions if culture provides ways of talking about the emotions as inner experiences. From the etic point of view, liver-talk *could* be 'about' emotions (a consideration returned to later). But we are not at present concerned with this framework; our concern is to characterize the emic perspective. And there are as yet no clear signs that this framework supports interpretation in terms of inner experiences.

Significantly, the Chewong can speak of the 'true person', an inner person in that the *ruway* lies within the body (*bajo ruway*, the *ruway*'s 'cloak'), and a 'personage' which 'may be translated as consciousness' (Howell 1981:138; 1980:179). Although such a conceptual vehicle could be used to talk of the emotions as states of consciousness, *ruway* is ignored: 'Disease is defined as loss of *ruway*, but psychological states are...never [expressed] by reference to the *ruway*' (1981:139).[4]

That 'psychological' states are 'only' expressed via the *rus* - which, as should be apparent, is much less suitable than *ruway* for expressing inner experiences - supports my contention that liver-talk is not about emotions. The inner self does not appear to exist in so far as the emotions are concerned. As I shall attempt to argue, after paving the way by introducing Chewong 'rules', this interpretation receives broader support in that rules encourage the dampening of emotional arousal: in particular by discouraging expression and examination of anti-social and distressful 'emotions', and in general by directing Chewong attention to a behavioural rather than to a mentalistic locus.

*Rules and Context*

Rules are of fundamental importance to the Chewong. Their everyday life is 'largely structured by the all-pervasive presence of them' (Howell 1981:135). To illustrate how they operate, *tola* means that if somebody shows disrespect towards certain categories of affines by behaving too openly, the individual becomes ill; *maro* entails that if somebody is 'stingy', not offering food to a visitor, the individual suffers dizziness; *punen* (of seven varieties) can mean the connexion between 'speaking badly' (either speaking of an anticipated feast, etc., or exclaiming when an accident occurs) and suffering; *mali* has to do with the unpleasant consequences of whistling or swinging legs (etc.) in an extravagant manner; *taladn* operates in similar fashion, but when somebody

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[4] Which makes one wonder why Howell translates *ruway* as 'consciousness' - all the more so in that the *rus*, as we have seen, is 'the seat of all consciousness'.

laughs at animals; Tanko, a supernatural being, punishes those who transgress rules governing sexual intercourse; and *pantang* rules 'specify restrictions on behaviour once events (major life-crises) have occurred which are outside the control of man' (*ibid.*:137; see also 1980:241-280).

Other than *pantang*, which is protective in function, rules are preventive. They 'indicate the sort of *behaviour* which must not be indulged in lest specific consequences come about' (1981: 137, my emphasis). What all the rules have in common is that deviant behaviour results in punishment. They all bear on behaviour, whether it be showing disrespect, not sharing food, acting extravagantly (swinging legs), having illicit sex, or, in the more general sense of behaviour as 'Manner of conducting oneself' (*Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*), laughing, crying, shouting, 'speaking badly', and whistling.

Rules focus on external activities, on the individual as publicly envisaged and as socially accountable. Chewong rules remind us of Skinner-derived behavioural therapy. The 'black box' is left intact in the understanding and management of anti-social behaviour. Concerning the activation of rules, *tola* applies when someone shows disrespect (it is not couched in terms of being too intimate); *maro* operates if one does not give food (it is not attributed to inner desires to keep for oneself); one type of *punen* is called into action if one behaves badly in connexion with accidents; and *mali* operates because somebody whistles (not, apparently, because that person is, in our terms, happy). As for the consequences of rule-infringement, attention is again directed away from emotions:

> ...rather than *describe* their thoughts and feelings as we would at such times, they describe the cause of the disease or mishap, i.e. they refer to the particular rule that has been broken.... (Howell 1981:140, my emphasis).

We in the West find it most natural to introduce emotions when the rational, socialized, self goes awry to break rules and conventions. How can the irrational be explained by reference to the rational? As the philosopher Richard Peters puts it, 'the phrases in which the term "emotion" and its derivatives are not only natural but almost indispensable are when we speak of judgments being disturbed, clouded, or warped by emotion....' (1962: 119).[5] As well as using emotion-talk to explain deviation, we also use it when suffering from the consequences of rule-trans-

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[5] See also Coulter: 'It is most routinely the case that emotion-concepts function in accounts that explain action that is in some way considered untoward or problematic within a situation, or that explain the absence of some otherwise obligatory or preferred course of action' (1979:132).

gression (think of 'guilt' and 'shame'). That the Chewong appear to resist these apparently natural tendencies, rules being called into play by anti-social behaviour and resulting in punishment and the description of the particular rule that has been broken, shows the extent to which Chewong modes of thought are orientated away from the emotions.

Whilst Howell in the main emphasizes the behavioural nature of rules (they 'prohibit most kinds of extravagant behaviour'; they 'inform the individual how to conduct himself or herself' [1980:241-2]), she also argues that they function to acknowledge emotions implicitly. We are told, for example, that,

> ...the sorts of things that are forbidden by the rules are such as *we would regard* as expressions of feelings. One must never laugh uproariously, cry, shout, whistle or behave extravagantly in any manner. By just invoking the word for the rule/repercussion a whole gamut of emotions is thus implicitly referred to (1981:141; my emphasis).

And on occasion Howell is prepared to go further, writing that 'rules provide them with an idiom for *explaining* their inner states whenever these change at times of stress - such as during disease or "bad luck"...' (*ibid.*:140, my emphasis).

What encourages Howell to interpret rules in terms of their being called into operation by and acknowledging inner states? One reason is that it is difficult for a Westerner not to assume that crying, laughing, etc., register acknowledged inner states. A related reason is that 'the nature and indeed...very existence [of rules] demonstrates that emotions, far from being foreign to them, are of such importance as to require close control' (*ibid.*: 135; *cf.* 'That they experience them or at any rate are aware of their existence, must be assumed because of their being specifically forbidden' [1980:285]).

Postponing for the moment further discussion of these incitements, the fact remains that there is no good ethnographic evidence to suggest that it is emotions, rather than behaviour, which are specifically forbidden. I agree with Howell that rules are about behaviour; that they provide 'an *externalized* idiom for... controlling and suppressing the self'; that they 'constitute the dominant restraint upon Chewong behaviour' (1981:142 my emphasis; 1980:241). I do not agree that rules should be seen as involving 'control of the emotions' (1980:242). One kind of *punen*, for example, is supposedly instigated when someone 'explicitly wants' something; it is better understood, as Howell also indicates, in terms of the principle that 'not to share is anti-social' - all the more so in that *punen* can operate in the absence of desire (1981:136; 1980:252). It is significant that the ethnographer herself appears to have reservations about introducing emotions. Thus when she observes, in an extract already given, that the things which are forbidden by rules 'are such as we would regard as expressions of feelings', the implication is that Chewong do not regard deviant behaviour in the same light.

*Liver and Rules*

My earlier interpretation, that liver-talk does not appear to be about emotions, can now be supported. The two idioms (rules and liver) are closely related. Given that the Chewong have without a shadow of doubt been taught not to display whatever 'emotions' they might have (excepting 'fear' and 'shyness'), it is hardly feasible that they should want to acknowledge that they break rules because they have fallen foul of anti-social emotions. But participants require ways of relating rule transgression to what is occurring in their lives. Bearing in mind the behavioural nature of rules, and bearing in mind that the liver does not seem to provide an emotionalistic idiom, it appears that liver-talk should be understood as performing this 'relating' function.

First, liver-talk provides an account of the behaviours which initiate rule sequences. Thus the entire *maro* sequence runs: a visitor from another settlement comes to one's house; he is not given food; one's liver is *kenjed* (glossed as 'stingy' and *simply* meaning that one is behaving anti-socially);[6] *maro* is activated; one is punished (1981:135). Second, and this is an associated function, the liver is seen as providing rule-enforcing agencies with the information they require. Thus 'when someone breaks a certain rule the retribution of which is an attack by a tiger, the tiger sees the offence in its liver, *endagn lam rus*, and hence knows who and where to attack' (1980:207). It is also probable that liver-talk provides a way of praising culturally valued behaviour, so encouraging conformity (as in 'his liver is good').

When Howell translates liver-talk into mentalistic terms ('angry', 'jealous', etc., of her vocabulary of inner states), she presumably has relied on contextual evidence. 'His liver is tiny' has to do with 'shame' because the person in question has been caught out in public. I have argued that there is no reason to regard liver-talk as being about anything more than what is occurring in the public world of social activity. What so readily appears to be discourse of inner experiences is actually monitoring and regulating social behaviour. What matters is the social, not the experiential; is behaving appropriately, not attending to (controlling, satisfying, exploring, communicating) the 'emotions' themselves.

Although it is extraordinarily difficult to establish the extent to which the Chewong (or any other people) acknowledge the emotions, Howell's ethnographic material is sufficiently detailed for me to be able to argue that the Chewong are more behaviouristic than she on occasion suggests. There is little or no

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6 And perhaps alluding to those prior social events which explain why one is stingy, and to the fact that one is stingy in the sense of having this personality trait (one tends to behave in stingy fashion). I should point out that deviant behaviour can also be attributed to the heat of human blood and bodies (Howell, 1980:228).

evidence that they *know* emotions, let alone knowing differences between, for example, 'anger' and 'irritation'. The Chewong do not pay conceptual attention to the emotions (excepting, according to Howell, 'fear' and 'shyness'). Certainly the Chewong stand in stark contrast to societies such as the Taita of Kenya where the 'black box' is broken into, where anti-social behaviour is attributed to 'anger' and then managed by a form of 'psychotherapy' (see Harris 1978 ; for another example of a mentalistic traditional society, see Briggs 1970). That Chewong do not associate 'emotions' with the inner conscious self, do not talk of 'emotions' when they suffer, do not appear to manage 'emotions' by means of indigenous psychotherapies, and so on, together with the facts that behaviour and *morality* are emphasised (recall *tola* [disrespect], or 'my liver is good' and see Howell 1980:52), provide good reasons for concluding that 'emotion'-talk is used in and *belongs to* social contexts.

*The Etic Perspective: Some Psychological Considerations*

The Chewong jolt our view of ourselves. Most of us know only too well what it is to be ravaged with jealousy, blinded by rage, or paralysed by fear. Seemingly driven to regard the emotions as inner states, the significance of many of our activities is bound up with how we consider that our emotions should be managed in the best possible manner (Should I postpone getting married until I am sure of my feelings? What shall I do to relax tonight? How can I get rid of my anger?). And we tend to feel that the better we understand our emotions, the better we can manage or come to terms with them (this is most clearly exemplified by the psychotherapeutic tradition). How then is it possible for the Chewong not to register what we take to be so self-evident, namely the existence of a wide range of emotional experiences? How do they explain deviant behaviour, and how is it possible for Chewong to handle their emotions when they do not know what they are handling?

A radical answer to these questions would be to argue that emotional experiences, as we understand them, are absent. So I ask: what are the *actual* psychological consequences of Chewong indigenous psychology? More exactly, what are the psychological consequences of not attributing deviant behaviour to emotions, of not conceptualizing suffering in terms of emotions, and in general of not representing the emotions?

Explanation has to be of what is the case: that, 'One of the most striking features of Chewong life is the lack of emotional displays among adults' (Howell 1980:54). This consequence, however, can be explained in three ways from the etic viewpoint. At one pole there is Howell's 'suppression' argument, that 'most emotions commonly acknowledged in the West are suppressed by the Chewong'(1980:285). Chewong experience much the same emotions as we do, but cultural punishment models or rules prevent their display (Chewong legends spell out the consequences of rule-

breaking; 'Feelings such as envy, desire, hostility and so on, that might otherwise be provoked at various times are therefore avoided...' (*ibid.*:141). At the other pole there is the theory which holds that Chewong culture does not allow for the constitution of the great majority of emotions. Accordingly, Chewong emotional experience is very different from our own. And between these two poles is the theory, which I adopt, namely that Chewong experience certain emotions in ways approximating to how we do but in greatly dampened fashion.

Concerning the first approach, Howell points out, in connexion with the activation of rules, that 'the type of situations singled out as most likely to provoke emotional responses are familiar to the Westerner' (1981:141; *cf.*'...a close examination of the sorts of behaviour prohibited in the rules, reveals remarkable emphasis upon the control of emotions' [1980:242]). For reasons already discussed, I do not think that these considerations permit us to follow Howell's mentalistic interpretation of 'emotion'-talk. But there is a considerable amount of evidence from experimental psychology that certain situations are likely to result in emotional arousal and that certain forms of behaviour are likely to be bound up with these perturbations (see Berkowitz 1971; Ekman 1977; Leventhal 1980).

If indeed Chewong experience 'anger', etc., should we not agree with Howell's claim that rules function to prevent the expression of emotions? This claim is weakened in that preventing the expression of aroused emotions is almost certain to result in cathartic display (see Heelas, in press). So far as I can establish, Chewong culture does not provide for such display. More fundamentally, the suppression argument is rendered redundant if Schachter's theory (pole two) is valid. *Suppression* gives way to *denial* and *redirection*. Instead of rules implicitly acknowledging emotions by controlling them, rules and liver-talk ignore emotions and so prevent them from being constituted.

The work of the psychologist Schachter (1971) and others shows that emotions to a large extent depend upon cognitive or cultural models, and that in the absence of such models physiological arousal (however initiated) results only in 'as if' feelings (1971:3).[7] Chewong culture, I have argued, does not provide models *for* the great majority of emotions: which means, according to Schachter's theory, that these emotions are absent. Howell, it is interesting to note, moves some way towards this position:

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[7] The position about to be outlined is also supported by the research of London and Nisbett (1974), for example, and by social learning theorists (see Bandura 1977). See also Peters 1974:402; Hampshire 1959:13; Mischel 1977:21. Anthropologists who have adopted this position include Geertz (1966) and Ortner (1978).

> Where we differ is that whereas we examine and talk about these [emotional responses], the Chewong play them down. The rules discourage discussion and *differentiation* of emotions (1981:141; my emphasis).

Robarchek's explanation of Semai rules (very similar to those of Chewong culture) is of a fully-fledged Schachterian order. *Pehunan*, for example, is taken to involve 'frustration', a much less specific or cognitively guided state than a particular emotion (1978:767; 1979). Many psychologists have argued that frustration results in anger. That this does not occur in the Semai setting (where anger is tabooed) is because frustration can in fact be guided into other emotions. The *pehunan* rule provides a fear model, a model which goes deeper than simply preventing angry display (by pointing to those punishments which follow rule-transgressions) in that it transforms potential anger into real fear. In Robarchek's words, 'in those instances where frustration does occur, the resultant emotion in the frustrated party is not anger but is rather fear of the danger to which he has become vulnerable' (*ibid.*:769).

This kind of explanation is plausible. It derives from reasonably well-established psychological theory, and it suits the ethnographic facts. Thus it suits the emphasis on fear, explains why there are no signs of the Chewong and Semai suffering from repression/suppression, and explains why at least the Chewong are not motivated to engage in behaviours which are not forbidden by rules (they do not kill because they do not feel angry). What is particularly interesting is that the Semai (and the Chewong) have themselves arrived at an implicit formulation of Schachter's theory: to speak of a desire (read frustration) 'makes it explicit and increases the speaker's vulnerability of *pehunan* if the desire is not fulfilled' (Robarchek 1978:768). In emic terms, to talk is to increase vulnerability. In etic terms, it is to lapse into using explicit models, and so help constitute what should be denied.

Schachter's theory makes it very unlikely that rules simply work at the level of preventing emotional display. But the evidence cited earlier also makes it unlikely that emotions are entirely absent in the absence of appropriate 'models for'. Hence my adoption of a middle position: putting it crudely, Chewong biology ensures that they experience something approaching what we in the West experience; Chewong culture ensures that their experiences are considerably dampened.

Coulter is close, although rather Schachterian, to this position:

> A *sensation* or *feeling-state* could arise and be avowed intelligibly in ways that are unoccasioned by the social and historical circumstances of a meaningful environment whereas, by contrast, the appropriate application of *affect-concepts* to describe someone's state depends upon specific arrays of meaningful circumstances. What

> distinguishes grief from remorse and disappointment from shame is not a determinate inner feeling but responses, actions, appraisals and situations in the social world (1979:127).

On the one hand biology provides sensations, feeling-states, experience of frustration, or what Leventhal calls 'primary emotional experiences' (i.e.'...emotions of anger, grief, disgust, fear, shame, joy, interest, should retain a common *core* in experience as they are based on innate motor scripts' (1980:192; my emphasis). On the other hand culture provides - or does not provide - the means whereby these basic and ill-defined experiences are more refined, differentiated, and filled-out.[8] Fully-fledged emotional experiences 'are not mere eruptions independent of appraisals and judgments, beliefs and conceptualizations' (Coulter 1979:131), but the eruptions are significant enough for us to hold that the Chewong experience what they do not conceptualize.

*Conclusion*

As well as discussing what is involved in interpreting the 'emotion'-talk of another culture, I have attempted to address the issue of psychic unity. In the absence of hard data (such as a psychologist *might* be able to provide if he went into the field and, for example, tried to collect physiological data), it seems reasonable to suppose that the Chewong experience dampened versions of a number of emotions,[9] but are unlikely to experience those more meaning-dependent and infused emotions of the variety

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8 The position I have adopted relies on the validity of the distinction between 'feeling-states' etc., and emotions themselves. Running between nature and culture, the most likely hypothesis is that there is a spectrum between the biological and the meaning-dependent : a spectrum whose poles have been characterized in terms of such contrasts as 'primary' and 'enriched' (Leventhal 1980:192), 'physiological arousal' and 'emotion' (Schachter 1971), and 'somatic experience' and 'cognitive experience' (Leff 1977: 324). Evidence supporting the validity of such contrasts (and by implication the spectrum hypothesis), but not their exact form (recall that Schachter and Leventhal do not agree), is provided by experiments showing that frustration can result in various emotions (Berkowitz 1980:345-6) and by the fact that psychologists working with various theories have found it necessary to draw broadly similar distinctions.

9 Perhaps of the kind mentioned by Leventhal (1980); *cf.* Ekman's list - the 'emotions' of happiness, surprise, fear, anger, disgust, sadness, and, probably, interest and shame (1977:72).

mentioned by Coulter. It would be rash to deny basic (biological) psychic unity; it would be only marginally less rash to deny psychic disunity with regard to the role exercised by meanings in the education of emotional life. Emotions exist between what is constant (biology) and what is variable (culture). They are not simply endogenous (given by nature) and they are not simply exogenous (given by culture).

The Chewong live *in* their 'behavioural environment' (Hallowell 1971:87), an environment which includes rules and associated superhuman agencies. These function to minimize frustration ('desires' must be gratified), and to channel emotional arousal away from anti-social display (negative and positive learning models make it less likely that Chewong experience anything approaching our 'anger', more likely that they experience something akin to our 'fear'). Dampening and channelling is further facilitated by general lack of acknowledgment of the emotions. In the words of Robert Burton, in *The Anatomy of Melancholy*,

> ...so we, as long as we are ruled by reason [read rules], correct our inordinate appetite [read satisfy 'desires'], and conform ourselves to God's word [read supernatural agencies], are as so many saints : but if we give reins to lust, anger, ambition, pride, and follow our own ways, we degenerate into beasts, transform ourselves... provoke God to anger, and heap upon us this of melancholy, and all kinds of incurable diseases, as a just and deserved punishment of our sins (1972:137).

I earlier raised a number of questions, to do with how the Chewong manage to virtually ignore the emotions. Needham asks us to consider,

> ...the imaginary example of an encounter with humanoids from outer space. We should not presume that such beings possessed any of the inner states that we attribute to human beings, and we should have no real need to do so in order to describe their behaviour or gauge their capacities or predict their future actions (1981:73).

The Chewong are Ryleians, not aliens. But they demonstrate that it is possible to organize social and individual life with minimal reference to emotions. In particular they show that it is not necessary to enter the 'black box' in order to manage the emotions. Instead of handling anti-social emotions in terms of indigenous techniques involving what we would call psychotherapy, Chewong culture facilitates behaviour therapy (or, more exactly, therapy as envisaged by such social learning theorists as Bandura [1977]). Providing a naturalistic 'experiment', Chewong non-aggression (Howell 1980:50-56) and generally low-keyed emotional life shows the success of their management strategy.

And given the dampening of emotional life, it is easy to understand why there is no 'need' for participants to struggle to

develop emotion-language. Furthermore, whether it be socialization, explaining deviant behaviour, or handling suffering, Chewong have an effective idiom: children are told to share their food by adults saying *punen*; deviant behaviour is attributed to liver-states which in turn imply, it seems, personality traits and perhaps prior social experiences; and suffering is conceptualized in terms of rule-transgression (see Howell 1980:244; 1981: 141; for details of socialization). Finally, socially acceptable behaviour is also encouraged without requiring emotional encouragement (as when we say, 'it will stop you feeling guilty'): 'When offering food to a guest, he will be urged to eat by the host's exclamations of *maro*!' (*ibid.*:141). Emotion-talk is not needed when a society focuses on externals, on behaviour and the external agencies which operate the rules.

It will be apparent that I have become increasingly speculative, in particular with regard to the psychic unity issue. I have relied on the approach of combining experimental evidence and ethnographic conditions.[10] On the experimental side, there is doubt as to whether explicit emotion terms are necessary to constitute appropriate emotions. As Leff, in discussing Schachter, puts it: 'A problematical question is whether a particular experience is available to someone who does not have the word to define it' (1973:300). Less direct means (such as models conveying 'anger' through behaviour alone) might well result in the experience of 'anger' . Another problem, but this time on the endogenous side, is that there is 'considerable uncertainty' as to what cues have to be present to naturally elicit core emotions (see Berkowitz and Le Page 1971:351), or, more generally, as to the range and 'strength' of such emotions. And on the ethnographic side, it is not clear whether the Chewong have direct ways of talking about emotions: Howell, in personal communication, tells me that the Chewong do say,'I *am* angry'.

It follows that it is difficult to know exactly what significance to attach to the facts that superhuman beings attack people (Howell 1980:218) and that there do not appear to be any positive models for 'fear' or 'shyness'. I still maintain, however, that there is sufficient evidence - both ethnographic *and* psychological, however unfashionable it might be to infer from the latter - to suppose that Chewong do not live with the same emotional repertoire as we do. Leff, it seems to me, is justified to claim

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[10] See Heelas (in press). Psychological findings, obtained from experiments where conditions and consequences can be much more exactly specified and measured than in the field, must surely be more important to the social anthropologist than is perhaps often acknowledged. Granted that there are more variables in field circumstances, and that it is even more difficult to 'examine' emotions as inner experiences, experimental research (combined with investigation of ethnographic circumstances) provides a way forward along the path of reasonable speculation.

that despite the difficulties, 'there is a strong link between the availability of appropriate words for the various emotions and the ease with which people distinguish between their experiences' (1973:304), and that 'somatic' experiences are a dampened version of 'cognitive' varieties (1977:324). Who would want to maintain that meanings do not change experiences, including those of an emotional variety? Who can deny that emotions are in part (whatever the extent) constituted by meanings? So, given even a minimal difference between Chewong and our own modes of thought, who would want to deny that psychic disunity pertains between these cultures?

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