HANDBOOK OF EMOTIONS
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CHAPTER 26

The Cultural Psychology of the Emotions: Ancient and New

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This chapter recapitulates and expands a description of the cultural psychology of the emotions that appeared in the first edition of the Handbook. A cultural/symbolic/meaning-centered approach to the study of the emotions is defined and illustrated, using some sources that are quite ancient (e.g., a 3rd century Sanskrit text, the "Rasidhyliya" of the Mityaiiistra and others that are quite new. The chapter then examines the moral context of emotional functioning. It is suggested that the character and meaning of particular emotions are systematically related to the kind of ethic (autonomy, community, or divinity) prevalent in a cultural community (Shweder, 1990b; Shweder, Much, Mahapatra, & Park, 1997; Haidt, Koller, & Dias, 1993; Jensen, 1995).

In recent years there have been several major reviews of contemporary research on similarities and differences in emotional meanings across cultural groups (Good & Kleinman, 1984; Kleinman & Good, 1985; Kitayama & Markus, 1994; Lutz & White, 1986; Marsella, 1980; Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Russell, 1991; Scherer, Wallbott, & Zanella, 1988; Shweder & LeVine, 1984; Shweder, 1993, 1994; White & Kirkpatrick, 1985). There have also been several books and essays defining the character of a new interdisciplinary field for cross-cultural research on the emotions, which has come to be known as "cultural psychology" (e.g., Bruner, 1990; Cole, 1988, 1990, 1996; D'Andrade, 1995; Goddard, 1997; Howard, 1985; LeVine, 1990; Lutz, 1985a; Markus & Kitayama, 1991, 1992; Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996; Much, 1995; Peacock, 1984; Shweder, 1990, 1991, 1999a, 1999b; Shweder et al., 1998; Shweder & Sullivan, 1990, 1993; Stigler, Shweder, & Herdt, 1990; Wierzbicka, 1993, 1997; Yang, 1997. For a discussion of the historical antecedents of cultural psychology, see Jahoda (1992). In anthropology, the two most notable forums for research on the cultural psychology of the emotions are the journals Ethos: Journal of the Society for Psychological Anthropology, and Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry.

The major goals of cultural psychology are to spell out the implicit meanings that give shape to psychological processes, to examine the distribution of those meanings across ethnic groups and temporal–spatial regions of the
world, and to identify the manner of their social acquisition. Related goals are to reassess the principle of psychic unity or uniformity, and to develop a credible theory of psychological diversity or pluralism. The emphasis in cultural psychology is upon the way the human mind can be transformed and made functional in a number of different ways, which are not equally distributed across ethnic and cultural communities around the world. Hence the slogan popular among cultural psychologists, “One mind, but many mentalities: universalism without the uniformity,” which is meant to express that pluralistic emphasis (see Shweder, 1991, 1996, 1998; Shweder et al., 1998).

One hallmark of cultural psychology is a conception of “culture” that is symbolic and behavioral at the same time. Culture, so conceived, can be defined as ideas about what is true, good, beautiful, and efficient that are made manifest in the speech, laws and customary practices of a self-regulating group (Goodnow, Millet, & Kessel, 1995; Shweder et al., 1998; Shweder, 1999a, 1999b). In research on cultural psychology, “culture” thus consists of meanings, conceptions, and interpretive schemes that are activated, constructed or brought “online” through participation in normative social institutions and routine practices (including linguistic practices) (see e.g., D’Andrade, 1984; Geertz, 1973; LeVine, 1984; Millet, Potts, Fang, Hoogstra, & Mintz, 1990; Shweder, 1991, 1999a,b). According to this view, a culture is that subset of possible or available meanings which, by virtue of enculturation (informal or formal, implicit or explicit), unintended or intended, has become active in giving shape to the psychological processes of the individuals in a group.

A second hallmark of cultural psychology is the idea that interpretation, conceptualization, and other “acts of meaning” can take place rapidly, automatically, and un-self-consciously. Indeed it is assumed that “acts of meaning” (e.g., the judgment that the human body may become polluted or desanctified because it is a temple for the soul; or that illness is a means of becoming “emotionalized” (e.g., as sadness, anger, fear, or guilt) rather than “somatized” (e.g., as tiredness, chest pain, or appetite loss) in different ethnic groups and in different temporal–spatial regions of the world?) (see e.g., Abu-Lughod, 1985, 1986; Appadurai, 1985; Briggs, 1970; Geertz, 1983; Geertz, 1995; Lutz, 1982, 1988; Miller & Sperry, 1987; Myers, 1970a, 1970b; Parish, 1991; Rosaldo, 1980, 1983, 1984; Schieffelin, 1976, 1983, 1985a, 1985b; Stearns & Stearns, 1988; Swartz, 1988; Wierzbiacka, 1986, 1990, 1997, 1999, Wikan, 1984, 1989.)

To what extent is the experience of various states of the world (e.g., “loss,” “goal blockage,” “status degradation,” “taboo violation”) “emotionalized” (e.g., as sadness, anger, fear, or guilt) rather than “somatized” (e.g., as tiredness, chest pain, or appetite loss) in different ethnic groups and in different temporal–spatial regions of the world? (see e.g., Angel & Guarnaccia, 1989; Angel & Idler, 1992; Angel & Thoits, 1987; Kleinman, 1988; Levy, 1984a, 1984b; Shweder, 1988.)

4. Precisely how are emotionalized and somatized meanings brought “online,” socialized.
enculturated, or otherwise acquired? More specifically, what is the role of everyday discourse and social interpretation in the activation of emotionalized and somatized meanings? (See, e.g., Bruner, 1990; Garvey, 1992; Miller & Speerty, 1987; Miller et al. 1990; Miller, Mints, Hoogstra, Fung, & Potts, 1992; Miller & Hoogstra, 1992; Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Shweder et al., 1998; Shweder & Much, 1987).

Any comprehensive review of answers to these questions would have to address hundreds of years of theoretical arguments, empirical sightings, and philosophical reflections in the literatures of several different civilizations (see Dinsrock, 1974; Harre, 1986b; Kakar, 1982; Kleinman, 1986; Rorty, 1980; Shixie, 1989; Solomon, 1976; Veith, 1978). In this chapter our aim is simply to formulate the first two of those questions in ways that seem promising, provocative, and productive for future interdisciplinary research.

We start the discussion, however, in the 3rd century A.D. in India with a relatively detailed examination of a Sanskrit text (the "Rastsdhya") of the Nityasudra that was written relatively close to the beginning of the historical record of systematic human self-consciousness about the emotions. It is through an analysis of this venerable text—an ancient example of a cultural psychology—that we address contemporary concerns. The "Rastsdhya" is a useful intellectual pole star on which to concentrate a discussion of the cultural psychology of the emotions, for three reasons: (1) The text, although ancient, compares favorably with any contemporary treatise on the symbolic character of emotional experience; (2) the text, although famous among Sanskritists and scholars of South Asian civilization, is hardly known at all by emotion researchers in anthropology and psychology; and (3) the text provides the opportunity for an object lesson about the universally appealing yet culturally revealing character of all accounts about what is "basic" to the emotional nature of human beings.

THE BASIC EMOTIONS OF THE "RASTSDHYA"

In Sanskrit the word for "existence" and the word for "mental state" (bhdva) are the same, and mental states are said to "bring into existence the essence of poetry" (Gnoli, 1956, p. 63). So one should not be surprised to discover that between the 3rd and 11th centuries A.D., Hindu philosophers of poetics and drama, interested in human emotions as objects of aesthetic pleasure, posited the existence of eight or nine basic emotions (srtiyi-bhdva)—four of which they viewed as primary—and developed a relatively detailed account of the symbolic structures that give them shape and meaning.

There is no standard English translation of the Sanskrit terms for the postulated basic emotions. Indeed, there is no agreement about whether they should be translated as "emotions" or as "mental states" or as "feelings," or about whether they should be translated as "basic" or "dominant" or "permanent" or "universal" or "natural" or "principal" emotions (or mental states or feelings). The eight basic (or dominant) emotions (or mental states or feelings) are variously translated as follows: (1) sexual passion, love, or delight (rati); (2) amusement, laughter, humor, or mirth (cilasa); (3) sorrow (kshat); (4) anger (bhrurya); (5) fear or terror (bhaya); (6) perseverance, energy, dynamic energy, or heroism (sattva); (7) disgust or disillusion (jagatpak); and (8) amusement, wonder, astonishment, or amazement (vismaya). Some early medieval commentators mention an additional basic (or dominant) emotion (or mental state or feeling), (9) serenity or calm (sama). To simplify our exegesis, we refer to the eight (or nine) as "basic emotions," and we label them "sexual passion," "amusement," "sorrow," "anger," "fear," "perseverance," "disgust," "wonder," and "serenity." Of the basic emotions, four are privileged as primary basic emotions: sexual passion, anger, perseverance, and disgust (with serenity sometimes substituted or linked to disgust as a primary basic emotion).

The canonical Sanskrit text on the "emotions," attributed to Bharata, is the sixth chapter, the "Rastsdhya," of the Nityasudra, which is a book about drama. Ancient and medieval Hindu thought specialized in "psychological" topics concerned with the nature of consciousness. Much of Sanskrit philosophy elevated the human mind and body to the status of sacramental objects, and was disinclined to draw sharp oppositions among the material, the sense, the conscious, the poetic, and the divine. In Sanskrit drama the primary aim of the aesthetic experience was psychological as well; indeed, it was the symbolic representation of emotional states per se that set the stage for aesthetic and revela-
tory experience (see Dimock, 1974). The famous sixth chapter of the *Ntityastrai* is about the narrative structure (the causes, consequences, and concurrents) of eight basic emotional states and the most effective means to evoke facial expression, voice, posture, setting, character, action, and physiological response of their representation in the theatre.

The *Ntityastrai* was probably written some time between the 3rd and 5th centuries B.C. The most famous exposition and commentary on the text itself is a critique of earlier explications and commentaries and the source of our knowledge of the earlier commentaries, derives from the 10th and 11th century Kashmiri Brahman philosopher Abhinavagupta (partial translations and contemporary commentaries can be found in Masson & Patwardhan, 1970, and Gnoli, 1956; see also Dimock, 1974, and Keith, 1924).

One major concern of the text and commentaries is to define the nature and significance (both aesthetic and theological) of an elusive metaemotion called *rasa*. *Rasa* means "to taste," "to savour," or "to sample," but when the term is used to refer to the grand metaemotion of Hindu aesthetic experience it is usually translated as aesthetic "pleasure," "enjoyment," or "rapture." It is a pleasure that lasts only as long as the dramatic illusion that makes *rasa* a reality. Because it is possible for members of the audience who witness a drama (the *nata*), to experience enjoyment or pleasure (*rasa*) even from the apprehension of negative emotional states (disgust, fear, anger, sorrow), which in other circumstances one might want to avoid or repress. Abhinavagupta and others reasoned that *rasa* must be an autonomous metaemotion, a sui generis form of consciousness.

A second major concern of the text and commentaries is to differentiate eight (or nine) varieties, colors, or flavors of *rasa*, each related to one of the basic emotions. There is no standard English translation of the Sanskrit terms for the eight (or nine) *rasa*. They are variously translated as (1) the erotic or love (spisgena), the *rasa* of sexual passion; (2) the comic (kasuva, the *rasa* of amusement); (3) the compassionate or pathetic (karuna, the *rasa* of sorrow); (4) the furious or fiery (vrisna, the *rasa* of anger); (5) the heroic (vira, the *rasa* of perseverance); (6) the terrifying or terror (bhaya), the *rasa* of fear; (7) the horrific (bhayabhaya, the *rasa* of fear); (8) the marvelous, the awesome, admiration, or wonder (adhyija, the *rasa* of wonder); and (9) the quiescent or calm (adihata, the *rasa* of serenity).

When viewed from the perspective of their relationship to the eight (or nine) basic emotions of everyday life, the eight (or nine) flavors of *rasa* the pleasure of the terrifying, the delight of horror, etc., are sometimes translated as the eight (or nine) "sentiments" or "moods" of the theater.

A third major concern of the text and commentaries is to give an account of the precise relationship between the *rasa* and the basic emotions (karuna, bhaya, etc.) to which they are said to correspond. In general, when the actor on stage effectively portrays a particular *bhava*, the appreciative audience experiences the corresponding *rasa*.

Ultimately, the idea is advanced that the experience of the *rasa* of a basic emotion is something entirely different from the experience of the basic emotion itself.

Instead, the relationship of the eight (or nine) *rasa* to the eight (or nine) basic emotions is akin to the relationship of an intentional state to its intentional object. To experience *rasa* is to experience the pleasure or enjoyment (an intentional state) that results from the dramatically induced perception of the hidden or unconscious generic symbolic structures (the intentional objects) that lend shape and meaning to the basic emotions in everyday life. To paraphrase Bhārata, in drama the basic emotions are brought to a state of *rasa*. This happens to the very extent that their implicit symbolic codes are revealed and savored (or tasted) as objects of pleasure and as a means of self-consciousness and transcendence.

According to this line of reasoning then, what "flavors" or "colors" the *rasa* and distinguishes them from each other is that each has a different intentional object, one of the eight (or nine) "basic" emotions, which are thought to be possessed by all human beings at birth. Nevertheless there is still something common to all the flavors of *rasa*. It is the pleasure, enjoyment, delight, or rapture that comes from being artfully transported out of time, place, and the immediacies of personal emotional experi-
ences—beyond "the thick pall of mental stupor which cloaks one's own consciousness" (Gnoli, 1956, p. 53)—into the hidden depths of the soul, where one perceives, tastes, and savors the transcendental or impersonal narrative forms that are immanent or implicit in the most deeply rooted modes of human experience.

Thus, viewed generically, all rasa possess that quality of pleasure or enjoyment that comes from the tasting of a transcendental form that had previously been hidden from the consciousness it had organized. It is this sui generis experience of delight, viewed as an intentional state aimed at the basic emotions as its intentional object, which explains how even disgust, anger, fear, and sorrow can be objects of pleasure when they present themselves as objects of aesthetic encounter. Thus viewed, what is common to the rasa is a metaemotion, the feeling of delight that comes from the clear apprehension of the symbolic forms implicit in ordinary emotional experience. This line of reasoning is suggestive of a parallel type of analysis of "empathy." Empathy may be viewed as a metaemotion motivated by its own characteristic source of enjoyment or pleasure, which makes it possible to be responsive to another person's negative emotional states such as sorrow or guilt. By this analysis, empathic sorrow or empathic guilt is not the same as the direct or secondary experience of sorrow or guilt. Instead, empathy is a dignifying experience precisely because, as a witness to someone else's emotional experience, one is transported out of oneself. It is as if empathy is also a metaemotion, but of a middle scale. It is less detached than the experience of rasa, which comes from witnessing the generic symbolic structure that lends shape and meaning to a basic emotion; yet it is more detached than the experience of a basic emotion itself, which is the unprivileged and all too immediate experience of everyday personal life. (For an account of the psychology of empathy, see Hoffman, 1990.)

Having summarized, however incompletely, a few key elements of the "Rasādhvīya" and subsequent commentaries, we would now like to ask two questions about the text. (1) What can the "Rasādhvīya" tell us about the symbolic structure of emotional experience? (2) What does it reveal about itself as a cultured (hence parochial or local) account of what is "basic" to human emotional experience? We treat the second question first.

THE WONDER OF THE SANSKRIT EMOTIONS: A CULTURAL ACCOUNT

Contemporary emotion researchers are likely to find the account of the basic emotions in the "Rasādhvīya" both familiar and strange. If we compare the Sanskrit list of nine (eight plus one) basic emotions (sexual passion, amusement, sorrow, anger, fear, perseverance, disgust, wonder, and sometimes serenity) with Paul Ekman's well-known contemporary list of nine (six plus three) basic emotions (anger, fear, sadness, happiness, surprise, and disgust, plus interest, shame, and contempt), which he derives from the analysis of everyday facial expressions (Ekman, 1980, 1984), the two lists are not closely coordinated, although they are not totally disjoint either.

Richard Schechner (1988, pp. 267-289), in his volume Performance Theory, presents a series of photographs of facial expressions that he claims are iconic representations of the nine rasa of the Nātyasūtra. This, of course, is a rather risky thing to do. The Nātyasūtra never abstracts out facial expressions as the key markers of the basic emotions, but rather treats them as one element in an array of constituents; and there is every reason to believe that in Hindu drama facial expressions unfold dynamically in a sequence of movements, which are not easily frozen into a single frame. Nevertheless, Schechner posits direct analogies between six of his facial expressions for the rasa and the six facial expressions from Ekman's primary scheme—equating, for example, Ekman's representation of the face of surprise with the face for the rasa of wonder (adbhūta) and Ekman's representation of the face of happiness with the face for the rasa of sexual passion (rāgadūya). Schechner thinks he sees a universal pattern reflected in the two schemes. He states, "Humankind has countless gods, but I would be very surprised if there were not some agreement concerning the basic emotions" (1988, p. 266).

In our view, several of Schechner's equations are dubious. For example, in Ekman's photo of the face of surprise, the mouth is wide open; it is not similar to the mouth of the rasa of wonder, which is closed and faintly suggestive of a smile. (The mouth is closed in all of the facial expressions of the rasa, which may be related to a cultural evaluation concerning the vulgari-
of the linguistic semantics of emotion terms claims that from the point of view of the study in most of the languages of the world. She and is neither lexicalized, important, nor salient of the emotions is not an empirical universal in European and North American conceptions to a halt facile claims about translation equivalent, and the language of the emotions, has brought specializes in the study of semantic universals in an anthropological linguist and polyglot who Wierzbicka (1992; see also 1990, 1997, 1999), not to suggest that those three emotional meanings for medieval Hindus and contemporaries, three of the nine basic emotions (anger, fear, and sorrow) are genuinely familiar, in the sense of possessing an equivalent shape and meaning for medieval Hindus and contemporary North Americans. Of course, to acknowledge those three points of dense similarity is not to suggest that those three emotional meanings must be cross-cultural universals. Wierzbicka (1992; see also 1990, 1997, 1999), an anthropological linguist and polyglot who specializes in the study of semantic universals and the language of the emotions, has brought to a halt facile claims about translation equivalence, by arguing that “sadness” as understood in European and North American conceptions of the emotions is not an empirical universal and is neither lexicalized, important, nor salient in most of the languages of the world. She claims that from the point of view of the study of the linguistic semantics of emotion terms around the world, there are no basic or universal emotions.

Nevertheless, anger, fear, and sorrow are easy to recognize in the “Rasådyâya.” Sorrow, for example, is said to arise from misfortune, calamity, and destruction, and from “separation from those who are dear, [their] downfall, loss of wealth, death and imprisonment.” It should be acted out by tears, laments, drying up of the mouth, change of color, languor in the limbs, sighs, loss of memory, etc.” (Masson & Patwardhan, 1970, p. 52). Sorrow is said to be accompanied by other mental states, including world-weary, physical weariness, lassitude, tears, confusion, dejection, and worry.

Anger and fear are also easy to recognize in the text. Anger, for example, is said to arise from provocative actions, insult, lies, assault, harsh words, oppression, and envy. The actions accompanying it include beating, splitting open, crushing, breaking, hitting, and drawing blood. “It should be acted out by red eyes. Narrowing of the brows, biting one’s lips and grinding one’s teeth, puffing the cheeks, wringing the hands, and similar gestures.” It is accompanied by other mental states, including an increase in determination or energy, rashness, violence, sweat, trembling, pride, panic, resentment, and stuttering (see Masson & Patwardhan, 1970, pp. 52-53).

For three of the nine basic emotions described in the “Rasådyâya,” it is easy to recognize the underlying script, to see the self in the other, and to arrive at a cross-cultural and cross-historical agreement about what is basic in emotional functioning (at least for them and us). Yet as one moves beyond sorrow, anger and fear to disgust, amusement, wonder, perseverance, sexual passion, and serenity, the way in which consciousness is partitioned or hierarchically structured into basic and nonbasic states in the “Rasådyâya” seems less and less familiar, despite any initial appearances to the contrary. This decline in familiarity is similar to the “gradient of recognition” that Haidt and Keil (1999) found when studying facial expressions in India and the United States: Some expressions are very well recognized across cultures, some are less well recognized, and there is no clear or bounded set of “universal” facial expressions.

Thus it becomes clear upon examination of the relevant Sanskrit texts and commentaries that medieval Hindu “disgust” differs from modern North American disgust. Medieval
Hindu disgust is partitioned into two subtypes: The first includes aspects of horror and disillusionment, as well as world-weariness associated with the quest for detachment, transcendence, and salvation. The second includes horror at the sight of blood. Medieval Hindu disgust is, as the anthropologist McKim Marriott has suggested to us, more like a domain of the loathsome, and it gathers together within its territory a broad range of human responses to the ugly, the nasty, and the odious. Rozin, Haidt, and McCauley (Chapter 40, this volume) argue that contemporary North American disgust has a similarly broad and heterogeneous domain of elicitors, but that moral and interpersonal disgust are highly variable across cultures.

It also becomes clear upon examination that medieval Hindu “wonder” is not contemporary North American “surprise,” but rather a state of mind closer to admiration than to startle or shock. For Hindu wonder has less to do with a sudden violation of expectations and more to do with one’s reactions to the opportunity to witness divine, heavenly, or exalted feats, events, or beings (including, e.g., the feats of a juggler). It is even possible to do such witnessing with one’s mouth closed, as long as the eyes are wide open!

Similarly it becomes clear upon examination that medieval Hindu “amusement” (which includes contemptuous, indignant, or derisive laughter at the faults and inferior status of others) is not contemporary North American “happiness,” which has celebratory implications. Indeed, happiness, shame, indignation, arrogance, and some contempt-like emotions are explicitly mentioned in the “Rasadhya” for inclusion among 33 nonbasic (“accompanying”) mental states. Thus it seems reasonable to assert that the basic emotion designated by medieval Hindu philosophers as “amusement” is not adequately translated as “happiness” or as “contempt.” (It should be noted that while the text provides little basis for determining equivalence of meaning for the terms used to translate the 33 nonbasic mental states, there is good reason to doubt that “shame” and “happiness” have the same implications and associations, or play the same psychological role, in India as they do in contemporary North America. (See Shweder, 1994, on the positive qualities of shame in India, where it is a virtue associated with civility, modesty, and an ability to rein in one’s destructive powers in support of the social order rather than with the diminishment of the ego; see also Parish, 1991, and below.)

It also becomes clear upon examination of the text that medieval Hindu “perseverance” is not contemporary North American “interest,” but is rather deeply connected to heroic determination and a willingness to engage in acts requiring endurance and self-sacrifice. In the context of the early medieval Hindu scriptures, when the Hindu goddess Durga (or Kali) endured trials and tribulations yet persisted in a seemingly hopeless battle against uncountable demons in an effort to save the world, her efforts are said to have displayed the heroic rasa of perseverance. More interest had very little to do with it; she would probably rather have been doing something else (see below).

In sum, the two lists of nine basic human emotions truly overlap at only three points. All the other apparent points of similarity (amusement as happiness, their disgust as our disgust, wonder as surprise, perseverance as interest) turn out to be merely apparent; and for several of the emotions (sexual passion, serenity, shame, contempt), there is not even an illusion of transcultural equivalence. In the end, most of the items cannot be easily mapped across the two lists.

There are other ways in which the “Rasadhya” presents us with a somewhat unfamiliar portrait of the way consciousness is organized. One has to do with the way the text divides the basic emotions into primary basic emotions and secondary basic emotions. According to the text and commentaries, the four primary basic emotions are sexual passion, anger, perseverance, and disgust. The four secondary basic emotions are amusement, sorrow, wonder, and fear. The ninth basic emotion, serenity, is sometimes viewed as a primary basic emotion and either substituted for disgust or associated with disgust (through a causal sequence that begins with horror and revulsion over attachments in the world and ends with the serenity of ego alienation, detachment, and salvation).

In commenting on this scheme, it is perhaps worth noting in passing that Sigmund Freud might find much of value in a conception that treats sexual passion and anger (and perseverance and disgust) as the deepest aspects of human experience. One wonders whether Freud would have interpreted perseverance and disgust as analogues to the life and death instincts.
More notable, however, is the fact that the primary basic emotions are primary primarily because they are the "emotions" associated in classical and folk Hindu thought with the four worthy ends of goals of life. One of those goals of life—pleasure (aman) is linked to sexual passion. A second goal—control, autonomy, and power (artha)—is linked to anger. A third goal—social duty and moral virtue (dharma)—is linked to perseverance. The fourth and perhaps highest goal—salvation or the attainment of divinity (moksha)—is linked to disgust and/or serenity. In other words, presupposed by this familiar formulation about the organization of human emotions are a special theory of morality and human motivation, and a specific way of life. Thus it is hardly surprising that this particular medieval South Asian conception of the hierarchical structuring of consciousness into basics versus nonbasics and primary basics versus secondary basics should seem somewhat strange to emotion researchers in North American and vice versa.

There is yet another way in which the "Rasallviiya" presents us with an unfamiliar portrait of the organization of consciousness. For the eight or nine items on the Sanskrit list are bound to seem like a disparate and anomalous collection, at least from the point of view of North American folk and academic conceptions about how to partition consciousness into kinds of mental states (see D'Andrade 1987). Indeed, one might expect North American emotion researchers to recoil at the suggestion that the Sanskrit list is really a list of basic "emotions" at all. North American folk and academic psychology do not really classify serenity, wonder, sexual passion, amusement, or perseverance as definitive or clear examples of "emotions" (see Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, & O'Connell, 1987). Sexual passion would probably be classified as a motive or, alternatively, as a nonemotional feeling. Serenity might be classified as a nonemotional feeling or a state of mind, although not a motive. Perseverance would probably be classified as a quality of will or agency, or perhaps a formal property of motivation. Amusement and wonder seem to be none of the above. Indeed after reading the text and commentaries and the various nonequivalent translations of ānā and nissā (are they mental states, emotions, feelings, moods, sentiments, or what?!), one might begin to suspect that in the "Rasallviiya" one is faced with a somewhat different conception of how to partition a person into parts and how to divide consciousness into kinds.

It is of course possible indeed, likely—that in some ways the "Rasallviiya" presupposes a partitioning of the person into parts that is not coordinate with our own conception of the person, and that is why it is so hard to settle on any single translation equivalent for the Sanskrit ānā and nissā. This is a familiar kind of translation problem, and it is encountered even across European languages and subcultures. Wierzbicka (1989), for example, has analyzed in detail the many distortions of meaning that occur when the Russian word duša is translated into English. Duša is a lexical item signifying a key Russian cultural concept that has to do with the partitioning of a person into parts. It is typically translated into English as "soul," or alternatively as "mind" or "heart" or "spirit." None of these lexical mappings is adequate, because none of these English words signifies the full and equivalent set of meanings associated with duša. For example, Wierzbicka (1989, p. 52) notes that it is one of two parts of the person, that one cannot see it; that because of this part, things can happen in a person that cannot happen in anything other than a person; that these things can be good or bad; that because of this part, a person can feel things that nothing other than a person can feel; that other people can't know what these things are if the person doesn't say it; that a person would want someone to know what these things are; and that because of this part, a person can be a good person and feel something good toward other people.

Similar issues concerning variations in the organization of consciousness arise in connection with the research of Steven Parish (1991) on conceptions of the mental life among the South Asian Hindu Newars of Nepal (see also Appadurai, 1990; Brenner, 1990). For the Newars, mental states such as memory, desire, feeling, thought, and emotion, which we would spatially differentiate between the head and the heart (and perhaps the gut and the skin), are all thought to be located together in the heart; this heart of the mental life is thought to be animated by a god, who makes perception and experience possible. Consequently, for the Newars "the efforts of individuals to muster their inner life often draw on the sense of a divine agency," and it is believed that "a person sees because the god sees through his or her eyes" (Parish, 1991, p. 316). So it would be surprising indeed if the set of meanings associated
with the Sanskrit terms rasa and bhāva could be easily mapped onto the set of meanings associated with any single English term or phrase, such as “emotion,” “feeling,” “mood,” “sentiment,” “mental state,” or “consciousness.” We look forward to the day when Sanskritists do for the concept signified by the term bhāva what Wierzbicka has done for the concept signified by the Russian word dula.

For the time being, however, we are not going to try to solve the very deepest of questions about the partitioning of the person into parts and the division of consciousness into kinds. Instead, we are going to argue that it is helpful enough to know what the text tells us. What the “Rasādhyāyī” tells us is that in drama the sṭhītya-bhāva (we’ll keep calling them “basic emotions”) are brought to a state of rasa.

More importantly, however, what the text tells us is that the ma are nothing more than the union of three script-like or narrative components:

1. The determinants, causes, or eliciting conditions (vi-bhāva), which includes all the background information, settings, events, and action tendencies that might make manifest some state of the world and one’s relationship to it (e.g., forced separation from something one cherishes; finding oneself powerless in the face of danger).

2. The consequences (anu-bhāva), which includes eight types of involuntary somatic responses (sweating, fainting, weeping, etc.), and various action tendencies (abusing the body, brandishing weapons) and expressive modes (bodily movement, voice tone, facial expression)—for example, wailing and tears.

3. The “accompanying” mental states (vyābhicari-bhava), which are something like a 33-item symptom list of secondary side effects, including emotions, feelings, and cognitive states; some of these effects are weariness, reminiscence, panic, envy, dreaming, confusion, sickness, shame, and even death.

In other words, in the “Rasādhyāyī” one finds a relatively elaborate account of the symbolic structures that give shape and meaning to a selected subset of mental experiences, which because they have been privileged for symbolic elaboration have become transformed into “basic” mental experiences for that culturally constituted world. That is, in the “Rasādhyāyī” one finds an ancient yet sophisticated text in the cultural psychology of the emotions.

THE SYMBOLIC STRUCTURE OF THE EMOTIONS

The strategy adopted in the “Rasādhyāyī” is to define a basic emotion by the implicit symbolic structure that gives shape and meaning to that emotion (its rasa—the intentional object of aesthetic pleasure in the theatre) and then to define that symbolic structure by resolving it into its determinants, consequences, and accompanying side effects. This strategy is directly parallel to various contemporary approaches to the cultural psychology of the emotions.

One aspect of this symbolic (or, as some would call it, “cognitive”) approach is the view that kinds of emotions are not kinds of things like plants or animals. Instead they are (rasa-like) interpretive schemes of a particular script-like, story-like, or narrative kind that give shape and meaning to the human experience of those conditions of the world that have a bearing on self-esteem (see Shweder, 1994). The elements that are proposed as slots in the story may vary slightly from scholar to scholar, although most of the slots in use today can be found in the “Rasādhyāyī.”

Mesquita and Frijda (1992; also see Ellsworth, 1991; Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Lewis, Sullivan, & Michalson, 1984; Lewis, 1989; Lutz, 1985b; Russell, 1991; Stein & Levine, 1987), for example, parse each emotion script into a series of slots including “anecdotal events,” “event coding” (type of condition of the world), “appraisal” (judged implications for self-esteem and well-being), “physiological reaction patterns,” “action readiness,” “emotional behavior,” and “regulation.” Shweder (1994) suggests a parsing of emotion scripts into slots such as “self-involving conditions of the world” (e.g., loss and gain, protection and threat), “somatic feelings” (e.g., muscle tension, pain, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, breathlessness), “affective feelings” (e.g., agitation, emptiness, expansiveness), “expressive modes” (e.g., face, posture, voice), and “plans for self-management” (e.g., to flee, to retaliate, to celebrate, to invest). (See also Shweder, 1991, where a slot is provided in the emotion narrative for variations in “social regulation” or the normative appropriateness of certain emotions’ being experienced or expressed.)

The primary assumption of the symbolic approach is the same as the approach of the “Rasādhyāyī”—namely, that the “emotion"
(e.g., sadness, fear, or love) is not something independent of or separable from the conditions that justify it, from the somatic and affective events that are ways of feeling or being touched by it, from the actions it demands, or the like. The "emotion" is the whole story: a kind of somatic event (fatigue, chest pain, goose flesh) and/or affective event (panic, emptiness, expansiveness) experienced as a perception of some antecedent conditions (death of a friend, acceptance of a book manuscript for publication, a proposition to go out to dinner) and their implications for the self (e.g., as loss, gain, threat, possibility), and experienced as well as a social judgment (e.g., of vice or virtue, sickness or health) and as a kind of plan for action to preserve one's self-esteem (attack, withdraw, confess, hide, explore). The "emotion" is the entire script. It is the simultaneous experience of all the components, or, perhaps more accurately, the unitary experience of the whole package deal.

A second aspect of the symbolic approach is the view that for the sake of comparison and translation, any "emotion" is decomposable into its narrative slots. From this point of view, to ask whether people are alike or different in their emotional functioning (or whether emotion words in different languages are alike or different in their significations) is really to ask several more specific questions:

1. Are they alike or different in their somatic experiences (e.g., muscle tension, headaches, etc.)? (the somatic phenomenology question)
2. Are they alike or different in their affective experiences (e.g., emptiness, calm, pleasantness)? (the affective phenomenology question)
3. Are they alike or different in the antecedent conditions of those somatic and affective experiences (e.g., infertility, job loss, winning the lottery)? (the environmental determinants question)
4. Are they alike or different in the perceived implications of those antecedent conditions for self-esteem (e.g., irreversible loss, flame and recognition)? (the self-appraisal question)
5. Are they alike or different in the extent to which showing or displaying that state of consciousness has been socially baptized as a vice or virtue or as a sign of sickness or health? (the social appraisal question)
6. Are they alike or different in the plans for the self-management of self-esteem that get activated as part of the emotion script (e.g., celebration, attack, withdrawal from social contacts)? (the self-management question)

Are they alike or different in the iconic and symbolic vehicles used for giving expression to the whole package deal (e.g., facial expressions, voice, posture, and action)? (the communication question)

Given this type of decomposition of the definition of an emotion to its constituent narrative slots, the issue of translation equivalence becomes a matter of pattern matching, as one tries to determine whether the variables in each of those slots are linked in similar ways across cultures.

BITE YOUR TONGUE: THE CASE OF HINDU LAJJA

For example, the contemporary Hindu conception of lajja (or lajj) has recently been elucidated for two communities in South Asia, the Newars of Bhaktapur in Nepal (Parish, 1991) and the Oriyas of Jharnamalpur in Orissa, India (Menon & Shweder, 1994, 1998; Shweder & Menon, in press)—and, as spelled out below, there is even more to be said about lajja than can be found in those two accounts. Lajja is often translated by bilingual informants and dictionaries as "shame," "embarrassment," "shyness," or "modesty"; yet, as should become obvious from the following bit of cultural exegesis, every one of these translations is problematic or fatally flawed.

For starters lajja is something one deliberately shows or pouts on display the way we might show our "gratitude," "loyalty," or "respect." It is a state of consciousness that has been baptized in South Asia as a supreme virtue, especially for women, and it is routinely exhibited in everyday life (e.g., everyday a married woman covers her face or ducks out of a room to avoid direct affiliation with those members of her family she is supposed to avoid). Parish (1991, p. 324) describes it as both an emotion and a moral state. It is by means of their lajja that those who are civilized uphold the social order—by showing perseverance in the pursuit of their own social role obligations; by displaying respect for the hierarchical arrangement of social privileges and responsibilities; by acting shy, modest, or deferential and not encroaching
on the prerogatives of others; by covering one's face, remaining silent, or lowering one's eyes in the presence of superiors. Like gratitude, loyalty, or respect, *lajja*, which is a way of showing one's civility and commitment to the maintenance of social harmony, is judged in South Asia to be a very good thing.

While *lajja* may be experienced by both men and women, it is an emotion and a virtue associated with a certain feminine ideal. It is talked about as a lovely ornament worn by women. *Lajja* is the linguistic stem for the name of a local creeper plant (a "touch-me-not"), which is so coy that upon the slightest contact it closes its petals and withdraws into itself. To say of a woman that she is full of *lajja* is a very positive recommendation. Here is one reason why.

Perhaps the most important collective representation of *lajja* in various regions of eastern India is the tantric icon portraying the mother goddess Kali, brandishing weapons and a decapitated head in her 10 arms, eyes bulging and tongue out, with her foot stepping on the chest of her husband, the god Siva, who is lying on the ground beneath her. Based on interviews with 92 informants in Orissa, India, Menon and Shweder (1994, 1998; Shweder & Menon, in press) have been examining the meaning of this icon and its significance for our understanding of *lajja*.

The gist of the story, as it is narrated by local experts, is that once upon a time the male gods gave a boon to a minor demon, Mahisasura, to the effect that he could only be killed at the hands of a naked female. They thereby turned Mahisasura into a major demon who was able unimpeded to terrorize all the male gods. In order to destroy the demon, the male gods pooled all their energy and powers and created the goddess Durga, and armed her with their own weapons. On their behalf they sent Durga into battle against Mahisasura, but they neglected to tell her about the boon. She fought bravely but could not kill the demon; he was too strong and clever. In desperation Durga appealed for guidance from an auspicious goddess, who let her in on the secret. As one informant narrated the story:

So Durga did as she was advised to (she stripped), and within seconds after Mahisasura saw her [naked], his strength waned and he died under her sword. After killing him a terrible rage entered Durga's mind, and she asked herself, "What kinds of gods are these that give to demons such boons, and apart from that what kind of gods are these that they do not have the honesty to tell me the truth before sending me into battle?"

Durga felt humiliated by her nakedness and by the deceit. She decided that such a world with such gods did not deserve to survive; she therefore took on the form of Kali and went on a mad rampage, devouring every living creature that came in her way. The gods then called on Siva, Kali's husband, to do something to save the world from destruction at the hands of the mother goddess. Siva lay in her path as she came tramping along, enraged. Absorbed in her wild dance of destruction, Kali accidentally stepped on Siva and placed her foot on her husband's chest, an unspeakable act of disrespect. When she looked down and saw what she had done, she came back to her senses—in particular to her sense of *lajja*, which she expressed by biting her tongue between her teeth. She reined in her anger and became calm and still. To this day in Orissa, India, "Bite your tongue" is an idiomatic expression for *lajja*, and the biting of the tongue is the facial expression used by women as an iconic apology when they realize, or are confronted with the fact, that they have failed to uphold social norms.

One moral of the story is that men are incapable of running the world by themselves, even though they are socially dominant. They rely on women to make the world go round. Yet in a patriarchal society, men humiliate women by the way they exploit female power, strength, and perseverance. This leads to anger and rage in women, which is highly destructive of everything of value and must be brought under control, for the sake of the social order. *Lajja* is a salient ideal in South Asia because it preserves social harmony by helping women to swallow their rage.

If we decompose *lajja* into its constituent narrative slots, it becomes apparent just how hazardous it can be to assume that one can render the emotional meanings of others with terms from our received English lexicon for mental states. (See Geertz, 1984, p. 130, on the difficulties of translating the Balinese term *lek*. Balinese *lek* seems much like Hindu *lajja*. Geertz notes that *lek* has been variably translated and mistranslated and that "'shame' is the most common attempt." He tries to render it as "stage fright.") Hindu *lajja* does not map well onto words like "shame," "embarrassment," "shyness," "modesty," or "stage fright."
analysis of the constituents of \(lajja\) helps us see why.

From the perspective of social appraisal and self-appraisal, for example, to be full of \(lajja\) is to be in possession of the virtue of behaving in a civilized manner and in such a way that the social order and its norms are upheld. It is not a neurosis, and it does not connote a reduction in the strength of the ego. Indeed, \(lajja\) promotes self-esteem. Of course, to be perceived or labeled as someone without \(lajja\)—as someone who encroaches on the station of others, or fails to live up to the requirements of his or her own station—is unpleasant and arousing. Parish notes that to feel \(Witt\) is sometimes associated with blushing, sweating, and altered pulse (1991, p. 324), but we suspect that such a somatic phenomenology is a feature of the anxiety provoked by the social perception of the absence of \(lajja\) and is not definitive of \(lajja\) itself. For to experience \(Icyja\) is to experience that sense of virtuous, courteous, well-mannered restraint that led Kali to rein in her rage.

The environmental determinants of \(lajja\) as a sense of one’s own virtue and civility are as varied as the set of actions that are dutiful and responsible, given one’s station in life in a world in which all people are highly self-conscious about their social designation (see Geertz, 1984, for a brilliant attempt to capture the dramatic qualities of such a world). They include events that we would find familiar (not being seen naked by the wrong person in the wrong context) as well as many events that might seem alien or strange (never talking directly to one’s husband’s elder brother or to one’s father-in-law; never being in the same room with both one’s husband and another male to whom he must defer).

From the perspective of self-management, South Asian \(lajja\) may appear at first glance to be similar to North American shame or embarrassment. It activates a habit or routine that sometimes results in hiding, covering up, and withdrawing from the scene. Yet what is really being activated by \(lajja\) is a general habit of respect for social hierarchy and a consciousness of one’s social and public responsibilities, which in the context of South Asian norms may call for avoidance, silence, withdrawal, or other deferential, protective, or nonaggressive gestures and actions.

Finally, consider the semantic structure of “shame” and \(lajja\) in the minds of informants. When middle-class Euro-American college students are presented with the triad of terms “shame–happiness–anger” and asked, “Which is most different from the other two?,” they are most likely to respond that either “happiness” or “shame” is most different from the other two, perhaps on the grounds that “shame” and “anger” go together because they are both unpleasant feelings, or that “happiness” and “anger” go together because they are both ego-expanding emotions. Neither response is typical of responses in the South Asian community where Menon and Shweder (1994) have worked, where \(lajja\) (shame?) and \(raa\) (happiness?) are thought to go together in the triad test, and \(nugu\) (anger?), perceived as destructive of society, is the odd emotion out. Here something seems to be amiss in the translation process. Something may well have been amiss in most past attempts to equate emotions across languages and across local cultural worlds (see Wierzbicka, 1992).
the individual, with the result that nothing can be condemned that does not demonstrably harm others, restrict their freedom, or impinge on their rights. Haidt et al. (1993), for example, found that U.S. college students (a population steeped in the ethics of autonomy) responded to stories about violations of food and sexual taboos (e.g., eating one's already dead pet dog) with disgust. Nevertheless, these students felt compelled by the logic of their ethical stance to separate their feelings of disgust from their moral judgments. As a result they held firmly to the view that their personal emotional reactions did not imply that the actions were wrong. They spoke exclusively in the language of the ethics of autonomy, pointing out that nobody was hurt, and that the people involved had a right to do as they pleased in a private setting. Disgust plays an ambiguous role in such an autonomy-based cultural world (see Rozin et al., Chapter 40, this volume). In such a cultural world, the moral domain is constructed so that it is limited to issues of harm, rights, and justice (Turiel, 1983), and the emotions that are experienced as moral emotions (e.g., anger, sympathy, and guilt) are those that respond to a rather narrow class of ethical goods (e.g., justice, freedom, and the avoidance of harm). In such a cultural world, the focus of ordinary folk and social scientists alike is upon individuals' striving to maximize their personal utility (e.g., Lazarus, 1991; Plutchik, 1980; Stein, Trabasso, & Liwag, Chapter 28, this volume). Happiness, sadness, pride, and shame are viewed as responses to individual gains and losses, successes and failures. Other moral goods (such as loyalty, duty, and respect for status) that might be linked to the emotions are either lost or undertheorized.

Nevertheless, in many parts of the world the moral domain has been constructed in such a way that it is broader than, or at least different from, an ethics of autonomy. In cultures that emphasize an ethics of community, ontological priority is given to collective entities (the family, guild, clan, community, corporation, or nation), and the central moral goods are those that protect these entities against challenges from without and decay from within (e.g., goods such as loyalty, duty, honor, respectfulness, chastity, modesty, and self-control). In such a world, individual choices (what to wear, whom to marry, how to address others) take on a moral significance and an ethical importance (Shweder, Mahapatra, & Miller, 1987), and the successful pursuit of individual goals may even be a cause for embarrassment or shame. Haidt et al. (1993), for example, found that outside of college samples, people of lower socioeconomic status generally thought it was morally wrong to eat one's already dead pet dog or to clean one's toilet with the national flag. Even when these actions were judged to be harmless, they were still seen as objectively disgusting or disrespectful and hence as morally wrong. In a cultural world based on an ethics of community, emotions may exist that are not fully felt by those whose morality is based on an ethics of autonomy. Lujia is a clear example, since it is not the type of emotion that will be experienced in a world that sees hierarchy and the exclusive prerogatives of others as unjust or as a form of oppression, rather than as a powerful and legitimate object of admiration and/or respect (Menon & Shweder, 1998). To select another example, song, the righteous indignation of the Ifaluk (Lutz, 1988), may require a sense of close, valued, and inescapable community. Whereas North American "anger" is triggered by a violation of rights and leads to a desire for revenge, Ifaluk song appears to be triggered by violations of relationships, and it leads to a socially shared emotion that brings the violator back into voluntary conformity (Lutz, 1988).

Similarly, emotions related to honor and heroism may require a strong attachment and dedication to a collectivity or group, for whom the hero lays down his or her life. The Nāryuśīttu's otherwise puzzling inclusion of perseverance or heroism as a basic emotion, equal to anger and fear, seems more intelligible against the backdrop of the ethics of community. A James Bond-type hero may display perseverance as he battles to save the "free world," yet we do not think he inspires the same rasa in a North American audience that an Indian audience savors when a Hindi film hero battles to avenge the death of his father. Many older classic North American films raised themes of family honor, but such themes have become less common in recent decades, as the ethics of autonomy has pushed back the ethics of community. Unlike Hindi films, modern North American films rarely embed the hero in the thick traditions and obligations of family history. It is a rare movie indeed when we meet the hero's parents.

The third ethic, the ethic of divinity, may have a similar differential activation and en-
CONCLUSION: THE CULTURAL PSYCHOLOGY OF THE EMOTIONS ANEW

As we enter a new era of collaborative research among anthropologists, psychologists, and physiologists, concerned with similarities and differences in emotional functioning on a worldwide scale, a major goal for the cultural psychology of the emotions will be to decompose the emotions (and the languages of the emotions) into constituent narrative slots. It is to be hoped that by means of the decomposition of the symbolic structure of the emotions, it will be possible to render the meaning of other people's mental states without assimilating them in misleading ways to an a priori set of lexical items available in the language of the researcher (e.g., rendering Hindu *ajñā* as English “shame”).

It is one of the great marvels of life that across languages, cultures, and history, it is possible, with sufficient knowledge, effort, and insight, to truly understand the meanings of other people's emotions and mental states. Yet one must also marvel at one of the great ironies of life—namely, that the process of understanding the consciousness of others can deceptively appear to be far easier than it really is, thereby making it even more difficult to achieve a genuine understanding of “otherness.” Thus, in the end, this discussion of the cultural psychology of the emotions and meditation on the venerable “Rasidhyliya” of the *Nāyikāvatara* are really pleas for a decomposition of emotional states into their constituent narrative slots (environmental determinants, somatic phenomenology, affective phenomenology, self-appraisal, social appraisal, self-management strategy, and communication codes). Unless we take that step, we will continue to be prone to the bias that the emotional life of human beings is “basically” the same around the world. The truth may well be that when it comes to “basic” emotions we (medieval Hindus and contemporary North Americans, Inuit and Balinese, etc.) are not only basically alike in some ways, but are basically different from each other as well.

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