CHAPTER 6

Comparing emotional norms across languages and cultures: Polish vs. Anglo-American

1 Emotion and culture

Although human emotional endowment is no doubt largely innate and universal, people's emotional lives are shaped, to a considerable extent, by their culture. Every culture offers not only a linguistically embodied grid for the conceptualization of emotions, but also a set of "scripts" suggesting to people how to feel, how to express their feelings, how to think about their own and other people's feelings, and so on.

In fact, a culture's lexical grid and its repertoire of "cultural scripts", including "emotional scripts", are closely related. For example, the fact that the closest Malay counterpart of *angry* (*marah*) is incompatible with violence and aggression and can be seen as, in some ways, closer to English words like *resentful* and *upset* than to *angry*, is no doubt related to Malay cultural attitudes to aggression, violence, and emotional self-control (cf. Goddard 1997a). In addition to the basic lexical grid, however, a culture's "emotional scripts" manifest themselves in many other ways – in the lexicon, in grammar, and in discourse.

But to be able to see, and to interpret, the diverse links between emotion and culture (cf. Kitayama and Markus 1994), we need to reaffirm "culture" as a valid, and indeed indispensable construct.

Questioning this construct, one influential writer, Eric Wolf (1994), refers in this context to Franz Boas as someone who appreciated, ahead of his time, "the heterogeneity and the historically changing interconnectedness of cultures" and was therefore able to see cultures as "a problem and not a given". Wolf charges that, subsequently, anthropologists failed to fully appreciate the importance, and the full implications, of these points. Apparently forgetting that Boas himself was a major link in the historical tradition leading from Herder and Humboldt to Sapir and Whorf, Wolf contrasts the French "universalist" tradition with the German-style emphasis on *Volksgeist* and differences between cultures.

There can be no quarrel with the statement that cultures are not separate monads but, rather, heterogeneous, historically changing, in-

terconnected, and "continually exchanging materials" (Wolf 1994: 5). But there is a difference between, on the one hand, rejecting "static culturologies", as does Regna Darnell (1994) in her commentary on Wolf's paper, and, on the other, embracing the view that cultures have no "content" at all, being no more than cross-currents of myriads of influences, as Immanuel Wallerstein (1994) seems to do in his commentary on the same paper.

No one is more acutely aware of the reality of cultures than a bilingual who lives his or her life in two languages and two cultures, and the testimony of bilingual and bicultural writers is loud and clear (Cf. Wierzbicka 1997a; chapter 1). For the same reason that bilingual witnesses are better placed than monolinguals to affirm the reality of different languages, bicultural witnesses are better placed than "monolingual monoculturals" to affirm the reality of different cultures, however heterogeneous and lacking in fixed contours these cultures may be. Wuthnow et al. (1984: 6–7) note that "for all the research that has been made possible by survey techniques and qualitative analysis, little has been learned about cultural patterns", and they ask "whether it is possible to construct cultural analysis as a basic tool capable of producing verifiable social scientific knowledge at all, or whether the study of culture necessarily remains a speculative venture" (p. 257).

This chapter, focussed on Polish "emotional scripts" (set against the background of Anglo-American "scripts"), seeks to demonstrate that patterns of culture can be studied in a verifiable and non-speculative way on the basis of linguistic semantics, rooted in empirically established linguistic and conceptual universals.

My claim is that when one analyses linguistic evidence concerning emotions and emotional expression in Polish culture, there emerge three basic "cultural scripts", or families of "scripts", which can be labelled, for the sake of convenience, the "scripts of sincerity", the "scripts of warmth", and the "scripts of spontaneity".

2 The scripts of "sincerity"

2.1 "Sincerity" and smiles

The "scripts of sincerity" concern the value of presenting one's feelings "truthfully", that is, of saying, and "showing", what one really feels, and not saying, or "showing", that one feels something that one does not in fact feel. Polish culture can be contrasted in this respect with Anglo-American culture, which values and encourages the display of "good feelings" that one may not necessarily feel, and the suppression of "bad feelings" whose display may be seen as serving no useful

purpose and either damaging to our "image" or unpleasant for other people.

In particular, the two cultures have different norms and expectations concerning smiling. An American woman married to a Pole and living in Warsaw (Klos Sokol 1997: 117) writes that "Americans smile more in situations where Poles tend not to"; Poles don't "*initiate* an exchange of smiles in a quick or anonymous interaction"; in Poland "you may see faces that might look *really* grumpy", and she comments further:

> In everyday life, the approach to fleeting interactions in Poland is often take-me-seriously. Rather than the cursory smile, surface courtesy means a slight nod of the head. And some Poles may not feel like masking their everyday preoccupations. From this perspective, the smile would be fake. In American culture, you don't advertise your daily headaches; it's bad form; so you turn up the corners of the mouth – or at least try – according to the Smile Code.

The tacit assumption behind what Klos Sokol calls the American "Smile Code" can be represented in the form of the following cultural script:

> 1. *Anglo-American*
> [people think:]
> when I say something to other people
> it is good if these people think that I feel something good

Of course not all Americans live by this script, but they are all familiar with it. The component "people think:" opening the scripts reflects the fact that even people who personally don't identify with the content of that script are nonetheless familiar with it: they, too, belong to the community which shares familiarity with this script (and with other, related, cultural scripts).[1] In Polish culture, however, there is no similar (generally recognizable) tacit assumption. It is not surprising, therefore, that, as Klos Sokol notes, Poles who have lived in the United States are often struck by the American "Smile Code". For example:

> A Pole who has lived in the States for six years recently returned to Poland for a visit. During a round of introductions to some people in a cafe, she immediately spotted the American by his smile. "There's a lack of smiling here . . ." says the Pole. Another Pole says, "Americans, in general, smile all the time. Here, people in the streets look worried."

The evidence adduced above is of course purely anecdotal and subjective. There is also, however, objective – linguistic – evidence which points in the same direction. This evidence includes, in particular, the strongly negative connotations of Polish words like *fałszywy* "false" and *sztuczny* "artificial", used for condemnation of "put-on"

smiles and other forms of non-spontaneous displays of "good feelings". The collocation *fałszywy uśmiech*, "a false smile", is particularly common, but there are others as well. Some examples (from *SJP* 1958–69):

> Gdy Lipecka starała się manifestować czułość i troskliwość dla męża, wypadało to tak sztucznie i *fałszywie*, że nie mogło ujść niczyjej uwagi. (Perzyński)
> "When Lipecka tried to show tenderness and care for her husband, the effect was so artificial and false that everybody was bound to notice it."

> W *fałszywie* uśmiechniętym dorobkiewiczu dojrzał . . . bezdeń podłości. (Gomulicki)
> "In the falsely smiling nouveau-riche he saw bottomless baseness."

> Był zawsze słodki i zawsze *fałszywy*! A wam się wszystkim podobał, że taki zakochany. (Nałkowska)
> "He was always sugary and always false! And you all liked him because you thought that he was so much in love."

> Na Klarze jej pocałunki sprawiały przykre wrażenie czegoś *fałszywego*, ale poddała się im uprzejmie. (Orzeszkowa)
> "To Clare her kisses seemed painfully false, but she submitted to them to be polite."

Particularly noteworthy is the use of the word *fałszywy* "false" to describe a person as a whole ("a false person"), which is glossed by the SJP as "hypocritical, insincere, cunning, traitor-like" and which is illustrated with the following examples:

> W ich usłużności i gotowości nie tkwiło nic *fałszywego*.
> "There was nothing false in their eagerness to help and to be of service."

> *Fałszywy*, zdradny i przewrotny dworak ten był znienawidzony powszechnie.
> "That false, cunning, and treacherous courtier was hated by everyone."

The semantic shift from "insincere, fake", to "cunning" and "traitor-like" is telling.

Collocations like *fałszywy uśmiech* "a false smile", *fałszywe pocałunki*

"false kisses" or *coś fałszywego* "something false" imply that someone is displaying "good feelings towards another person" that in fact are not felt, and that "of course" it is very bad to do so. This can be represented in the form of the following cultural script:

2. *Polish*
   [people think:]
   it is bad
   when a person wants other people to think
      that this person "feels something good towards these people"[2]
   if this person doesn't feel this

This script can be seen as a special instance of a more general script:[3]

3. *Polish*
   [people think:]
   it is bad
   when a person wants other people to think
      that this person feels something
   if this person doesn't feel this

Laura Klos Sokol (1997: 177) remarks:

> Poles expect people to be direct with emotions, views, and reactions. A Pole who lives in the States and works with Americans says, "I'm the kind of person whose face reflects my feelings. When someone is feeling down but poses as happy, I don't like it. Sometimes it gets on my nerves."

The assumption that a person's face should reflect his or her feelings is far more than an individual preference: it is a cultural premiss, supported by linguistic evidence in the form, for example, of pejorative expressions like *fałszywy uśmiech* "a false smile" and *sztuczny uśmiech* "an artificial smile", to which we will now turn.

To begin with, I will note that although the word *sztuczny* ("artificial") doesn't sound quite as pejorative in Polish as the word *fałszywy*, the two go often together, as in the example quoted earlier:

> Gdy Lipecka starała sié manifestować czułość i troskliwość dla męża, wypadało to tak *sztucznie* i *fałszywie*, że nie mogło ujść niczyjej uwagi.
> "When Lipecka tried to show tenderness and care for her husband, the effect was so artificial and false that everybody was bound to notice it."

A few more examples:

> Takiś smutny . . . – Gdzie tam – zaśmiałem się *sztucznie*. (Kłosowski)
> "You look so sad . . . who me? – I laughed phonily."

> Sam wiedział, że to, co mówi, brzmi jakoś *sztucznie* i *nieszczerze*. (Krzywicki)
> "He knew himself that what he was saying sounded artificial and insincere."

> Stłumił głęboką urazę *sztucznym* uśmiechem. (Moraczewski)
> "He suppressed his deep resentment beneath a false smile."

> Mówił *sztucznym*, aksamitnym głosem gruchając słodko przy każdym 'r'. (Braun)
> "He spoke in a velvety, phoney voice, fruitily rolling each 'r'."

All these examples illustrate the cultural assumption that "it is bad when a person wants other people to think that this person feels something if this person doesn't feel this". A quote from the writer Niemcewicz, adduced by *SJP*, sums it up as follows:

> Uczucia, które *sztucznie* udajemy, serca nasze oziębiają.
> "Feelings that we artificially display, make our hearts cold."

Both sociological analysis and linguistic evidence concur with the cross-cultural experience in the assessment that Anglo-American attitudes to "displays of good feelings" in general, and to deliberate, controlled "put-on" smiles in particular, are different.

The extraordinary importance of controlled smiles in American culture is epitomized in the training in smiling to which American flight attendants are widely subjected. A vignette from Hochschild's (1983) account of her visit to the Delta Airlines Stewardess Training Center illustrates this well:

> The young trainee sitting next to me wrote on her notepad, "Important to smile. Don't forget smile." The admonition came from the speaker in the front of the room, a crewcut pilot in his early fifties, speaking in a Southern drawl: "Now girls, I want you to go out there and really *smile*. Your smile is your biggest asset. I want you to go out there and use it. Smile. *Really* smile. Really *lay it on*." (p. 4)

As Hochschild emphasized, the smiles that the air hostesses are expected to have on their faces must be "spontaneous and sincere":

> As the Pacific Southwest Airlines jingle says, "Our smiles are not just painted on." Our flight attendants' smile, the company emphasizes, will be more human than the phony smiles you're resigned to seeing on people who are paid to smile. There is a smile-like strip of paint on the nose of each PSA plane. Indeed, the plane and the flight attendant advertise one another . . . Now that advertisements, training, notions of professionalism, and dollar bills have intervened between the smiler and the smiled upon, it takes an extra effort to imagine that spontaneous warmth can exist in uniform – because companies now advertise spontaneous warmth, too. (p. 5)

Because passengers "are quick to detect strained or forced smiles", what flight attendants are required to do is not just smile and smile well (i.e. adroitly, skilfully), but to manufacture within themselves feelings that match the smile. Thus, a stewardess is required to "really work on her smiles" and is expected to "manage her heart" in such a way as to trigger a smile that will both seem and be "spontaneous and sincere" (Hochschild 1983: 105). The company lays claim not simply to her physical movements – how she handles food trays – but to her emotional actions as well and to the way these show in the ease of the smile (p. 107). American society at large appears to value not just "painted smiles", but smiles reflecting genuine cheerfulness, genuine enthusiasm, a genuine state of feeling "happy"; but in the dominant hierarchy of values "cheerfulness" appears to be above "spontaneity" and perhaps even above "sincerity".

2.2 "Cheerful" speech routines

In English, there are many common speech routines which manifestly reflect a cultural premiss to the effect that it is good to "feel good" – and to be seen as someone who "feels good". In particular, the common "How are you? – I am fine" routine implies an expectation that "good feelings" will be expressed, and if need be, "artificially displayed". Of course this expectation may be violated, but it is undoubtedly there, as highlighted by the dictum "don't tell your friends about your indigestion, 'How are you' is a greeting, not a question" (Arthur Guiteman, quoted in Leech 1983: 198).

The importance of positive expressives such as *Hi!* or *Great!* in American culture, and of positive conversational routines, is well illustrated by the following beginning of a conversation, offered in an American bestseller as a model of successful human interaction (M. Smith 1975: 93):

> Pete: Hi, Jean.
> Jean: Hi, Pete, how are you?
> Pete: I'm fine, how are you?

Jean: I feel like having a good time.
Pete: Great. So do I.

In fact, Anglo-American culture appears to have gone further in the direction of "positive" scripts than the Anglo-British or Anglo-Australian varieties have, and has apparently developed some emotional scripts of its own, two of which could be called the "enthusiasm script" and the "cheerfulness script". To quote an American witness (Klos Sokol 1997: 176) again (cf. Wierzbicka 1994d: 184):

> Wow! Great! How nice! That's fantastic! I had a terrific time! It was wonderful! Have a nice day! Americans. So damned cheerful.

Speech routines of this kind suggest a cultural script which can be formulated along the following lines:

> 4. *Anglo-American*
> [people think:]
> it is good to say often something like this:
> "I feel something very good"

It is interesting to note in this connection that, for example, Sommers' (1984) cultural study of attitudes toward emotions showed that Americans place an exceptional emphasis on "enthusiasm" and value it far more highly than do the other cultural groups with which they were compared (Greeks, West Indians, Chinese). In a similar vein, Renwick (1980) contrasted the "Australian art of deadpan understatement" with the American penchant for "exaggeration and overstatement" and observed that "Australians also add a dash of cynicism to their conversation, especially when they want to counterpoint an American colleague's overenthusiasm" (p. 28).

One linguistic reflection of this attitude is the ubiquitous presence of the word *great* in American discourse (cf. Wolfson 1983: 93), both as a modifier (especially of the verb *to look*) and as a "response particle":

> You look great!
> Your X (hair, garden, apartment, etc.) looks great!
> It's great! That's great! Great!

(Cf. also the dialogue between Pete and Jean quoted earlier.) The basic meaning of the "great" conversational routine may be represented as follows:

> (a) I think this is very good
> (b) when I think about it, I feel something very good
> (c) I want people to know this

Component (a) spells out the positive evaluation; component (b) accounts for the role of *great* as an expression of enthusiasm and accounts for the emotive character of this adjective (cf. *"Objectively speaking, that was a great meal"); and component (c) accounts for the tendency of *great* to be used as a response particle.

Polish doesn't have speech routines corresponding to "How are you? – I'm fine", "How is it going?", or to the ubiquitous American "Great!" This is consistent with the subjective evidence such as that reported by Klos Sokol (1997: 176):

> To some extent, Poles enjoy the up-beat American pom-pom skating cheer. Who would dare claim that cheerfulness is bad? However, sometimes, Poles balk at American-style frothy enthusiasm. Ask a Pole to imitate American behaviour and chances are the result will include a wide smile, an elongated "Wooooow!" and "Everything is fine!" with a thumbs-up.
>
> One Pole said, "My first impression was how happy Americans must be." But like many Poles she cracked the code: "Poles have different expectations. Something 'fantastic' for Americans would not be 'fantastic' in my way of thinking." Another Pole says, "When Americans say it was great, I know it was good. When they say it was good, I know it was okay. When they say it was okay, I know it was bad."

The central importance of positive feelings in American culture is also reflected in the key role that the adjective *happy* plays in American discourse, an adjective that is widely used as a yardstick for measuring people's psychological well-being as well as their social adjustment. The crucial role of this adjective in American life has often been commented on by newcomers. For example, Stanisław Barańczak (1990: 13), professor of Polish literature at Harvard University, writes:[4]

> Take the word "happy", perhaps one of the most frequently used words in Basic American. It's easy to open an English–Polish or English–Russian dictionary and find an equivalent adjective. In fact, however, it will not be equivalent. The Polish word for "happy" (and I believe this also holds for other Slavic languages) has much more restricted meaning; it is generally reserved for rare states of profound bliss, or total satisfaction with serious things such as love, family, the meaning of life, and so on. Accordingly, it is not used as often as "happy" is in American common parlance . . . Incidentally, it is also interesting that Slavic languages don't have an exact equivalent for the verb "to enjoy." I don't mean to say that Americans are a nation of superficial, backslapping enjoyers and happy-makers, as opposed to our suffering Slavic souls. What I'm trying to point out is only one example of the semantic incompatibilities which are so firmly ingrained in languages and cultures that they sometimes make mutual communication impossible.

The pressure on people to be "happy" can only be compared with the

pressure to smile: by being "happy", one projects a positive image of oneself (as a successful person). The fact that some American psychologists have elevated the state of being "happy" to the status of a basic human emotion is revealing in this respect: from a cross-cultural perspective, the word *joy* (with equivalents such as *Freude*, *joie*, *gioia*, *radost'*, etc. in other European languages) might have seemed a much better candidate for such a status. But in American culture, the concept of *happy* is indeed much more central than the concept of *joy*. It is easy to understand how the centrality of this concept in American culture may have influenced the researchers' perspective on human emotions in general.

To be *happy* is to feel something good for personal reasons – an ideal quite consistent with the general orientation of "a culture dominated by expressive and utilitarian individualism" (Bellah et al. 1985: 115). The fact that *happy* is an adjective, whereas its closest counterparts in other European languages are verbs (e.g. *sich freuen* in German, *se rejouir* in French, or *cieszyć się* in Polish) is also significant, because these verbs indicate a temporary occurrence (as the archaic verb *rejoice* does in English), whereas the adjective *happy* is compatible with a long-term state (the expected norm). As Barańczak points out, people can be expected to be "happy" most of the time, but can not be expected to "rejoice" most of the time (cf. Kitayama and Markus 1992: 23–5; for a fuller discussion of the concept *happy*, see chapter 2).

The concept of *enjoyment* mentioned by Barańczak is also culturally significant, as it links good feelings with the idea of an activity: in contrast to *pleasure*, which can be entirely passive, one can only *enjoy* something that one is *doing* (e.g. talking, swimming, dancing, sitting in the sun, and so on). The fact that other European (or non-European) languages do not have a word corresponding to the English *enjoy* highlights the characteristically Anglo nexus of feeling and control, and of actively achieving a desired emotional state:

> X is enjoying Y =
> when X does Y, X feels something good
> because of this, X wants to do Y

Equally revealing is the key Anglo (and, especially, Anglo-American) concept of *fun*, which also links the idea of doing something with that of feeling something good (and adds to it a further component of the speaker's own good feelings at the idea of doing something for pleasure). The sociologist Martha Wolfenstein (1975: 401) talks even in this connection of "the emergence of fun morality" in modern American culture: ". . . fun, from having been suspect if not taboo, has tended to become obligatory. Instead of feeling guilty for having too much fun,

one is inclined to feel ashamed if one does not have enough." Wolfenstein illustrates the emergence of the "fun morality" by doing a content analysis of child-rearing handbooks, with their striking emphasis on "fun" and "enjoyment". One example:

> The new parents are told that they are making a good start if they can enjoy their baby . . . The child should learn that mother and father are "two people who enjoy each other" . . . Introducing the baby to solid foods will be "fun" and "amusing" for the mother, and the baby will "enjoy the new experience more if you are having a good time." (p. 401)

The importance of good feelings (such as "cheerfulness", "friendliness", "enthusiasm", "enjoyment", and "fun") in American culture and the absence of similar norms in Polish culture are illustrated particularly well in Eva Hoffman's (1989) reminiscences of different farewell rituals as she experienced them in Poland and in America:

> But as the time of our departure approaches, Basia . . . makes me promise that I won't forget her. Of course I won't! She passes a journal with a pretty, embroidered cloth cover to my fellow classmates, in which they are to write appropriate words of good-bye. Most of them choose melancholy verses in which life is figured as a vale of tears or a river of suffering, or a journey of pain on which we are embarking. This tone of sadness is something we all enjoy. It makes us feel the gravity of life, and it is gratifying to have a truly tragic event – a parting forever – to give vent to such romantic feelings.
>
> It's only two years later that I go on a month-long bus trip across Canada and the United States with a group of teenagers, who at parting inscribe sentences in each other's notebooks to be remembered by. "It was great fun knowing you!" they exclaim in the pages of my little notebook. "Don't ever lose your friendly personality!" "Keep cheerful, and nothing can harm you!" they enjoin, and as I compare my two sets of mementos, I know that, even though they're so close to each other in time, I've indeed come to another country. (p. 78)

These contrasting attitudes can be formulated as follows:

> 5. *Polish*
> [everybody knows:]
> sometimes people feel something bad
> because they can't be in the same place as someone else
> [people think: this is good]
>
> 6. *Anglo-American*
> [people think:]
> it is good to think often that good things can happen to people
> it is good to feel something good because of this

The reason why the Polish script (5) has been introduced in the frame "everyone knows" rather than "people think" is that the cultural

attitude in question is best thought of as a cultural model rather than a normative cultural script. From a Polish point of view, it is "common knowledge" that people often suffer because they are separated from beloved, or familiar, people and places – "common knowledge" reflected in the language-specific concept of *tęsknota* "nostalgia/homesickness/longing/heartache". (For detailed discussion, see Wierzbicka 1986a, 1988b.) The model which acknowledges this "common knowledge" is culturally endorsed, and the words *tęsknota* and *tęsknić* (verb) have rather positive connotations in Polish. At the same time, however, there is no normative script recommending to people that they should feel something like *tęsknota*, as there are normative scripts of "positive thinking" or "cheerfulness" in Anglo-American culture.[5]

Social commentators agree that, far from suppressing all expression of emotion, Anglo culture fosters certain kinds of (carefully monitored) emotional expression. In particular, American culture fosters and encourages "cheerfulness". To quote Eva Hoffman (1989) again:

> If all neurosis is a form of repression, then surely, the denial of suffering, and of helplessness, is also a form of neurosis. Surely, all our attempts to escape sorrow twist themselves into the specific, acrid pain of self-suppression. And if that is so, then a culture that insists on cheerfulness and staying in control is a culture that – in one of those ironies that prevails in the unruly realm of the inner life – propagates its own kind of pain. (p. 271)

Assessments of the psychological costs of obligatory cheerfulness may or may not be correct, but few commentators would disagree with the basic idea that something like "cheerfulness" is encouraged by American culture. More precisely, the norm in question can be represented as follows:

> 7. *Anglo-American*
> [people think:]
> it is good to think often that something good will happen
> it is good to often feel something good because of this
> it is good if other people can see this

What can one do to comply with the above norm? One can, of course, smile – and, as we have seen, American culture is one of those cultures that value and encourage the "social smile" (cf. Wanning 1991: 19; for the concept of social smile, see Ekman 1989).

3 The scripts of interpersonal "warmth"

Turning now to the "scripts of warmth", I will note, above all, the importance of the concept of "serdeczność" (from *serce* "heart") in

Polish culture. Roughly speaking, to be *serdeczny* (adjective) means to show "good feelings towards another person". Being *serdeczny* is a little bit like being "cordial", but the Polish word – which, unlike *cordial*, is a common, everyday word – implies more intensive and more genuine "warmth", flowing "straight from the heart".

Unlike *cordiality*, *serdeczność* must be perceived as spontaneous and almost unintentional (it just "flows" from the heart); and unlike *warm-heartedness*, it is personal, directed to a particular person. For example, common collocations with *serdeczny* include *serdeczny przyjaciel* and *najserdeczniejszy* (superlative) *przyjaciel* – literally, "heart-friend" and "most-heart-friend". The word *przyjaciel* itself means not just "friend" but "a close friend" (cf. Wierzbicka 1997a), and the adjective *serdeczny* implies here something like a loving bond. By contrast, one cannot speak in English of a "cordial friend". Generally speaking, "cordiality" is reserved for people who are *not* very close to us; it refers more to a conscious attitude, manifested mainly in somewhat formal encounters, than to a propensity for outpouring genuine interpersonal feeling, as the Polish *serdeczność* does. Some examples (from *SJP*):

> Był oczywiście *serdeczny* – wyściskał i wycałował przyjaciela. (Broszkiewicz)
> "Naturally he was very warm, hugging and kissing his friend."

> Była u mnie Cesia, moja *najserdeczniejsza* przyjaciółka i najdawniejsza, bo jeszcze na pensji przysięgłyśmy sobie przyjaźń. (Reymont)
> "Cesia came to see me, my oldest and best friend, with whom I exchanged vows of eternal friendship while we were still at school."

The plural noun *serdeczności* refers to a specific (verbal or non-verbal) outpouring of good feelings towards another person. For example:

> Chłopczyna zaczął go głaskać ręką po twarzy. Na zakończenie tych *serdeczności* objął go za szyję i uścisnął. (Sewer)
> "The lad began to stroke his face, and finally flung his arms around his neck and embraced him warmly."

> Przesyła wszystkim mnóstwo serdecznosci. (Chopin)
> "He sends everyone masses of warm greetings."

"Serdeczność" does not consist in doing good things for someone else or in intentionally displaying good feelings towards another person.

Rather, it consists in letting genuine good feelings "flow" spontaneously towards another person.

Hoffman (1989) reminisces on this point as follows:

> My mother says I'm becoming "English". This hurts me, because I know she means I'm becoming cold. I'm no colder than I've ever been, but I'm learning to be less demonstrative . . . I learn restraint from Penny, who looks offended when I shake her by the arm in excitement, as if my gesture had been one of aggression instead of friendliness. I learn it from a girl who pulls away when I hook my arm through hers as we walk down the street – this movement of friendly intimacy is an embarrassment to her.

Hoffman's reference to "coldness", which her mother perceives as typical of "Anglo" behaviour (as compared with typical Polish behaviour), can be understood in two different ways: from Hoffman's mother's point of view, to be "cold" means, roughly speaking, to be lacking in "feeling" in general, and in particular, to be lacking in interpersonal "warmth". When Hoffman shakes her friend's arm in excitement, she is acting spontaneously, her action "flowing", so to speak, from her feeling, and "showing" other people what that feeling is. When Hoffman "hooks her arm through her friend's arm" she is again acting spontaneously, unreflectingly letting her "good feelings for her friend" express themselves in a bodily gesture. The gesture, "flowing" directly from the feeling, spontaneously displays that feeling, and since the feeling in question is affection (interpersonal "good feelings") for another person, the gesture is perceived as emanating "warmth".

All this is in accordance with the Polish "cultural model" (again, model rather than a normative script) which can be represented as follows:

> 8. *Polish*
> [everybody knows:]
> often when people feel something
> they do something with parts of the body because of this
> because of this other people can know what these people feel
> [people think: this is good]

What is particularly "good" (from a Polish cultural point of view) is a spontaneous manifestation of "good feelings" towards another person (i.e. of interpersonal "warmth", "serdeczność"):

> 9. *Polish*
> [everybody knows:]
> often when people feel something good towards someone else

they do something with their body at the same time
they want to do it
when they do it parts of their body touch parts of the other person's body
because of this other people can know what these people feel
[people think: this is good]

From this perspective, the "spontaneity" in the display of "good feelings towards another person" is as important as having those "good feelings" in the first place: merely telling other people that we are fond of them would not count as "serdeczność", as "warmth". To quote Hoffman again:

> Perhaps my mother is right, after all; perhaps I'm becoming colder. After a while, emotion follows action, response getting warmer or cooler according to gesture. I'm more careful about what I say, how loud I laugh, whether I give vent to grief. The storminess of emotion prevailing in our family is in excess of the normal here, and the unwritten rules for the normal have their osmotic effect.

As Hoffman perceptively observes, the Anglo-American "unwritten rules for the normal" – that is, implicit "cultural scripts" which form the society's shared frame of reference – are different from the Polish ones, for the hierarchy of values governing interpersonal relations is different. Anglo "cultural scripts" encourage people to be "careful", to be "considerate", to be "thoughtful", to avoid "hurting other people's feelings". Generally speaking, they focus on the feelings of the "other person": one should be careful to avoid causing the "other person" to feel "something bad", and (as I will show shortly) one should try to make the "other person" feel "something good". By contrast, Polish "cultural scripts" focus not on the feelings of the addressee but on those of the speaker; what matters most is that the speaker has, and spontaneously displays, "warm" good feelings towards the addressee.

It is not an accident, therefore, that Polish doesn't have any words corresponding to the English words *considerate*, *thoughtful*, or even *kind*, or expressions like *to hurt someone's feelings*, all of which concentrate on the other person's feelings, not on our own (cf. Travis 1997). Nor is it an accident that English has no words corresponding to the Polish *serdeczny* (and its family of cognates), or to the important Polish emotion term *przykro*, which refers to a pain caused by what is perceived as "somebody's lack of warmth for another person" (cf. Wierzbicka, forthcoming a). The extensive Polish system of expressive derivation of personal names and other nouns used as terms of address, each with a different shade of "good feelings", also points to the Polish cultural emphasis on showing affection, tenderness, etc. (e.g. for *Maria*, *Marysia*,

Marysieńka, *Marysiulka*, *Marysiuchna*, *Marysiątko*, *Marysik*, *Marysieczka*, *Marysiunia*, etc.; cf. Wierzbicka 1992a), as does also the elaborate system of common endearments of various kinds, such as *ptaszku* "birdie", *żabko* "froggie", *kotku* "kitten", *koteczku* "little kitten", *słoneczko* "dear little sun", *złoto* "gold", *złotko* "dear-little-gold", etc. (cf. Wierzbicka 1994d).

From an Anglo point of view, then, Polish has both some astonishing lacunae (such as the absence of words corresponding to *kind*, *thoughtful*, *considerate*, and of expressions corresponding to *hurt someone's feelings*) and some areas of astonishing over-elaboration; and from a Polish point of view, English is similarly astonishing in both its apparent lacunae and its riches. The differences can be made sense of when they are shown to be systematic and reducible to general "cultural scripts" like the following:

10. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
it is good
if a person says something
because this person doesn't want another person to feel something bad

11. *Polish*
[people think:]
it is good
if a person says/does something
because this person feels something good towards another person

4 The scripts of "spontaneity"

4.1 "Compliments", "praise", and "criticisms"

Klos Sokol (1997: 97) suggests that in Polish, in contrast to English, compliments are often "treated with suspicion". For example:

> A Polish friend told me that my Polish has improved so I said thank you. "Oh, that wasn't a compliment", he corrected me, "It's just an observation". I told a Polish friend with a new spiffy haircut how great she looked with short hair. "You didn't think I looked good with long hair?" she asked.

Klos Sokol also comments that "You may also hear someone say '*To nie komplement. To prawda.*' ('That's not a compliment, it's the truth'), as if compliments are naturally on shaky ground" (p. 99); and she notes the

expression *pusty komplement* "empty compliment" (to which can be added two near-synonyms: *czcze komplementy* and *zdawkowe komplementy*).

As I pointed out in my own earlier discussion of Polish attitudes to "compliments" (Wierzbicka 1994d), the very word *komplement* suggests, in Polish, something trivial and not-serious. A *komplement* may have its place in a playful, flirtatious exchange between the sexes, but in general by classifying an utterance as a "komplement" one indicates, in Polish, that it has little or no weight. The reason is not that what is seen as a "komplement" is suspected of being not true or not sincere, but rather that a Polish "komplement" wears on its sleeve the speaker's illocutionary intention of pleasing the addressee ("I say this because I want you to feel something good"). In English, such an intention can be treated as perfectly natural and acceptable, and a common routine of responding with "thank you" appears to recognize this intention as valid and beneficial to the addressee (one "thanks" the speaker for having made an effort to please us). From a Polish point of view, however, a professed intention of pleasing the addressee tends to rob the utterance of its interpersonal value: praise is valued if it is seen as spontaneous, flowing straight "from the heart" and caused by the speaker's own "good feelings" rather than by his or her desire to make the addressee feel good.

From an Anglo point of view, then, it is seen as "good" if someone expresses admiration or some similar good feelings for another person in order to make this other person feel good:

12. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
it is good
if a person says something to someone else
because this person wants this other person to feel something good

From a Polish point of view, however, if a person expresses admiration or some similar feelings "merely" to make me feel good (rather than to "pour out" the feelings of their own heart) this has little value for me. Even when the admiration is genuine, if its expression is "calculated" to make me feel good, this detracts from the value of this admiration. On the other hand, a spontaneous exclamation of admiration is perceived as valuable. But to be credible, exclamations of admiration and similar feelings must be balanced (in a particular relationship) with exclamations of criticisms, with spontaneous negative "personal remarks". A remark like "Your hair looks nice" sounds more credible

(from a Polish perspective) against the background of remembered spontaneous remarks like "This haircut doesn't suit you" or "This skirt doesn't look good on you."

Klos Sokol comments (from her perspective as an American teaching English to Polish students):

> All this Yankee mega-cheery stuff isn't crime; it's just confusing. When Poles hear again and again how wonderful! great! and fine! things are, they don't know what to believe or how to react. Or where they stand, complains a Pole. In the classroom, when giving students on-the-spot evaluations, I listed all the good points before getting to the meaty criticism. One student interrupted me, "Yes, yes, I know. Great. Great. Great. How did I really do?" (p. 176)

Clearly, the Anglo-American cultural script enacted by Klos Sokol encourages her to try to make the addressee feel "something good" and to avoid making the addressee feel "something bad". On the other hand, the Polish students expect her to adopt a different cultural script and to say what she really thinks and how she really feels about their work.

This is entirely consistent with the testimony of Eva Hoffman, who reports having had similar experiences *à rebours*:

> I learn also that certain kinds of truth are impolite. One shouldn't criticise the person one is with, at least not directly. You shouldn't say, "You are wrong about that" – though you may say, "On the other hand, there is that to consider." You shouldn't say, "This doesn't look good on you," though you may say, "I like you better in that other outfit." I learn to tone down my sharpness, to do more careful conversational minuet. (1989: 146)

Of these last two different patterns, insightfully noted by Hoffman, the Anglo one ("I like you better in that other outfit") is clearly based on the cultural premiss that it is good to try to avoid "hurting the other person's feelings", whereas the Polish one ("this doesn't look good on you") is based on the cultural premiss that it is good to say what one really thinks and what one really feels. But to follow the Anglo cultural premiss one has indeed, as Hoffman suggested, to be "more careful about what one says" (to dance a "more careful conversational minuet"), whereas to follow the Polish cultural premiss one has to speak "spontaneously", moving directly (to use Hoffman's expression) "from impulse to expression". This can be represented as follows:

13. *Polish*
[people think:]
it is good
when a person says: "I feel something now"

because this person feels something at that time

14. *Polish*
[people think:]
it is not good
when a person says "I feel something now"
because this person wants another person to feel (or think) something

4.2 "Spontaneity" vs. "control" over emotions

Polish culture encourages uninhibited expression of emotions in general (in addition to good emotions directed at the addressee). As Hoffman (1989) put it, the "storminess of emotions" in a Polish family (like her own) is in excess of what is normal in Anglo culture: and the word *storminess* refers here to both intensity and spontaneity of emotional expression.

In an earlier book (Wierzbicka 1991), I represented the uninhibited emotional expression characteristic of Polish culture in terms of the formula "I want to say what I feel." But this may require slight modification, because Polish culture encourages people to *show* emotions (verbally or non-verbally) rather than to *speak* about them. Polish culture does not have a tradition of elaborate verbalization of emotions or of highly developed analysis of one's own emotions (characteristic of mainstream modern American culture). Polish culture encourages spontaneity, not introspection. To quote Hoffman again:

> Between the two stories and two vocabularies, there's a vast alteration in the diagram of the psyche and the relationship to inner life. When I say to myself, "I'm anxious," I draw on different faculties than when I say, "I'm afraid." "I'm anxious because I have problems with separation," I tell myself very rationally when a boyfriend leaves for a long trip, and in that quick movement of self-analysis and explanation the trajectory of feeling is re-routed. I no longer follow it from impulse to expression; now that I understand what the problem is, I won't cry at the airport. By this ploy, I mute the force of the original fear; I gain some control . . . I've become a more self-controlled person over the years – more "English," as my mother told me years ago. I don't allow myself to be blown about this way and that helplessly; I've learned how to use the mechanisms of my will, how to look for symptom and root cause before sadness or happiness overwhelm me. I've gained some control, and control is something I need more than my mother did. I have more of a public life, in which it's important to appear strong. I live in an individualistic society, in which people blend less easily with each other, in which "That's your problem" is a phrase of daily combat and self-defense. (1989: 269–70).

This time, Hoffman interprets her mother's epithet "English" not in terms of interpersonal warmth but in terms of control over one's emotions, control that is based on self-analysis. Hoffman's comments based on personal experience echo those of social commentators who have often pointed out the paramount importance of constant scanning of one's feelings in American culture. Bellah et al. (1985) link this cultural preoccupation with the place of psychotherapy in American society and with the role of psychotherapy as a model of human relationships. They point out that "practitioners [of psychotherapy] stress the primary importance of 'knowing how you're feeling'" (p. 128). The culturally endorsed attitudes in question can be represented as follows:

15. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
it is good if I know what I feel
it is good if I know why I feel like this
it is good if I think about this

This constant attention to one's feelings and the inclination to analyse and verbalize them is clearly reflected in American popular literature, where the authors often seem to be at pains to describe exactly how they or their heroes were feeling at any given time. For example, in Elizabeth Glaser's (1991) moving autobiography there are references to feelings on almost every page and often several times on one page:

I still felt . . . nonstop nervousness when we were in public. (p. 170)
[I] feel lucky that I get to call her a friend. (p. 171)
I felt devoid of almost any optimism. (p. 171)
I began to think that I would feel dead until I died. (p. 171)
I knew I would feel cold and black inside. (p. 171)
just how wretched I felt inside. (p. 172)
It was wonderful to feel momentarily alive. (p. 175)
I felt so devastated. (p. 175)
We felt like detectives (p. 176)
I felt bleak and overwhelmed. (p. 185)
I felt scared. (p. 183)
I feel so frightened and helpless. (p. 185)
Paul and I felt awful. (p. 184)
I could feel my head reverberate. (p. 189)

Self-analysis and self-control are particularly encouraged in the case of negative feelings. To quote Hoffman (1989) again:

> In the project of gaining control, I've been aided by the vocabulary of self-analysis, and by the prevailing assumption that it's good to be in charge. "I've got to get some control," my friends say when something troubles them or goes wrong. It is shameful to admit that sometimes

> things can go very wrong; it's shameful to confess that sometimes we have no control. (p. 270)

The cultural attitude referred to in this passage can be represented as follows:

> 16. *Anglo-American*
> [people think:]
> when I feel something bad, it is good to think about it
> if I think about it, I don't have to feel like this any more

The ability to analyse one's feelings rationally is important in Anglo culture because self-analysis enables people to gain some distance from their emotions, and this distance is a prerequisite for emotional self-control, in the double sense of controlling emotional expression ("I will not cry at the airport") and of changing one's feelings (shaping them and decreasing their intensity).

Culture plays a role at every level of this process: (a) One identifies one's feelings in terms of concepts provided by a language-and-culture system (e.g. *anxious* or *afraid*); (b) the element of thinking about one's feelings and of looking for their causes reflects the general emphasis of Anglo culture on rational analysis and on explanations; (c) the idea of "controlling" one's feelings is part of the general Anglo emphasis on control, on shaping events in accordance with one's will; and (d) the suppression of involuntary expressive behaviour (such as crying) reflects the general distrust of the involuntary and the irrational.

Hoffman's personal testimony that in gaining "control" she was aided by the vocabulary of self-analysis, tallies with the general cultural norms reflected in American English and the American ethnography of speaking. In particular, crucial conceptual categories such as *stress*, *depression*, or *relaxation* (and the corresponding adjectives *stressed out*, *depressed*, *relaxed*) bear witness to the enormous influence of psychotherapeutic language on everyday emotion talk. A comparison of the English and the Polish lexicon in this regard is revealing because Polish does not have common everyday words for any of these concepts. The recent emergence in Polish of English loan words such as *stres* and *relaks* highlights the absence of concepts of this kind in Polish folk psychology. The Polish word *przygnębiony* could be said to be not too different from *depressed*, but it has no clinical connotations, and apart from the fact that it seems to be used much more rarely than *depressed*, it is rarely used to describe purely internal states:

> I feel depressed.
> ? *Czuję się przygnębiony.*

Przygnębiony is closer in its use to English words and expressions such as *downcast*, *dejected*, or *in low spirits*, which are most naturally used about other people (or about oneself in the past), rather than about one's own current state, and which are not entirely natural in the "I feel" frame:

He was downcast/dejected/in low spirits.
? I feel downcast/dejected/in low spirits.

The most common Polish emotion terms used about one's own current (negative) state appear to be *zdenerwowany*, *zły*, *wściekły*, *zmartwiony*, and *przykro (mi)*, all of which imply a lack of control over one's emotional state.[6] *Zdernerwowany* is an extremely common word, with no equivalent or even near-equivalent in English, which implies a state of abnormal inner agitation and readiness to "explode" (a kind of opposite of calm). *Zły* (literally, "bad") implies a kind of crude anger that one has no wish to control. *Wściekły* comes close to *furious* or *mad*, but it is much more readily used in self-reports referring to the speaker's current state:

Wściekła jestem!
? I am mad (furious)!

Zmartwiony, which could be glossed very roughly as "worried", does not have the active (though uncontrolled) character of *zdenerwowany*, *zły*, or *wściekły*, but it does imply a passive kind of out-of-controlness not unlike that implied by the English word *upset*. Finally, *przykro* (to which I have devoted a separate study, see Wierzbicka forthcoming a) can be loosely described as a painful feeling comparable to those linked in English with the words *hurt*, *upset*, and *sorry*.

It is particularly interesting to note that none of these five common words for negative emotions corresponds to any of the supposedly universal basic emotions. None of them corresponds exactly to the English word *angry* or *anger*. As mentioned earlier, the closest Polish equivalent of *anger*, namely *gniew*, is not nearly as common and intuitively basic as *anger* is in English. It implies a level of awareness, discernment, and control that makes it inapplicable to children, and it is undoubtedly less common and intuitively basic than *złość* (literally, "badness"), which implies neither discernment nor control and which is, nonetheless, not pejorative like the English word *tantrum*.

In Polish culture, then, the dominant attitude towards emotions is different from that of American culture. Instead of seeking to know "what I feel" and "why I feel like this", one wants *others* to know "what

I feel'' (or rather ''how I feel''). In this cultural universe, there is no need for me to know what I feel or to think about what I feel, or why I feel like this. Rather, there is a need to *express* my feelings and to express them *now*, without thinking about them and without trying to analyse, shape, or suppress them:

> Once, when my mother was very miserable, I told her, full of my newly acquired American wisdom, that she should try to control her feelings. ''What do you mean?'' she asked, as if this was an idea proffered by a member of a computer species. ''How can I do that? They are my feelings.''
>
> My mother cannot imagine tampering with her feelings, which are the most authentic part of her, which are her. She suffers her emotions as if they were forces of nature, winds and storms and volcanic eruptions. She is racked by the movements of passion – *passio*, whose meaning is suffering. (Hoffman 1989: 269)

The American folk philosophy stressing the need for ''control'' over one's emotions is reflected revealingly in the interviews on emotion conducted with fifteen American men and women by Lutz (1990). As Lutz observed,

> One theme that frequently arises in the interview is what can be called ''the rhetoric of control'' (R. Rosaldo 1978). When people are asked to talk about emotions, one of the most common set [*sic*] of metaphors used are those in which someone or something controls, handles, copes, deals, disciplines or manages either or both their emotions or the situation seen as creating the emotion. (p. 4)

To illustrate, one of Lutz's female respondents spoke as follows of a friend grieving over her son's death two years earlier: ''You've got to pick up and go on. You've got to try and get those feelings under control'' (p. 74).

Hoffman's and Lutz's emphasis on the prevailing ideology of ''control'' over emotions in contemporary American culture is consistent with the conclusions reached by many other commentators, including Carol and Peter Stearns, the authors of the *History of Anger in America* (see also Stearns and Stearns 1988b):

> Contemporary Americans seek to regulate not only behaviour but the feeling itself. Indeed, during the past two hundred years, Americans have shifted in their methods of controlling social behaviour towards greater reliance on direct manipulation of emotions and, particularly, of anger . . . For at least a century past Americans have been characterized not by unusual readiness to express their tempers but by a complicated ambivalence that has focussed on the need for control. (Stearns and Stearns 1986: 2–3)

4.3 ''Spontaneity'' in grammar and in non-verbal behaviour

The Polish cultural emphasis on the involuntary character of feelings is reflected in Polish grammar, which has a productive pattern for talking

about involuntary emotions. For example:

(i) *Jaś* *był* *smutny.*
Johnny-NOM was sad-ADJ
"JOHNNY WAS SAD."
(ii) *Jasiowi* *było* *smutno.*
Johnny-DAT was-IMP sadly-ADV

In the (i) pattern, the experiencer is in the nominative case, the copula agrees with the subject in gender (masculine), and the predicate word is an adjective; in the (ii) pattern, the experiencer is in the dative, the copula has an impersonal (neuter) form, and the predicate word is an adverb. Semantically, pattern (i) corresponds to the English gloss ("Johnny was sad"); pattern (ii), however, has no exact English equivalent (the closest being perhaps "sadness came over Johnny").

Pattern (ii), which plays a very important role in the Polish conceptualization of emotions, does not always have a pattern (i) counterpart at all, for it can be based on a predicate that in its adjectival form does not designate an emotion. For example:

Jasiowi *było* *tam* *źle.*
Johnny-DAT was-IMP there badly-ADV
"Johnny didn't feel well there."

Because this grammatical pattern focusses entirely on the experiencer's subjective feeling, it occurs most often and most naturally in the first person:

Było *mi* *gorzko/nieprzyjemnie/przyjemnie.*
was-IMP me-DAT bitterly/unpleasantly/pleasantly-ADV
"I felt bitter/I had an unpleasant/pleasant feeling."

Było *mi* *ciężko/lekko* *na* *sercu.*
(it) was-IMP me-DAT heavily/lightly-ADV on heart-LOC
"My heart was heavy/'light'."

In addition, Polish has a voluntary pattern for talking about emotions, but this voluntary pattern does not indicate that the feelings are controlled, but rather, that the experiencer is, as it were, giving in to a feeling. For example, verbs such as *smucić się* (from *smutny*, "sad"), or *złościć się* (from *zły*, "angry/cross/bad-tempered") imply a kind of voluntary (unchecked) wallowing in a feeling, and therefore can hardly be linked with emotional self-control. The fact that Polish is very rich in verbs of this kind (many of them without any corresponding adjectives) high-

lights the salience of this perspective on emotions in Polish culture. Some examples:

cieszyć się	rejoice
martwić się	worry
denerwować się	(cf. *nerwy* "nerves")
wstydzić się	(cf. *wstyd* "shame")
gniewać się	(cf. *gniew* "anger")
niepokoić się	(cf. *niepokój* "anxiety")
złościć się	(cf. *zły* "bad" or "angry/mad").

Far from suggesting any control over one's emotions, verbs of this kind suggest that the experiencer is acting out an involuntary impulse, amplifying it, and giving it full vent. They imply nothing of that "re-routing of the trajectory of feeling" (from impulse to expression) that Hoffman (1989) linked with "the quick movement of self-analysis and explanation" encouraged by Anglo culture (p. 269). On the contrary, they imply both a voluntary attitude of giving in to the impulse and an immediate expression of the feeling.

There is a clear difference in this respect between the adverbial–dative pattern and the verbal pattern. For example, the sentence:

Wstyd *mi*
shame-ADV me-DAT
"I feel ashamed."

means, roughly speaking, that I feel ashamed and that I cannot do anything about it, and refers to a passive inner state inaccessible to external observers; whereas the corresponding verbal construction:

Wstydzę *się*
shame-VERB-1Sg REFL
"I am ashamed"

implies not only an active inner attitude (as if one were intentionally amplifying the involuntary feeling) but also some sort of external expression. The passive versus active contrast is reflected in the differential use of the imperative construction:

(i) *Nie wstydź się!*
Don't be ashamed! (lit. "Don't shame yourself!")

(ii) ? *Niech ci nie będzie wstyd*!
Don't feel ashamed!

The difference with regard to external expression is reflected in the fact that an external observer is more likely to report someone else's emotion in the verbal pattern than in the adverbial–dative construction:

(i) *Zauważyłem, ze Jaś zawstydził się.*
I noticed that Johnny got ashamed (verb).
(ii) ? *Zauważyłem, że Jasiowi zrobiło się wstyd.*
? I noticed that Johnny became (inwardly) ashamed (adverb).

Thus, both the involuntary pattern of talking about emotions and the voluntary one suggest a view of emotions different from that embodied in the Anglo folk philosophy with its stress on self-control. The fact that emotion verbs in English are not only rare but also (as noted earlier) tend to develop pejorative connotations provides further linguistic evidence for this folk philosophy. For example, verbs such as *sulk* or *fume* suggest the same combination of voluntariness and external expression as the Polish verbs of emotion discussed earlier, but they also reflect the culture's negative attitude to this kind of uncontrolled emotional reaction.

Again, linguistic evidence parallels in this respect "participant observations" on non-verbal behaviour, such as Hoffman's comment about her friend Penny, who "looks offended when I shake her by the arm in excitement, as if my gesture had been one of aggression instead of friendliness". From an Anglo point of view, behaviour such as Hoffman's is lacking in the necessary restraint and reserve: the emotion itself ("excitement") should have been restrained and harnessed; and whatever the emotion, it should not be allowed to express itself in uncontrolled physical behavior (shaking someone's arm).

From an Anglo cultural point of view, the idea of shaking another person is particularly unacceptable because this action combines uncontrolled emotional expression with violation of another person's bodily autonomy (as well as of their personal space). But even if this kind of assault on another person's territory and bodily integrity is absent, the unchecked flow of emotion translating itself into action is discouraged in the Anglo cultural world while treated as "normal" in Polish culture:

17. *Polish*
[people think:]
when I feel something
I want other people to know what I feel

18. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
when I do something I want to know:
"I do it because I want to do it
(not because I feel something)"

The Polish script (17) reflects a tendency to spontaneous emotional expression, whereas the Anglo script reflects the cultural emphasis on self-control. The Anglo script (18) can be seen as a special case of the more general script of "personal autonomy" (cf. Wierzbicka 1991, 1996b, 1998a):

19. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
when I do something I want to know:
"I do it because I want to do it
not because of anything else"

One might be tempted to propose for Anglo culture an emotional script more directly opposite to the Polish one (especially as far as negative feelings are concerned), along the following lines:

19a. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
when I feel something
I don't always want people to know what I feel

But the apparent Anglo tendency to suppress spontaneous expression of feelings appears to be in fact a by-product of a norm encouraging controlled behaviour. Control over expression of emotions is not the same thing as suppression of emotional expression. To quote one of Lutz's (1990) American informants: "Let me explain control. It's not that you sit there and you take it [some kind of abuse] and, you know, I think controlling them [emotions] is letting them out in the proper time, in the proper place" (p. 9). The norm underlying these comments can be represented as follows:

20. *Anglo-American*
[people think:]
it is good if other people know what I feel
  when I want them to know it
it is good to say what I feel
  when I want other people to know it

4.4 "Spontaneity" and the "living speech" of the face

The metaphor of "the face's living speech" was coined by Hoffman, who reports having experienced the different expectations with respect to "facial life" as another major dimension of difference between Polish and American culture.

> Because I'm not heard, I feel I'm not seen. My words often seem to baffle others . . . Anyway, the back and forth of conversation is different here. People often don't answer each other. But the matt look in their eyes as they listen to me cancels my face, flattens my features. The mobility of my face comes from the mobility of the words coming to the surface and the feelings that drive them. Its vividness is sparked by the locking of an answering gaze, by the quickness of understanding. But now I can't feel how my face lights up from inside; I don't receive from others the reflected movement of its expressions, its living speech. People look past me as I speak. What do I look like, here? Imperceptible, I think; impalpable, neutral, faceless. (p. 147)

Thus, the "spontaneity" of feelings valued (according to Hoffman) in Polish culture in contrast to the more "controlled" approach to feelings in Anglo-American culture concerns also the emotional accompaniment of speech: from a Polish cultural point of view, even when the speaker is not saying anything about his or her feelings, it is good if some feelings are non-verbally expressed, and it is good if the addressee responds to them and reinforces them with appropriate facial expressions of their own. What this means is not controlled management of one's facial expressions but rather permitting the free play of feelings in the speaker's face.

Linguistic evidence supports Hoffman's subjective evidence in a number of ways. To begin with, Polish doesn't have a verb corresponding to *stare* (elaborately glossed in English–Polish dictionaries along the lines of "to look at someone fixedly and impudently"; cf. e.g. Stanisławski 1969). The expression *patrzeć w oczy* "to look in the eyes" has positive connotations in Polish, and unlike the English expression "to look someone in the eye" carries no implications of defiance or readiness for confrontation.

It is interesting to note in this context Jerome Bruner's remarks on the potential dangers of looking other people in the eye:

> As we know, prolonged eye-to-eye contact is a feature of infant–caretaker interaction, one that appears just before infant–caretaker joint attention to objects. It is also known that prolonged eye-to-eye contact is virtually absent in our nearest kin, the chimpanzee. But with good reason. Below man, anything longer than momentary eye contact precipitates attack and threat behavior by the dominant animal – especially in Old World monkeys and baboons – which in turn is a reminder that we should be careful about prolonged eye-to-eye

> contact with human strangers in strange places, like the subway: it will always be overinterpreted. If one is about to propose a general theory about the role of eye contact in human intersubjectivity, one had better be mindful of this troublesome bit of primate evolutionary history. (1990: 163–4)

Bruner is no doubt right. One wonders, though, whether his perspective on eye-contact is not influenced, partly, by cultural factors: that is, by culture-specific Anglo-American norms concerning eye-contact. As noted by Edward T. Hall, in Arabic culture, the norms concerning eye contact are rather different (cf. also Rieschild 1996):

> Arabs who interact with Americans report experiencing a certain flatness traceable in part to a very different use of the eyes in private and in public as well as between friends and strangers. Even though it is rude for a guest to walk around the Arab home eyeing things, Arabs look at each other in ways which seem hostile or challenging to the American. One Arab informant said that he was in constant hot water with Americans because of the way he looked at them without the slightest intention of offending. In fact, he had on several occasions barely avoided fights with American men who apparently thought their masculinity was being challenged because of the way he was looking at them. As noted earlier, Arabs look each other in the eye when talking with an intensity that makes most Americans highly uncomfortable. (1990: 161)

Polish tacit norms concerning eye contact are by no means identical with the Arabic ones (as described by Hall 1990: 161), but they are also different from the main-stream Anglo-American ones. In particular, they require that the speaker looks at least intermittently in the eyes of the addressees. This requires, in turn, that the addressee will meet, again and again, the speaker's gaze; but the emphasis appears to be on the *speaker*'s eyes, and the addressee's gaze is perceived, as Hoffman puts it, as "an answering gaze".

In fact, there is an expression *nie patrzeć w oczy* "not to look in the eyes", which suggests evasion (typically, on the part of the speaker), and has negative implications. A sentence like:

> Mówił nie patrząc jej w oczy.
> "He was speaking without looking into her eyes."

suggests that speaking without looking frequently (if not continuously) into the other person's eyes is abnormal, unpleasant, and suspect.

English shows no evidence of linguistically embedded expectations of this kind. Certainly, occasional eye contact with the addressee is expected, but not looking continuously, or even frequently, into the addressee's eyes. Furthermore, in English it is apparently the addressee

who is expected to be looking at the speaker's face (in a conversational exchange), and not even the addressee is expected to be looking for long stretches, but rather to show willingness to periodically "meet the speaker's eye". Expressions like *he averted his eyes* imply that the addressee is failing to fulfil this minimal expectation of "meeting the speaker's eyes", but do not imply an expectation of frequent and prolonged eye contact.

In Polish culture, the expectation seems to be that the expression of a person's face mirrors their current psychological state, and that to fully understand another person one has to engage not just in verbal dialogue, but also in a "facial dialogue" of the kind referred to by Hoffman. It is therefore important to look at the speaker not only to show that one is listening but also to be able to "read" and respond to the other person's face. In this connection, it is interesting to note descriptions like the following, commonly occurring in Polish literature (examples from *SJP*):

> Jego nieporównanie wyrazista i ruchliwa twarz mieniła się wszystkimi odcieniami uczuć.
> "His incomparably expressive and mobile face reflected all shades of feelings."

Not only people's faces but also their eyes are frequently described in Polish – positively – as extremely *ruchliwe* "mobile", *żywe* "lively" and *wyraziste* "expressive" (expressions which suggest, to use Hoffman's words, a "mobility driven by feelings"). In addition, eyes are described as "shining" (with inner life), as "lively" or "full of fire". For example:

> Oczy nadzwyczajnie ruchliwe rzucały spojrzenia pełne ognia.
> "The intensely expressive (lit. mobile) eyes cast fiery glances."

> Jego giętki, podatny ulotnym odcieniom głos, wyrazista mimika ruchliwej twarzy
> "His supple and subtly modulated voice, the expressive play of his mobile features"

The word *mimika* ("expressive facial behaviour") and the expression *wyrazista mimika* (where the adjective *wyrazista* means by itself "highly expressive") have no counterparts in English.

Furthermore, the word *wyraz* "expression" has a wide range of collocations referring to different emotions which can be read in a person's face. The *SJP* dictionary lists the following:

> Wyraz boleści, cierpienia, smutku, zakłopotania, żalu (na

> twarzy, w twarzy). Wyraz twarzy. Oczy, spojrzenie, usta mają, przybierają jakiś wyraz, tracą wyraz.
> "An expression of pain, suffering, sadness, embarrassment, regret (on the face, in the face). An expression of the face. The eyes, the gaze, the mouth have or assume an expression, or lose some expressions."

The range of common patterns referred to in this passage is illustrated with the following quote:

> Z wyrazem dumy spoglądała dokoła.
> "She was looking around with an expression of pride."

With this kind of cultural expectations, a successful interpersonal interaction requires participants to "watch" each other's faces like movies, and to look "into each other's eyes" while talking – if not continuously then at least frequently. The fact that Polish doesn't have a word like *stare* but does have expressions like *mówić nie patrząc w oczy* "to talk without [continuously] looking into the eyes" provides linguistic evidence for the validity of such perceptions, as does also the use of common expressions like *wyraz twarzy* "the expression of the face" (unlike the technical English *facial expression*), *wyraz oczu* "the expression of the eyes", and (pejorative) *bez wyrazu* "without expression."

All these facts support the model of communication in which it is good if people can "see" what a person feels, and in which what is valued is not a conscious "display" of feeling but a "free play" of feelings in a person's face.

What applies to a person's eyes, and face, applies also to a person's voice: from a Polish cultural point of view, it is good if the voice, too, spontaneously conveys emotional information, whereas from an Anglo point of view it is good if the voice is kept under control.

For example, the adjective *gorący* "hot" and the adverb *gorąco* "hotly" are used in Polish with positive connotations to describe an appealing presence of strong and good feelings in a person's voice or eyes – in marked contrast to the positive connotations of the word *cool* in English, and the negative connotations of expressions like *hot under the collar* or *hot and bothered*. What is particularly striking in this connection is the fact that Polish expressions like *mówić gorąco* "to speak hotly", *prosić gorąco* "to ask hotly", or *dziękować gorąco* "to thank hotly" (all with very positive connotations) have, in most cases, no equivalents in English (one can perhaps *speak passionately*, but not *ask passionately* or *thank passionately*).

The cultural attitudes in question can be represented in the form of the following cultural models:

21. *Polish*
[everyone knows:]
often when a person is saying something
other people can know what this person feels
because they can see this person's face
[people think: this is good]

22. *Polish*
[everyone knows:]
often when a person is saying something
other people can know what this person feels
because they can hear this person's voice
[people think: this is good]

5 Conclusion

Cultures – like languages – are heterogeneous and changeable, but are nonetheless both objectively and subjectively real. The best evidence for their objective reality is linguistic evidence – lexical, phraseological, grammatical – such as that discussed in this chapter.[7] The best evidence for their subjective reality comes from the testimony of bilingual and bicultural writers (for detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1997b).[8] The theory of "cultural scripts" provides a framework within which cultural norms and expectations can be studied in a methodical and intersubjective way.

While aspiring to description which is intersubjectively and interculturally valid, I have not attempted in this chapter to present a fully "objective", neutral, and entirely even-handed treatment of the cultures discussed. Some readers might suspect some sort of pro-Polish bias. I should acknowledge, therefore, that my point of view is indeed subjective and influenced more by my native Polishness than by my thirty-year old immersion in Anglo culture. I do not claim that the treatment of the two cultures in the chapter is even-handed, because I didn't try to produce a full picture of all the differences, concentrating, rather, on those differences which over the years have struck me most; and these, inevitably, do reflect my personal history, experience, and, no doubt, prejudices. (Cf. Wierzbicka 1997b)

Nonetheless, the scripts themselves are phrased, I believe, in an unbiassed way; and if the discussion of the topics were to be extended to cover other areas of difference, the overall picture might well strike the Anglo reader in a different way. In particular, I could develop the theme of the emphasis on "tact", "considerateness", and "kindness" in Anglo culture; and on the relative unimportance of such values to Polish culture.

It is all very well to be sincere, affectionate and spontaneous. But when one considers that the emphasis on such values may be associated with, and indeed lead to, telling people (on impulse) that their views are absolutely wrong, even crazy, that what they say is obvious nonsense, that they look awful, that their haircut doesn't suit them at all, that they "must" do X, Y, and Z, then some Anglo cultural scripts may appear – to an Anglo person – in a more positive light.

For example, as I have discussed in detail elsewhere (Wierzbicka 1994b), Polish particles like *przecież*, *skądże*, *skądże znowu*, *ależ skąd* and *no*, with which Polish conversation is frequently peppered, express messages of the kind "you are obviously wrong". Such attitudes are far less acceptable from an Anglo point of view. It is no accident that there are no comparable particles in English, as there are no particles in Polish comparable to the diplomatic English *well* (e.g. "well, yes"; "well, no"). Similarly, contrasts like that between saying "This doesn't look good on you" and "I like you better in that other outfit" (Hoffman's example) reflect profound differences in underlying cultural assumptions and are linked with different "fundamental schemas" (cf. Shore 1996: 53). Roughly:

Polish
it is good to say what I think
Anglo
it is not always good to say to another person what I think about this person
if I say it this person can feel something bad because of this

Scripts of this kind are always formulated from the insider's point of view. In Shore's (1996: 54–6) terms, they are "actors' models", not "observers' models"; and they are inherently sympathetic – and empathetic – to the insiders' point of view. They try to articulate the "native's" tacit knowledge rather than an outsider's objectivist and experience-distant representations of human experience and competence. At the same time, being formulated in universal human concepts, they can be intelligible to outsiders, too.

Thus, if this chapter reflects a predominantly Polish perspective it does so in the choice of the material discussed, not in the treatment of this material. For a more comprehensive, and therefore, more stereoscopic, presentation see my larger study of cultural scripts (cf. Wierzbicka forthcoming c).