CHAPTER 1

Introduction: feelings, languages, and cultures

1 Emotions or feelings?

According to the biologist Charles Birch (1995: ix), "Feelings are what matter most in life"[1]. While it is debatable whether they really matter "most", they certainly matter a great deal; and it is good to see that after a long period of scholarly neglect, feelings are now at the forefront of interdisciplinary investigations, spanning the humanities, social sciences, and biological sciences.

Some would say: not "feelings", but "emotions" – and the question "which of the two (feelings or emotions)?" plunges us straight into the heart of the central controversy concerning the relationship between human biology on the one hand and language and culture on the other.

Many psychologists appear to be more comfortable with the term "emotion" than "feeling" because "emotions" seem to be somehow "objective". It is often assumed that only the "objective" is real and amenable to rigorous study, and that "emotions" have a biological foundation and can therefore be studied "objectively", whereas feelings cannot be studied at all. (Birch (1995: v) calls this attitude "the flight from subjectivity"; see also Gaylin 1979).

Seventy years ago the founder of behaviourism John Watson proposed the following definition (quoted in Plutchik 1994: 3): "An emotion is an hereditary 'pattern-reaction' involving profound changes of the bodily mechanisms as a whole, but particularly of the visceral and glandular systems". While such purely behaviouristic conceptions of "emotions" have now been repudiated, "emotions" are still often seen as something that, for example, can be measured. Plutchik (1994: 139) himself writes: "Because emotions are complex states of the organism involving feelings, behaviour, impulses, physiological changes and efforts at control, the measurement of emotions is also a complex process".

Many anthropologists, too, prefer to talk about "emotions" rather than "feelings" – in their case not because of the former's "objective" biological foundation but because of their interpersonal, social basis. (See e.g. Lutz 1988; White 1993.)

But the word *emotion* is not as unproblematic as it seems; and by taking the notion of "emotion" as our starting point we may be committing ourselves, at the outset, to a perspective which is shaped by our own native language, or by the language currently predominant in some academic disciplines rather than taking a maximally "neutral" and culture-independent point of view. (Some will say, no doubt: "nothing is neutral, nothing is culture-independent". To avoid getting bogged down in this particular controversy at the outset, I repeat: *maximally* neutral, *maximally* culture-independent.)

The English word *emotion* combines in its meaning a reference to "feeling", a reference to "thinking", and a reference to a person's body. For example, one can talk about a "feeling of hunger", or a "feeling of heartburn", but not about an "emotion of hunger" or an "emotion of heartburn", because the feelings in question are not thought-related. One can also talk about a "feeling of loneliness" or a "feeling of alienation", but not an "emotion of loneliness" or an "emotion of alienation", because while these feelings are clearly related to thoughts (such as "I am all alone", "I don't belong" etc.), they do not suggest any associated bodily events or processes (such as rising blood pressure, a rush of blood to the head, tears, and so on).

In the anthropological literature on "emotions", "feelings" and "body" are often confused, and the word *feelings* is sometimes treated as interchangeable with the expression *bodily feelings*. In fact, some writers try to vindicate the importance of feelings for "human emotions" by arguing for the importance of the body. For example, Michelle Rosaldo (1984: 143) in her ground-breaking work on "emotions" has written, inter alia: "Emotions are thoughts somehow 'felt' in flushes, pulses, 'movements' of our livers, minds, hearts, stomachs, skin. They are *embodied* thoughts, thoughts seeped with the apprehension that 'I am involved'". Quoting this passage with approval, Leavitt (1996: 524) comments: "This apprehension, then, is clearly not simply a cognition, judgment, or model, but is as bodily, as felt, as the stab of a pin or the stroke of a feather". I agree with Rosaldo and Leavitt that some thoughts are linked with feelings and with bodily events, and that in all cultures people are aware of such links and interested in them (to a varying degree). But I do not agree that "feelings" equals "bodily feelings". For example, if one says that one feels "abandoned", or "lost", one is referring to a feeling without referring to anything that happens in the body. Precisely for this reason, one would normally not call such feelings "emotions", because the English word *emotion* requires a combination of all three elements (thoughts, feelings, and bodily events/processes).

In the hypothetical set of universal human concepts, evolved by the

author and colleagues over many years' cross-linguistic investigations (see below, section 8), "feel" is indeed one of the elements, but "emotion" is not. If words such as *emotion* (or, for that matter, *sensation*) are taken for granted as analytical tools, and if their English-based character is not kept in mind, they can reify (for English speakers and English writers) inherently fluid phenomena which could be conceptualized and categorized in many different ways. Phrases such as "the psychology of emotion", or "psychobiological theory of emotion", or "operational definition of emotion" (such as galvanic skin response, GSR) create the impression that "emotion" is an objectively existing category, delimited from other categories by nature itself, and that the concept of "emotion" carves nature at its joints. But even languages culturally (as well as genetically) closely related to English provide evidence of different ways of conceptualizing and categorizing human experience.

For example, in ordinary German there is no word for "emotion" at all. The word usually used as the translation equivalent of the English *emotion*, *Gefühl* (from *fühlen* "to feel") makes no distinction between mental and physical feelings, although contemporary scientific German uses increasingly the word *Emotion*, borrowed from scientific English, while in older academic German the compound *Gemütsbewegung*, roughly "movement of the mind", was often used in a similar sense. (It is interesting to note, for example, that in the bilingual German–English editions of Ludwig Wittgenstein's writings, the word *emotion* used in the English translation stands for Wittgenstein's word *Gemütsbewegung*, not *Emotion*; see e.g. Wittgenstein 1967: 86.) At the same time, the plural form – *Gefühle* – is restricted to thought-related feelings, although – unlike the English *emotion* – it doesn't imply any "bodily disturbances" or processes of any kind. The same is true of Russian, where there is no word corresponding to *emotion*, and where the noun *čuvstvo* (from *čuvstvovat'* "to feel") corresponds to *feeling* whereas the plural form *čuvstva* suggests cognitively based feelings. To take a non-European example, Gerber (1985) notes that Samoan has no word corresponding to the English term *emotion* and relies, instead, on the notion of *lagona* "feeling" (see also Ochs 1986: 258). The French word *sentiment* (unlike the Russian *čuvstvo* and the German *Gefühl*) includes only two of these elements (a feeling and a thought). This is why one can speak in Russian of both a *čuvstvo styda* "a feeling of shame" and a *čuvstvo goloda* "a feeling of hunger", and in German of both a *Schamgefühl* and a *Hungergefühl*, whereas in French one can speak of a *sentiment de honte* (a "mental feeling" of shame) but not a *sentiment de faim* (a "mental feeling of hunger"); and also, why one can speak (in French) of *le sentiment de sa valeur* (a feeling of one's own worth) but not (in English) of the "emotion of one's own worth": one does not expect a feeling of one's own

worth to be associated with any bodily events or processes. (As for the relations between the French word *émotion*, the Italian *emozione*, and the Spanish *emoción*, see Wierzbicka 1995c.)

Thus, while the concept of "feeling" is universal and can be safely used in the investigation of human experience and human nature[2] (see below, section 8; see also chapter 7), the concept of "emotion" is culture-bound and cannot be similarly relied on.

Of course scholars who debate the nature of "emotions" are interested in something other than just "feelings". In fact, the notion that "emotions" must not be reduced to "feelings" is one of the few ideas that advocates of different approaches to "emotion" (biological, cognitive, and socio-cultural) tend to strongly agree on (cf. e.g. Schachter and Singer 1962; Solomon 1984: 248; Lutz 1986: 295). Since, however, it is the concept of "feel" (rather than the concept of "emotion") which is universal and untinted by our own culture, it is preferable to take it as the starting point for any exploration of the area under consideration. This need not preclude us from investigating other phenomena at the same time. We can ask, for example: When people feel something, what happens in their bodies? What do they do? What do they think? What do they say? Do they think they know what they feel? Can they identify their feelings for themselves and others? Does their interpretation of what they feel depend on what they think they *should* feel, or on what they think people around them think they should feel? How are people's reported or presumed feelings related to what is thought of, in a given society, as "good" or "bad"? How are they related to social interaction? And so on.

Nothing illustrates the confusion surrounding the term *emotion* better than the combination of claims that emotions are not cognitively based with the practice of including in the category of "emotions" only those feelings which in fact *are* related to thoughts (and excluding those which are not). For example, Izard (1984: 24) explicitly states that "emotion has no cognitive component. I maintain that the emotion process is bounded by the feeling that derives *directly* from the activity of the neurochemical substrates". Yet as examples of "emotions" Izard mentions "shame", "anger", "sadness", and so on – not, for example, "pain", "hunger", "thirst", "itch", or "heartburn". In practice, then, Izard, too, distinguishes cognitively based (i.e. thought-related) feelings (such as "shame" or "sadness") from purely bodily feelings (such as "hunger" or "itch") and calls only the former "emotions". While denying that "emotions" are cognitively based he doesn't go so far as to include among them "hunger" or "thirst". On what basis, then, does he distinguish his "emotions" from hunger, thirst, or pain? The very meanings of words such as *shame*, *anger*, or *sadness* on the one hand, and *hunger* or

thirst on the other draw a distinction between feelings based on thoughts and purely bodily feelings; and the word *emotion*, too, is in practice only used with respect to thought-related feelings, never with respect to bodily feelings such as hunger or thirst. Thus, in drawing a line between feelings such as "shame" or "sadness" on the one hand and "hunger" or "thirst" on the other, even "anti-cognitivist" scholars like Izard accept in practice the distinction drawn in everyday conceptions. Yet, at the same time, they reject this distinction at a theoretical level!

A hundred years after the publication of William James' famous paper "What is an emotion?" some scholars still argue about the "right" answer to James' question, instead of rephrasing the question itself. For example, Marks (1995: 3) writes: "What, then, is (an) emotion? The most obvious answer is 'A feeling'", and then he goes on to discuss "the apparent inadequacy of the feeling view of emotion", citing, among others, the philosopher Robert Solomon's celebrated statement that "an emotion *is* a judgement" (1976: 185). At the end, Marks rejects both the "feeling view of emotions" and what he calls "the New View of Emotions [as Judgement]" in favour of what he calls "an even Newer View . . . that emotions are not just things in the head but essentially involve culture" (p. 5).

But there is absolutely no reason why we should have to make such choices, linking "emotion" either with bodily processes, or with feelings, or with thoughts, or with culture. The very meaning of the English word *emotion* includes both a reference to feelings and a reference to thoughts (as well as a reference to the body), and culture often shapes both ways of thinking and ways of feeling. All these things can be and need to be studied: ways of thinking, ways of feeling, ways of living, the links between ways of living and ways of thinking, the links between thoughts and feelings, the links between what people feel and what happens inside their bodies, and so on. But to study all these, we need a clear and reliable conceptual framework, and the English word *emotion* cannot serve as the cornerstone of such a framework. It is good to see, therefore, that even within psychology the practice of taking the word *emotion* for granted is now increasingly being questioned. George Mandler, who first tried to draw attention to the problem more than twenty years ago (see Mandler 1975), has recently expressed surprise at the fact that "something as vague and intellectually slippery as emotion" could have been used for so long, by so many scholars, as a seemingly unproblematic notion (Mandler 1997: vii). Speaking specifically of what is often referred to as the "facial expression of emotions", Mandler (1997: xii) asks rhetorically: "Are *expression* and *emotion* even the right concepts, or has our everyday language frozen in place ideas that were only half-baked and prescientific?"

In a similar vein, Russell (1997: 19) writes: "'Emotion' is an ordinary, everyday word understood by all, rather than a precise concept honed through scientific analysis. Perhaps 'emotion' is a concept that could be dispensed with in scientific discourse (except as a folk concept requiring rather than providing explanation)". Referring, in particular, to the "facial expression of emotion", Russell (ibid.) concludes: "we have probably reached the point where further usefulness of thinking of facial expressions in terms of emotion requires a clarification of the concept of emotion itself". (Cf. also Ginsburg 1997.) As many writers on "emotion" have begun to agree, the point can be generalized: progress of research into "human emotions" requires clarification of the concept of "emotion" itself. For example, Lisa Feldman-Barrett (1998: v) in her recent article entitled "The future of emotion research" notes that "there is still little consensus on what emotion is or is not", and states: "The future of affective science will be determined by our ability to establish the fundamental nature of what we are studying".

But calls for clarification and explanation of the concept of "emotion" raise some crucial methodological questions. To explain the concept of "emotion" (or any other concept) we have to render it in terms of some other concepts, and our proposed explanations will only be clear if those other concepts are themselves clear; if they are not, they, in turn, will also need to be explained, and this can involve us in infinite regress. It is essential, therefore, that our explanation of "emotion" be couched in terms which are not equally problematic and obscure. If we do not anchor our explanations in something that is self-explanatory, or at least more self-explanatory than the concept we are trying to explain, they can only be pseudo-explanations (as "explanations" in scholarly literature often are). To quote Leibniz:

> If nothing could be understood in itself nothing at all could ever be understood. Because what can only be understood via something else can be understood only to the extent to which that other thing can be understood, and so on; accordingly, we can say that we have understood something only when we have broken it down into parts which can be understood in themselves. (Couturat 1903: 430; my translation)

This basic point, which in modern times has often been lost sight of, was made repeatedly in the writings on language by the great French thinkers of the seventeenth century such as Descartes, Pascal, and Arnauld. For example, Descartes wrote:

> I declare that there are certain things which we render more obscure by trying to define them, because, since they are very simple and clear, we cannot know and perceive them better than by themselves. Nay, we must place in the number of those chief errors that can be commit-

> ted in the sciences, the mistakes committed by those who would try to define what ought only to be conceived, and who cannot distinguish the clear from the obscure, nor discriminate between what, in order to be known, requires and deserves to be defined, from what can be best known by itself. (1931[1701]: 324)

In my 1996 book *Semantics: Primes and Universals* I illustrated this point with a recent discussion of the concept IF by two prominent researchers into child language who start by saying that "it is difficult to provide a precise definition of the word *if*", and at the end conclude that "The fundamental meaning of *if*, in both logic and ordinary language, is one of implication" (French and Nelson 1985: 38). These statements reflect two common assumptions: first, that it is possible to define all words – including *if*; and second, that if a word seems difficult to define, one can always reach for a scientific-sounding word of Latin origin (such as *implication)* to "define" it with. These assumptions are not merely false; jointly, they constitute a major stumbling block for the semantic analysis of any domain. One cannot define all words, because the very idea of "defining" implies that there is not only something to be defined but also something to define it with.

What applies to *if* and *implication*, applies also to *feel* and *emotion*: one can define *implication* via *if*, and *emotion* via *feel*, but not the other way around, as was attempted, for example, in the following explanation: "'feeling' is our subjective awareness of our own emotional state" (Gaylin 1979: 2). If someone doesn't know what *feel* means then they wouldn't know what an *emotional state* means either.

2 Breaking the "hermeneutical circle"

There are of course many scholars who claim that nothing is truly self-explanatory and who appear to accept and even to rejoice in the idea that there is no way out of "the hermeneutic circle". Charles Taylor (1979[1971]: 34) applied this idea specifically to emotions when he wrote:

> The vocabulary defining meaning – words like "terrifying", "attractive" – is linked with that describing feeling – "fear", "desire" – and that describing goals – "safety", "possession".
>
> Moreover, our understanding of these terms moves inescapably in a hermeneutical circle. An emotion term like "shame", for instance, essentially refers us to a certain kind of situation, the "shameful", or "humiliating" . . . But this situation in its turn can only be identified in relation to the feelings which it provokes . . . We have to be within the circle.
>
> An emotion term like "shame" can only be explained by reference to other concepts which in turn cannot be understood without

> reference to shame. To understand these concepts we have to be in on a certain experience, we have to understand a certain language, not just of words, but also a certain language of mutual action and communication, by which we blame, exhort, admire, esteem each other. In the end we are in on this because we grow up in the ambit of certain common meanings. But we can often experience what it is like to be on the outside when we encounter the feeling, action and experiential meaning language of another civilization. Here there is no translation, no way of explaining in other, more accessible concepts. We can only catch on by getting somehow into their way of life, if only in imagination.

There is an important truth in what Taylor is saying here, but it is a partial truth, and it is distorted by being presented as the whole truth. It is true that there are "communities of meaning" sharing the familiarity with certain common meanings, such as, for example, the meaning of the Russian words *toska* (roughly, "melancholy-cum-yearning") or *žalet'* (roughly, "to lovingly pity someone"; for detailed discussion, see Wierzbicka 1992a), or the Ifaluk concept *fago* (roughly, "sadness / compassion / love", cf. Lutz 1995). It is also true that verbal explanations of such concepts cannot replace experiential familiarity with them and with their functioning within the local "stream of life" (to use Wittgenstein's phrase; cf. Malcolm 1966: 93). But it is not true that no verbal explanations illuminating to outsiders are possible at all.

The crucial point is that while most concepts (including *toska*, *žalet'*, *fago*, *shame*, *emotion*, *implication*) are complex (decomposable) and culture-specific, others are simple (non-decomposable) and universal (e.g. FEEL, WANT, KNOW, THINK, SAY, DO, HAPPEN, IF); and that the former can be explained in terms of the latter. For example, while there is no word in English matching the Russian word *toska*, one can still explain to a native speaker of English what *toska* means, relying on concepts shared by these two languages (as well as all other languages of the world): it is how one feels when one wants some things to happen and knows that they cannot happen (for detailed discussion, see Wierzbicka 1992a).[3] Crucially, this (simplified) definition can be translated word for word into Russian, and tested with "ordinary" native speakers.

Shared, universal concepts such as FEEL, WANT, KNOW, THINK, SAY, DO, HAPPEN, and IF (in Russian ČUVSTVOVAT', XOTET', ZNAT', DUMAT', SKAZAT', SDELAT', SLUČIT'SJA, ESLI) constitute the bedrock of intercultural understanding. These concepts are the stepping stones by which we can escape the "hermeneutical circle".

Needless to say, not everything worth knowing can be explained in words. But as Wittgenstein (1988[1922]: 27) put it, "what can be said at all can be said clearly". And even if someone wished to insist that concepts such as FEEL, WANT, SAY, THINK, DO, or IF are not entirely clear

to them either, they would have to admit that they are clearer and more intelligible than *emotion*, *sensation*, *volition*, *locution*, *cognition*, *agency*, or *implication*. And it is indisputably more intelligible to say, for example, that "I want to do something and can't do it" than to say that I experience "a lack of goal conductiveness" (cf. chapter 4).

This doesn't mean that complex and technical words should always be *replaced* by simple and easily comprehensible ones. For example, Izard (1977, 1991) may have good reasons for describing "emotions" as "consisting of neuro-physiological, behavioural, and subjective components" (cf. Russell and Fernández-Dols 1997a: 19) rather than in terms of "feeling something, doing something, and having something happen inside one's body". But complex and technical concepts such as "neuro-physiological", "behavioural", and "subjective" have to be introduced and explained, at some stage, via intuitively intelligible concepts such as "body", "happen", "do", and "feel", rather than the other way around.

Generally speaking, scientific discourse – and in particular scientific discourse about "human emotions", "human subjectivity", "human emotional experience", or "human communication" – has to build on ordinary discourse, and on words intelligible to those ordinary mortals whose "subjectivity" it seeks to investigate and explain.

Emotion shouldn't be taken for granted in scientific discourse, not so much because it is "an ordinary, everyday word understood by all" (and not "a precise concept honed through scientific analysis") but rather because it is a fairly complex and culture-specific word which does require explanation. It is not "understood by all" because, as mentioned earlier, it doesn't have exact equivalents in other languages (not even in other European languages such as German, Russian, or French); and it is not "understood by all" because children have to learn it on the basis of a prior understanding of words such as *feel*, *think*, *know*, *want*, and *body*.

One can imagine a child asking an adult: "What does the word *emotion* mean?" or "What does the word *sensation* mean?" but not "What does the word *feel* mean?" or "What does the word *want* mean?" And the answer to the questions about the meanings of *emotion* and *sensation* would have to be based on the concept "feel". For example, one might say to the child: "*Sensation* means that you feel something in some part of your body, e.g. you feel cold or itchy, and *emotion* means that you feel sad, or happy, or angry – something to do with what you think".

"Precise concepts honed through scientific analysis" are of course necessary, too; but to have any explanatory power they have to build on simple and intuitively clear concepts such as FEEL and WANT, which a child picks up in social interaction *before* any verbal explanations can be offered and understood.

Scientific discourse about "humans" can have an explanatory value only if it can address questions which arise on the basis of people's fundamental conceptual models, models which cannot be reduced to anything else. Semantic investigations into English and a great many other languages suggest that "ordinary people" conceive of a human individual as someone who can think, feel, want, and know something; and who can also say things and do things. The universal availability of words expressing precisely these concepts (e.g., not "believe" but "think"; not "intention" or "volition" but "want"; not "emotion", "sensation", or "experience", but "feel") allows us to say that these particular concepts (THINK, KNOW, FEEL, WANT, SAY, and DO) represent different and irreducible aspects of a universal "folk model of a person" (cf. Bruner 1990; D'Andrade 1987).

Complex and language-specific notions such as, for example, *belief*, *intention*, *emotion*, *sensation*, or *mood* have to be defined on the basis of those fundamental, universal, and presumably innate "indefinables". Even concepts as central to the traditional scientific pursuits carried out through the medium of the English language as "mind" have to be acknowledged for what they are – cultural artifacts of one particular language and tradition, no more scientifically valid than the German *Geist*, the Russian *duša*, or the Samoan *loto* (cf. Wierzbicka 1992a and 1993a; Mandler 1975). All such concepts can of course be retained in scientific discourse if they are found to be useful – but they can only be truly useful if they are previously anchored in something more fundamental and more self-explanatory (also to children, and to speakers of other languages).

3 "Experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts

The distinction between "experience-near" and "experience-distant" concepts was introduced into human sciences by Clifford Geertz (1984[1976]: 227–8) (who credited it to the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut). To quote:

> An experience-near concept is, roughly, one which an individual – a patient, a subject, in our case an informant – might himself naturally and effortlessly use to define what he and his fellows see, feel, think, imagine, and so on, and which he would readily understand when similarly applied by others. An experience-distant concept is one which various types of specialist – an analyst, an experimenter, an ethnographer, even a priest or an ideologist – employ to forward their scientific, philosophical, or practical aims. "Love" is an experience-near concept; "object cathesis" is an experience-distant one.

As Geertz (ibid.) points out, the distinction is not absolute but a matter of degree; for example, "'fear' is experience-nearer than 'phobia', and 'phobia' experience-nearer than 'ego-dissontic'".

On the face of it, it would seem obvious that "experience-near" concepts like "love" or "fear" throw more light on human "emotional" experience than "experience-distant" ones like "object cathexis" or "ego-dissontic". But the catch is that experience-near concepts like "love" and "fear" are language-specific and so cannot give us a handle on human experience in general. To quote Geertz (1984[1976]: 124) again:

> Confinement to experience-near concepts leaves an ethnographer awash in immediacies as well as entangled in vernacular. Confinement to experience-distant ones leaves him stranded in abstractions and smothered in jargon. The real question . . . is what roles the two kinds of concepts play in anthropological analysis. To be more exact: How, in each case, should they be deployed so as to produce an interpretation of the way a people live which is neither imprisoned within their mental horizons, an ethnography of witchcraft as written by a witch, nor systematically deaf to the distinctive tonalities of witchcraft as written by a geometer?

Fortunately, it is not the case that *all* experience-near concepts are language-specific and that their use has to "entangle us in the vernacular". For example, concepts like FEEL, WANT, and THINK are experience-near (unlike *affect*, *volition*, or *cognition*), and yet using them in our explanations or definitions we do not get "entangled in the vernacular", because "lexical exponents" of these concepts can be readily found in every language.

Thus, we are not forced to choose in our discussions of "human emotions" between, on the one hand, experience-near but language-specific concepts such as the Russian *toska*, the Ifaluk *fago*, the German *Schadenfreude*, or the English *embarrassment* (see chapter 2, section 6) and on the other, language-independent but experience-distant expressions such as "object cathexis" or "ego-dissontic". By explaining concepts like *toska*, *fago*, *Schadenfreude*, or *embarrassment* in terms of universal concepts such as FEEL, THINK, WANT, and HAPPEN (as illustrated earlier) we can have our cake and eat it too, for concepts of this kind are both experience-near and readily translatable into any other language (as are also their combinations like the one illustrated in the definition of *toska*).

What applies to particular "emotion concepts" such as *toska*, *Schadenfreude*, or *embarrassment*, applies also to the concept of *emotion* in general. While *emotion* is not as experience-distant as its more technical (and somewhat dated) substitute *affect*, it is not as experience-near as

feel. At the same time, it is not the experience-near concept *feel* which would entangle us in the idiosyncrasies of the English vernacular, but the (relatively) experience-distant concept *emotion*. As Russell (1997: 19) has put it, *emotion* is a "folk concept requiring rather than providing explanations"; and to be truly explanatory, our explanation of this concept has to be phrased in terms of concepts which themselves do not require any further explanation (because there is nothing simpler or clearer to explain them with).

In this book I will, nonetheless, use the word *emotion* (generally either in italics or in inverted commas), because the book is written in English and *emotion* is an important and convenient English word; I will not, however, *rely* on this word and treat it as an unproblematic analytical tool; and I will be using it as an abbreviation for, roughly speaking, "feelings based on thoughts". On the other hand, I *will* use as unproblematic analytical tools words like *feel, want*, and *happen* (in their basic and indefinable meanings), which stand for concepts that are both experience-near and – as linguistic evidence suggests – universal.

4 Describing feelings through prototypes

In literature, feelings are frequently described by means of comparisons: the hero felt as a person might feel in the following situation (description follows). Some examples from Tolstoy's novel *Anna Karenina* (for more detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1973; the quotes below are from Louise and Aylmer Maude's translation, see Tolstoy 1970[1918]):

> [At the station, Vronsky, who is in love with Anna, catches sight of Anna's husband]
> Vronsky . . . had such a disagreeable sensation as a man tortured by thirst might feel on reaching a spring and finding a dog, sheep, or pig in it, drinking the water and making it muddy. (p. 97)

> He [Anna's husband] now felt like a man who on coming home finds his house locked against him. "But perhaps the key can still be found", thought Karenin. (p. 132)

> [Anna has finally left her husband]
> He felt like a man who has just had a tooth drawn which has been hurting him a long time. (p. 254)

The same mode of description is also often used in everyday discourse, as well as in popular songs and other similar texts. A simple example comes from a blues song: "I feel like a motherless child". Much could of course be written about "what it means to feel like a motherless child", but the expression "I feel like . . . " itself cannot be

defined or explained any further: it is as simple and clear as anything can be. There is no point in trying to define or explain the meaning of "I", "feel", "like", or the combination "I feel like (this)". The understanding of the whole line depends not only on the assumption that one knows (or can imagine) how "motherless children" feel, but also that the meaning of the expression "I feel like (this)" is intuitively clear.

But while "feeling" cannot be defined, "ordinary people" generally assume that the way one feels *can* be described and that one *can* tell other people how one feels. There are many ways of describing to other people how one feels but most of them can be reduced to two basic modes (a third mode will be discussed later): (1) one can tell other people that one "feels good" or that one "feels bad", and (2) one can tell other people that one feels like a person feels in a certain situation and then identify, in one way or another, that prototypical situation. If I tell someone that I "feel wonderful", or that I "feel awful", I am following the first mode of describing feelings. If I tell them that I "feel like a motherless child", or that I "feel lost", or that I "feel abandoned", I am following the second mode.

In addition to "feeling good", "feeling bad", and "feeling like this" (with some reference point for "this" provided) other ways of describing "how I feel" are of course also open to us: one can say, for example, that one "feels sad" or "feels angry"; and also, that one "feels hungry", "feels hot", "feels itchy", "feels tired", or "feels sleepy". But ready-made labels for describing feelings are usually based on the same two basic modes.

For example, the expression "to feel hungry" is a conventional abbreviation (encoded as such in the English language) for saying, roughly speaking, that one feels like a person does if he or she hasn't eaten anything for a long time and wants to eat something because of that. Using a standardized (but still intuitively intelligible) mode of semantic representation, we can portray the meaning of expressions like "feel hungry" as follows:

I felt hungry. =
I felt something
    sometimes a person doesn't eat anything for a long time
    afterwards this person feels something bad because of this
    this person wants to eat something
I felt like this

I felt tired. =
I felt something
    sometimes a person does many things for a long time

afterwards this person feels something bad because of this
this person doesn't want to do anything for some time
I felt like this

I felt sleepy. =
I felt something
sometimes a person doesn't sleep for a long time
afterwards this person feels something because of this
this person wants to sleep
I felt like this

Descriptive labels like *sad*, *angry*, *afraid*, or *guilty* differ, of course, from those like *hungry*, *tired*, or *sleepy* in some important respects (to be discussed below), but they, too, rely on the two basic modes of describing feelings, that is, the "feel good/bad" mode, and the "feel like this" mode. For example, to "feel guilty" means, roughly, to "feel bad, like a person does who thinks: I have done something (bad), something bad happened because of this". Using, again, the standardized mode of semantic description we could represent this as follows:

I felt guilty. =
I felt something because I thought something
sometimes a person thinks:
"I did something
something bad happened because of this"
because this person thinks this, this person feels something bad
I felt (something) like this because I thought something like this

I felt afraid. =
I felt something because I thought something
sometimes a person thinks:
"something bad can happen to me now
I don't want this to happen
because of this I want to do something
I don't know what I can do"
because this person thinks this, this person feels something bad
I felt (something) like this because I thought something like this

As these formulae illustrate, expressions like *feel guilty* or *feel afraid* can be defined via a "prototype", describing, in very general terms, a kind of situation (or a "scenario"), associated in people's minds with a recognizable kind of feeling.[4]

The main difference between words like *guilty* and *afraid* on the one hand and words like *hungry* or *sleepy* on the other has to do, roughly speaking, with the "cognitive" character of the former and the "non-cognitive" character of the latter. What this means is that the prototypical scenario serving as a reference point for the phrase "feel like this" (e.g. in "I felt like this") is formulated in the case of words like *guilty* or *afraid* in terms of somebody's thoughts ("sometimes a person thinks: . . ."), whereas in the case of words like *hungry*, *sleepy*, or *tired* there is no reference to thoughts. (Cf. Wittgenstein (1967: 88e): "A thought rouses emotions [*Gemütsbewegungen*] in me (fear, sorrow etc.), not bodily pain".) In addition, in the case of *hungry* or *sleepy* (but not *tired*) there are also references to somebody's body (implicit in the meaning of the words *eat* and *sleep*).

The very fact that besides words with bodily references like *hungry* and *sleepy* and words with references to thoughts such as *afraid* or *guilty* there are also words like *tired*, which refer neither to the body nor to thoughts but which nonetheless do refer to a kind of feeling, highlights the futility of attempts (cf. e.g. Coulter 1986) to ascribe two different meanings to *feel*, a physical one (as in *hungry*) and a mental one (as in *guilty*): *tired* is neither necessarily "physical" nor necessarily "mental", yet it does imply that one "feels" something (in the basic and undifferentiated sense of the word *feel*, which we find in every language).

The distinction between "thought-based" feelings and other kinds of feelings is of course a valid and an important one. It has to be recognized, however, that this distinction is based not on two allegedly different meanings of the word *feel* (or its equivalents in other languages) but on the kind of prototypical scenario implied by a given "feeling word": some words, e.g. *afraid* and *guilty* in English, imply a thought-related scenario, whereas others, e.g., *hungry* and *tired* in English, imply a scenario not based on thoughts; and *hungry*, though not *tired*, implies, in addition, a scenario related specifically to a person's body.

As I will discuss in detail in chapter 7, the remarkable facts are that, first, all languages have a general, undifferentiated word for FEEL (covering both thought-related and not-thought-related kinds of feelings), and that, second, all languages have some words for some particular kinds of thought-related feelings (e.g. *afraid* and *guilty* in English and *toska* in Russian). The meanings of such words are language-specific and, generally speaking, do not match across languages and cultures. Every language, however, has lexically encoded some scenarios involving both thoughts and feelings and serving as a reference point for the identification of what the speakers of this language see as distinct kinds of feelings. For example, Russian has no word for *guilt*,[5]

and of course English has no word for *toska*; but both *guilt* and *toska* identify what the speakers of the language see as a specific kind of feeling, associated with an identifiable cognitive scenario.

Since the cognitive scenarios linked with *guilty* and *toska* can be stated in the same, universal human concepts (such as FEEL, WANT, BAD, DO, and so on), these scenarios can be understood by cultural outsiders, and the kinds of feeling associated with them can be identified, explained, and compared; and both the similarities and differences between scenarios lexicalized in different languages can be pinpointed. But the very possibility of comparisons rests on the availability of a universal *tertium comparationis*, provided by universal concepts like FEEL, WANT, BAD, GOOD, or DO, and universally available configurations of concepts such as, for example, "I feel like this".

Importantly, the same *tertium comparationis* can also be used for comparing feelings described in a third mode available in many languages and cultures, linking thought-related feelings and "felt" bodily processes. This mode can be illustrated with Charlotte Brontë's (1971[1847]: 14) description of what happened to Jane Eyre when she was locked in a room believed to be haunted and when she saw a beam of light that she thought was a ghost:

> My heart beat thick, my head grew hot; a sound filled my ears, which I deemed the rushing of wings; something seemed near me; I was oppressed, suffocated; endurance broke down; I rushed to the door and shook the lock in desperate effort.

Gaylin (1979: 47), who quotes this description, seems to have no doubt that there is an accurate label to describe it: "it is horror that she is experiencing", but even if Jane's thought-related feelings can indeed be loosely described as "horror" (for a detailed analysis of "horror" and related concepts see chapter 2) the passage implies also that those thought-related feelings were associated with some bodily events, and that these bodily events could be felt, too (as we feel, for example, our movements; cf. Wittgenstein 1967: 85e). Schematically (the first person reflects Jane's point of view):

(a) I felt something because I thought something
(b) when I felt this some things were happening inside my body
(c) I could feel these things happening

Since the bodily feelings in component (c) co-occur with the thought-related ones, the two can be perceived by the experiencer as a global experience and the description of the bodily events may be used as a way of characterizing one's state of mind.

It is possible, and indeed likely, that such a "global" way of describing a person's thought-related feelings is used (to a varying degree) in all cultures. But it is of course not the only way, and not necessarily the dominant one. (For another major mode of describing feelings, based on "bodily images" such as "heart-broken", "blood-boiling", or "a heavy heart", see chapter 7.)

5. "Emotions": disruptive episodes or vital forces that mould our lives?

There is a tradition within Anglo academic psychology which tends to be hostile to "emotions". Fehr and Russell (1984: 473) have illustrated this culture-specific attitude with the following characteristic sentences from an English-language introductory psychology textbook:

> A state of emotion is recognized by its holder as a departure from his or her normal state of composure; at the same time there are physical changes that can be detected objectively.
>
> When sufficiently intense, emotion can seriously impair the processes that control organized behavior.
>
> Sometimes emotion is hard to control.
>
> Emotion accompanies motivated behavior; the effect can be facilitating or interfering.

Sentences of this kind, seemingly objective and scientific, are in fact loaded with unconscious cultural assumptions and saturated with the values of a powerful stream within Anglo-American culture (arguably, the dominant stream), and reading them it is hard not to think of Catherine Lutz's (1988) provocative title "Ethnopsychology compared to what?" The basic assumption is that a person's "normal state" is a state of "composure", and that an emotion constitutes a departure from a "normal state".

It would be difficult, however, to find evidence for such assumptions in, for example, mainstream Russian, Italian, or German culture. Similar *attitudes* could no doubt be found anywhere, but the cultural premiss taking such attitudes for granted and treating them as background assumptions, is culture-specific, and, as I will illustrate below, it is reflected in the English language. On the other hand, there is ample evidence showing that, for example, from the point of view of traditional Russian culture, states such as "joy", "worry", "sadness", "sorrow", "grief", "delight", and so on constitute most people's normal

state, and that an absence of "emotions" would be seen as indicating a deadening of a person's *duša* ("heart/soul"). In fact, experiences comparable to "joy", "sadness", or "anger" are often conceptualized in Russian as inner activities in which one engages rather than as states which one passively undergoes, and so they are often designated by verbs rather than adjectives. Some examples: *radovat'sja* "to rejoice" (in English archaic), *grustit'* (from *grust'*, roughly "sadness"), *toskovat'* (from *toska* "melancholy-cum-longing"), *serdit'sja* (roughly, "to be angry", but a verb, like *to rage* in English), *stydit'sja* (roughly "to be ashamed"), and so on (for detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1992a and 1995a). The cultural ideal of "composure" as a person's "normal state" is alien to mainstream Russian culture (cf. Wierzbicka 1989, 1990a, and 1992a and the references cited there; see also chapter 5).

It is also interesting to compare the characteristic "Anglo" attitude to "emotions" reflected in the sentences quoted from the psychology textbooks with that reflected, for example, in Goethe's reference to "glorious feelings":

> Die uns das Leben gaben, herrliche Gefühle
> Erstarren in dem irdischen Gewühle.
>
> The fine emotions whence our lives we mold
> Lie in the earthly tumult dumb and cold.
> (Faust, Pt.1, sc.1, 1.286, quoted in Stevenson 1949: 661)

From Goethe's point of view, *herrliche Gefühle* ("glorious feelings") are not something that has to be controlled or something that threatens to impair, or interfere with, "organized behavior"; rather, they are positive forces that "give us life".

Of course "Anglo" culture in general, and "Anglo emotionology" in particular, is heterogeneous and changeable (cf. e.g. P. Stearns 1994; Stearns and Stearns 1986), and in any case, individual scholars are free to side with Goethe rather than with the psychology textbooks quoted above, as the following passage written by (the American philosopher) Robert Solomon (1995: 257) illustrates: "Emotions are not just disruptions of our otherwise calm and reasonable experience; they are at the very heart of that experience, determining our focus, influencing our interests, defining the dimensions of our world . . . Emotions . . . lie at the very heart of ethics, determining our values, focusing our vision, influencing our every judgement, giving meaning to our lives." But in any culture, in any epoch, the prevailing "emotionology" finds its reflection in language, and any counter-emotionology must define itself with reference to the prevailing one (cf. e.g. Lutz 1990). For example, while feminist thought in America has challenged the dominant Anglo

attitudes to feelings and sought to place more value on them, it has had to define itself with reference to those traditional attitudes; and, moreover, it is easier to challenge overt ideologies than the implicit ones which have found their reflection even in some terms of everyday discourse, and have become imperceptible (as the air we breathe).

For example, there is a certain unconscious "ideology" written into the English word *emotional* – an "ideology" which assumes that showing feelings over which one has no control is a departure from "normal" behaviour. The word has pejorative overtones, and even when it is used in a "tolerant" tone it still implies that there is something there, in the "emotional outburst", which needs to be excused (the loss of "control" over one's feelings and over their display). There are no words analogous to *emotional* in German, French, Italian, or Russian. An individual speaker of English may feel out of sympathy with the perspective reflected in this word and may not use it herself, but she cannot erase it at will from the English lexicon.

The perspective on feelings and their manifestation which is reflected in psychology textbook phrases like "departure from the normal state of composure" is also reflected, in a more subtle way, in the ordinary English word *upset*, which, unlike *sad*, doesn't have equivalents in other European languages. The hidden metaphor of an "upset" position of normal equilibrium (as in an upset vase) is highly suggestive: it implies that the "bad feeling", over which the experiencer has no control, is viewed as a temporary departure from a "normal" state. To quote Gaylin (1979: 175):

> The central image in the feeling of upset is one of disorder and disarray. The synonyms for feeling upset all include a sense of confusion, and an interruption of the normal control and orderliness of life . . . We tend to feel upset when we have a sense that our normal orderly control over our lives is threatened. The feeling of upset suggests a thinness of our defense mechanisms, so that we perceive ourselves as particularly vulnerable to a shake-up, an explosion, or an eruption of emotion. Whatever initiated the feeling of being at sixes and sevens, the risk perceived is not from the original stimulus but from our sense that we are losing control.

Gaylin's comments are perceptive, and yet he misses one important point: that the very idea of "feeling upset" is a cultural creation, and that the central concern with "losing control" reflects preoccupations which are anything but universal. The point is all the more instructive in that the main thrust of Gaylin's book is anti-behaviourist, denouncing the widespread preoccupation with "the orderly charts, statistics, and physiological measurements that have come to represent the academic world of emotion" (p. 425).[6]

The perspective on human feelings which sees them as "disruptive episodes" is also reflected in Paul Ekman's (1992a: 186) suggestion (based partly on the distinction between "emotions" and "moods") that "emotions are typically a matter of seconds, not minutes, hours or days". It also appears to reify the distinction drawn by the English lexicon between *emotion* and *mood*, for which French and Italian, for example, have no equivalent.[7] Ekman comments: "It may be that under exceptional circumstances a single emotion endures for more than seconds or minutes, but I think it more likely that close inspection would reveal that the same emotion is being repeatedly evoked." But whose "close inspection" does Ekman have in mind, the experiencer's or the psychologist's? The following quote provides an answer to this question:

> My proposal that emotions are typically a matter of seconds, not minutes or hours, is supported by some preliminary evidence. Examining the duration of both expressive and physiological changes during spontaneous emotional events suggests a short time span. When subjects have reported experiencing an emotion for 15 or 20 minutes, and I have had access to a videotaped record of their preceding behaviour, I found that they showed multiple expression of that emotion. My interpretation of such incidents is that people summate in their verbal report what was actually a series of repeated but discrete emotion episodes.

Thus, when the person experiencing an "emotion" reports a 15 or 20 minutes' duration, Ekman assumes that the report is inaccurate and that in fact a series of very brief, discrete "emotion episodes" took place. But while an outsider (in this case, a scientist) may be able to gather data about my facial behaviour, or about the physiological changes in my body which accompany the feeling, this will not give him access to the feelings as such, let alone privileged access more reliable than that of the person directly involved.

There is no reason to assume, then, that feelings (rather than muscle contractions or physiological changes in the body) are a matter of seconds (rather than minutes or hours). The idea that – despite people's introspective reports – their feelings must have a very brief duration, reflects a strong behaviourist bias, assisted, so to speak, by the (culturally shaped) semantics of the English word *emotion*: were Ekman using the English word *feelings*, or the German word *Gefühle*, or the Russian word *čuvstva*, he would probably be less likely to restrict the duration of the phenomena in question to "seconds": even if it were true that human feelings are associated with repeated episodes of muscular or other physiological changes, there would not be the same temptation to assume that what applies to the muscles must also apply

to feelings. There would also be less temptation to speak of feelings as discrete entities, as in the case of Ekman's phrase "a single emotion". (Of course Ekman doesn't say that "feelings" are typically a matter of seconds, only that "emotions" are; but in doing so he unwittingly identifies "emotions" with muscular changes and leaves the feelings out of account altogether.) Take, for example, a German Jew, Victor Klemperer's (1996: 420), record of his feelings noted in his diary during the Nazi era:

> Immer hat man den Druck und das Ekelgefühl auf der Seele und entgeht ihn nur noch auf Minuten.
> "One has constantly an oppressive feeling and a feeling of disgust/revulsion [lit. 'on the heart / soul'], which one can only escape for minutes."

Why should Klemperer's personal testimony, based on the German concept of *Gefühl* "feeling", be any less valid than Ekman's speculative theory, based on the English notion of *emotion*?

Wittgenstein, whose philosophy of psychology was coloured by the German folk model, thought about human feelings in terms of the distinction between *Gemütsbewegungen* (literally, movements of the *Gemüt*) and *Empfindungen* (roughly, "sensations"). *Gemüt* stands for a folk construct which can be described, loosely, as a kind of cross between "mind" and "inner disposition". As examples of *Gemütsbewegungen* Wittgenstein cited *Freude* (roughly, "joy"), *Trauer* (roughly, "sorrow") and *Depression* ("depression"). He saw *Empfindungen* (in Elizabeth Anscombe's English translation, *sensations*) and *Gemütsbewegungen* (in Anscombe's translation , *emotions*) as both having genuine duration and having "a course", but unlike *Empfindungen*, he observed, *Gemütsbewegungen* are not localized in the body, though not "diffuse" either.

While Wittgenstein's *Gemütsbewegungen* (in contrast to his *Gemütsdispositionen*, "dispositions of the *Gemüt*", such as *Liebe* "love" and *Haß* "hate") are characterized by duration, they are *not* characterized – as Ekman's "emotions" are – by *brief* duration. This is hardly surprising given that the category of *Gemütsbewegung*, suggested to Wittgenstein by the ordinary German, can include *Depression* "depression" and *Trauer* "sorrow" as well as *Freude* "joy". What all this illustrates is that, for example, Ekman's theory of "emotions" (having extremely brief duration) is coloured by the ordinary English word *emotion*. More generally, it shows that language-specific interpretive categories such as *emotion*, *mood*, *mind*, *anxiety*, or *contempt* (the latest alleged "basic emotion"; cf. e.g. Ekman and Friesen 1986; Matsumoto 1996), should not be treated as "neutral" analytical tools.

To deny the universality of "emotion" as a conceptual (and lexical)

category does not mean, of course, denying the reality of the links between thoughts, feelings, and bodily processes, or the universality of the human awareness of, and interest in, such links. In fact, linguistic evidence tends to confirm the universality of the perception that thoughts, feelings, and bodily processes are often interrelated. First, all languages appear to have expressions presenting thought-related feelings in terms of bodily images, such as the English *heart-broken*, *heavy heart*, or *getting cold feet*; and second, all languages appear to have some words or expressions referring, in a non-figurative way, to the interrelation between thoughts, feelings, and bodily events, such as, for example, the English words *laugh* and *cry* (cf. Plessner 1970[1961]). To illustrate, here is a tentative (prototype-based) explication of the English word *cry*:

Person X was crying. =
something was happening to person X
sometimes a person thinks:
"something bad is happening to me now
I don't want this to be happening
I want to do something because of this
I can't do anything"
when this person thinks this this person feels something bad
because of this something is happening in this person's body
because of this people can hear something in this place
like people can hear something when someone is saying something
at the same time other people can see something like water in this person's eyes
something like this was happening to person X

As this explication shows, the concept of *crying* is based on a prototype (indented) involving fairly complex thoughts, feelings, and some audible and visible bodily events.

I am not suggesting, then, that there is anything "ethnocentric" in studying links between thoughts, feelings, and bodily events in research seeking to gain knowledge about "humans" in general. It is necessary to remember, however, that these aspects are conceptually dissociable, and that the word *emotion*, which links them in one overarching category, is a culture-specific conceptual artifact. When we want to talk about "humans", we are always on firmer ground if we

refer to what people think, what they feel, what happens in their bodies, and what they do and say to one another, than if we speak about their "emotions".

Another point which needs to be made here has to do with the relationship between the concept *emotion* and concepts like *sadness*, *anger*, or *relief*. In the literature on "emotions", words of this kind are commonly referred to as "emotion terms", and in ordinary language, too, "sadness", "anger", or "relief" can be described as "emotions". This doesn't mean, however, that the concept of *emotion* is included in the very meaning of *sadness*, *anger*, or *relief*.[8] *Sadness* or *relief* could be classified ad hoc as "kinds of emotion", just as *knives* could be classified ad hoc as "a kind of weapon" or "a kind of cutlery" (especially in a "forced choice" task); but just as both *weapon* and *cutlery* include semantic components absent from *knife*, so *emotion* contains components (or a component) absent from *sadness* or *relief*. The missing component is that referring to "bodily events". So-called "emotion terms" like *sadness* or *relief* do not imply by virtue of their very meaning that something is happening in a person's body, and so they are comparable in meaning to words like *tristesse* and *soulagement* in French, *Traurigheit* and *Erleichterung* in German, or *grust'* and *oblegčenie* in Russian, that is to words that clearly do not embody the English concept of *emotion* (which has no equivalent in those languages).[9]

To sum up, then, *emotion* is an English classificatory term which has been borrowed from "folk English" into the language of scholarly literature, where it is now used in a variety of non-defined ways coloured by the folk concept and where it has contributed to a culturally shaped view of "human psychology". It is not really well suited for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural comparisons or for discussions of "human nature" or "human psychology" in general. It is a word, however, which is so firmly entrenched in the scholarly literature written in English, and even in non-scholarly "educated" English discourse, that it seems unrealistic at this stage to give it up altogether (as, for example, Leavitt 1996 appears to recommend, although he doesn't do it himself). Ideally, it should be used in scholarly work in inverted commas, and in any case the argument should not depend on it at all, but should rely, instead, on solid, "experience-near" and yet universal, concepts like FEEL, THINK, WANT, BODY, DO, and HAPPEN.

The psychologist Panksepp (1982: 449) has written: "The semantic controversies that routinely arise in the discussion of emotion have long hindered the progress of research in this area" (quoted in Fehr and Russell 1984: 483), and "it is unlikely that we can resolve disagreements concerning the meanings of terms such as *emotions* and *feelings*" (Panksepp 1982: 453). But given a coherent semantic theory and well-devel-

oped semantic methodology, the meaning of words such as *feelings* and *emotions can* be stated in a non-arbitrary way open to intersubjective assessment; and it is the absence of serious investigation of the semantics of "emotions", rather than its exaggerated pursuit, which has long hindered the progress of research in this area.

In particular, by clarifying the issues from a semantic point of view, we can go beyond the debates on whether "emotions" are "biologically based" or "culturally constituted", "private" and "internal", or "public" and "social" (as if they couldn't be all these things at the same time; cf. Leavitt 1996), and move on to investigate clearly formulated questions focussing on what people think, feel, want, know, say, and do; what happens in their bodies; how the thoughts, feelings, wants, and bodily events are linked (temporarily and/or causally); and also, how those links are perceived, and spoken about, by the "actors" and experiencers themselves, and what role the feelings (linked with culturally shaped thoughts and biologically based bodily events) play in the stream of life.

6 Why words matter

Human beings are "classifying animals": they categorize both the "contents of the world" and events into categories and put labels on them. Among other things, they categorize feelings, including "thought-related" ones (which I will call, for convenience, "emotions"), and they do so differently in different speech communities. Generally speaking, the labels do not match across language boundaries. For example, speakers of English use categories such as *sad*, *angry*, *disgusted*, and *happy*, whereas the speakers of Ifaluk use different, non-matching categories such as *fago*, *song*, *waires*, and *ker* (cf. Lutz 1988; Wierzbicka 1992a), whilst speakers of Malay use categories such as *sedih*, *marah*, *jijik* and *gembira*, which are different again.[10]

Until recently many scholars refused to believe that the categorization of "emotions" can differ from language to language and insisted that at least some "emotions" must be linguistically recognized in all languages. There can no longer be any doubt, however, that this is not the case. Although much more is known about this diversity now than twenty or thirty years ago, the basic fact that in principle "emotion words" don't match was known at that time too. Even an extreme "universalist" like Paul Ekman, who has claimed for decades that the same "basic emotions" (i.e. happiness, sadness, anger, fear, disgust, and surprise, cf. e.g. Ekman 1973: 219–20; see also Ekman 1993, 1994a and b) are recognized in all cultures, acknowledged more than twenty years ago that the Dani people of the New Guinea Highlands, whose

faces and "emotions" he had studied in the field, "don't even have words for the six emotions" (Ekman 1975: 39).

Undoubtedly, the "emotion lexicons" of different languages show similarities as well as differences (I will discuss these similarities in detail in chapter 7). But it is essential to recognize the diversity, too, and to abandon the idea that all languages must have words for something as "basic" and as "natural" as "sadness", "anger", "fear", "happiness", "disgust", and "surprise".

It might seem that once the basic fact of lexical diversity has been recognized the battle against ethnocentrism in the study of "emotions" has been won, but this is not the case either. For even when this fact is acknowledged, many scholars feel free to dismiss its importance and to affirm that behind or beneath this lexical diversity there lies cross-cultural uniformity. For example, the psychologist Paul Harris (1995: 355) writes: "what is in dispute is whether we can draw any conclusions – other than lexical conclusions – about the emotional universe of a culture by examining its emotion lexicon". If one takes this attitude, one feels free to dismiss the lexical categories of any distant culture in favour of one's own – and to fall back, once again (as Harris does), on English lexical categories such as *sadness*, *anger*, and so on, to identify what really matters to people in that other culture.

Ekman (1993: 384) has claimed that "no one to date has obtained strong evidence of cross-cultural disagreement about the interpretation of fear, anger, disgust, sadness, or enjoyment expressions". But how *could* anyone obtain such evidence if the key interpretive categories "fear", "anger", "enjoyment", etc. are taken for granted from the outset and built into the research project itself?

I, for example, as a native speaker of Polish, would never interpret Ekman's smiling faces in terms of "enjoyment", because there is no such category in the Polish lexicon. I agree with Ekman and Izard that smiling faces do convey a universal, culture-independent message, but I would argue that this message can only be represented accurately in terms of universal, culture-independent concepts; and I would propose as the core of this message the formula "I feel something good now" (see chapter 4).

Speaking of the "uncritical presumption that in their emotional lives human beings anywhere are by and large essentially alike", Needham (1981: 99) remarked that "it calls for very little acquaintance with history or ethnography to provoke the serious doubt that this view can be correct", and he added: "For a comparativist, the prime field of evidence is presented by vocabularies of emotion in different linguistic traditions; and the first lesson is that simply in the numbers of emotions discriminated they diverge very greatly". But many influential recent

writers on "emotions" have simply ignored such warnings, and some continue to do so.

As William James noted, we know from introspection that, on the one hand, we are capable of a great variety of feelings, and on the other, that these different feelings are not clearly separated from one another and cannot be counted. James pointed out that upon this largely nebulous world of feelings every language imposes its own interpretive grid.

> if one should seek to name each particular one [of the emotions] of which the human heart is the seat, it is plain that the limit to their number would lie in the introspective vocabulary of the seeker, each race of men having found names for some shade of feeling which other races have left undiscriminated. If we should seek to break the emotions, thus enumerated, into groups, according to their affinities, it is again plain that all sorts of groupings would be possible, according as we chose this character or that as a basis, and that all groupings would be equally real and true. (1890: 485)

Thus, the way people interpret their own emotions depends, to some extent at least, on the lexical grid provided by their native language. To take an example from ethnobiology, two different creatures (e.g. a large nocturnal moth attracted by lights and a clothes moth) may be classified as 'the same kind of creature" in one language (e.g. in English) and as "two different kinds of creature" in another language (e.g. in Polish *ćma* and *mól* respectively), and conversely, two different animals (e.g. a mouse and a rat) may be classified as "two different kinds of animal" in one language (e.g. *mouse* and *rat* in English) and as 'the same kind of animal" in another language (e.g. *nezumi* in Japanese). The same applies to "emotions": whether or not two feelings are interpreted as two different instances of, essentially, "the same emotion" or as instances of "two different emotions" depends largely on the language through the prism of which these feelings are interpreted; and that prism depends on culture.

It is ethnocentric to think that if the Tahitians don't have a word corresponding to the English word *sad* (Levy 1973), they must nonetheless have an innate conceptual category of "sadness"; or to assume that in their emotional experience "sadness" – for which they have no name – is nonetheless more salient and more relevant to their "emotional universe" than, for example, the feelings of *tōiaha* or *pe'ape'a*, for which they do have a name (although English does not). Ekman (1994b: 147) dismisses Levy's report "that the Tahitians do not have a word for sadness, and do not recognize the constellation of sad behaviour as caused by the loss of a loved person" with the following characteristic comment: "this is not sufficient to assert that the relationship between the sadness Antecedent and sadness responses is absent in that culture . . .

The Tahitians did show sad behaviours in response to loss even though they did not label it as sadness, and attributed those responses to illness rather than to loss''. Ekman doesn't consider the possibility that the Tahitians' interpretation of their own experience might be just as valid as his (i.e. an outsider's) interpretation of it. He is convinced that what the Tahitians, unbeknown to themselves, ''really feel'' is ''sadness''.

Obviously, there is no reason to think that Tahitians are incapable of feeling ''sad''; but neither is there any reason to believe that the speakers of English are incapable of feeling ''tōiaha'' or ''pe'ape'a''. Above all, there is no reason to think that ''sadness'' is more important or more ''universal'' than ''tōiaha'' or ''pe'ape'a''. The conceptual categories of ''sadness'' or ''anger'' are highly relevant to the speakers of English, and also to the speakers of other languages which have words corresponding in meaning to the English words *sad* and *angry* or *sadness* and *anger*. In many other cultures, however, the conceptual grid provided by language is different. To quote Russell (1994: 14): ''We speakers of English find it plausible that our concepts of *anger*, *fear*, *contempt* and the like are universal categories, exposing nature at its joints. One way to overcome the influence of such implicit assumptions is to emphasize alternative conceptualizations.''

The unselfconscious use of English emotion terms in the study of human emotions illustrates well what Smedslund (1992: 454) calls the empiricist *Zeitgeist* of contemporary psychology. He writes:

> There appears to be no awareness of the conceptual grid *through which* our experiences are filtered and in terms of which our descriptions *must* be made. The . . . metaphor of a distinction between the study of the world as seen through lenses and the study of the lenses through which the world is seen, is helpful here. Both are necessary for the process of achieving scientific knowledge. However, empiricism is exclusively focused on what is experienced and ignores the study of what is presupposed in, or structures, that experience.

As in other areas of research, investigation of ''emotion'' vocabulary is a necessary first step for identifying the object of our inquiry. We cannot say anything about ''anger'' if we don't know what we are talking about, and to know what we are talking about we must first analyse the meaning of the word *anger*. As Shweder (1994: 32) puts it, ''anger'' is just an ''interpretive scheme'' imposed by speakers of English on raw emotional experience. There are countless other interpretive schemes which can be imposed on similar experiences, and the one associated with the English word *anger* can hardly be regarded as providing privileged access to some language-independent psychological

reality. (I say "similar" rather than "the same" because as Harré (1986a) and others have pointed out, the interpretive scheme may well become part of the experience itself.)

The idea that there may be an infinite variety of "emotion" categories operating across cultures is not incompatible with the view that there may also be some universal patterns of emotional organization. The crucial point is that if there are universal patterns they cannot be captured by means of English folk categories such as *anger*, *sadness*, or *disgust*, but only in terms of *universal* human concepts.

Linguistics can contribute to the cross-disciplinary study of "emotions" by describing and analysing "data" from the world's languages, and a great deal has been done in this area in recent years. (Cf. e.g. Athanasiadou and Tabakowska 1998; Goddard 1996a; Harkins 1996; Hasada 1998; Iordanskaja 1970, 1974, 1986; Iordanskaja and Mel'čuk 1990; Levontina and Zaliznjak (forthcoming); Travis 1998; Zaliznjak 1992; papers in Apresjan 1997; and Mel'čuk et al. 1984, 1988, 1992). But perhaps the most important role for linguistics in "emotion research" is to emphasize the "non-transparency" of the language of description and the trap waiting for those who declare that they want to study "emotions as such" and "are not interested in language". For language stands between the researchers and the "emotions" that they wish to investigate and it cannot be ignored.

Some psychologists are reluctant to concede that there may be a problem here. To quote from a recent rejoinder by the distinguished psychologist Richard Lazarus (1995) directed, amongst others, at myself:

> Wierzbicka suggests that I underestimate the depth of cultural variation in emotion concepts as well as the problem of language. (p. 255)
>
> Words have power to influence, yet – as in the Whorfian hypotheses writ large – they cannot override the life conditions that make people sad or angry, which they can sense to some extent without words . . .
> I am suggesting, in effect, that all people experience anger, sadness, and so forth, regardless of what they call it . . . Words are important, but we must not deify them. (p. 250)

But by refusing to pay attention to differences between different languages, scholars who take this position end up doing precisely what they wished to avoid, that is, "deifying" some words from their own native language and reifying the concepts encapsulated in them.

Words matter for at least two different but equally important reasons. First, words provide clues to other people's conceptualizations. Pace Harris, Ekman, Lazarus, Pinker, and many others, it is words, more than anything, which allow us access to the "emotional universe"

of people from another culture. Second, it is only by studying words that we can go *beyond* words. For example, if we are interested in "emotions" and uninterested in words (as for example Ekman (1994a) professes to be), we still have to take enough interest in words to notice that English words such as *sadness*, *enjoyment*, or *anger* are no more than the cultural artifacts of one particular language. As Edward Sapir warned, "the philosopher needs to understand language if only to protect himself against his own language habits" (Sapir 1949[1929]: 165).

"Emotion" is "expressed" or communicated at every level of language, including grammar and intonation; it is also expressed in facial gestures such as frowns and raised eyebrows or in bodily gestures such as kisses or foot-stamping. All these facets of "emotion" need to be studied cross-culturally. None of them, however, can be studied effectively if the researcher doesn't "protect himself against his own language habits".

To insist that words matter is not the same as "to define emotions as emotion words" or to "reduce emotion to a kind of meaning" (cf. Leavitt 1996: 552). Of course an "emotion" is no more an "emotion word" than an illness is an illness word. Nor is an emotion or an illness reducible to a "meaning". But one can't discuss either "emotions" or illnesses without using *some* words, and if we don't want to mistake our own folk-taxonomies for "natural", objectively valid categories (a practice spectacularly illustrated recently by Stephen Pinker's discussion of "human emotions" in his *How the Mind Works*)[11] we had better pay some attention to words.

A good example of the consequences of failing to do this is provided by Ernest Becker (1962: 39) in his *The Birth and Death of Meaning*:

> The question "What fact is the most basic to an understanding of human motivation?" can be answered with just one word: anxiety. Anxiety is a prime mover of human behaviour, and many will do anything to avoid it . . . In fact, one is tempted to coin still another definition, and call man "the anxiety-avoiding animal" . . . Freud, who spent a lifetime trying to uncover the mainsprings of motivation, devoted an entire work to the problem of anxiety.

What is most striking about this passage is Becker's substitution of the English word *anxiety* for the German word *Angst* employed by Freud. Clearly, Becker believed that he was in full agreement with Freud, and indeed that he was only developing Freud's ideas. In fact he was talking about something else: anxiety, not Angst (for a discussion of the differences between the two concepts see chapter 3). As a result, Becker's theory of human motivation and human nature misrepresented Freud (cf. Gaylin 1979: 49–51).

Curiously, research into the meanings of "emotion terms" in different languages is occasionally attacked even by linguists, who are sometimes so eager to emphasize the importance of non-lexical manifestations of "emotions" in language that they seem to deny the value of lexical research altogether. For example, Taylor and Mbense (1998: 221) conclude their valuable study of metaphors in Zulu talk about "emotions" with an attack on the present writer as someone interested in lexical semantics:

> In spite of a number of uncertainties in the interpretation of our data, we would like, nevertheless, to stress the methodological point that the issues discussed in this paper would simply not have arisen (and so could not have been addressed at all) if we had restricted our attention merely to the lexical semantics of the noun *ulaka* and the verb *thukuthela*, in the style of Wierzbicka's studies.

Although the phrase "Wierzbicka's studies" is in the plural, the only reference to my work on "emotions" is to an article entitled" 'Sadness' and 'Anger' in Russian" in the same volume (Athanasiadou and Tabakowska 1998). This paucity of references suggests that the authors are unaware of my numerous non-lexical studies of "emotions", such as, for example, the extensive study of Russian and Polish expressive derivation in Wierzbicka 1992a; the studies of different attitudes to feelings associated with different grammatical frames (Wierzbicka 1988a and 1995a); the study of emotive interjections (Wierzbicka 1991); the study of emotions in discourse (Wierzbicka 1994d); or indeed my study of similes as a means for describing feelings, published at a time when most present-day cognitive linguists were still faithful practitioners of Chomsky's anti-semantic transformational grammar (Wierzbicka 1973). (See also the numerous non-lexical studies included in the volume on emotions which I edited a decade ago, Wierzbicka 1990e.)

But while I fully agree with Taylor and Mbense (1998) that the linguistic study of "emotions" should include not only lexicon but also grammar, phraseology, similes, metaphors, and so on (as my studies over a quarter of a century demonstrate), I believe that the lexicon is also very important. The insouciant way in which Taylor and Mbense are prepared to use the English word *anger* in talking about the Zulu ways of speaking suggests that they still haven't grasped the danger of ethnocentrism inherent in such practice. The very title of their paper "Red dogs and rotten mealies: how Zulus talk about anger" is misleading, to say the least: it is "Anglos" who speak about "anger", not Zulus. Much as Taylor and Mbense despise lexical studies, the Zulus speak not about *anger* but about *ulaka*, and so if we want to understand the Zulu perspective as feelings we should indeed take an interest in what *ulaka*

means, rather than imposing on them the perspective encoded in the English word *anger*.

I am not suggesting that everybody who wants to study the Zulu perspective must engage in lexical research. For example, the study of Zulu metaphors presented by Taylor and Mbense is, in my view, valuable and informative as it is (despite the misleading title and glosses). It is a pity, however, that these and other cognitive linguists who don't engage in lexical semantic investigations themselves find it necessary to try to underscore the value of their own work with attacks on lexical research (cf. e.g. Lakoff and Johnson 1980; Lakoff 1987; for discussion see Wierzbicka 1986b), without which the multiple perspectives on human experience reflected in "emotion" terms in different languages would never be revealed and the perspective reflected in twentieth-century English would continue to be mistaken for one which is universal, innate, and simply "human".

7 Emotion and culture

The literature on "emotions" often contrasts "biology" with "culture", as if the two were mutually exclusive. It is worth remembering, therefore, that it was actually a psychologist (William James), not an anthropologist or linguist, who said that the categorization of feelings depends on "the introspective vocabulary of the seeker", which in turn depends on his or her language and culture (James 1890: 485). James held that feelings represented the subjective experience of biological (physiological) events, but he recognized that feelings can be categorized in a variety of ways, and that they *are* differently categorized in different cultures. This is not to say that there are no common threads (I will discuss some of these in chapter 7). But the diversity is very considerable indeed.

The meaning of English "emotion words" has actually changed a great deal in the course of history. Had Shakespeare been interested in proposing a basic "emotional keyboard" (cf. Shweder 1985: 200) it would have been different from that proposed by twentieth-century psychologists – even if it contained some of the same words, for example *angry*. The view of *anger* as something that can be manipulated – "controlled", "vented", "released", left "unresolved", "directed" at this or that target, "stirred up", "repressed", "expressed", "suppressed", and so on (for examples see, e.g. Pendergrast 1998: 23, 24, 219, 242, 243, 364) – is entirely modern and goes far beyond the semantic range of the Shakespearian *anger* (cf. Logan 1998; also Stearns and Stearns 1986). It also goes beyond the range of the supposed equivalents of *anger* in other languages (for example, Polish). In fact, the Polish

words closest to the English *anger* and *angry* are so different from them in meaning that it would be virtually impossible to translate into Polish perfectly "normal" sentences in twentieth-century English such as the following one (for detailed discussion, see chapter 2, section 4): "Dying people may feel angry . . . Some people feel angry at God for allowing them to get sick, at their doctors for not being able to find a cure, at the government for putting money into weapons instead of medical research, or at the world in general" (Callanan and Kelley 1993: 44).

The two closest Polish counterparts of the English *anger* are *złość* and *gniew*, with the corresponding verbs *złościć się* and *gniewać się*, and the adjectives *zły* (literally, "bad") and *gniewny*. The verb *złościć się* (often used about children) has pejorative connotations and suggests something like a temper tantrum; the adjective *zły* (with the object in the accusative and the preposition *na*) means something like "cross (with someone)"; the adjective *gniewny* refers to outward expression, not an inner feeling, and the verb *gniewać się* (which takes an object in the accusative case with the preposition *na*) suggests a position of authority and an exercise of some power (for example, a mother can *gniewać się na* a child, typically, by scolding the child). Clearly, none of these words is compatible with the situation of the dying person who feels *angry* at God, at the doctors, and at the world; to say that someone is *zły na Pana Boga* or *gniewa się na Pana Boga* or *złości się na Pana Boga* ("is angry at God", literally "at Lord God") would sound humorous. The nouns *złość* and *gniew* are not really applicable to this situation either; *gniew* is analogous to *wrath* and it could only be directed at someone who (in the experiencer's view) "has done something bad", not at doctors who were not able to find a cure and not at "the world" or any other impersonal force, phenomenon, or thing.

What this example shows is that an apparently basic and innocent concept like *anger* is in fact linked with a certain cultural model and so cannot be taken for granted as a "culture-free" analytical tool or as a universal standard for describing "human emotions".

Examples of this kind provide an answer for those who, like Paul Harris, ask "whether we can draw any conclusions – other than lexical conclusions – about the emotional universe of a culture by examining its emotion lexicon". The answer is that by examining the meaning and the use of words like *anger* and *angry* in contemporary English we can indeed learn a great deal about the "emotional universe" of the speakers of contemporary English. "Emotion words" such as *anger* reflect, and pass on, certain cultural models; and these models, in turn, reflect and pass on values, preoccupations, and frames of reference of the society (or speech community) within which they have evolved. They reflect its "habits of the heart" (Bellah et al. 1985) and the con-

comitant "habits of the mind". The English *anger* and *angry* (with their current range of meanings) both reflect and reinforce what Bellah et al. 1985 call the "therapeutic culture" in modern Anglo society; and the shift from the Shakespearian *wrath* to modern *anger* both reflects and constitutes an aspect of the democratization of society and the passing of the feudal order (cf. de Tocqueville 1953[1835–40]; Stearns and Stearns 1986).

Let me adduce here two more Polish examples: the word of *tęsknota* (noun) and *tęsknić* (verb) and the adverb *przykro*.

Tęsknota is cognate with the Russian *toska* and with words like *tesknost* or *teskoba* in other Slavic languages. In the course of the nineteenth century, however, *tęsknota*, which had previously had a more general meaning of something like *malaise*, developed a meaning focussed specifically on pain associated with separation from loved people and places. In this new meaning, it acquired the status of one of Polish culture's key words (for detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1986a and 1992a; see also Hoffman 1989). Both the semantic change and the cultural salience of *tęsknota* were clearly associated with the partitions of Poland by the neighbouring powers at the end of the eighteenth century, the national uprisings (especially that of 1830) which followed them, and the resulting "Great Emigration". For those forced into exile, and among them the political, literary, and artistic elite of the nation including the poet Adam Mickiewicz and the composer Fryderyk Szopen (Frédéric Chopin), the pain of exile became one of the dominant themes. The increasingly frequent use of the words *tęsknota* and *tęsknić* in Polish emigré poetry and prose no doubt contributed to the emergence of this new "emotional key concept", which can be roughly described as a combination of nostalgia, painfully missing someone, and a longing to be reunited with them. It would be hard to find a clearer example of a culturally constructed and historically based "emotion concept".

The word *przykro*, to which I have devoted a separate study (cf. Wierzbicka forthcoming a) can also be seen as one of Polish culture's key concepts. Roughly speaking, it describes a kind of "bad feeling" arising in interpersonal relations when someone fails to show us the warmth or affection or, more generally, "good feelings" that we expect from them. The causer of the bad feeling doesn't have to "hurt our feelings" in any way, it is enough that he or she doesn't show us affection. The cultural implications of this key concept seem quite clear: it points to the great value that Polish culture places on showing people warmth, or, as one says in Polish, *serdeczność* (from *serce* "heart"). The importance of the value of "serdeczność" in Polish culture, reflected both in the word *serdeczność* and in the semantically related word

przykro (roughly, pain caused by lack of *serdeczność*), is also supported by other evidence, linguistic and non-linguistic (for detailed discussion see Chapter 6).

Naturally it is not only the lexicon which provides clues to the "emotional universe of a culture". Grammar does too, as do phraseology, discourse structure, gestures, intonation, interjections, swear-words, forms of address, culture-specific facial expressions and bodily postures, gestures, and so on. For example, it is clearly significant that "active" verbs like *rejoice* have all but disappeared from modern English usage, giving way to "passive" adjectives like *happy* or *pleased*; or that those "emotion verbs" which remain tend to have pejorative or humorous connotations (cf. e.g. *fume*, *fret*, *sulk*, *pine*, *enthuse*, *rage*, and so on; for detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1988a, 1995a)

Similarly, the Russian "emotional universe" is reflected in Russian expressive derivation, including notably the numerous "diminutive" suffixes with different emotional shadings encoded in each of them (for detailed discussion see Wierzbicka 1992a; see also Friedrich 1997). It is also reflected in the culture-specific phraseology centred on the human body and expressive bodily (and facial) behaviour (cf. Iordanskaja and Paperno 1996; for detailed discussion see chapter 5).

All these aspects of both verbal and non-verbal communication need to be studied, and to be studied across cultures. We also need to study different cultures' "cultural scripts", which implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) tell people what to feel, and what not to feel, and what to say and do, or not say and do, when they feel something (see chapter 6). To study all this, however, we need reliable analytical tools and a reliable methodology. I believe that such a methodology can be provided by the Natural Semantic Metalanguage, to which I will now turn.

8 The Natural Semantic Metalanguage (NSM) as a tool for cross-cultural analysis

This book proposes a new perspective on "human emotions". The basic idea is that language is a key issue in "emotion research" and that progress in the understanding of "emotions" requires that this issue be squarely addressed. "Human emotions" vary a great deal across languages and cultures, but they also share a great deal. Neither the diversity nor the universal aspects of "emotions", however, can be studied without an appropriate metalanguage. All attempts to study "human emotions" in terms of ordinary English (or any other natural language) are bound to lead to distortions, because every natural language contains its own "naive picture of the world" (cf. Apresjan 1992[1974]), including its own "ethnopsychology". By relying, uncriti-

cally, on ordinary English words we unwittingly fall prey to the "naive picture" that is reflected in them.

Nor can we transcend this "naive picture" by adopting the conventional technical language of traditional psychology, because this conventional language has developed on the basis of ordinary language and is coloured by the naive picture embedded in it. The reliance of many psychologists on folk-English distinctions such as that between *emotion* and *mood* is a good case in point. (Cf. Mandler 1975.)

The approach to "emotions" adopted in this book (and in earlier publications by the author and colleagues)[12] seeks to break the dependence on any one natural language as the source of "common sense insights" by anchoring the analysis in universal human concepts and their "universal grammar". Both the universal concepts and their rules of combination (i.e. their "grammar") have been arrived at by empirical cross-linguistic investigations carried out by several linguists over many years and based on work with typologically diverse and genetically unrelated languages, including Chinese (Chappell 1986, 1991, 1994), Japanese (Hasada 1996, 1997; Onishi 1994, 1997; Travis 1997), Malay (Goddard 1995, 1996a), Lao (Enfield forthcoming), Mbula (Bugenhagen 1994), Ewe (Ameka 1990a and b, 1994), French (Peeters 1994, 1997), several Australian Aboriginal languages (Goddard 1991b; Harkins 1995, 1996; Harkins and Wilkins 1994; Wilkins 1986), and many others.

Most words in any language are specific to this particular language or to a group of languages, and are not universal. For example, neither English nor Spanish nor Malay has a word with a meaning corresponding exactly to the meaning of the German word *Angst* (see chapter 3). At the same time, evidence suggests that all languages have words with meanings corresponding exactly to the meanings of the English words *good* and *bad*, or *know* and *want*. This suggests that the concepts of "good" and "bad" (or "know" and "want") are universal, and can, therefore, be used as elements of a culture-independent semantic metalanguage.

To reflect the special status of such words as exponents of universal human concepts, I will render them in capital letters, as GOOD and BAD, or BUENO and MALO (Spanish), or BAIK and BURUK (Malay), thus indicating that they are being used as elements of a special semantic metalanguage. At the same time we can identify them with the meanings of ordinary English, Spanish, and Malay words (*good* and *bad*, *bueno* and *malo*, *baik* and *buruk*), and require that semantic formulae including these words be testable via natural language.

Since the words of ordinary language are often polysemous, we need to identify the meanings in question by means of certain "canonical"

sentences such as, for example, "this person did something bad", "esta persona ha hecho algo malo" (Spanish), and "orang ini buat sesuatu yang buruk" (Malay), or "something good happened to me", "algo bueno me ha sucedido" (Spanish), "sesuatu yang baik terjadi kepada aku" (Malay). Proceeding in this way, we can overcome both the incomprehensibility and unverifiability of a technical language relying on "experience-distant" concepts and the ethnocentrism of descriptions using a full-blown natural language such as ordinary English, in all its culture-specific richness.

Whether or not all languages do share a minimum of basic concepts is an empirical question, and one which colleagues and I have been pursuing on an empirical basis for many years. The results of these investigations have been reported in two collective volumes *Semantic and Lexical Universals – Theory and empirical findings* (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1994) and *Meaning and Universal Grammar: Theory and empirical findings* (Goddard and Wierzbicka forthcoming), as well as in my *Semantics: Primes and Universals* (Wierzbicka 1996a) and in Goddard's (1998) *Semantic Analysis: A practical introduction*.

These results tend to confirm the thrust of centuries of philosophical speculations about "innate ideas" (Descartes, e.g. 1931[1701]), "the alphabet of human thoughts" (Leibniz, cf. Couturat 1903), the "midpoint around which all languages revolve" (Humboldt 1903–36, v.4: 21–3) and the "psychic unity of mankind" (Boas 1966[1911]). The main conclusion is that all languages do indeed appear to share a common core, both in their lexical repertoire and in their grammar, and that this common core can be used as a basis for a non-arbitrary and non-ethnocentric metalanguage for the description of languages and for the study of human cognition and emotion. This shared lexical core derived from empirical cross-linguistic investigations, is summarized in the following table:

Conceptual primitives and lexical universals[13]

Substantives	I, YOU, SOMEONE(PERSON), SOMETHING(THING), PEOPLE, BODY
Determiners	THIS, THE SAME, OTHER
Quantifiers	ONE, TWO, SOME, MANY/MUCH, ALL
Attributes	GOOD, BAD, BIG, SMALL
Mental predicates	THINK, KNOW, WANT, FEEL, SEE, HEAR
Speech	SAY, WORD, TRUE
Actions, events, movements	DO, HAPPEN, MOVE
Existence and possession	THERE IS, HAVE

Life and death	LIVE, DIE
Logical concepts	NOT, MAYBE, CAN, BECAUSE, IF
Time	WHEN(TIME), NOW, AFTER, BEFORE, A LONG TIME, A SHORT TIME, FOR SOME TIME
Space	WHERE(PLACE), HERE, ABOVE, BELOW, FAR, NEAR; SIDE, INSIDE
Intensifier, augmentor	VERY, MORE
Taxonomy, partonomy	KIND OF, PART OF
Similarity	LIKE

Spanish Version

Substantives	YO, TÚ; ALGUÉN, ALGO; GENTE; CUERPO
Determiners	ESTE, EL MISMO, OTRO
Quantifiers	UNO, DOS, ALGUNOS, MUCHOS, TODOS
Attributes	BUENO, MALO, GRANDE, PEQUENO
Mental predicates	PENSAR, SABER/CONOCER, QUERER, SENTIR, VER, OÍR
Speech	DECIR, PALABRA, VERDAD
Actions, events, and movements	HACER, SUCEDER, MOVERSE
Existence and possession	HAY (EXISTIR), TENER
Life and death	VIVIR, MORIR
Logical concepts	NO, QUIZÁS, PODER, PORQUE, SÍ
Time	CUANDO, AHORA, ANTES, DESPUÉS, MUCHO TIEMPO, POCO TIEMPO, POR UN TIEMPO
Space	DÓNDE, ACQUÍ, SOBRE, DEBAJO, LEJOS, CERCA, LADO, DENTRO
Intensifier, augmentor	MUY, MÁS
Taxonomy, partonomy	GÉNERO, PARTE
Similarity	COMO

Malay Version

Substantives	AKU, KAU, SESEORANG, SESUATU, ORANG, BADAN
Determiners	INI, (YANG) SAMA, LAIN
Quantifiers	SATU, DUA, BEBERAPA, BANYAK, SEMUA
Attributes	BAIK, BURUK, BESAR, KECIL
Mental predicates	FIKIR, TAHU, MAHU, RASA, LIHAT, DENGAR
Speech	KATA, PERKATAAN, BENAR
Actions, events, movements	BUAT, TERJADI, BERGERAK
Existence and possession	ADA_1, ADA_2
Life and death	HIDUP, MATI
Logical concepts	TIDAK, MUNGKIN, BOLEH, SEBAB, KALAU
Time	BILA(MASA), SEKARANG, SELEPAS, SEBELUM, LAMA, SEKEJAP, SEBENTAR

Space	MANA(TEMPAT), (DI) SINI, (DI) ATAS, (DI) BAWAH, JAUH, DEKAT; SEBELAH, DALAM
Intensifier, augmentor	SANGAT, LAGI
Taxonomy, partonomy	JENIS, BAHAGIAN
Similarity	MACAM

This, then, is what the "alphabet of human thoughts" appears to look like. All complex meanings, in all conceptual domains, can be represented and explained as configurations of these sixty or so fundamental conceptual building blocks.[14] (For fuller discussion and justification of this set see the references given above.)

What applies to the universal "lexicon of human thoughts" applies also to the universal "grammar of human thoughts" manifested in universal syntactic patterns. Empirical evidence suggests that despite the colossal variation in language structures there is also a common core of shared or matching grammatical patterns in which the shared lexical items can be used. This common core defines a set of "basic sentences" which can be said in any language and matched across language boundaries and it can be used as a natural semantic metalanguage for the description and comparison of meanings.

Thus, a configuration of conceptual primes such as "I feel (something) good now" appears to be universally possible and can therefore be plausibly proposed as the meaning of a smile, in preference to culture-specific English words like *enjoyment* or *happy* (see chapter 4). Similarly, configurations such as "I want to do something", "I know I can't do anything", or "I know: something bad happened" also appear to be universally present and can be assigned as plausible semantic components to "emotion words" such as, for example, the English *sadness* and the Russian *grust'*, helping to map the similarities and differences between them.

9 An illustration: "sadness" in English and in Russian

Like other so-called "emotion terms" (e.g. *fear*, *joy*, *surprise*, *disgust*, *shame*, and so on), the English word *sadness* has a meaning which purports to link a particular kind (or range) of feeling with a particular cognitive scenario. Typically, the feeling of "sadness" is triggered (according to the folk-psychology reflected in the word *sad*) by a combination of thoughts which can be represented as follows:

(a) I know: something bad happened
(b) I don't want things like this to happen
(c) I can't think now: "I will do something because of this"
(d) I know that I can't do anything

For example, if I say that I feel sad because my dog died I mean (a) that something bad happened (my dog died); (b) that I don't want things like this to happen; and (c) that I am not planning to do anything because of this because (d) I realize I can't do anything about it. In addition, I imply that while I think those thoughts I feel something – something "bad".

This cognitive scenario (which is readily translatable into any other language) is presented in the meaning of this English word as typical rather than necessary, for one can say in English, for example, "I feel sad – I don't know why" (cf. Johnson-Laird and Oatley 1989). What this shows is that by describing my feeling as "sadness" I would be saying, in effect, that I feel LIKE a person does who actually thinks some such thoughts.

The full meaning of *sadness* can be presented as follows:

sadness (e.g. X feels sad)
(a) X feels something
(b) sometimes a person thinks:
(c) "I know: something bad happened
(d) I don't want things like this to happen
(e) I can't think now: I will do something because of this
(f) I know that I can't do anything"
(g) because of this, this person feels something bad
(h) X feels something like this

This, then, is one of the cognitive scenarios "singled out" by the English lexicon and encoded in the word *sad*. Other languages single out other cognitive scenarios, and draw different conceptual distinctions.

While the explication of *sadness* proposed above includes a prototypical scenario (shown here as the indented middle part), this type of prototypical scenario differs considerably from those proposed in current psychological literature, where no attempt is usually made to capture the *invariant* of a given "emotion concept", or to analyse this concept via simpler and more universal concepts. As an illustration of these differences in approach, I reproduce below (in a slightly abbreviated form) the "prototype of sadness" proposed by Shaver et al. (1987: 1077).

The prototype of sadness
An undesirable outcome; getting what was not wanted . . .
Discovering that one is powerless, helpless, impotent
Empathy with someone who is sad, hurt, etc.
Sitting or lying around; being inactive, lethargic, listless
Tired, rundown, low in energy; slow shuffling movements; slumped, drooping posture
Withdrawing from social contact; talking little or not at all
Low, quiet, slow, monotonous voice; saying sad things
Frowning, not smiling; crying, tears, whimpering
Irritable, touchy, grouchy; moping, brooding, being moody
Negative outlook; thinking only about the negative side of things
Giving up; no longer trying to improve or control the situation
Blaming, criticizing oneself
Talking to someone about the sad feelings or events
Taking action, becoming active . . . suppressing the negative feelings

A "prototypical scenario" of this kind includes lots of ideas which may come to mind in connection with the concept of "sadness", but it does not separate essential features from more or less accidental ones. For example, something like "an undesirable outcome" may indeed be a necessary part of the "sadness scenario", but "withdrawing from social contact" or "slumped, drooping posture" is not. (Listing various possible ways of behaving which may be associated with "sadness" is no substitute for defining *sadness*: on the contrary, in order to be able to say meaningfully that a sad person is likely to cry or to assume a slumped, drooping posture we must first be able to define *sad* independently.)

The NSM approach seeks above all to distinguish the essential from the optional, to capture the invariant, and to break complex concepts into maximally simple ones, relying exclusively on independently established conceptual primes and lexico-grammatical universals.

English–Russian dictionaries usually offer two Russian words as equivalents of the English word *sad*: *grustnyj* and *pečal'nyj* (cf. e.g. Falla et al. 1992). The noun *sadness* is usually given two glosses: *grust'* and *pečal'*, although sometimes a third Russian word, *toska*, is also added (cf. e.g. Falla et al. 1992). This implies that *grustnyj* and *grust'* mean the same as *pečal'nyj* and *pečal'* (as well as *sad* and *sadness*). In fact, however, this is not the case.

Both *grust'* and *pečal'* are common, everyday words in Russian (unlike, for example, *melancholy* in English). In fact, they are both much more common in Russian speech than *sadness* is in English. *Toska*, glossed sometimes as "sadness", also has an extremely high frequency in Russian speech (cf. Wierzbicka 1992a).

Although figures that can be found in frequency dictionaries are only broadly indicative (if only because they differ from one frequency

dictionary to another) the differences between the Russian and the English data are, nonetheless, too marked to be ignored. At the very least they show that neither *pečal'* nor *grust'* is marginal in Russian speech, the way *melancholy* is marginal in English. They also show that Russian has three common everyday words (or families of words) in the domain in which English has only one.

Given, then, that both *pečal'* and *grust'* are conceptual categories of great salience in Russian culture, and that they both correspond, to some degree, to the English *sadness*, how exactly are they related to one another (and to *sadness*)?

If one asks native speakers of Russian what the difference between *grust'* and *pečal'* is, they usually reply, somewhat vaguely, that one of these emotions is "more concrete" than the other, or "more serious", "more definite", "more general", and so on. But a systematic study of the differences in collocations and grammatical frames of the two words and their derivational families allows us to capture the semantic differences in question in more precise terms.

To begin with, *pečal'* is much more readily described as "deep" than *grust'* is (*glubokaja pečal'*, ?*glubokaja grust'*). Similarly, the adjective *pečal'nyj* – in contrast to *grustnyj* – co-occurs readily with the adverb *gluboko* "deeply", as the following example illustrates:

> Duxovnaja bezkrylost', bezdarnost' russkoj revolucii možet dostavljat' zloradnoe udovolstvie vsem ee vragam. No éto fakt gluboko pečal'nyj (*grustnyj) dlja russkogo naroda i ego buduščego. (Fedotov 1981[1938]:103)
>
> "The spiritual squalor of the Russian revolution can be a source of Schadenfreude for its enemies. But it is a tragic [lit. deeply *pečal'nyj*] fact for the Russian nation and its future."

In the literature on human "emotions", the situation often adduced as the prototypical situation of "sadness" is that of one's child (or other beloved person) dying. In Russian, *grust'* (described by Uryson (1997: 442) as a "not deep and not very intensive feeling") would not be normally linked with such a situation. *Pečal'* might; although given Russian cultural attitudes more dramatic emotions such as *gore* (grief/sorrow) or *otčajanie* (despair) would probably be regarded as more natural.

Just as *pečal'* is more readily described as "deep" (*glubokaja*) than *grust'*, so *grust'* is more readily described as "light" (in weight) or "passing" than *pečal'* (*mimoletnaja grust'*, ?*mimoletnaja pečal'*, *legkaja grust'*, ?*legkaja pečal'*). This is consistent with the fact that an expression such as *pečalnoe lico* (roughly, "a sad face") implies a permanent characteristic, whereas *grustnoe lico* ("a sad face") is more likely to refer to a passing emotion. It is also consistent with the fact that one can say

pogruzit'sja v pečal' "to sink into *pečal*" but not **pogruzit'sja v grust'* (cf. Mostovaja 1998).

The adverb *grustno* can occur in the so-called dative construction, which indicates a purely subjective perspective (the feeling may be inexplicable, and not externally manifested); but the corresponding adverb *pečal'no* cannot occur in this construction:

Mne grustno.
to-me sad-ADV
"I feel sad."
*Mne pečal'no.

Grust', like *sadness*, may not have any clearly identified cause, but *pečal'* is more similar in this respect to the English words *sorrow* and *grief*. One cannot feel *sorrow*, *grief*, or *pečal'* without being aware of the cause of the feeling. The dative construction with the adverb *grustno*, on the other hand, is particularly suitable for referring to a feeling with no identifiable cause:

Emu bylo grustno, on sam ne znal počemu.
to-him was sad-ADV he (himself) didn't know why
"He felt sad, he himself didn't know why."

This difference in the grammatical behaviour of the two alleged synonyms suggests that *pečal'* – but not *grust'* – is based on a conscious judgment: "this is bad". *Grust'* implies that one feels LIKE a person who is making some such judgment, but *pečal'* implies that one is actually making the judgment. The dative construction implies that the feeling is, as it were, involuntary and inexplicable, whereas *pečal'* implies that the feeling is due to a conscious and as it were intentional thought. Presumably, this is why the dative construction **mne pečal'no* ("I feel sad", literally, "to me it is sad") is unacceptable, whereas the corresponding version with *grustno* is perfectly natural.

Though the dative construction is particularly suited to the expression of "vague sadness", the noun *grust'* can also refer to such a situation, whereas the noun *pečal'* cannot.

On čuvstvoval kakuju-to grust', on sam ne znal počemu.
?On čuvstvoval kakuju-to pečal', on sam ne znal počemu.
"He felt some sadness, he himself didn't know why."

While the *Oxford Russian Dictionary* (Falla et al. 1992) glosses *sad* as "grustnyj, pečal'nyj", the corresponding Russian nouns are glossed

differently: "*grust'* – sadness, melancholy", "*pečal'* – grief, sorrow". These glosses are in keeping with the fact that *melancholy* needs no identifiable cause, whereas *grief* and *sorrow* do.

On the other hand, one might say that *grief* and *sorrow* are both "more personal" than *pečal'*: they refer to "something bad that happened TO ME", whereas *pečal'* implies that "something bad happened" (not necessarily to me), and also, more generally, that what happened results in a situation which is seen as "bad", too. In particular, the adjective *pečal'nyj* is frequently used to describe objective situations, and to imply a negative evaluation of such situations, as in the following examples:

> vmeste s nimi sudili ix mašinistku Veru Laškovu i Alekseja Dobrovol'skogo, sygravšego pečal'nuju (*grustnuju) rol' provokatora. (Amal'rik 1982: 41)
>
> "Together with them, they put on trial their typist, Vera Laškova, and Aleksej Dobrovol'ski, who had played the pitiful (pečal'nuju) role of agent provocateur."

Consider also the following line from a poem by Lermontov:

> Pečal'no ja smotrju na éto pokolenie.
> sadly I look-1s on this generation
> "I look with sadness on this generation."

The phrase *pečal'no smotrju* clearly implies an evaluation ("I think the state of this generation is bad"). The use of the adverb *grustno* would imply "a sad look" (i.e. a sad facial expression) rather than a negative evaluation.

The *Oxford Russian Dictionary* also cites the phrases *pečal'nyj konec* "dismal end" and *pečal'nye resul'taty* "unfortunate results". Although the dictionary assigns both *pečal'nyj* and *grustnyj* a second meaning glossed as "grievous", no similar phrases are offered for *grustnyj* and the second sense of *grustnyj* is glossed in fact as "grievous, distressing", whereas the second sense of *pečal'nyj* is glossed simply as "grievous" (without "distressing"). Though a little confusing, these choices are consistent with the idea that *pečal'nyj* implies an objective evaluation, whereas *grustnyj* refers to a personal reaction to a situation.

All these considerations bring us to the following explications (the contrasting parts are shown in capitals):

> *pečal'*
> (a) X felt something BECAUSE X THOUGHT SOMETHING
> (b) sometimes a person thinks:

(c) "I know: something bad happened
(d) THIS IS BAD
(e) I don't want things like this to happen
(f) I can't think now: I will do something because of this
(g) I know that I can't do anything"
(h) because this person thinks this, this person feels something BAD
(i) X felt something like this
(j) BECAUSE X THOUGHT SOMETHING LIKE THIS
(k) X THOUGHT ABOUT IT FOR A LONG TIME
(l) X FELT SOMETHING BECAUSE OF THIS FOR A LONG TIME

grust'
(a) X felt something
(b) sometimes a person thinks:
(c) "I know: something bad happened NOW
(d) ———————————
(e) I don't want things like this to happen
(f) I can't think now: I will do something because of this
(g) I know that I can't do anything"
(h) because this person thinks this, this person feels something FOR A SHORT TIME
(i) X felt something like this

The differences between the two explications can be summarized as follows.

First, the feeling of *grust'* is described only via a prototype ("X felt something like this"); no actual thoughts are attributed to the experiencer. In the case of *pečal'*, however, a thought ("something bad happened") is in fact attributed to him/her (component (j)). This difference accounts for the possibility of using *grust'*, in contrast to *pečal'*, in the case of an unidentifiable cause.

Second, in the case of *pečal'* the negative evaluation of the event ("something bad happened") is generalized and extended beyond this event as such: "this is bad" (component (d)).

Third, in the case of *pečal'* the feeling (as well as the underlying thought) is portrayed as extended in time (components (k) and (l)). In the case of *grust'*, time is left unspecified. This accounts for the fact that *mimoletnaja grust'* "a passing sadness" sounds better than ?*mimoletnaja pečal'* (cf. Uryson 1997).

Fourth, the feeling associated with *grust'* is not presented in the explication as a "bad feeling". Since the underlying thought (in the prototypical scenario) refers to a "bad" event ("something bad hap-

pened''), the explication invites the inference that the feeling caused by it is a ''bad'' feeling, but the explication does not state this explicitly. In the explication of *pečal'*, however, the feeling is specified as ''bad'' (component (h)). This difference accounts for the fact that *grust'* can be sometimes described as *svetlaja* ''luminous'', whereas *pečal'* normally cannot (except in poetry).

Fifth, the triggering event is presented in the explication of *grust'* as current or recent (''now'', component (c)), where no such reference to the present is included in the explication of *pečal'*.

It will be clear from the foregoing discussion that while both *grust'* and *pečal'* have a great deal in common with the English *sadness*, they both differ from it in some respects. Unlike *sadness*, *pečal'* has to have a definite cause, it has to imply a negative evaluation of some event or state of affairs, as well as a ''bad feeling'', and it has to extend in time; and *grust'* differs from *sadness* in implying (prototypically at least) a short term feeling and not necessarily a ''bad one''. (The death of a child, frequently mentioned in the literature as a ''prototypical antecedent'' of ''sadness'', could hardly be linked with *grust'*.) Thus, each of the three words considered here (*sadness*, *grust'*, *pečal'*) has its own distinct meaning. There is of course no reason to think that one of these words corresponds to some universal cognitive scenario (let alone a distinctive universal pattern of autonomic nervous system activity, cf. Ekman 1994b: 17), whereas the others do not.

It could be said that the differences between *grust'*, *pečal'*, and *sadness* are relatively minor. As noted earlier, however, there are languages (like Tahitian; cf. Levy 1973) where the closest counterpart of *sadness* differs from it so much that the language can be said to have no counterpart of *sadness* at all (not even an approximate one). The main point of this section was not to claim that Russian, like Tahitian, ''has no word for sadness'', but rather to demonstrate the methodology which can be used for comparing any ''emotion concepts'', no matter how different, both within a given language and across languages and cultures.

10 The scope of this book

The main theoretical themes of the book have been introduced in this chapter, but they will reappear in various contexts in other chapters as well. Throughout the book, the focus is on both cultural diversity and ''emotional universals''. The unity of the analysis lies in its methodology: looking at the phenomena discussed through the prism of the same universal human concepts.

Chapter 2 presents a systematic account of several dozen ''emotion

concepts", studying in detail similarities and differences within each group. The groups discussed are based on distinctions such as that between "good feelings" (e.g. *joy*) and "bad feelings" (e.g. *frustration*), between feelings based on the thought that "something bad happened" (e.g. *sadness*) and those based on the thought "something bad can happen" (e.g. *fear*), and between "thinking about someone else" (e.g. *envy*) and "thinking about ourselves" (e.g. *shame*).

While in discussing "joy", "frustration", "sadness", "fear", "envy", and "shame" one must look in detail at the meaning of the corresponding English words, the chapter is not intended to be just a study in lexical semantics. By uncovering the cognitive scenarios encoded in such words and discussing them in a cross-cultural and often historical perspective, I hope to identify many cognitive components which play a role in "emotional universes" other than that encoded in the contemporary English lexicon, and thus prepare the ground for the study of "emotional universals" in chapters 4 and 7. Throughout chapter 2, I have engaged with the existing literature on "individual emotions" – psychological, anthropological, philosophical, historical, and so on. Each "emotion" is the subject of a mini-study, and an exercise in multifaceted cross-disciplinary analysis, within a clear methodological framework.

Chapter 3 is a case study devoted to the German key concept *Angst*. While showing how the uses of *Angst* in German psychology, philosophy, and theology are rooted in the everyday use of the word, it explores its cultural underpinnings, tracing the origins of this unique German concept to the spiritual, cultural, and linguistic legacy of Martin Luther.

Chapter 4 explores human facial expressions. Rejecting analyses carried out in terms of language-specific English words such as *sad*, *happy*, *angry*, or *disgusted*, it proposes a radically new approach, shifting the perspective from the "psychology of the human face" to the "semantics of the human face". Arguing that meaningful facial components such as "raised eyebrows" or "drawn-together eyebrows" can be identified on an experiential semiotic basis, it isolates eight such meaningful facial gestures and assigns to them invariant (context-independent) meanings formulated in the Natural Semantic Metalanguage. The chapter's main hypothesis is that if there is a universal biologically based "emotional keyboard", it can be identified on the basis of universal, experientially recognizable facial gestures, and that its keys include, for example, the following ones: the "raised-eyebrows feelings", the "wrinkled-nose feelings", the "corners-of-the-mouth-up feelings", and so on. As demonstrated in chapter 7, these universals of feelings based on facial expressions are not necessarily the same as the common

themes which can be detected through the study of the lexicons of the world's languages.

Whereas chapter 4 studies human faces from a universal point of view and seeks to establish a set of "facial universals", chapter 5 views the human body from the point of view of one particular culture – Russian – and does so by analysing Russian phraseology related to the body. The chapter discusses the differences between Russian and English ethnophraseology to do with the human body, and demonstrates, using linguistic evidence, how the human body seen through the prism of the Russian language is culturally constructed.

Chapter 6 introduces the notion of "cultural script" (developed by the author and colleagues in a number of earlier publications, see in particular Goddard 1997a, Wierzbicka 1990b, 1994b, c, and d, 1996b and c, 1998a), applying it to the comparison of two cultures, Polish and Anglo-American. The chapter shows how the theory of "cultural scripts" can be applied to cross-cultural study of "emotions" and proposes a number of contrasting Polish and Anglo-American "emotional scripts". The "scripts" discussed have to do with "feeling good feelings", "showing good feelings", "not showing any feelings that one doesn't feel", "showing good feelings towards other people", and so on. The chapter uses linguistic evidence of various kinds, as well as observations made by bilingual writers, and discusses both verbal and non-verbal behaviour.

Chapter 7 puts forward a number of hypotheses concerning "emotional universals". It discusses the evidence for the universality of the concept FEEL (undifferentiated between "mental" and "physical" feelings and distinct from the concept THINK), the universal tendency that people have to talk about "good feelings" and "bad feelings", the universal phenomenon of expressive words linking feelings with thoughts, i.e., interjections (e.g. *Gee!*, *Wow!*, or *Yuk!* in English), the existence in all languages of *descriptive* words linking feelings with thoughts (such as *sadness* or *grust'*), the universal phenomenon of using images of internal bodily events and processes to describe thought-related feelings (e.g. *heart-broken* in English), and the apparently universal recognition of some links between thoughts, feelings, and bodily processes (e.g. *blush* in English). The discussion raises again the question of "facial universals" (such as the "raised eyebrows" feeling or the "corners-of-the-mouth-up" feeling). The chapter tries to show how the study of "human emotions" can be freed from a dependence on language-specific English words such as *sad*, *angry*, *disgusted*, or *happy*; and how the study of linguistic and cultural diversity can be reconciled with a search for genuine universals.

Ekman and Davidson (1994: 46) unjustifiably attributed to the

present writer a position of extreme relativity when they wrote: "In challenging Ekman and also Johnson-Laird and Oatley, Shweder cites Wierzbicka's arguments about language differences. Even Scherer would not accept Wierzbicka's position about the total variability in the lexicon of emotions."

But first, given Ekman's clearly declared lack of interest in "words" (see in particular Ekman 1994a: 282) and his frequent insistence that he is talking about "emotions", not about "words", it is difficult to see why he should have any problems with "total variability in the lexicon of emotion". Second, if by "position of total variability" Ekman and Davidson mean the claim that words like *anger*, *sadness*, or *surprise* do not have exact equivalents in many other languages, then the evidence in favour of this position would seem to be by now overwhelming. And third, if the authors are claiming that I deny the existence of any common themes running through the "emotion lexicons" of different languages then they are mistaken. I have in fact never denied this, and in chapter 7 of this book I try to identify some such common themes in precise ways, with reference to cross-linguistic evidence. Indeed, as chapter 7 illustrates, I, too, believe in the existence of "emotional universals", and I am as interested in these as I am in cultural diversity. I believe, however, that to be able to compare languages, cultures, and conceptual systems at all we need a reliable *tertium comparationis*, and that to study "human mind", "human cognition", or "human emotions" we must reach beyond the conventional English lexicon and anchor our investigations in conceptual universals.