



Emotions in Personality and Culture

C. E. Izard

Ethos, Vol. 11, No. 4, The Socialization of Affect. (Winter, 1983), pp. 305-312.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0091-2131%28198324%2911%3A4%3C305%3AEIPAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C>

Ethos is currently published by American Anthropological Association.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/about/terms.html>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/journals/anthro.html>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is an independent not-for-profit organization dedicated to and preserving a digital archive of scholarly journals. For more information regarding JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Emotions in Personality and Culture

C. E. IZARD

I'm delighted with the attention differential emotions theory is getting in anthropology and happily indebted to you for inviting me to do this commentary. I felt this invitation to serve as a discussant here today as a real challenge. Regrettably, I couldn't turn to the mainstream of American psychology for much help in discussing the contemporary research of anthropologists on emotion and socialization. I did find an inspirational and psychologically radical thought in philosophy. I refer to the work of Susanne Langer (1967) in her book *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*:

The central problem of the present essay is the nature and origin of the veritable gulf that divides human from animal mentality. . . . For animals have mental functions, but only the human being has a mind, and a mental life. Some animals are intelligent, but only human beings can be intellectual. The thesis I am about to develop here is that the human being's departure from the normal pattern of animal mentality is a vast and special evolution of *feeling* in the hominid stock. This deviation from the general balance of functions usually maintained in the complex advances of life (this vast unfolding of feelings and emotions) is so rich and so intricately detailed that it affects every aspect of our existence, and adds up to the total qualitative difference which sets human nature apart from the rest of the animal kingdom as a mode of being that is typified by language, culture, morality, and consciousness of life and death. [pp. xvi-xvii]

CARROLL E. IZARD is Unidel Professor of Psychology in the Department of Psychology, University of Delaware.

ETHOS 11:4 WINTER 1983
Copyright © 1983 by the Society for Psychological Anthropology
0091-2131/83/040305-08\$1.30/1

Perhaps Langer's idea that the quantum leap in evolution from nonhuman to human mentality is a function of the evolution of feelings and emotions is wholly acceptable to relatively few behavioral scientists. But the panel seems to be in general agreement that emotions are not only a significant part of human beings and vital to their motivational system, but important also as an integral part of culture and socialization. I heartily agree.

Some of the panelists explicitly or implicitly dealt with the emotion of interest, a phenomenon closely allied with curiosity, the motivation for the infant's and child's attention focusing, gaze patterns, and exploratory behavior. Anthropological evidence is now suggesting, to me at least, that the infant's and child's insatiable interest and curiosity give rise to customs that serve to place constraint on the child's movements and explorations. Some of LeVine's (1977) earlier observations on childrearing as cultural adaptation presents a nice example of this. I refer to his work among the Gusii where toddlers sometimes suffer severe burns in the cooking fire. The burn hazard, along with a number of other potential hazards for the infant and toddler exploring a typical African environment, are seen by LeVine as contributing to the development of the custom of the carrying sling. The affective rewards of bodily contact undoubtedly made some contribution, also.

One might raise the question as to why an innate fear response or at least a conditioned fear response would not be a much more economical way of protecting the child. Our research at the University of Delaware on the ontogeny of emotion expressions has recently produced robust evidence that disconfirms the hypothesis of Bowlby (1973) and Gray (1971) that pain is an innate releaser of fear. Furthermore, it is not until eight or nine months of age that one can expect a child's cognitive capacities to permit the learning of a conditioned fear or anticipatory pain avoidance response. Even in a study of repeated painful stimulations, a study that could hardly be conceived in the framework of current ethical standards for use of human subjects, McGraw (1941) found that it was not until around 200 days of age that infants showed anticipatory negative responses to repeated painful stimulation. Many infants by this age are mobile and quite capable of maneuvering themselves into painful situations. Thus mothers and the rules and customs of caregiving must compensate for young infants' lack of fear, lest their compelling

curiosity and lack of the cognitive capacity to appraise dangerous situations prove fatal.

Incidentally, in the pain situation that we are studying, the immunogenic inoculation series, the first negative emotion expression to follow the expression of physical distress is that of anger. We observed anger expressions following the pain of inoculation in 24 of 36 infants 2 to 19 months of age. In immediate response to pain the prominence of the distress expression decreases with age and the prominence of the anger expression increases. When we divided infants into groups that soothe quickly or slowly, we found that slow soothers displayed the anger expression more in terms of absolute time and in terms of the proportion of the total time that negative affect expressions were displayed in the pain situation. We think individual differences in soothability and in patterns of affect expressions may index differences in temperament or personality. We argued that anger can be an adaptive response to pain, particularly in infants and toddlers who have to depend more on motor responses than on cognitive or verbal manipulations in order to cope with the situation.

The adaptive value of anger in emergency situations has been well documented since the work of Cannon (1929). Its use in more ordinary social interchanges has also been recognized by anthropologists. Even in Tahiti, which Robert Levy (1973) describes as an oasis of gentleness in a comparatively hostile, violent, and crime-ridden world, anger in small amounts is seen as useful by one of his informants "because it helps you overcome fear when someone has wronged you" (1973:35). Against a background of generalized and culturally valued timidity, the Tahitians also tend to see a show of anger as "a shameful loss of control," suggesting that shame anticipation may account for some of the Tahitians' tranquility. These observations of the Tahitian bring us to another of the highly adaptive functions of emotion that has generally been overlooked by all the behavioral sciences, psychology in particular.

I refer to emotion-emotion regulation or the power of one emotion to control another emotion. This is beautifully illustrated in Lutz's observations in Ifaluk Atoll. She identified the reciprocal relationship between the fearful emotion of *metagu* and what she terms 'justifiable anger' or *song*. Anger or *song* expressed by a person of age or one of higher rank should elicit fear or *metagu* in per-

sons of lower rank, especially children. I found it fascinating that the people of Ifaluk feel that experiencing fear or *metagu* regularly in the appropriate situations is essential to the behavior control that is exercised by persons of greater age and rank through their expression of 'justifiable anger' or *song*.

Note that we have discussed two distinctly different but complementary functions of anger in relation to fear. If I understand Levy's report correctly, the Tahitians described their use of anger to *control* their own fear that was elicited by another person. This is an intraindividual or an intrapsychic regulating function of anger—using anger to inhibit or control fear. On the other hand, Lutz described a social function of anger expression as it is used by a person of age or higher rank to *elicit* fear in children or persons of lower rank. In both cases anger is serving a regulatory function in relation to fear—self-regulation of fear in Tahiti and social elicitation of fear in Ifaluk.

While the intraindividual and social functions of emotions are clearly discriminable in the instances we described, individual and social functions are probably overlapping in both instances. The Tahitians' use of anger in the self-regulation of fear was described as an occurrence in a social context and undoubtedly the altered intrapsychic emotion processes had social consequences. On the other hand, the Ifalukans' use of 'justifiable anger' or *song* to elicit 'fear' or *metagu* must in turn regulate aspects of the social interaction.

The papers of the Kilbrides and Weisner, Bausano, and Kornfein were concerned with the socialization of positive emotions. In view of the relative neglect of the study of positive emotions in all the behavioral sciences and in view of the fact that the evolutionary process seems to have endowed us with far more negative affects than positive ones, I'm particularly pleased with the work of these investigators. Furthermore, the Kilbrides' work goes a long way toward restoring our faith in what is probably a universal phenomenon—reciprocal positive affect expression between mother or caregiver and infant. They showed that contrary to some of the impressions given by earlier research Baganda mothers displayed high positive affect toward their infants. Although no direct comparison may be possible, they may even rival the efforts of Weisner's nonconventional California families who socialize for positive affect.

Weisner and his co-authors wisely pointed out that the experi-

encing, expression, and conceptualization of emotions are discriminable though often highly interrelated phenomena. In the case of their sample, there seemed to be a rather distinct difference between nonconventional and conventional families' cognitions and verbalizations about emotions. As implied in the Kilbrides' paper, however, the way we conceptualize emotions may make some important differences both in emotion processes within the individual and the culture as well as in the data we report and the interpretations we make of it. The Kilbrides, in fact, suggest that Ainsworth's western conception of positive affect expression led her to the erroneous conclusion that Bagandan mothers are extremely low in positive affect expression toward their infants. This was partly due to wide differences in kissing customs in the two cultures.

Weisner et al.'s conclusion that nonconventional and conventional families differ in affective behaviors toward their children only in the cognitive verbal domain may be partly a function of the age of the infants at the time he obtained these data. As Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971) has pointed out, facial features of the young infant, sometimes labeled cuddliness, are compelling elicitors of affect expressions in caregivers as well as casual observers. The babyhood factor at six months may be overriding latent differences in emotion-related behaviors in conventional and nonconventional families in the early months of life. Perhaps if the study is replicated after the infants are two or three years of age and babyhood features have receded, the differences between the two types of families in cognitions and verbalizations about emotions and emotion expressions will have produced other measurable effects.

I am particularly attracted to one aspect of Harkness and Super's model for the socialization of affect. I refer to their use of age or developmental stage in defining their concept of the culturally-regulated developmental niche. Nothing has become more apparent to us in our studies of the ontogeny of emotion expressions than the fact that age or stage of development is an important determinant of emotion expression in relation to a particular event. Our studies of the development of emotion expressions in response to pain, already described, well illustrate this point. Another study that I shall describe below also shows that mothers respond differently to a given emotion expressed in a six-month-old and the same emotion expressed in a one-year-old or toddler. Thus as Harkness and Super

point out, it would be quite possible to get a different reading on affect expression between mother and infant depending upon the developmental stage of the child at the time the data are obtained. A recent dissertation by Carol Malatesta (1980) at Rutgers showed that mothers displayed less facial expressive and verbal encouragement of affect expressions in *six*-month-old infants as compared with *three*-month-old infants. This conclusion was based on a microanalysis using our system (Izard and Dougherty 1982) of facial movement coding for identifying affect expressions in both mother and infant. Malatesta also showed that maternal anger expression is highly correlated with infant anger expression and that infants of high emotion-expressive mothers showed more interest and enjoyment expressions than infants of low emotion-expressive mothers. Further, maternal emotion or personality traits accounted for some of the variance in the mothers' tendency to encourage or discourage affect expressions in the infants.

I shall conclude my remarks with some comments on the important questions raised at the symposium by Professor LeVine. The first question he raised is that of the boundaries between the universal and the culture-specific in emotional experience. At the conceptual level, at least in differential emotion theory, the answer is simple, perhaps deceptively so. In this framework, the experiential component of emotion is a quality of consciousness or *feeling*, and at this level the emotion state is invariant across cultures. What makes this simple answer inadequate for a lot of the problems in psychological and anthropological research is that the quality of consciousness that characterizes the particular emotion is typically, though not always, accompanied by cognitive processes, and these cognitive processes are, as we all know, greatly influenced by culture. I think the problem that Professor LeVine raised is the problem of emotion-cognition interaction. Although I do not want to leave biology out of this altogether, culture and the socialization process in particular determine the rules that govern the development of affective cognitive structures. So while I cannot provide an answer to this intriguing and very basic question, I am willing to suggest that it will prove heuristic to consider emotion as having an affective or feeling component, which is universal and which may or may not be symbolized, and that this feeling component may or may not be, but most often is, bonded with images and symbols and ideas to form of

affective-cognitive structures, the kind of structures that are preeminent in verbal humankind. Thus if we are willing to assume that there is a limited set of emotion states or feelings or qualities of consciousness that are invariant across cultures, we can then examine how the rules and obligations and semantic structures of the culture may provide the key to cross-cultural differences in what Professor LeVine called emotional experience and what I would call affective-cognitive phenomena.

Professor LeVine's second question, that of cultural differences in standards of emotion expression, seems to me to be quite open to empirical investigation. If Malatesta, in her dissertation, could show that middle class New Jersey mothers are apparently following somewhat different rules for encouraging or discouraging affect expression in six-month-olds as opposed to three-month-olds, surely there are wide differences in cultural rules for rewarding and punishing affect expressions. Even within a given culture, whether or not an emotion expression is encouraged or discouraged must vary with the age or developmental stage of the child, the sex of the child, status of the child, or its family, and a number of other variables. I think the kind of research reported by Seymour at this Symposium is relevant here. She showed rather convincingly that household structure and household status are salient variables in the socialization of positive affect expression. Apparently some types of households are more expressive of both positive and negative affects.

We did a study in a health clinic in rural Delaware that also suggested that there are wide intracultural differences in the socialization of emotion expression in the United States. In this study, low income mothers perceived their infants as capable of wrongdoing and of guilt, or some awareness of wrongdoing, as early as six or seven months of age. Few, if any, middle-class mothers share this conception. In this retrospective interview study, mothers reported responding quite differently to a particular emotion expression in six- and twelve-month-olds. For example, anger expression elicited positive maternal responses in 69% of mothers of infants in the first 3 months of life but in only 11% of mothers of infants 15 months and older. Contrary to this, mothers continued to respond to infants' fear expressions with positive maternal behavior until the infant was 15 months old.

Professor LeVine's final question, regarding whether there are ef-

fects of cultural codes of emotion expression on the development of individuals, must be of interest to all of us. I believe that the answer to the question is affirmative, but studying it will not be simple. I believe there can be no substitute for longitudinal studies in pursuit of answers to this question. It will be important to try to identify the differential contributions of biology and culture in the developmental process, because some of the variation in patterns of affect expression are biologically based. On the other hand, the wide individual differences we found in soothability and in patterns of affect expressions in fast and slow soothers may well be a joint function of biology and socialization.

In summary, the work of the panelists suggests the possibility of a powerful alliance between the psychology of emotion and psychological anthropology, the discipline that may best provide ecological validity for emotion constructs.

REFERENCES

- BOWLBY, J. 1973. *Attachment and Loss: Vol. II. Separation, Anxiety, and Anger*. New York: Basic Books.
- CANNON, W. B. 1929. *Bodily Changes in Pain, Hunger, Fear and Rage*. (2nd ed.) New York: Appleton.
- EIBL-EIBESFELDT, I. 1971. *Love and Hate: The Natural History of Behavior Patterns*. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
- GRAY, J. A. 1971. *The Psychology of Fear and Stress*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- IZARD, C. E., and L. M. DOUGHERTY. 1982. Two Complimentary Systems For Measuring Facial Expressions in Infants and Children. *Measuring Emotions in Infants and Children* (C. E. Izard, ed.), pp. 97-126. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- LANGER, S. K. 1967. *Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- LEVINE, R. A. 1977. Child Rearing as Cultural Adaptation. *Culture and Infancy: Variations in the Human Experience* (P. H. Leiderman, S. R. Tulkin, and A. Rosenfeld, eds.), pp. 15-77. New York: Academic Press.
- LEVY, R. L. 1973. *The Tahitians*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- MALATESTA, C. 1980. *Determinants of Infant Affect Socialization: Age, Sex of Infant and Maternal Emotional Traits*. Doctoral dissertation, Rutgers University.
- MCGRAW, M. B. 1941. Neural Maturation as Exemplified in the Changing Reactions of the Infant to Pin Prick. *Child Development* 12:31-42.

LINKED CITATIONS

- Page 1 of 1 -



You have printed the following article:

Emotions in Personality and Culture

C. E. Izard

Ethos, Vol. 11, No. 4, The Socialization of Affect. (Winter, 1983), pp. 305-312.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0091-2131%28198324%2911%3A4%3C305%3AEIPAC%3E2.0.CO%3B2-C>

This article references the following linked citations. If you are trying to access articles from an off-campus location, you may be required to first logon via your library web site to access JSTOR. Please visit your library's website or contact a librarian to learn about options for remote access to JSTOR.

References

Neural Maturation as Exemplified in the Changing Reactions of the Infant to Pin Prick

Myrtle B. McGraw

Child Development, Vol. 12, No. 1. (Mar., 1941), pp. 31-42.

Stable URL:

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0009-3920%28194103%2912%3A1%3C31%3ANMAEIT%3E2.0.CO%3B2-P>