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Describing the body, disclosing the person: Reflections of Tetun personhood and social-emotional agency

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Initially setting out to explore Tetun¹ emotion terms, I soon realised that such an approach was too limiting for the data I was encountering. First, there were the inevitable problems that arise when a second language (such as English) is used to index the meaning of words in another language (such as Tetun). And, while it was not hard to compile a list of Tetun words and phrases that could be equated with emotion terms (in English), I found no overarching category in Tetun equivalent to the notion of ‘emotions’, making it analytically unsound to speak of Tetun ‘emotion terms’ as if they constitute an emic category. So, rather than force Tetun concepts into Western culture-bound notions of emotion,

1 The Tetun speakers who graciously taught me their language and provided data for this chapter are from the two regencies (*kabupaten*) of Belu and Malaka in the Indonesian province of Nusa Tenggara Timur on the western side of the Indonesian border with Timor-Leste. There are around 500,000 native speakers of Tetun in these two regencies, with the boundary between the two roughly dividing the two major dialects: Foho in the north and Fehan in the south. This variety of Tetun is also spoken in Timor-Leste, where it is often referred to as ‘Tetun Terik’, in contrast with the variety of Tetun spoken in and around Dili. I am especially grateful to Gabriel A. Bria, Asnat Halek-Dami, Ludofikus Bria and Emanuel Seran, who worked with me periodically over several years. Charles Grimes provided helpful comments on earlier drafts of this chapter.

I shifted from a focus on emotion terms per se to an analysis of how Tetun speakers talk about inner subjective experience, and what this implies in terms of the conceptualisation of personhood and human agency.

The starting point for analysis thus became what I refer to as Tetun *body talk*—phrases describing parts of the body that are used when talking about inner subjective experiences such as feeling, thinking, remembering and relating socially.² In the first section of this chapter, I discuss phrases based on seven different body parts that I have found to be at the core of Tetun body talk. I demonstrate how body talk describes the condition or state of a person without disassociating the physical body from the emotional, intellectual or social person. In the second section of the chapter, I note how body talk is linguistically encoded as noun phrases, disclosing the state of the inner person as a non-agent, in contrast to a set of Tetun ‘emotion’ verbs that assert social-emotional agency. In the third section, I discuss how morality and social norms are emotionally regulated and restrained through the Tetun concept of shame (*moe*).

The noun phrases of body talk

Tetun body talk shows considerable similarities with what is found in other languages in the region, including in both Austronesian and Papuan languages. In contrast to the seven body parts found in Tetun body talk, Papuan languages appear to use particularly large inventories of body parts. Kratochvil and Delpada (2012) list 22 different body parts found in ‘emotion and cognition predicates’ of Abui, a Papuan language of Alor Island just north of Timor. Their database includes over 300 expressions based on these body parts. McElhanon (1977) lists 28 body parts that occur in ‘idioms’ in Selepet, a Papuan language of Morobe Province in Papua New Guinea.³ He comments that ‘body parts express definite

2 This use of body metaphors parallels some of what Fox (Chapter 5, this volume) describes for Rote, Sather (Chapter 3, this volume) for Iban and Kuehling (Chapter 7, this volume) for Dobu, along with other works discussed in this chapter.

3 These are *amun* (‘buttocks’), *ândâp* (‘ear’), *bât* (‘hand, arm’), *biwi* (‘inside’), *dihin* (‘chest’), *engat* (‘neck’), *bahit* (‘bone’), *hâk* (‘skin’), *hâme* (‘nose’), *hep* (‘blood’), *kahapoy* (‘breath, vapour’), *kambe* (‘shoulder’), *kambiam* (‘liver, heart’), *kâi* (‘foot, leg’), *kâkâ* (‘molar’), *kun* (‘head’), *lau* (‘mouth’), *nângân nângân* (‘understanding’), *nekam* (‘chin’), *nelâm* (‘mind’), *nimbilam* (‘tongue’), *sât* (‘tooth’), *sen* (‘eye’), *tâp* (‘saliva’), *tep* (‘belly’), *umut* (‘shadow, image, spirit’), *we* (‘soul’[?]) and *wât* (‘strength’).

psychological and sociological functions’ and ‘a careful study of the expressions based upon body parts reveal[s] an underlying system with some clearly discernible characteristics’ (McElhanon 1977: 117).

McElhanon also addresses the difficulty in trying to classify these expressions as having ‘idiomatic’ (metaphorical or figurative) meaning in contrast to ‘non-idiomatic’ (literal) meaning.

The same dilemma could be said to exist in Tetun. Some expressions appear to be used metaphorically or figuratively, such as the phrase *laran malirin* (‘cool insides’), which is used to refer to someone who is no longer angry. But other expressions refer to a literal observable state of the body as well as an implied internal state, such as the phrase *nawan naksetik* (‘tight/constricted breathing’), used to refer to someone who is frustrated. In this analysis, I do not attempt to distinguish metaphorical from literal meaning, opting instead to see Tetun body talk—metaphorical or otherwise—as describing and revealing both the body and the person. The Tetun concept of personhood is an embodied one, where physical as well as emotional, intellectual and relational states are revealed by talking about the body/person. Body talk simultaneously references both physical (literal) and metaphorical (figurative) states, without creating distinction between the body and the person.

Phrases based on the seven body parts that have been found in Tetun body talk are discussed below. I include example sentences to show how ‘body talk’ is grammatically represented as descriptive phrases that define the body/person in systematic ways. The Tetun body parts I elaborate on are listed briefly below; a fuller discussion with examples is given below for a more complete sense of what these simple glosses represent.

nawa-n: ‘breath, life force’

ibu-n: ‘mouth’

mata-n: ‘eye’

ate-n: ‘liver’

kakutak: ‘brain’

neo-n: ‘mind’

lara-n: ‘insides’

Most of the examples below use the following grammatical frame: subject,⁴ [is being described as] body part noun + modifier.⁵

1.1 *Nawan* ('breath, life force')

- | | | |
|-----------|---|---|
| 01 | <i>Nia nawan sa'e</i>
He breath ascend/increase | 'He is angry' |
| 02 | <i>Nia nawan aat</i>
He breath bad/evil | 'He has numerous negative social characteristics' |
| 03 | <i>Nia nawan naruki</i>
He breath long | 1) 'He is an athletic runner or diver who holds his breath a long time' OR
2) 'He is a person who took an unexpectedly long time to die' |
| 04 | <i>Nia nawan tuun</i>
He breath descend/subside | 1) 'He is no longer angry' (resulting state)//'His anger is subsiding' (process)
OR
2) 'His breath/life force subsides' ⁶ |
| | <i>Emi baa, te nawan tuun ti'an</i>
You-pl go, reason his breath descend already | 'Just go ahead and go, since he's no longer angry [at you]' |
| 05 | <i>Nia nawan badak</i>
He breath short | 'He is quick to get angry' |
| 06 | <i>Nia nawan naksetik</i>
He breath tight/constricted | 'He is extremely angry and frustrated' |
| 07 | <i>Hakraik nawan lai!</i>
Lower breath imperative | 'Stop being angry!' |
| 08 | <i>Nia nawan kotu</i>
He breath cut/severed | 'He stopped breathing' (Euphemism: he died—refers to the moment of a person's death) ⁷ |
| 09 | <i>La noo nawan</i>
NEG exist breath | 'There is no breath/life force' (refers to inanimate objects) |
| 10 | <i>La noo nawan ti'an</i>
NEG exist breath already | 'There is no longer any breath/life force' (refers to a dead person or animal) |

4 *Nia*, the Tetun third person singular pronoun, is not marked for gender. For simplicity and brevity, I only gloss it in English with the male pronoun he/him.

5 This sentence is technically composed of a subject and a nonverbal predicate.

6 This phrase is also used to mean a *liurai* ('king') has died, in the special Tetun register used for talking to/about nobles. The normal phrase used when someone dies, *Nia nawan kotu*, is considered too impolite for talking about nobles.

7 Similar to the term *putus nafas* used in the local variety of Malay.

The link between ‘breath’ and ‘life force’ in these Tetun phrases reflects the association between breath and life—an association common in many languages, including English. But, as the phrases about increasing and decreasing anger suggest, in Tetun there is also a close association between the physical state of a person’s breathing and the state of his/her emotional *and* social experience. *Nawan sa’e* (‘breath ascends’) is a multidimensional term that simultaneously implies the physiological experience of rapid breathing, the emotional experience of anger and the social experience of troubled relationships.

1.2 *Ibun* (‘mouth’)

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|----|--|---|
| 11 | <i>Nia ibu wa-waan</i>
He mouth DUP-open | ‘He is amazed/astonished/agape’ |
| 12 | <i>Nia ibun boot</i>
He mouth (n) big | ‘He talks too much, without anything constructive to say’ (seen as a negative characteristic such as grandstanding or bragging) |
| 13 | <i>Nia ibun maweek</i>
He mouth watery | ‘He frequently gossips’ |
| 14 | <i>Nia nakmulis ibun</i>
He twists mouth | ‘He is mocking someone’ |
| 15 | <i>Nia ibun naruk, nunun naruk</i>
He mouth long lips long | ‘He habitually talks badly about people’ |
| 16 | <i>Nia ibun luan</i>
He mouth wide | ‘He is talkative’ (descriptive, not negative) |
| 17 | <i>Lia nia keke ti’an nosi ibun
baa ibun</i>
Matter its spread already from mouth go/to mouth | ‘The news has spread all over the place’ |
| 18 | <i>Loke ibun</i>
Open mouth | ‘Begin to talk’ (again, after not talking)
‘Resume speaking’ |
| 19 | <i>Taka ibun</i>
Close mouth | ‘Refuse to talk’ (descriptive) OR
‘Shut up!’ (imperative) |
| 20 | <i>Daka ibun</i>
Guard mouth | ‘Be careful what one says’ |
| 21 | <i>Ibun-nanaan</i>
Mouth-tongue | ‘A spokesperson’ |
| 22 | <i>Nanaan karuak</i>
Tongue doubled | ‘Hypocritical, say one thing, then another thing’ |

In the parallelisms associated with ritual speech, *ibun* ('mouth') pairs with *nanaan* ('tongue'), and the 'mouth-tongue' pair functions as an idiom for a spokesperson, reflecting the physiological association of mouth with speaking. The other phrases show how Tetun body talk of *ibun* ('mouth') and *nanaan* ('tongue') reveals the person as a social person.

1.3 *Matan* ('eye')

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>23 <i>Sia titu ema nodi mata
baluk dei</i>
They look person with eye
one side only</p> | <p>'They do not treat people appropriately'
(they look down on people, view them
disparagingly, treat people with contempt)</p> |
| <p>24 <i>Nia mata katar</i>
He eye itch</p> | <p>'He habitually flirts with girls'</p> |
| <p>25 <i>Nia mata malaik</i>
He eye quick</p> | <p>'His eyes move quickly' (Implication:
to look at or flirt with girls)</p> |
| <p>26 <i>Nia mata mareek</i>
He eye seeing</p> | <p>'He sees things in the invisible world'</p> |

As the above examples show, Tetun body talk of eyes reflects ways of seeing and interacting with the external social worlds, including the invisible world.

1.4 *Aten* ('liver')

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|--|---|
| <p>27 <i>Ema ne'e, ate kabahat</i>
Person this liver stingy/
miserly</p> | <p>'This person is very selfish/unsharing/
stingy'</p> |
| <p>28 <i>Ema ne'e, ate fa'ek</i>
Person this liver split</p> | <p>'This person is self-centred and causes
social divisions'</p> |
| <p>29 <i>Ema ne'e, ate kamoruk</i>
Person this liver bitter</p> | <p>'This person acts extremely egotistically
and bitter towards other people'</p> |

My Tetun consultants were quick to point out that, unlike Indonesian and the local variety of Malay, in Tetun there are only a limited number of body-talk phrases relating to *aten* ('liver') and these phrases always portray characteristics that are viewed very negatively. The liver is considered to be located deeply within a person, both physically and socially. When traits such as stingy, divisive and bitter are associated with a person's liver, these traits are considered 'deep' and almost never changeable.

1.5 *Kakutak* ('brain')

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 30 | <i>Nia kakutak di'ak</i>
He brain good | ‘He thinks/remembers well/He is a good thinker/He is clever’ |
| 31 | <i>Nia kakutak kro'at</i>
He brain sharp | ‘He thinks/remembers perceptively’ |
| 32 | <i>Nia kakutak loos</i>
He brain straight | ‘He thinks/remembers correctly/wisely/accurately’ (the metaphor of straight implies a contrast to the negative association of twisted/devious) |
| 33 | <i>Nia kakutak monas</i>
He brain hard | ‘He is dull-witted, can't remember and respond appropriately to what people tell him’ |
| 34 | <i>Nia kakutak ufak</i>
He brain dull | ‘He is stupid’ (he should remember and respond but does not) |
| 35 | <i>Nia kakutak ktomak</i>
He brain complete | ‘He is very stupid’ (his brains are complete or closed—not open to comprehend or respond to new information) |
| 36 | <i>Mak bolu lia rai lia iba kakutak</i>
REL calls out word store
word in brain | A traditional poet is ‘one who stores up knowledge in his brain’ |
| 37 | <i>Lia nia la tama baa kakutak</i>
Matter its NEG enter go/to
brain | ‘That matter does not make sense’ |

The above examples show that *kakutak* ('brains') are conceptualised as the place where information and memories are located. As with other parts of the body, brains can be described in a variety of ways, indexing how a person remembers mentally and how they respond socially to information they are expected to know. Interestingly, *kakutak* ('brains') contrasts with *neon* ('mind'), described below.

1.6 *Neon* ('mind/heart')

Phrases with the noun *neo-n* are numerous. Some of the phrases refer to thinking, pondering or coming to a mental conclusion about something, and can be translated with an English gloss like 'mind'. However, many *neon* phrases could also be considered typical emotion terms, more fitting

with an English gloss of ‘heart’ as the seat of emotions and values. This is a significant point: *neon* is best translated as both ‘mind’ and ‘heart’—the place for both thinking and feeling.

Tetun speakers agree that the *neon* is an internal part of the body (often pointing to their chest), but they also agree that there is no physical organ called *neon*. In butchering a pig, for example, there would be no *neon* to point out, in contrast to the previous phrases used above to describe Tetun body talk.

The root of the noun *neo-n* is *neo*, which can appear as the verb *ha-neo*, meaning to ‘reason’ or ‘think’. *Neon* is where the action of *haneo* occurs.

- 38 *Ita haneo iha neon* ‘We think in our mind/heart’
 We-inc think in mind/heart
- 39 *Naree nu’unia, sia naneo na’ak ...* ‘Seeing like that, they reasoned/
 See like that they think saying concluded that ...’

Another verb associated with *neon* is *horan*, which focuses on the human ability to ‘sense’ or ‘perceive’. *Horan* can be associated with what could be considered emotional feelings such as fear, good fortune or unpleasantness, but it also can be associated with sensing bodily ‘feelings’, such as the adverse experiencing of tiredness, thirst and hunger.

- 40 *Ita horan hatauk iha neon laran* ‘We perceive/sense/experience fear
 We-inc perceive fear in mind in our mind/heart’
 inside
- 41 *Ita horan salaen* ‘We experience thirst’/‘They are
 We-inc perceive thirst thirsty’
- 42 *Sia horan sotir, tan moris furak* ‘They experience good fortune,
 They perceive good fortune because they live well off’
 because live pleasant

Both *haneo* and *horan* are considered characteristics of living human beings.

- 43 *Oras ita moris, ita hatene haneo* ‘When we are alive, we are able
no horan to think and perceive’
 When we-inc live we know
 think and perceive

In contrast to the actions of *haneo no horan* ('thinking and perceiving'), which are associated with the *neon* ('heart/mind'), the action of *hanoin* ('remembering') is associated with the *kakutak* ('brain'). *Hanoin* can include a sense of yearning for someone or for a socially positive event.

- 44 *Hanoin ba oras emi sei ki'ik* 'Remember when you were still small/
Remember to when you-pl young'
still small
- 45 *Ita hanoin iha kakutak* 'We remember in our brain'
We-inc remember in brain
- 46 *Hanoin di'a-di'ak!* 'Pay attention!'/ 'Think carefully!'
Remember DUP-good

Remarkably, the Tetun grammatical particle *hola* ('take', when used as a main verb) collocates with the verb *hanoin* ('remember'), but does not collocate with *haneo* ('think'). As a modifier, *hola* is a perfective verbal marker, indicating that the action of the verb is completed and accomplished.⁸ Semantically, it cannot co-occur with *haneo*—constrained by the reality that thinking is a continuing process. Remembering, on the other hand, is an action that can be completed or successfully accomplished.

- 47 *Mais la nanoin nola, teki-tekis* 'He forgot what he came to do, and just
nia fila mai went home' (i.e. he did not successfully
But NEG remember take remember)
suddenly he return come

But **naneo nola* ('*accomplish thinking') is not allowable in any contexts according to the native speakers of Tetun with whom I consulted.

The following phrases show productive uses of *neon*.

- 48 *Nia neon di'ak* 'He is happy/pleased/in a pleasant state
He mind good of mind'
- 49 *Nia neon loos* 'He is honest, does what is right'
He mind straight
- 50 *Nia neon monas* 'He is hard-hearted/not compassionate'
He mind hard (when the social situation requires it)

8 Readers interested in understanding in greater depth how verbal modifiers such as *hola* can make the verb perfective with an accomplishment sense are referred to Jacob and Grimes (2011), which describes this in-depth for several languages in the West Timor region.

EXPRESSIONS OF AUSTRONESIAN THOUGHT AND EMOTIONS

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 51 | <i>Niakaan neon kbiit</i>
His mind strong | ‘He is not fearful or easily swayed to do wrong’ |
| 52 | <i>Nia neon ktodan</i>
He mind heavy | ‘He is worried, heavy-hearted, sad, discouraged’ |
| 53 | <i>Nia neon ki’i</i>
He mind sting | ‘He is troubled, has many concerns’ |
| 54 | <i>Nia neon ki’ik</i>
He mind small | ‘He is insecure, petty, not self-confident’ |
| 55 | <i>Nia neon boot</i>
He mind big | ‘He is happy, justifiably proud, delighted’ |
| 56 | <i>Nia neon susar</i>
He mind difficulty | ‘He is distressed/troubled’ (often because of loss due to death or threat of loss) |
| 57 | <i>Nia neo ruak</i>
He mind two | ‘He is undecided’ (cf. English idiom: ‘he is of two minds’) |
| 58 | <i>Nia neon monu</i>
He mind fall | ‘He becomes disappointed, loses enthusiasm’ |
| 59 | <i>Nia neon lakon</i>
He mind disappear | ‘He is temporarily startled, unable to think, panics, freezes’ |
| 60 | <i>Nia neon mamar</i>
He mind soft/pliable | ‘He is easily persuaded and does what others say [when he should not]’ (children are said to have pliable minds/hearts) |
| 61 | <i>Nia neon noku</i>
He mind calm | ‘He is calm, at peace, cool-headed, not worried’ |
| 62 | <i>Nia neon kmetis</i>
He mind firm | ‘He is consistent, does not change his mind’ |
| 63 | <i>Nia neon fatuk</i>
He mind rock | ‘He is consistent’ (similar to ‘firm mind/heart’ above) |
| 64 | <i>Nia neon lalek</i>
He mind without | ‘He does things thoughtlessly, without caring about others, and without thought to the social consequences’ |
| 65 | <i>Nia neon lakon ti’an</i>
He mind disappear already | ‘He is confused, doesn’t know what to think or do’ |
| 66 | <i>Nia noo neon ti’an</i>
He exist mind already | ‘He now has a mind/heart’ (said of a young child when he begins to express cognition; newborns are considered to not yet have a mind/heart) |

- 67 *Ami bakbiit siakan neon* 'We encourage, strengthen their hearts'
We-exc strengthen
their mind
- 68 *Nia taka neon ti'an* 'He refuses to listen to advice or input
He close mind already
from others'
- 69 *Nia loke neon ti'an* 'He now responds to advice or input from
He open mind already
others'/'He is now receptive to guidance'
- 70 *Nia neon dodok* 'His heart is broken [from failed
He mind shatter
romantic love]'
- 71 *Emi lala'o, emi neon moris, o!* 'When you are walking/travelling, you
You-pl walk you mind live
EMPH
must keep your minds alert!'
- 72 *Nia namina aan nola ema* 'He acts in a way to deceive someone'
neon
He oils self take person mind
- 73 *Keta rai neon baa kro'at no* 'Don't put your trust in weapons'
kmeik
Don't store mind go/to sharp
and pointed
- 74 *Lia nia, lia neon ain* 'That matter/story is a secret' (lit.: at the
Matter its matter mind foot
foot of the mind; cf. English concept of
'deepest darkest secret')

Another phrase considered by Tetun speakers to be similar to *lia neon ain* ('a matter at the foot of the mind/heart') is *lia kabu laran* ('a matter inside the stomach'). Things that are inside the stomach, or at the foot of the mind/heart, are secret and not known to others; they are hidden in the corners of our inner being, so to speak.

1.7 *Laran* ('inside')

Laran ('inside') is a common Tetun locational term referring to the inside of objects (such as *iha uma laran*: 'inside the house') and is an important concept used in discourse about emotional and social relations.⁹ Tetun

9 As such, there are parallels with Fox's (Chapter 5, this volume) description of *dalek* ('inside') for Rote languages. Linguistically, Tetun *lana-n* and Rote *dale-k* are cognate, both deriving from Proto-Malayo-Polynesian **dalam* ('inside') (C. Grimes, personal communication). Tetun *laran* ('inside') also contrasts with *luan* ('outside') in spatial and social ways, similar to Fox's description of Rote *dalek* ('inside') and *de'ak* ('outside'). For example, in Tetun, a contrast in the social origin of children is expressed as *oa kabun laran* ('child from inside the stomach/womb') and *oa kabun luan* ('child from outside the stomach/womb').

speakers agree that, similar to *neon* ('mind/heart'), *laran* is internal to the body (and they often point to their chest), but there is also no physical organ called *laran*.¹⁰ The following examples show that *laran* can best be described as the internal reflection of the social person.

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 75 | <i>Nia laran moras</i>
He insides sick | ‘He is offended/sickened/upset by the actions of another person’ |
| 76 | <i>Nia laran malirin ti’an</i>
He insides cool already | ‘He is no longer angry’ |
| 77 | <i>Nia laran maluak</i>
He insides wide | ‘He is hospitable, generous, helpful’ |
| 78 | <i>Nia laran di’ak</i>
He insides good | ‘He does good things, does not hold grievances or seek revenge’ (cf. English: ‘a good-hearted person, a person of good character’, but in Tetun it is always with reference to a relation with another person) |

It is insightful to contrast the above concept of *laran di’ak* ('good insides') with the concept of *neon di’ak* ('good mind/heart') already noted above.

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|
| 48 | <i>Nia neon di’ak</i>
He mind good | ‘He is happy/pleased/in a pleasant state of mind’ |
|----|---------------------------------------|---|

These two phrases—both using the descriptive word *di’ak* ('good')—reveal a significant distinction between the concepts of *neon* and *laran*: talk of *neon* is self-referential, indexing the state of internal experience, while talk of *laran* is social, indexing the internal state of external social relations. The body talk of *laran* ('inside') thus indicates that sociality is not constructed as external to the person. Instead, the state of social relations registers 'inside' the body, inside the person.

The fact that *neon* and *laran* are both considered integral parts of the body/person provides another indication that Tetun personhood includes inner subjective experiences (such as thinking and feeling) embodied in the *neon*, as well as social relations embodied 'inside' the body/person.

10 Donohue and Grimes (2008: 148–51) observe comparatively that quite a few Austronesian languages in eastern Indonesia and Timor-Leste have shifted away from the Austronesian words for 'liver' as the seat of emotion and character prevalent in the west (cf. Malay: *bati* '1. liver, 2. seat of emotions and character'), adapting to follow one of the common Papuan strategies for using 'inside, insides' as the seat of emotion and character.

In poetic and more eloquent forms of speech, *neon* and *laran* are paired to express the notion of doing something enthusiastically, wholeheartedly and unreservedly. In other words, doing something with complete engagement of the inner and social self.

- 79 *Serwisu hodi neon no laran* 'Work wholeheartedly'
Work with mind and insides
- 80 *Simu hodi neon no laran* 'Accept something wholeheartedly'
Receive with mind and insides
- 81 *Sala mak sia nalo la nodi neon no laran* 'Unintentional wrong'
Wrong which they do NEG take mind and insides

1.8 Summary of Tetun body talk

It is now possible to compare, contrast and summarise how Tetun descriptive noun phrases of body talk define the body/person in systematic ways:

- *nawan* ('breath/life force'): locus for physical and social-emotional states that reveal life and death; registers the danger of anger and frustration
- *ibun* ('mouth'): locus for oral communication; reflects social-emotional states associated with communication
- *matan* ('eye'): locus for perception; reveals how the body/person perceives and interacts with the (visible and invisible) social world
- *aten* ('liver'): locus for semipermanent negatively valued social traits considered to represent flawed character
- *kakutak* ('brain'): locus for retaining information; indicates how information is processed and remembered as well as appropriate/inappropriate social responses to memories
- *neon* ('mind/heart'): locus for thinking, feeling, sensing; reveals numerous social-emotional states
- *laran* ('inside'): internal reflection of social relations.

The verbs of social-emotional agency

The descriptive *noun phrases* of body talk discussed above describe the condition or state of the body/person and include states that would be clearly classed in English as reflecting ‘emotion’. There are also Tetun *verbs* that can be considered ‘emotion’ words. These verbs do not refer overtly to the body, but are frequently associated with the social-emotional states that are described through the noun phrases of body talk.

I propose that the differences between the ways these Tetun noun phrases and verbs are encoded in the grammar are significant in the conceptualisation of personhood. Descriptive noun phrases of body talk (body-part noun + modifier) disclose the subject as a non-agent *experiencing* bodily states such as cool insides, hard brains, a bitter liver and so on. In contrast, when ‘emotion’ words occur as active verbs, they denote that the subject is acting as an agent *doing* what I will refer to as ‘social-emotional agency’.¹¹

This grammatically encoded distinction between *experiencing* and *doing* alludes to the analytical distinction made by Strathern (1988: 273) between the Melanesian ‘person’ and ‘agent’. The person is construed from the vantage point of the relations that constitute him or her; she or he objectifies and is thus revealed in those relations. The agent is construed as the one who acts because of those relationships and is revealed in his or her actions.

The active Tetun verbs I discuss below are best understood as involving an agent acting with another in mind. Translations that reflect English notions of emotion can be seriously misleading. *Kanarak*, for example, is said of a person displaying anger, but to translate *kanarak* as ‘to be angry’ is misleading, because *kanarak* is not a descriptive phrase indicating a subject is *experiencing* anger; it is an active verb indicating that the subject is *doing* anger—acting on another as a social-emotional agent.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 82 <i>Nia kanarak</i> | ‘He acts in anger towards someone/ |
| He act-in-anger | He scolds someone’ |

¹¹ Grammatically, most of the clause-level examples in this chapter follow the simple pattern of subject + predicate. However, there are two kinds of predicates. The noun phrase predicates are nonverbal predicates where the subject is an undergoer in a BE relationship with the quality or characteristic being described in the noun phrase. In contrast, the verbal predicates reflect a DO relationship with the subject as actor.

A person who does anger in this way can be described with body talk as EXPERIENCING a changed body state:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| | <i>Nia nawan sa'e</i>
He breath ascend/increase | 'He is angry' (cf. ex. 01) |
| 83 | <i>Nia la kanarak ona</i>
He NEG act-in-anger
already | 'He no longer acts in anger towards someone/He no longer scolds someone' |

This person can be described with body talk as EXPERIENCING:

- | | | |
|-----------|--|--|
| | <i>Nia nawan tuun</i>
He breath descend | 'He is no longer angry' (resulting state// 'His anger is subsiding' (process) (cf. ex. 04) |
| 84 | <i>Nia kratak</i>
He fiercely-acts-in-anger | 'He habitually acts in fierce anger towards someone' |

A person who acts in this way can be described with body talk as:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| | <i>Nia nawan aat</i>
He breath bad/evil | 'He has numerous negative social characteristics'/'He has serious issues' (cf. ex. 02) |
|--|--|--|

Other Tetun verbs expressing social-emotional agency include:

- | | | |
|-----------|---|--|
| 85 | <i>hasuhu</i>
complain/grumble | 'complain to someone' |
| 86 | <i>hirus</i>
express anger/display anger | 'display anger at someone over a period of time' |
| 87 | <i>rai hirus</i>
store anger | 'store anger towards someone, build up resentment' (waiting for an opportunity to take action/vengeance) ¹² |
| 88 | <i>tinu</i>
be jealous | 'be jealous of someone, act out one's jealousy' (because someone is better than you or has the attention of your spouse/lover) |

12 This is similar, in many ways, to how Malay *simpan hati* ('hold a grudge'; lit.: store away liver) is used in eastern Indonesia.

Verbs of positively valued social interaction include:

- 89** *hadomi* 'to love, have affection for someone' (Can also imply pity and compassion)¹³
- dodan* 'to care for someone [often of lower status]'
- haloon* 'to plead, hope, wait humbly for someone [of higher status] to care of me/us'
- hakara* 'to like, be fond of someone'
- beer* 'to sincerely desire, yearn for someone'

The cause or result of these actions can be reflected in the body talk of *neon* ('mind/heart') and *laran* ('inside'). When something is done wholeheartedly and unreservedly, the phrase *hodi neon no laran* ('with mind/heart and insides') is used, highlighting the efficacy of the actor to act with maximum emotional and social agency.

- 90** *Nia nadomi sia nodi neon no laran* 'He loves them wholeheartedly'
He love them with mind and insides

The social-emotional regulation of morality

The final term I discuss is *moe*, a term that appeared on my initial list of Tetun emotion terms because it is translated as Indonesian *malu*, which is often glossed in English with terms ranging from 'shame' to 'embarrassment' to 'shy'. Tetun examples of *moe* present similarities with Goddard's (1996: 432–5) analysis of Malay *malu* as a negative and inhibiting reaction to real or potential social disapproval.

Tetun discourse suggests that social life is about knowing when and where to reflect the correct degree of relational restraint or *moe*. Such knowledge inherently concerns social norms and morality. At one end of the spectrum, respect is required and the restraint of *moe* is socially necessary. If a person does not show appropriate restraint in the context of a particular relationship, he or she is scolded:

- 91** *O ne'e, moe lalek* 'You are without shame/social restraint'
You this shame without

¹³ As such, Tetun *hadomi* shares a similar range of meaning to what Sather (Chapter 3, this volume) describes for Iban concepts of 'love' and Fox (Chapter 5, this volume) describes for the Rote terms *sue* and *sue'llai*.

At the other extreme, there are times when people (particularly young children acting ‘shy’) are seen to inappropriately show excessive social withdrawal or *moe*. This is termed *moe aat* (‘bad/excessive restraint’). In these cases, the person is told:

- 92 *Lalika moe!* ‘Don’t be so shy/socially withdrawn!’
Unnecessary shame

A sense of boldness can be associated with disregarding *moe* at times when most people would be too timid.

- 93 *Ha’u la kmoe baa* ‘I am not too timid/socially restrained
I NEG ashamed go to go’ (e.g. get involved in a dispute)

A causative prefix can be added to *moe*, resulting in a verb causing someone else to become *moe*.

- 94 *Lia nia na-moe ami* ‘That matter causes us to become *moe*’
Matter its CAUS-shame That matter causes us to socially withdraw
we-exc That matter embarrasses us

Further evidence that *moe* is a term indicating social and emotional withdrawal can be seen by the addition of the reflexive word *aan*. *Moe aan* can be translated as ‘embarrass oneself’, but it also connotes social retreat or withdrawing oneself.

- 95 *Dadi ema madiduk, ha’u kmoe aan* ‘Becoming a begging person, I *moe*
Become person beg myself’ (which means both of the
I shame self following:
‘[If I were to] become a beggar, I would socially withdraw myself’
‘[If I were to] become a beggar, I would embarrass/shame myself [= be ashamed]’)
- 96 *Musti hakneter ema nia, nebee nia la moe aan* ‘[We] must respect that person, so he does
Must respect person that not *moe* himself’ (which means both of
RESULT he NEG shame self the following:
‘We must respect that person, so he does not socially withdraw himself’
‘We must give that person his due respect, so he is not shamed’)

Conclusion: Where have all the emotion terms gone?

I now return to my initial plan to collect and analyse Tetun emotion terms. The approach was problematic and limiting, because an exclusive focus on emotion did not reveal the broader system underlying Tetun body talk and concepts of the person. The English-centric view of emotion terms as abstract nouns (such as ‘happiness’, ‘anger’, ‘joy’, ‘sadness’) constructs emotions as feelings distinct from the body. Interestingly, emotion terms in Indonesian—an Austronesian language from the west of Timor—are also frequently expressed as abstract nouns (see Appendix 6.1 for a list of 124 Indonesian emotion terms from Shaver et al. 2001). Less than 10 per cent of the Indonesian emotion terms in this list are based on body-part idioms. In contrast, more than 80 per cent of Tetun terms relating to emotions involve body-part idioms.

In conclusion, Tetun body talk does not encode emotions as abstract nouns or construct emotions as abstract ‘feelings’. Rather, inner subject experiences (emotions as well as thoughts, memories and sociality) are embodied and disclosed through body talk by describing the condition manifested or associated with a part of the body. In contrast to the noun phrases of body talk are active verbs grammatically asserting social-emotional agency: the actor acting on and in relation to another. An agent is not construed as experiencing the emotion of anger, but as enacting anger in relation to another. And, as agents act, their social-emotional states are read from their bodies.

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Appendix 6.1: List of 124 Indonesian emotion words

<i>aman</i>	calmness, safety, security
<i>asik</i>	absorption, fascination, excitement
<i>asmara</i>	romantic love
<i>bahagia</i>	happiness, wellbeing
<i>bangga</i>	feeling rightfully proud of

<i>benci</i>	hatred, extreme dislike, animosity
<i>berahi</i>	sexual desire, lust, infatuation
<i>berang</i>	anger, fury, ire
<i>berani</i>	boldness, courageousness
<i>berat hati</i>	sadness (lit.: heavy-heartedness)
<i>berbesar</i>	feeling expanded with pride
<i>berdebar</i>	heart palpitation, heart flutter
<i>berdengki</i>	hatred, envy
<i>bergairah</i>	passion, arousal, enthusiasm
<i>besar hati</i>	pride, elation
<i>bimbang</i>	worry, hesitation, vacillation, indecision
<i>bingung</i>	confusion; feeling panicky, perplexed, disoriented
<i>bosan</i>	boredom; feeling tired of, sick of
<i>cemas</i>	worry; feeling disturbed, anxious
<i>cemburu</i>	jealousy, envy, dissatisfaction
<i>ceria</i>	cheerfulness, brightness, purity
<i>cinta</i>	love, affection
<i>curiga</i>	suspicion, distrust
<i>damai</i>	peacefulness, tranquillity
<i>demen</i>	liking, fondness for
<i>dendam</i>	vengeance, bearing a grudge, animosity, rancour
<i>dengki</i>	envy, spite
<i>dongkol</i>	resentment, acrimony; feeling irked, vexed
<i>duka</i>	grief, sorrow, misery
<i>dukacita</i>	profound sorrow, heartache, grief
<i>edan kesmaran</i>	being madly in love, infatuated, smitten
<i>emosi</i>	negative emotion, feeling seized by emotion
<i>frustrasi</i>	feeling blocked, frustration
<i>gairah</i>	passion, strong desire
<i>galau</i>	confusion, upset
<i>gelisah</i>	nervousness, restlessness, uneasiness, worry, concern
<i>gemas</i>	annoyance, irritation (held back)

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<i>gembira</i>	gaiety, happiness, cheerfulness, bounciness, enthusiasm
<i>gentar</i>	fearful trembling
<i>geram</i>	being infuriated, enraged (growling)
<i>getar hati</i>	feeling moved (in the heart)
<i>girang</i>	elation, glee, delighted
<i>gregetan</i>	feeling tense from restraining pent-up emotions
<i>gundah</i>	anxiety, restlessness
<i>gusar</i>	anxiety, restlessness, agitation, upset
<i>haru</i>	feeling affected, moved, touched, emotional
<i>hasrat</i>	ardour, passion, longing, desire
<i>histeris</i>	feeling hysterically upset
<i>iba</i>	compassion, pity; feeling moved, touched
<i>ikhlas</i>	sincere devotion, complete conviction, full preparedness
<i>ingin</i>	desire, longing
<i>iri</i>	envious resentment
<i>jengkel</i>	vexation, annoyance, irritation
<i>jenuh</i>	feeling surfeited, fed up, sick and tired
<i>kagum</i>	amazed admiration, respect
<i>kalap</i>	beside oneself with anger, possessed, bewitched
<i>kalut</i>	confusion, disturbance, inner chaos
<i>kangen</i>	confusion, disturbance, inner chaos
<i>kasih</i>	affection, love, compassion
<i>kasihan</i>	pity, merciful compassion
<i>kawatir</i>	fear, apprehension, worry
<i>kebat-kebit</i>	nervousness, restlessness, agitation
<i>kecemasan</i>	anxiety, worry, concern, apprehension
<i>kecil hati</i>	hurt, grief, faint-heartedness, discouragement
<i>keharuan</i>	feeling moved emotionally, affected, touched
<i>kemesraan</i>	intimacy, absorption, love
<i>kepingin</i>	desire, eagerness for

<i>kepuasan</i>	satisfaction, contentment
<i>kesal</i>	feeling peeved, fed up, piqued, cross
<i>lega</i>	relaxation, relief
<i>malu</i>	shame, disgrace, mortification
<i>mangkel</i>	annoyance, irritation
<i>marah</i>	wrath, anger, ire, fury
<i>mesra</i>	feeling intimately fused, very close
<i>muak</i>	loathing, revulsion, repugnance
<i>murka</i>	anger, fury, feeling incensed
<i>murung</i>	melancholy, depression, gloom
<i>naik darah</i>	rising anger, becoming hot-headed
<i>naik pitam</i>	becoming enraged, having a fit
<i>ngambek</i>	pouting, anger, sulkiness
<i>panas hati</i>	edginess; quickness to anger, envy or jealousy
<i>patah hati</i>	feeling discouraged, heartbroken
<i>pedih hati</i>	mortification, grief, pain (lit.: stinging, smarting heart)
<i>penyesalan</i>	sorrow, regret, remorse
<i>perasaan</i>	feeling, sentiment
<i>pilu</i>	sadness, heartache, compassion
<i>prihatin</i>	concern, apprehension
<i>puas</i>	satisfaction, complacency
<i>putus asa</i>	hopelessness, being dispirited, disconsolation
<i>putus harapan</i>	hopelessness, despondency, despair
<i>remuk hati</i>	feeling crushed, broken-hearted
<i>rendah hati</i>	humility, modesty
<i>riang</i>	hilarity, gleefulness, dizziness
<i>rindu</i>	yearning, homesickness
<i>risau</i>	restlessness, nervousness, worry
<i>sabar</i>	patience, patient persistence, tolerance, calmness
<i>sakit hati</i>	pain (lit.: hurt heart), displeasure, bitterness

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<i>sayang</i>	caring, love (also a term of endearment: sweetie, darling)
<i>sebal</i>	resentment, vexation
<i>sedih</i>	sadness, distress, sorrow, misery
<i>senang</i>	happiness, contentment, liking
<i>sendu</i>	sadness, dejection, melancholy
<i>senewen</i>	nervousness, having a nervous fit
<i>sesal</i>	regret, remorse, sorrow, repentance
<i>setia</i>	loyalty, faithfulness, satisfaction, solidarity
<i>simpati</i>	sympathy
<i>suka</i>	liking, fondness for, enjoyment
<i>sukacita</i>	happiness, joy, merriment
<i>sukaria</i>	happiness, pleasure, delight, celebration
<i>tabah</i>	determination, persistence, steadfastness
<i>takut</i>	fear, apprehension, dread
<i>tenteram</i>	feeling settled, quieted, reassured
<i>terangsang</i>	excitement, stimulation, arousal, titillation
<i>terbuai</i>	blissful oblivion, rapture
<i>terkesiap</i>	being startled, captivated; having one's attention grabbed
<i>terpesona</i>	feeling spellbound, enchanted
<i>terpikat</i>	feeling charmed; attraction, fascination
<i>tersentuh</i>	feeling touched, moved
<i>tersingung</i>	feeling offended, bitter
<i>tertarik</i>	attraction, interest
<i>tinggi hati</i>	conceit, arrogance
<i>tulus</i>	honesty, openness, sincerity, straightforwardness
<i>waswas</i>	doubt, anxiety, suspicion, wariness
<i>yakin</i>	certainty, conviction, confidence

Source: Indonesian data from Shaver et al. (2001).

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