

Emotions May Not Be So Universal After All

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TIME:

From a very young age, infants have a way of making their feelings known – contorted faces and howls indicate their displeasure with a meal or a damp diaper, a gummy smile their contentment, and a furrowed brow their puzzlement over a new discovery such as their thumb.

While it seems logical that these expressions are universal, the latest study suggests they may not be. In fact, expressions of the major emotions – happiness, sadness, anger and the like, may be strongly culturally driven.

Maria Gendron, a post doc in the lab of psychology professor Lisa Feldman Barrett at Northeastern University, visited remote tribes in Namibia to come to that conclusion. Gendron spent 18 days with the Himba, a people with little exposure to the Western world. When members were asked to sort photos of six people making six facial expressions of emotions, she expected to see six neat piles of images.

Read the whole story: [*TIME*](#)