

CULTURE AND THE STRUCTURE OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCE: INSIDER AND OUTSIDER PHENOMENOLOGIES OF THE SELF AND SOCIAL WORLD

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This article argues for the importance of understanding the role of culture in structuring people's personal phenomenological experience. Such an understanding is (1) important per se and (2) important for elucidating the feedback loops between culture and self, between macro-level ideology and micro-level experience. To illustrate, we contrast the "outsider" perspective on the self of Asian-Americans with the "insider" perspective on the world for Euro-Americans. We examine (1) the outsider versus insider perspective by looking at the phenomenology of memory imagery, online imagery, visualization and embodiment of narratives, and relational versus egocentric projection; (2) the implications for cultural differences in egocentric biases that derive from dwelling too much in one's own internal experience; and (3) the emergence of developmental differences in characterizing the social world. We argue that the lessons of experience and cultural ideology cocreate each other, and we illustrate this by describing some ways that distinct phenomenological experiences are intimately tied to cultural norms, beliefs, and ideals.

I. Introduction

To say that a person "sees herself through other people's eyes" or "takes other people's perspective" implies something about how people act in relation to others. Conversely, to say that someone is "self-absorbed" or "lives in his own

world” indicates something about people’s failure to think about others. The expressions are usually meant metaphorically, but they also have a more literal interpretation that implies something about the actual phenomenology that the person experiences. In the present chapter, we examine how people from different subcultures may experience the self in ways that make a literal interpretation of these metaphors plausible; and in taking the metaphors literally, we try to address one of the important puzzles of cultural psychology, namely how micro-level individual phenomenological experience and macro-level cultural ideology can reinforce and recreate each other.

Much research in cultural and cross-cultural psychology has focused on content or the *what* of culture: What are the attitudes, beliefs, and values that differentiate between cultures? What are the contents of the independent versus interdependent self? What are the scripts, norms, and expectations that drive behavior? On the other hand, a good deal of attention has been paid subsequently to the process or the *how* of culture: How do people process information about the social world differently (Kuhnen & Oyserman 2002; Nisbett, Peng, Choi, & Norenzayan, 2001)? How do people juggle multiple identities (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martinez, 2000; Oyserman & Lee, 2007)? How do cultural practices get patterned by interpersonal interactions and affordances in the environment (Cohen, 2001; Kitayama & Markus, 1999; Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997; Miller & Goodnow, 1995)?

In this chapter, we argue that studying people’s phenomenological experience of themselves in the world is another important route to understanding how psyches and cultures make each other up. To be a person in the world *feels* like something, and this feeling of the self in the world can arise from our cultural ideologies and in turn can help to recreate those ideologies. The perceptions, the imagery, the memories, the mental models, the salience (or lack of salience) of our own internal thoughts and physical sensations, and the (real or imagined) feeling of being in tune with another person all structure the feeling of being a self in the world.

Here we focus on what might be called an “outsider” phenomenology of self versus an “insider” phenomenology. These are differences in the forms or structures of experience. In the “outsider” (or third person) form of experience, a person experiences himself or herself from the point of view of an outsider looking at the self. In the “insider” (or first person) form of experience, a person does not see himself or herself as others would; instead, the insider dwells in his or her own private, internal experiences and may end up either (1) projecting those experiences onto others or (2) mistaking the private, internal experience for something that is actually “out there” in the world.

We argue that understanding the phenomenology of being a self in the social world is extremely important for understanding two different

subcultural systems. We examine this phenomenology for Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans and show how it manifests in predictable situations.¹ As Nagel (1974) pointed out in a very different context, one of the key features of consciousness is that consciousness *feels* like something. And similarly, being a cultural being in the world feels like something that is hard to reduce to a simple collection of beliefs, attitudes, or artifacts. It feels a certain way to be a self in one cultural system or another; and in itself, understanding these differences is an extremely important part of understanding culture.

II. A Sociofunctional Account of Perception

A. HOW *FORM IS CONTENT*

We also argue that the *form* or structure of our phenomenological experience is not generated haphazardly, but is systematically derived from the *contents* of our cultural beliefs and values and in turn affects those beliefs and values. In this sense, *the structure of experience—the form—is content*. Embedded within the structure of our experience are cultural beliefs, attitudes, and values about the way the world is and should be. The content of our ideological conceptions shapes the phenomenological structure (the form) of our experience, and the form of our experience in turn leads us to certain beliefs about the world.

In terms of outsider phenomenology, for example, the form of a third-person memory (as opposed to a first-person memory) carries with it an implicit (content) understanding that the self is embedded in a social matrix where one is watched and watched over by others. Similarly, the form of having a third-person online experience carries with it a tacit acknowledgment that we must be concerned with how others see us. Engaging in relational projection (for example, seeing others as showing contempt for us when we are feeling ashamed) carries with it an understanding that the self is interdependent with others and that emotions are essentially relational.

At a very basic level, *the very form of the third-person experience gives us two messages: “think about how your actions look to other people” and “consider what the world looks like from other people’s points of view.”* Behaving with propriety and achieving interpersonal harmony are the higher-order cultural imperatives of these two basic messages.

¹We use the label “Asian-Americans” as a shorthand way of saying North Americans whose ancestors came from East Asia. We use the label “European Americans” or “Euro-Americans” as a shorthand way of saying North Americans whose ancestors came from Europe.

On the other hand, consider what follows from the insider's perspective. From the insider perspective, if I am so absorbed in my own internal experience that I do not consider others' perspectives and do not understand that my perceptions of the world are simply perceptions from *one* viewpoint, this contains a license for a certain willful individualism. Further, if my experience is so dominated by my own internal thoughts and feelings that I cannot separate my internal experience from my perception of what is actually "out there" in the world, this too will create (1) an assuredness that I am right in my beliefs about the world, (2) an agentic readiness for action, and (3) a certain approach to forming relationships or alliances with others based on their assumed similarity to me. As we describe later, the insider perspective is well suited to fostering the mores of an individualistic culture and the types of side-by-side relationships that occur within it (Tocqueville, 2000). Thus, embedded in the structure of experience are a whole set of cultural beliefs about the self and how it should act in relation to other people. Though we may not realize it, the way we structure our phenomenological experience of reality (form) *embodies* a certain set of cultural attitudes, beliefs, and values (content). (And, as discussed later, *because* we often do not realize how the form embodies our beliefs and values, the implicit messages the form contains may be all the more powerful.)

In the empirical section of the chapter, we examine how various aspects of experience can be similar or different for Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans. In the conclusion, we expand on what the consequences of some of these differing experiences might be. And immediately below, we lay out the logic for why and in what situations Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans might have these different sorts of phenomenological experiences.

B. PERCEPTION IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

Our sociofunctional² account of perception begins with the thought experiment: Suppose one had a human being B and could dictate the form (but not the content) of B's phenomenological experience. How would one want B's

²Cultural traits and patterns are not always functional, of course. Thus, people hold superstitious, irrational beliefs (Nemeroff & Rozin, 1989; Rozin, Markwith, & Nemeroff, 1992; Rozin, Markwith, & Ross, 1990; Rozin, Millman, & Nemeroff, 1986). They fail to pursue their goals optimally and sometimes engage in plainly self-destructive actions (Edgerton, 1992). And some behavior patterns simply outlast their usefulness. [e.g., Fertility customs that were adaptive in agricultural societies persist even after a population has been urbanized and cities have become overcrowded (Triandis, 1994).] Nevertheless, in many cases, an assumption of functionality is a decent place to start when we examine cultural patterns.

experience to be structured so that B could operate effectively in a tight, interdependent milieu that valued face-to-face relationships? Conduct the same thought experiment with person C, who would operate in a more individualistic culture. How would one want C's experience to be structured so that C could operate effectively in a looser, more individualistic environment? It is our contention that B's phenomenological experience would be structured such that B takes an outsider's perspective on the self, whereas C's experience would be structured more along the lines of an insider's perspective, roughly speaking.

1. Tight and Loose Cultures

In the case of Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans, it has been shown that Asian-Americans tend to endorse more collectivistic ideologies whereas Euro-Americans tend to endorse more individualistic ideologies—though the difference in explicit ideology may not be as great as cultural psychologists generally suppose (see Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). That is, Asian-Americans are more likely than Euro-Americans to say that the self is defined by social roles, interpersonal duties, and in-group-out-group distinctions rather than by intrapsychic traits, attitudes, or personal expressivity. Research on Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans has tended to stress this broad difference, and it has often attributed Asian-American and Euro-American differences to differences in how individualist versus collectivist or independent versus interdependent the cultures generally are.

However, if Asian-American culture is more collectivistic than Euro-American culture, it is also *tighter*, in the sense that it has clear norms for proper social behavior and punishments for violations of these norms (Chan, Gelfand, Triandis, & Tzeng, 1996; Triandis, 1994; see also Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama's fascinating contrast (1999) of Japanese and North American cultures). Generally speaking, tightness and collectivism tend to go together, but they are conceptually distinct; and in fact, Triandis (2004) views tightness-looseness as the more "basic" dimension from which other cultural syndromes (including collectivism) derive. Tightness plays an important role in deriving the hypotheses of this chapter (though as will be apparent, tightness and interdependence are bound together quite closely for the phenomena we describe).

In many relatively tight cultures such as those originating in East Asia, it is important to maintain harmony and important not to personally stand out so that the self will not be a target of criticism (for failures) or sometimes envy and resentment (in the case of successes) (Gelfand et al., 2002; Kwan, Bond, & Singelis, 1997; Rothbaum, Pott, Azuma, Miyake, & Weisz, 2000).

Negotiating a world where there are clear rules and where the opinions of others are quite important means that an individual needs to take stock of how he or she appears in another's eyes (Ji, Schwarz, & Nisbett, 2000; Mesquita, 2001). It means one must in some sense look on the self as an outsider would. The East Asian conception of "face" (*lian* or *mianzi* in Chinese) is an apt metaphor for this because one's face can only literally be seen from the outside.

In contrast, in looser cultures where self-esteem is valued and where the esteem of others is *relatively* less valued, it is far less necessary to take an outsider's perspective on the self. Further, loose cultures definitionally allow individuals greater freedom, and thus they tend to put a premium on choice by the individual. In loose, independent cultures, the rational, agentic individual is supposed to be capable of (1) knowing what he or she wants and (2) going out and getting it (see Fig. 1; Campbell et al., 1996; Hoshino-Browne et al., 2005; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999; Kitayama, Duffy, & Uchida, 2007; Morelli & Rothbaum, 2007; Schwartz, 2000; Schwartz et al., 2002). Finding and expressing our "authentic" self requires knowing ourselves and turning our focus to our internal states (Wang, 2004; Wang & Conway, 2004; Wang, Leichtman, & Davies, 2000). Our own thoughts and feelings become highly salient to us; and the focus of attention thus becomes more introspective as our own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs occupy consciousness.

"Too much" introspection can easily slide into egocentrism. Attention is a limited resource, thus our focus on internal thoughts, feelings, and desires takes away from our ability to perceive the world (and perceive ourselves) from another's perspective. Starting from early childhood, people get over their very crudest forms of egocentrism (believing that the rest of the world thinks, feels, and actually perceives the way they themselves do; Piaget & Inhelder, 1956). But it has been suggested that we are vulnerable to such egocentric thinking all our lives (Eibach, Libby, & Gilovich, 2003; Epley, Morewedge, & Keysar, 2004; Gilovich, Medvec, & Savitsky, 1998; Ross & Sicoly, 1979). The phenomenology of our own thoughts and feelings overpower us; we anchor on ourselves and then fail to adjust away when we think about what other people must think and feel (Epley, Keysar, Van Boven, & Gilovich, 2004; Gilovich et al., 1998). If living in a tight culture pushes us to take an outsider's perspective on the self, then living in a looser one pushes us to take an *insider's perspective* on the social world, leading us to dwell so much in our own thoughts that we effectively become naïve realists and also project our own internal states and feelings onto the external world. A loose, independent culture will not punish the egocentrism that comes from an insider's perspective as harshly as would a tight culture that valued

CULTURE AND PERSPECTIVE

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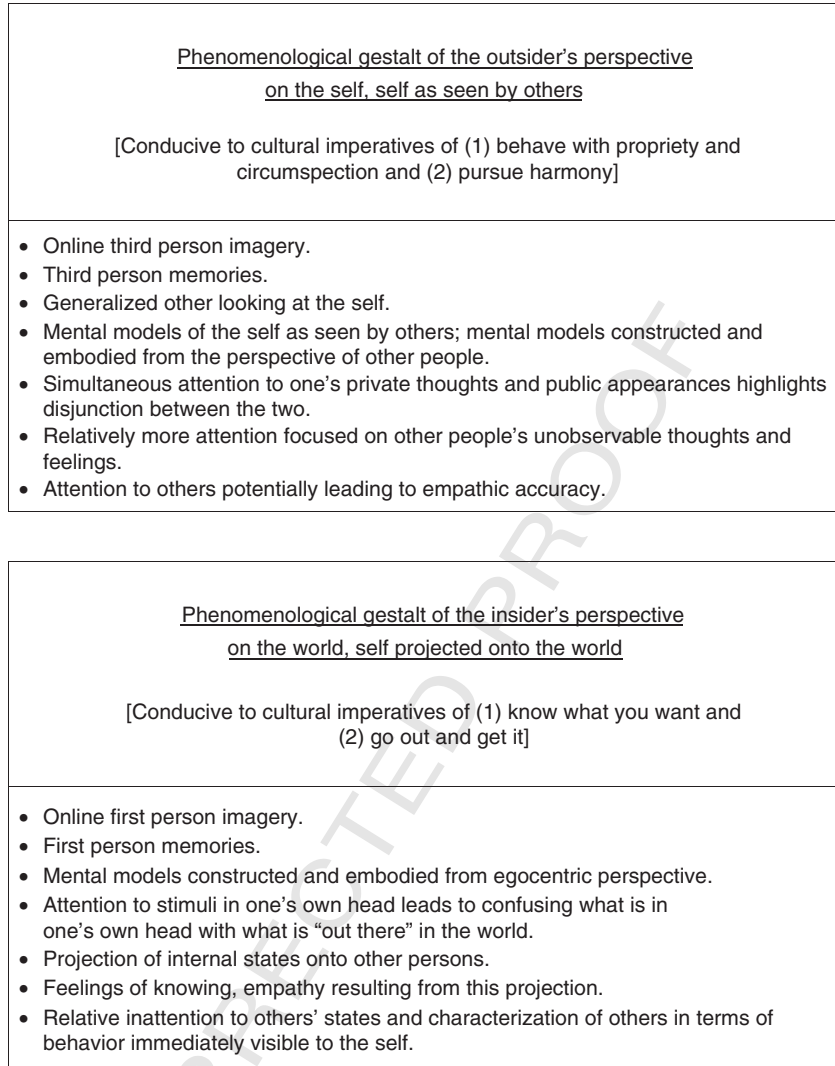


Fig. 1. Sociofunctional approach to perception. The cultural imperatives of tight versus loose cultures lead to different *phenomenological gestalts*.

interpersonal harmony and individual circumspection. In fact, as we note later, the insider's perspective can foster the willful individualism and sense of personal agency that can lead to success in a loose culture.

C. THE IMPARTIAL SPECTATOR AND THE GENERALIZED OTHER

Why is it that the look of another person looking at you is different from everything else in the Cosmos?

Walker Percy (1983) in *Lost in the Cosmos*

O would some Power the gift to give us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It would from many a blunder free us,
And foolish notion

Robert Burns from *To a Louse: On Seeing One on a Lady's Bonnet at Church*

Scholars (from the West) such as Adam Smith, Charles Cooley, and George Herbert Mead have discussed the notion of the “impartial spectator,” “the looking glass self,” and “the generalized other.”³ In their conception, the self comes into being because it imagines how others would see it. As Smith (1759) wrote:

Were it possible that a human creature could grow up to manhood in some solitary place, without any communication with his own species, he could no more think of his own character, of the propriety or demerit of his own sentiments and conduct, of the beauty or deformity of his own mind, than of the beauty or deformity of his own face. All these are objects which he cannot easily see, which naturally he does not look at, and with regard to which he is provided with no mirror which can present them to his view. Bring him into society, and he is immediately provided with the mirror which he wanted before. It is placed in the countenance and behaviour of those he lives with, which always mark when they enter into, and when they disapprove of his sentiments; and it is here that he first views the propriety and impropriety of his own passions, the beauty and deformity of his own mind.

The “generalized other” is a universal feature of the socialized human psyche. Mead (1934) and Smith (1759) in particular argued that the internalization of the “generalized other’s” perspective is the basis for social control. And in contemporary psychological work, researchers such as Baldwin and Holmes (1987), Diener and Wallbom (1977), Duval and Wicklund (1972), Fredrickson, Roberts, Noll, Quinn, and Twenge (1998), and Scheier and Carver (1977), have discussed phenomena such as self-objectification, objective self-awareness, and relational schemata that create private audiences. The contention in this chapter is thus *not*

³Sartre’s notions of Being-for-others and Being-for-itself (versus Being-in-itself) are relevant to ideas about consciousness reflecting on itself, as are other existentialist notions. However, we avoid this terminology for the most part because of the ethical baggage Sartre’s terms entail (Sartre, 1965). We use the phrase “being in the world” but not “Being-in-the-world” to avoid the philosophical baggage associated with the latter expression (Heidegger, 1962).

that the “impartial spectator” and the “generalized other” are important for Asian-Americans but not for Euro-Americans. Rather, the contention is that what Mead and Smith have said about the “generalized other” is more true for Asian-Americans than it is for Euro-Americans. That is, the self is more likely constructed and experienced for Asian-Americans as something that is the object of gaze from another (Kitayama & Markus, 1999). Heine et al. (1999, p. 773), talking about the Japanese, argued that “rather than being seen as subjects, they may more aptly be viewed as imagined objects in the eyes of others.”

In fact, Kitayama, Snibbe, Markus, and Suzuki (2004) have suggestive evidence that this imagined gaze of the other is what makes a situation psychologically real for Japanese participants. In a remarkable series of studies, they replicated Heine and Lehman’s finding (1997a) that Japanese participants do not show “normal” cognitive dissonance (rationalization) effects after making a choice. However, they extended their work by showing that putting Japanese participants in the same room as a poster with simple line drawings of faces brings the dissonance effects out in full force. The line drawings of “generalized others” looking at the participant give choices a real psychological impact; and now with the evaluative weight of imagined others looking on, “normal” dissonance effects emerged among the Japanese.

D. PLAN FOR THE PAPER

1. *The Outsider Perspective*

In Sections III to VI of this chapter, we try to take the metaphor of the *outsider’s perspective* on the self and show how it literally becomes instantiated in phenomenological experience. Thus, we flesh out how Asian-Americans are more likely than Euro-Americans to literally take an outsider’s perspective on themselves by examining the phenomenology of memories, online imagery, visualization, and relational projection. Importantly, we argue that the function of this outsider’s perspective is essentially social—in a tight society, it is to keep one from standing out. It gives one the circumspection needed to make sure one is following social norms. Thus, we would expect Asian-Americans to take this outsider perspective (more than Euro-Americans do) particularly in social situations or in situations where one is at the center of other people’s attention. Consistent with this functional interpretation, we would not expect an across-the-board difference such that Asian-Americans would take more of an outsider’s perspective on themselves in *all* situations.

Returning to our functionalist thought experiment: the ideal design for the structure of consciousness would involve flexibility so that a person might switch back and forth between a third-person (outsider) experience and a

first-person (insider) experience, depending on the demands of the situation. The empirical studies below highlight this point, showing that Asian-Americans are just as likely as Euro-Americans to be in the “insider” mode for situations when they would not be the center of attention (Section IV), when others are not made salient (Section V), and when the situation is not social (Sections VI and X).

2. *The Insider Perspective*

By taking the perspective of a spectator, Smith (1759) argued, “I divide myself, as it were, into two persons . . . I, the examiner and judge, represent a different character from that other I, the person whose conduct is examined into and judged of.” Smith hypothesized that without being able to do such splitting, it would be extremely difficult to separate oneself from one’s passions. In the continuation of the paragraph above, he argued: “To a man who from his birth was a stranger to society, the objects of his passions, the external bodies which either pleased or hurt him, would occupy his whole attention.” Not needing to control his behavior, this man would become absorbed with the thoughts and feelings developed from his own *insider’s perspective*.

In Sections VII through IX, we examined this issue by looking at how taking too much of an “insider’s” perspective can distort one’s perceptions of the external world. A person’s inability to get outside of his or her own head makes him or her especially vulnerable to egocentric biases that can arise from dwelling too much in one’s own phenomenological experience. That is, when a person’s own thoughts and feelings are so salient, so overpowering, and occupy so much of their consciousness, these thoughts and feelings have great power in coloring a person’s judgments about either (1) what must be out there in the world or (2) what other people must be thinking or feeling. In fascinating research, Gilovich et al. (1998) and Vorauer and Ross (1999) have described some of these egocentric biases as arising from essentially an “anchoring and adjustment” process in which we come to anchor on our own thoughts and then adjust away from them insufficiently in thinking about what others must feel or in thinking about how our perceptions and “true” reality might differ. The adjustment tends to be too close to the anchor (the self’s experience), and sometimes adjustment does not occur at all. Thus, the confusion between what is in our own heads, what is in other people’s heads, and what is “out there” in reality is essentially an *insider bias*. And therefore, conversely, taking an “outsider’s” perspective on the self should allow one to get out of one’s own head enough so that one might avoid egocentric errors that derive from self-absorbed thought. In Sections VII through IX, we examined various sorts of egocentric errors and illusions that those with insiders’ perspectives might fall prey to and those with outsiders’ perspectives might avoid.

3. *Characterizing the World*

Finally, we examine the issue of seeing through others' perspectives in a developmental study (Section X). With Asian-American and Euro-American elementary school children, we examine how these children learn to describe the world. Our cross-sectional study aims to assess how, as children age, they learn to either characterize the world in terms of actions they can see with their own eyes versus characterize it in terms of the (invisible) internal thoughts and feelings of others.

4. *Phenomenological Gestalts*

The sociofunctional approach to perception thus argues that tight versus loose cultures lead to different types of *phenomenological gestalts*. As noted in Fig. 1, these gestalts encompass a number of modalities (memory imagery, online imagery, mental models, embodied cognitions, feelings, and perceptions of the world and other people). In the case of tight cultures, the phenomenological gestalt of the "outsider's perspective" serves the need for circumspection, whereas in loose cultures, the phenomenological gestalt of the "insider's perspective" on the world facilitates the pursuit of individual goals and self-expression. We use the word "gestalts" to indicate that these perspectives are pervasive ways of being in the world that go beyond an isolated effect in this or that realm. Rather, the effects fit together in a coherent way such that they create (and are created by) a worldview that is necessary to operating in a tight, interdependent culture that values harmony or a loose, independent one that prizes individual selves.

E. NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY AND CLAIMS

1. *A Note on "Insider" and "Outsider"*

It is important to note that when we say "outsider" or "insider" perspective, we are using this as a shorthand way of saying "more outsider" or "more insider." In most cases, it would seem relatively rare for someone to have a complete outsider's perspective on themselves without any consciousness of their own internal sensations. Conversely, it would also seem relatively rare to have a complete insider's perspective, without any hint of self-consciousness or reflective thought.⁴

⁴We do not deny that there may be complete cases of insider or outsider experiencing in some instances: For example, extreme outsider experiences might include some cases (1) where there is neurological injury that prevents sensation (Gallagher, 2004), (2) complete out of body sensations perhaps produced by stimulation of the right angular gyrus (Blanke et al., 2002), or

2. *A Note on Participants*

The point of this chapter is to illustrate the usefulness of a sociofunctional approach to perception by describing the phenomenological gestalts (the insider and outsider perspectives) of people in tight versus loose cultures. Thus, we compare people from Euro-American and Asian-American cultures. Euro-American culture is typically described as relatively independent and loose, whereas Asian-American culture is typically described as relatively interdependent and tight (Triandis, 1994).

Of course, Asian-American culture may be a relatively tight culture for at least two reasons. First, East Asian culture has generally been described as interdependent and tight, and Asian-Americans may have preserved those traditions in North America. Second, Asian-American culture may be tight, because Asian-Americans occupy a minority status and sometimes an immigrant status in North America, and this status may produce a tight, circumspective culture (see also Dubois, 1903).⁵ The reasons why Asian-Americans have a tight culture are neither here nor there for the purposes of the present chapter; rather, the tight culture of Asian-Americans is merely taken as a

(3) cases of extreme alexithymia that inhibit the feeling of emotion. On the other end, there may be cases that totally preclude self-consciousness or reflective thought such as extreme cases of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), deprivation (the pangs of hunger may be the only thing felt by someone deprived of food), or passion. However, for these examples, it is not clear (1) that the "outsider" experiences would be accompanied by an attention to others in the external world and (2) that a lack of self-consciousness will produce the sorts of projections and egocentric errors we describe in Sections VII through IX.

⁵One could attempt to tease apart the effects of minority or immigrant status by, for example, comparing Asian-Americans with (1) Asians in Asia (though there would still be the self-selection bias that people who choose to immigrate may be systematically different than those who do not), (2) Euro-Americans in Asia (though again there is self-selection bias in the choice to leave one's country), (3) Asian-Americans living in predominantly Asian-American communities versus living in Euro-American communities (though there is self-selection bias in choosing where to live), (4) other immigrant or minority groups in North America (though no other nonwhite minority group has had as much mainstream economic and educational success as Asian Americans have), and so on.

Even if one were prepared to accept the self-selection and confound issues above, for studies that involved running participants at more than one site, there would still be possibilities of operational confounds in language, modes of administration, equipment and materials, personnel, and so on. In contrast, running all participants at one site allowed us to standardize operations (and importantly, standardize language) across participants. Finally, running participants at one site also allowed us to roughly equalize participants in terms of standard of living, ability and background knowledge, and so on.

Ultimately, through converging evidence across various methods, one might indeed estimate how much of an effect was due to Asian-Americans having minority or immigrant status. However, as noted in the text, this is not the concern of the present chapter. We studied Asian-Americans because Asian-American culture is a tight culture. Why they have a tight culture is not the point here.

starting point for contrasting the phenomenological gestalts of people from relatively tight versus relatively loose (Euro-American) cultures.

Also, it is worth adding that the labels of “Asian-American” and “Euro-American” cover a massive degree of within-group variation (Sanchez-Burks, 2002; Snibbe & Markus, 2005; Triandis, 1994). As a label, “Asian-Americans” refers to Americans whose ancestors come from East and Southeast Asian countries as diverse as Japan and Thailand and that collectively have 1.5 billion people. “Euro-Americans” refers to Americans whose ancestors come from both northern and southern Europe and eastern and western Europe. Simply using the label “American” also collapses over a diverse group of people because we are using this as a shorthand for North American, as these studies were run in Canada and the United States—countries that have their own rich collections of regional subcultures (Levine, Martinez, Brase, & Sorenson, 1994; Plaut, Markus, & Lachman, 2002; Vandello & Cohen, 1999). And, of course, there is a great deal of variation due to individual differences (Cohen, 2007; Rozin, 2003). Nevertheless, we think that there are commonalities that make it reasonable to talk about an Asian-American subculture and a Euro-American subculture that may be different in some ways. Systematic variation within these subcultures due to the specific country of ancestral origin or socioeconomic status or age is a topic for further study (see Vandello & Cohen, 2003). In the present chapter, to help quantify the magnitude of between-group and within-group differences, we report the effect size f for interactions. [Conventionally, f s in the range of 0.1, 0.25, and 0.4 are considered small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Rosenthal & Rosnow, 1991).]

III. Relational Versus Egocentric Projection⁶

In his book, *The Emotions*, Sartre (1948) sketched out a “phenomenological theory” and described emotions as “a magic transformation of the world.” Our perceptions of the world change, depending on the emotional state we are in. Whether the world seems gloomy or wondrous, whether another’s grin was friendly or mocking, and whether a touch was playful or hostile, all depend greatly on the mood we are in when we perceive them.

Psychologists have examined one way that emotions transform our perceptions when they have studied “projection.” Yet it is essential to understand that the label “projection” can embrace at least two very different sorts

⁶Because studies from Sections III and IV have been reported in more detail in Cohen and Gunz (2002), we give only brief methodological details for these two sections here.

of phenomena. The first and most frequently studied type is what might be called classical or *egocentric projection* in which people take their own feelings and project them onto others (e.g., an angry person sees others as angry, a sad person sees others as sad, and so on). For a person experiencing emotion X, the faces of other people are magically transformed into expressions of X. However, there is a second type of projection that might be called *relational projection*. In relational projection, a person does not project their own feelings; rather, they project onto others the feelings that the generalized other would have in looking at them. That is, certain emotions come in complementary pairs in that they naturally co-occur in social situations. Three of these pairs are: shame and contempt, anger and fear, sadness and sympathy: (1) A person who feels ashamed thinks that others are looking or would look at her with contempt; conversely, a person who feels contempt for another thinks that this person should feel ashamed of herself. (2) A person who feels afraid of another fears what this person might do in anger; conversely, a person who feels anger may do (or at least want to do) something that would cause the other to feel fear. Finally, (3) a person who feels sympathy for another experiences this emotion for someone who feels sad; conversely, a person who feels sad may expect (or want or anticipate) another's sympathy.

In the phenomenon of egocentric projection, a person would simply take their own internal emotions and project those same emotions onto others. However, in relational projection, one's own emotions are a guide to what others are thinking—more particularly, they are a guide to how the generalized other would look at the self. Note that both types of projections are biases. They can lead one to correct predictions, but they can also lead to errors. The errors in one case simply derive from taking one's insider's perspective and projecting it onto the social world, whereas the errors in the other case derive from inappropriately projecting a generalized other's outsider perspective.

In Cohen and Gunz (2002), we induced Asian-American and Euro-American participants to feel one of six emotions (randomly assigned). That is, supposedly as part of our memory study (see next section), some of our experimental participants were asked to write in detail about a time when they felt angry, afraid of another person, sad, sympathetic to another, ashamed of themselves, or contemptuous of another person. This assignment to emotional condition was a between-subjects variable.

After this "memory" study was completed, participants were told that we also needed their help rating pictures for an unrelated task. The pictures were 24 photographs showing a Euro-American male, Euro-American female, Asian-American male, and Asian-American female in various poses as well as images from 6 paintings, and participants were asked to rate the

pictures for the emotions they displayed. Each participant's egocentric projection score was computed as the average rating of emotion X when he or she had been induced to feel X himself or herself (e.g., the egocentric score was an average of how much a participant in the anger condition saw anger, how much a subject in the sad condition saw sadness, and so on). Each participant's relational projection score was computed as the average rating of the emotion that would have been appropriate for the generalized other looking at the participant in the participant's (induced) emotional state. For example, the relational projection score was an average of how much a participant in the shame condition saw contempt in another's expression, how much a participant in the fear condition saw anger in another's expression, how much a sad person saw sympathy in another's expression, and so on.

Figure 2 shows the significant ethnicity \times type of projection interaction, collapsing the results across mood induction condition. Consistent with taking an "insider's" perspective on the social world, Euro-American participants took their own emotions and projected them onto others, seeing in the faces the emotions that they themselves felt. However, consistent with an "outsider" perspective on the self, Asian-Americans engaged in relational projection seeing in the faces the emotions appropriate for the generalized other looking at them. Again, Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans both transformed their perceptions of others based on their own emotions, but the former group took the internal emotions and projected them outward whereas the latter group took the perspective of the outsider looking in.

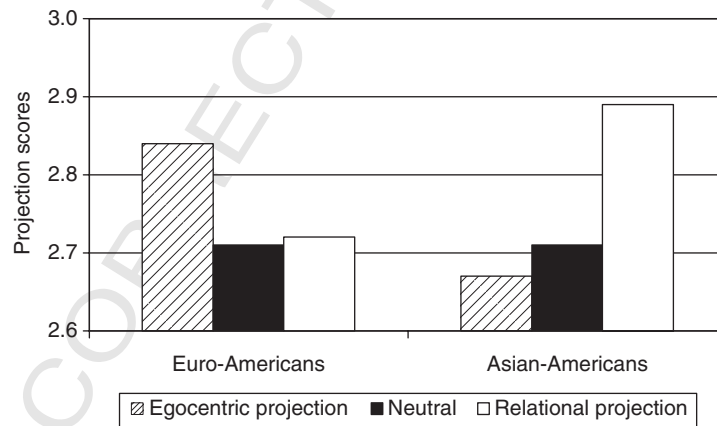


Fig. 2. Egocentric and relational projection scores among Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans.

IV. Memory Imagery

In terms of insider and outsider imagery, one useful area of research is memory. Nigro and Neisser (1983) have distinguished between field and observer memories. In the former, a person has the imagery of what they saw (or believed they saw) at the time. In the latter, a person takes the perspective of an outsider looking in on the scene—that is, this observer might see what the person saw, but the observer would also see the person in the scene. Thus, in an observer memory, a person would see himself or herself in the scene just as an outsider would. The experience of having first-person imagery or third-person imagery is relatively common in dreams, but Nigro and Neisser showed that memory imagery could be distinguished along these lines as well.

In our memory study, we asked participants to think of specific incidents. We used the incidents from Nigro and Neisser (1983) and added some of our own to create five memories in which the participant would be at the center of attention in the scene and five memories in which participants would not be at the center of attention in the scene. This distinction is crucial because the essential function of the outsider perspective for Asian-Americans is to create the circumspection necessary for correct behavior when under the scrutiny or in the gaze of others. It is not that Asian-Americans always adopt the outsider perspective; rather, it is that the outsider's perspective is a functional switching of perspectives that facilitates correct social behavior when one is the focus of attention. Examples of scenes in which the participant would be at the center of attention were scenes where the participant was giving an individual presentation or was being embarrassed; examples of scenes in which participants would not be at the center of attention were scenes where the participant was running for exercise or watching a scary movie.

After participants recalled the 10 specific incidents, we described the terminology of first- and third-person memories and for each incident, respondents rated the memories for their first-person versus third-person content, following Nigro and Neisser (1983). As may be seen in Fig. 3, the ethnicity \times center of scene interaction was significant. For scenes where the respondent would be at the center of attention, Asian-Americans were more likely to report third-person memories, both in comparison to Euro-Americans and compared to scenes where the respondent would not be at the center of attention. These effects held controlling for the memories' vividness, emotion, and distance in the past. For scenes in which they were not the center of attention, Asian-Americans were actually significantly less

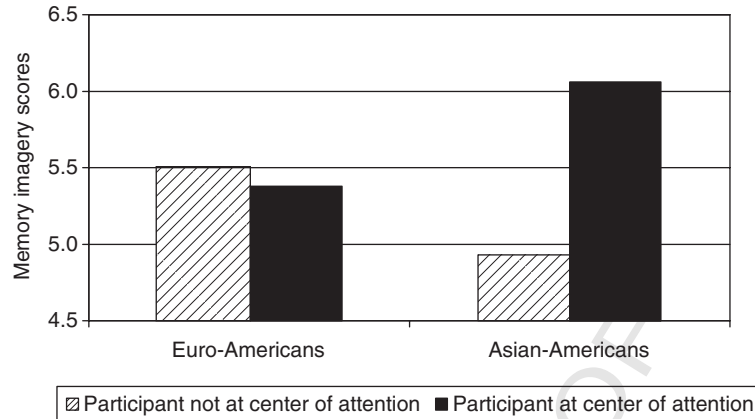


Fig. 3. Memories for situations in which Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans were either at the center of attention or not at the center of attention. Higher numbers indicate more third-person imagery.

likely to have third-person memories compared to Euro-Americans, perhaps due to a loss of self-consciousness in these types of situations (Weber, 1951).

Finally, we also asked participants about what might be called “collective memories,” that is memories deriving from stories that are told and retold among family and friends. We asked respondents to think of four collective memories that they were not present for themselves. (Examples given included stories that were told and retold about the time dad went through the car wash with the windows down or about the time mom met Elvis, and so on.) Respondents were asked about the imagery associated with each of their collective memories and were asked to classify the memories into three categories. The first sort of imagery was imagery that was as if the respondent took the perspective of the friend or family member and experienced the same things that the friend or family member did. The second sort of imagery was imagery that was as if the respondent saw what happened to the friend or family member as an outsider looking onto the scene would. The third sort of imagery was imagery that was simply of the main character just retelling the story to the respondent. The first sort of imagery (where it was as if the respondent had experienced what the friend or family member did) was considered the highest form of empathic imagery, and it was found that Asian-Americans were in fact more likely to enter into the scene from the friend or family member’s perspective. There was a main effect of

ethnicity here, though it was qualified by an interaction with gender, indicating that the effect was driven by male participants. Although this interaction with gender creates some ambiguity, the findings for males at least complement the findings on memories involving the self. For scenes where they are at the center of attention, Asian-Americans are more likely than Euro-Americans to have third-person “outsider” imagery; however, for collective memories with scenes involving friends and family, Asian-Americans are more likely to enter into the perspective of the other and take an “insider’s” perspective on that other’s experience.

V. Online Imagery

As noted above, dreams and memories are places where people commonly report imagery in which they see themselves from an “outsider’s” point of view. However, this phenomenon can also exist in online experience (Blanke, Ortigue, Landis, & Seeck, 2002). That is, a person can have a third-person experiencing of the event as it is actually happening in real time. Nigro and Neisser (1983), in fact, suggest that some third-person memories may derive directly from such third-person experiencing. They speculated that:

it is also possible to have observer experiences. Both of us (the authors) can attest to the possibility of experiencing events from a ‘detached’ perspective as they occur. In such instances we are conscious of how the entire scene would appear (or does appear in fact) to an onlooker who sees us as well as our surroundings. It is not clear how these experiences are best interpreted—whether as a nonegocentric form of direct perception in Gibson’s (1979) sense or as the products of instantaneous reconstruction—but it is clear they exist (pp. 468–469).

Smith (1759) argued that taking the outsider’s perspective was the way one achieved self-control and distanced oneself from one’s passions (see also Fujita, Trope, Liberman, & Levin-Sagi, 2006; Libby & Eibach, 2003). If this is true, then it should be that such third-person distancing would be especially likely when there were disturbing or unpleasant emotions or sensations to be contained. Study 3 thus took place as a putative study of “mental toughness” in which participants’ mental toughness was supposedly indexed by how long they could endure in a (physical) pain tolerance task.

Before participating in this pain tolerance task, all participants were run through one of three experimental conditions. The first condition was designed to highlight the salience of others to one’s interdependent self. The second was designed to highlight the individualistic goals of an independent self.

And the third was a control condition that did not involve a prime of any kind. The prediction was that as they endured the pain tolerance task, third-person distancing or an “observer” online experience would be particularly prevalent for Asian-Americans in the interdependent self condition. The evocation of the social group by the interdependent prime should encourage Asian-Americans to take an outsider’s perspective on themselves during the painful mental toughness task.

Method. Participants were 48 Euro-Americans and 62 Asian-Americans. Participants in the *interdependent prime* condition were asked to bring in a picture of themselves with their family and when they arrived at the laboratory, they wrote a short essay on what it means to be a good son or daughter. Participants in the *independent prime* condition were asked to bring a picture of themselves with no one else in the photo, and they wrote a short essay on what it means to “be yourself” by considering their special uniqueness (see also Trafimow, Triandis, & Goto, 1991). Participants in the *control* condition were not asked to bring in a photo and did not write an essay.

After writing (or not writing) the short essay, participants were told they would be given a pain endurance task as a test of mental toughness. The task was presented such that enduring the pain was a matter of will or self-control rather than physical sensitivity. The experimenter put the participant’s finger in the pain device and lowered a weight on top of it (for a more extensive description of the device and its pain-inducing properties see Eastwood, Gaskovski, & Bowers, 1998).

When the pain task ended, the experimenter immediately removed the participant’s finger from the pain device, and the participant was given the Cognitive Coping Strategy Inventory (Butler, Damarin, Beaulieu, Schwebel, & Thorn, 1989) and told to fill it out with reference to how he or she had just coped during the pain task. The inventory has 70 items, 7 of which were relevant to the use of third-person distancing. These items included statements such as “I might attempt to imagine myself leaving my body and observing my pain in an impartial, detached manner,” “I might begin thinking about my pain as if I were conducting an experiment or writing a biology report,” “I might attend to the pain in much the same way that a sports announcer or reporter would describe an event,” “I might try and imagine myself ‘floating off’ away from the pain, but still realize that my body hurts,” and so on.

Results. As may be seen in Fig. 4, the group that made most use of third-person distancing was the Asian-American group in the interdependent prime condition. This was true both when this condition was contrasted with all five other conditions [$t(110) = 2.22, p < .03$, effect size $f = .21$] as

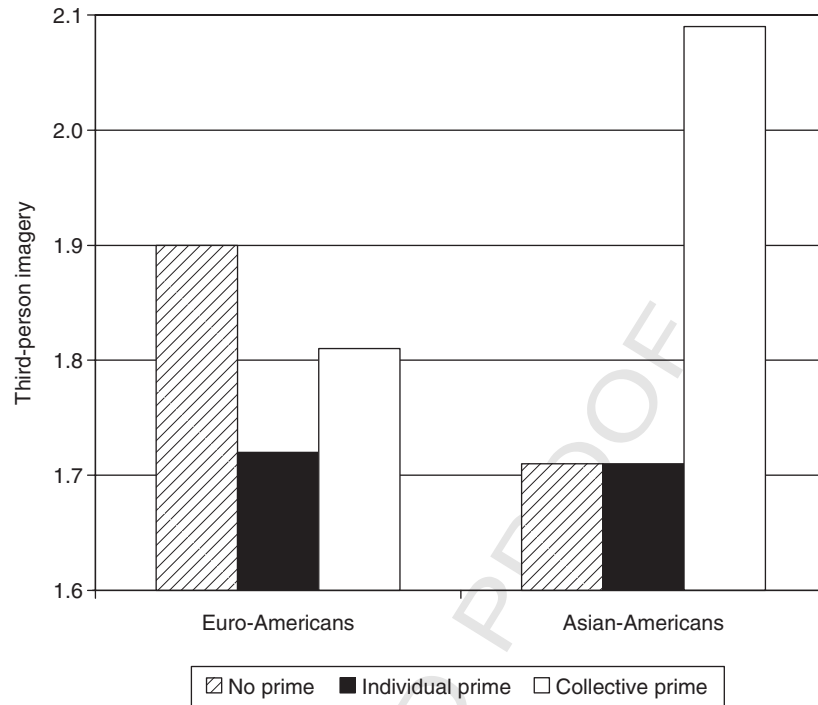


Fig. 4. Use of third-person imagery during a self-control task by Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans in individualism, collectivism, and no prime conditions. Higher numbers indicate more third-person imagery.

well as when it was contrasted only with the Asian-American independence and control conditions ($p < .02$, effect size $f = .26$) or with the Euro-Americans ($p < .06$, effect size $f = .21$).

Thus, the sort of observer perspective on the self that Asian-Americans reported in the memories task also occurred in this online self-control task. This third-person "observer" imagery occurred when important others had been made salient to our Asian-American participants through the interdependence prime. It did not occur in the independence prime or the control conditions, just as it did not occur in the memory study when the self was not the focus of attention in a scene. Thus, here too, third-person imagery of an outsider's perspective on the self was selectively recruited when it might usefully simulate the gaze of real or implied others. For our Euro-American participants, none of the experimental conditions were particularly likely to produce third-person imagery.

VI. Mental Models of the Self and Others in Narrative

In both Sections IV and V above, participants self-reported whether they took a third-person perspective on themselves in their memories and online imagery. It is hard to imagine how social desirability could create the observed interactions. And it is hard to imagine that participants cannot accurately report on the imagery in their own heads. Nevertheless, it would be good to have corroborating evidence from a third and different method of assessing third-person versus first-person perspective.

In research on mental models that people use to comprehend narratives, Bower, Morrow, and colleagues have developed various techniques that can be used to judge a participant's point of view (Bower & Morrow, 1990). We chose a technique that infers the perspective a person takes in their mental model by measuring their reaction times as they read stories involving *deictic* terms. As Black, Turner, and Bower (1979, p. 188) wrote, "The term *deixis* (which is Greek for 'pointing') refers to the orientational features of language which are relative to the time and place of the utterance," and such *deictic* terms establish a point of view for one's mental model.

The words *come* and *go* (along with words such as *bring* and *take*) are *deictic* words in that they establish whether actions are moving toward us (*come*, *bring*) or away from us (*go*, *take*). Once a person reading a story has a point of view, he or she expects that point of view to be maintained. Thus, a sentence that reads "Ted is enjoying his lunch when Sam *comes* to join him" is perfectly intelligible if, as readers, we have been taking Ted's point of view. If, as readers, our perspective is the same as Ted's perspective, what comes toward him also comes toward us. It would still make sense if we read that "Ted is enjoying his lunch when Sam *goes* toward him," but this sentence requires a little more processing time because it implies a different "camera angle" and we have to shift from Ted's perspective to a more third-party perspective or to Sam's perspective. This extra processing to change camera angles will slightly slowdown reading speed; and thus understanding how *deictic* words affect reading speed will tell us something about the perspective in the mental models that people have already constructed in their heads. In sum, if a reader is identifying with a character and taking his or her perspective, sentences where another person or object *comes* toward this character will be processed faster than those where this other person or object *goes* toward the character. By contrast, if a reader is not taking the main character's perspective and is instead taking the other person's perspective or taking the perspective of an outside observer, then sentences where the other person *goes* toward the main character will be processed faster than those where the other *comes* toward the main character. In the

study below, we examined how people constructed mental models when the self was the main character, relative to how they constructed such models when others (in this case, a close friend) were the main character.

Participants read eight different stories. In half of these stories, the main character was the participant. In the other half of the stories, the main character was a person who participants had identified as a friend they were very close to. Further, half the stories were social in content in that they involved the main character interacting with other people; the other half were nonsocial and did not involve the main character interacting with other people.

The prediction was that Asian-Americans would be more likely to take a third-person perspective when the main character was the self rather than a close friend. (Or stated in terms of a first-person perspective, Asian-Americans would be more likely to take a first-person perspective when the main character was a friend rather than the self.) For the Euro-Americans, the prediction was the opposite: Euro-Americans should be relatively more likely to take a first-person perspective when the main character was the self rather than a friend. Further, this interaction was expected to hold for the social (as opposed to the nonsocial) stories (consistent with the effects in both Sections IV and V).

Method. Sixty-six Euro-Americans and 65 Asian-Americans were invited to the laboratory and told that researchers were examining how narratives are processed. They were informed that they would read eight stories. The stories would come on the screen a sentence at a time (or if the sentences were long, a clause at a time). When readers were ready to go from one sentence to the next, they were to press a key on a keypad.⁷ Participants were told that before they read a given story, they would either be instructed to imagine the narrative involved them or to imagine the narrative involved a close friend. (The participant was to pick and write down the name of one male and one female friend who could serve as main characters for the latter narratives.) Two target sentences were embedded in each story with a number of “filler” sentences that did not involve deictic words. For each story, one target sentence stated that another person (in the social story) or an inanimate object (such as a wave or a racquetball in the nonsocial story) *comes* toward the main character. The other target sentence stated that another person or object *goes* toward the main character.

Results. Reaction time data were log transformed, and the average reaction time for processing the “come” sentences was subtracted from that for processing the “go” sentences, so that higher numbers indicated a more

⁷Participants were not told that reaction times for how long it took to read each sentence were being measured.

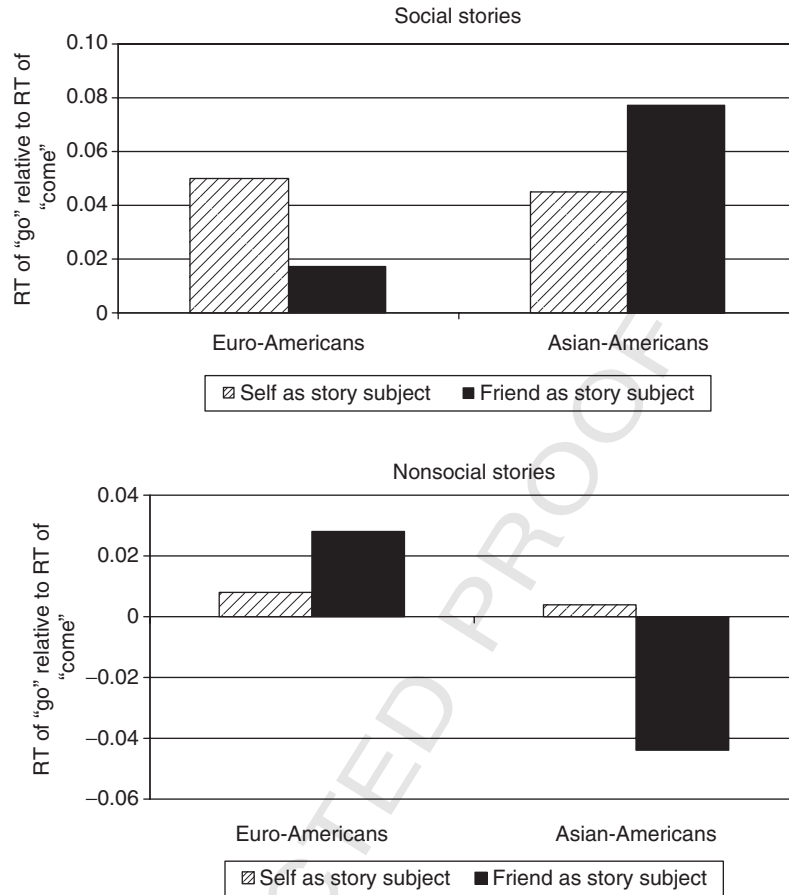


Fig. 5. Reaction times (RT) for Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans for stories involving themselves or a friend in social or nonsocial situations. Higher numbers indicate a more first-person perspective in the mental model. Note: The Y-axis represents the log-transformed reaction times for go minus come. Larger numbers thus imply a more first-person perspective, that is, the action comes toward (rather than goes toward) the story's subject.

first-person perspective. As predicted, there was a significant three-way interaction involving ethnicity \times social/nonsocial content \times main character, $F(1,121) = 4.91, p < .03$ effect size $f = .2$. As shown in Fig. 5, for the social stories, Asian-Americans were relatively more likely to take a third-person perspective when the main character was the self rather than a friend, whereas Euro-Americans were relatively more likely to take a third-person perspective when the main character was a friend rather than the self.

(Or stated conversely, Asian-Americans were more likely to take a first-person perspective when the main character was a friend rather than the self, whereas Euro-Americans were more likely to take a first-person perspective when the main character was the self rather than a friend.) This pattern held only for the social stories (top panel of Fig. 5), and it reversed for nonsocial stories (bottom panel of Fig. 5).⁸

A. FURTHER RESEARCH ON MENTAL MODELS

1. Spontaneous Construction of Sentences

Further work on mental models also supported the pattern of results above. In the above study, participants *read* scenarios and we measured reaction times as participants tried to comprehend the stories. In a subsequent study, we had participants imagine scenarios based on phrases or sentence fragments we presented to them and then participants spontaneously *constructed* sentences out of those phrases. For example, participants might read phrases such as, “party, beautiful woman, toward my friend, dance with, happy” or “restaurant, I, waved at, my friend, to my table.” The former would suggest a social scenario with the friend as the subject and the latter would suggest a

⁸Every way of being in the world brings with it its own pleasures, pressures, and pains. Euro-American cultural imperatives associated with the insider way of being carry with them the burden of introspection and knowing the self, the responsibility and pressure to make the right choice (even for quotidian decisions), and the effortful exertion needed to create and sustain an “authentic self” (Schwartz, 2000). Asian-American cultural imperatives associated with the outsider way of being carry with them the anxieties of public self-consciousness, the pressures of living up to others’ expectations, and the self-discipline required for empathizing and harmonizing with others (Doi, 2002; Kityama & Markus, 1999; Kitayama et al., 2004; Reischauer & Jansen, 1995; Weber, 1951). The reversals in the nonsocial condition (in which Euro-Americans take a more outsider perspective and Asian-Americans take a more insider perspective) may reflect the need for a release from these pressures—with Euro-Americans letting go and releasing themselves from the pressures of the insider way of being and Asian-Americans letting go and releasing themselves from the pressures of the outsider way of being. This sort of release phenomenon is nicely illustrated in a passage from Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men* (Warren, 1971): “Between one point on the map and another point on the map, there was the being alone in the car in the rain. They say you are not you except in terms of relation to other people. If there weren’t any other people, there wouldn’t be any you because what you do, which is what you are, only has meaning in relation to other people. That is a very comforting thought when you are in the car in the rain at night alone, for then you aren’t you, and not being you or anything, you can really lie back and get some rest. It is a vacation from being you. There is only the flow of the motor under your foot spinning . . . that nexus, which isn’t really there, between the you which you have just left in one place and the you which you will be when you get to the other placeBut meanwhile, there isn’t either one of them, and I am in the car in the rain at night” (pp. 128–129).

social scenario with the self as the subject. In responding to the latter example, participants might imagine the scene and construct sentences such as, “At the restaurant, I waved at my friend and he *came* over to my table” or “At the restaurant, I waved at my friend and he *went* over to my table.”

Eighty-seven Euro-Americans and 27 Asian-Americans were given phrases designed to suggest social scenarios with the self as the subject, social scenarios with a friend as the subject, nonsocial scenarios with the self as subject, and nonsocial scenarios with a friend as subject. Analyses of the sentence constructions that participants gave in free response format replicated the pattern of the reaction time data above. For social scenarios in which the self was the subject, Euro-Americans described the action as *coming* toward the self (implying a first-person perspective) in 98% of the sentences they constructed. On the other hand, when their friend was the subject, Euro-Americans described the action as *coming* toward the friend in only 79% of the sentences. This differential did not hold for Asian-Americans. For social scenarios, Asian-Americans described action coming toward the self 85% of the time when the self was the subject, but they also imagined action coming toward the friend 87% of the time when the friend was the subject. For these social stories then, the ethnicity \times main character (self versus other) interaction was significant, $Z = 1.96, p < .05$, in predicting the implied first- versus third-person perspective (see Fig. 6). And, consistent with previous results, this pattern did not hold for stories where the scenarios were not social. In fact, the pattern reversed for the nonsocial stories, again producing a replication of the three-way interaction found in the reaction time data, $Z = 3.79, p < .0001$. Thus, as indicated both by the sentences that participants spontaneously constructed and by the reaction time data, Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans seemed to mentally model their worlds from different points of view (Leung & Cohen, in press).⁹

2. Embodiment of the Self and Other's Perspective

In a third study, we extended the work further to the domain of “embodied cognition” and the *sense* of motion through the world (see Boroditsky, 2000, 2001, 2003; Lakoff & Johnson, 1982; Niedenthal, Barsalou, Winkielman,

⁹Additional data collected in this study allowed us to rule out the possibility that Euro-Americans were simply more familiar with the nuances of what “come” and “go” implied, as compared to Asian-Americans. At the end of the study, we asked participants to complete two sentences, giving them a forced choice between “go” and “come”: (1) From my window, I saw a man leave my apartment building and _____ across the street and (2) From my window, I saw my roommate _____ toward my apartment building. The overwhelming majority of respondents (92% of Euro-Americans and 95% of Asian-Americans) correctly completed the first sentence with go and the second sentence with come.

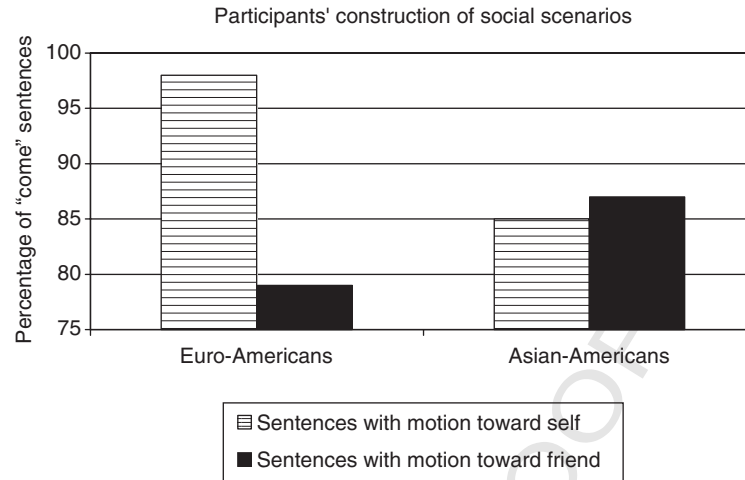


Fig. 6. Percentage of sentences where motion “comes” toward the self versus “comes” toward a friend for social scenarios that were spontaneously constructed by Euro-American and Asian-American participants. Note: Motion *coming* (rather than *going*) toward the self implies a first-person perspective for the self. Motion coming (rather than going) toward a friend implies a mental model that tries to enter into the friend’s first-person perspective.

Krauth-Gruber, & Ric, 2005). Briefly, we found that Euro-Americans were more likely to map out and “embody” time and space from their own perspective, whereas Asian-Americans were more likely to map out and “embody” time and space from the perspective of another person.

For our embodiment study, we adapted a clever paradigm developed by Boroditsky and Ramscar (2002). Their paradigm takes advantage of an ambiguity in language. Thus, for example, the sentence “Next Wednesday’s meeting has been moved forward two days” can either mean that the meeting has been moved to Monday (if we envision time moving toward us) or Friday (if we envision ourselves moving through time). On the basis of an “embodied cognition” hypothesis, Boroditsky and Ramscar (2002) demonstrated that our conception of time depends importantly on how we think about our bodies as moving (or not moving) through space. Thus, they found that people who are at the front of a cafeteria line (and hence have been moving through space) tend to believe that moving the meeting 2 days forward means the meeting is now on Friday, whereas people who are at the back of a cafeteria line (and hence have been stationary or moving very little) tend to believe the meeting is now on Monday. The motion (versus lack of

motion) through space “embodies” our motion through time (versus time’s motion past us).

In our study, we had Asian-American and Euro-American participants read vignettes in which either they or another person were described as moving through space (by, e.g., riding a roller coaster at an amusement park). (Again, the vignettes involved either a social scene or a nonsocial scene.) After reading the vignettes, we then asked participants questions such as Boroditsky and Ramscar’s “two days forward” question. If Euro-Americans are more likely to “embody” the self’s perspective (rather than a friend’s), they should be more likely to believe the meeting has been “moved forward” to Friday when the previously imagined scenario involved the self moving through space rather than a friend moving through space. Conversely, if Asian-Americans are more likely to “embody” the friend’s perspective (rather than the self’s), they should be more likely to believe the meeting has been “moved forward” to Friday when the previously imagined scenario involved the *friend* moving through space rather than the self. These predictions were confirmed with Euro-Americans answering “Friday” 82% of the time after imagining the self moving through space compared to 67% of the time after imagining the friend moving through space, whereas Asian-Americans answered “Friday” only 43% of the time after imagining the self moving through space compared to 69% of the time after imagining the friend moving through space. And again, this tendency was only observed when the preceding “motion” vignettes involved social scenes rather than nonsocial scenes (ethnicity \times self/other motion \times social/nonsocial story interaction, $p < .05$). Thus, not only did Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans mentally model the world differently in the reaction time and sentence construction studies, they also embodied the world differently, with Euro-Americans being relatively more likely to sense and embody the imagined motion of the self through time and space and Asian-Americans being relatively more likely to sense and embody the imagined motion of their friend through time and space (Leung & Cohen, in press).

3. Summary

Sections III through VI demonstrated that Asian-Americans (compared to Euro-Americans) were more likely to have an “outsider” perspective on the self. The data on mental models and embodiment and (for males) collective memories also provided some suggestion that Asian-Americans were more likely to get into the “insider” perspective of other people. In the next section, we extend this issue and trace out some potential implications of this for social interactions and perceptions.

B. THE OUTSIDER PERSPECTIVE AND INSIDER BIAS

To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men,—that is genius.

Ralph Waldo Emerson in “*Self-reliance*”

I celebrate myself,
And what I assume you shall assume,
For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.

Walt Whitman in “*Song of Myself*”

We have argued that Asian-Americans are more likely to get outside of their own heads and experience themselves through the eyes of another. This ability to get outside their own heads may make them less vulnerable to the sort of egocentric biases that come from too much attention to one’s own internal thoughts and feelings. For Euro-Americans, however, the overwhelming salience of their own internal phenomenology may cause them to rely too much on their own “insider’s” perspective and lead them to insufficiently adjust away from it as they think about the external world. For Euro-Americans, working from an insider’s perspective and too absorbed in their own thoughts, there becomes a fundamental confusion between what is in their own heads, what is in other people’s heads, and what is actually “out there” in objective reality.

As described below, these insider biases seem to have a phenomenological origin. In Section VII, we examine how this might operate to cause a confusion between what is in one’s own head and what is out there in reality. In Sections VIII and IX, we extend this point by examining how a similar process might operate to cause a confusion between what is in one’s own head and what is in other people’s heads.

VII. Confusing What Is in One’s Own Head and What Is Out There

One very vivid demonstration of insider bias comes from a study by Newton (1991, also see Griffin & Ross, 1991). In this study, participants were brought into the laboratory in pairs. One person (the “sender”) was instructed to tap out the rhythm to a popular song (e.g., “The national anthem”), whereas the other was instructed to guess what the song was. It turns out people are not really able to detect which song the sender is tapping out. They correctly guessed the song on about 3% of trials. This point, however, is lost on the senders, who believe that the song they have tapped

out is relatively obvious. (They estimate a 50% chance of accuracy, rather than a 3% chance of accuracy.)

The error comes because the sender is attending to something very different than just the taps on the table. As Griffin and Ross (1991) note, the sender hears the taps, but in addition she is also hearing the song fully orchestrated in her head as she taps along to a mental representation of cymbals crashing, a string section, lyrics, and so on. This fully orchestrated song that is playing in her head is easily identifiable, even though the only thing “out there” in the world is the sparse and very ambiguous tapping noise.

Attention to either the sparse objective stimulus in the world or the rich, idiosyncratic representation in one’s head profoundly affects one’s likelihood of figuring out which songs are indeed identifiable. The prediction for our study was that the insider perspective would make Euro-Americans perform worse than Asian-Americans in this task. Stated in the converse, because Asian-Americans are more likely to focus on the external world, they may be less susceptible to the error Euro-Americans make when they confuse their internal representation of the song with the sparse tapping sounds “out there” in reality. By concentrating on the objective reality, the Asian-Americans will be better able to discern which rhythms are distinctive and hence easy to guess versus which will be much harder to guess. (As an example of the latter, the “outsider” listening to the rhythm will have a relatively difficult time telling the difference between the tapping that corresponds to Frank Sinatra’s “My Way” and that which corresponds to Britney Spears’ “Oops! . . . I did it again.” The “insider,” who is hearing in her mind either Frank versus Britney’s voice, orchestras versus synthesizers, and so on, will think the songs are perfectly identifiable.)

Note that a cognitive load manipulation may have interesting consequences here, depending on what the person is attending to. If the attention is on the objective tapping, the cognitive load will distract the person from listening to the beat and hence will make them worse at discerning what songs will or will not be picked up by an observer. On the other hand, if the attention is focused on the misleading idiosyncratic representation in one’s own head, the load manipulation will disrupt one’s ability to concentrate on that; and as a consequence, a person may actually improve in discerning which songs will be picked up. Thus, in the no-load conditions, Asian-Americans may be more accurate than Euro-Americans because the Asian-Americans are concentrating on the beat “out there,” whereas the Euro-Americans are concentrating on the idiosyncratic representation of the song in their heads. In the load conditions, Euro-Americans should be more accurate than Asian-Americans because the cognitive load interferes with the Asian-Americans’ abilities to concentrate on the beat and Euro-Americans’ abilities to concentrate on the misleading representation in their heads.

For our experiment, we modified Newton's original procedure (1991) in two ways (Hoshino-Browne & Cohen, 2004). First, we wanted to make it possible for people who were listening only to the beat to guess the songs. Thus, we constrained the possibilities, informing both participants of the possible songs they would be listening to. Second, we wanted to make sure that there would not be a response bias due to either underconfidence or modesty on the part of Asian-Americans in estimating their ability to tap out the songs in identifiable ways. Thus, instead of having the "sender" tap out the songs, we had a standardized recording of tapping sounds that indicated the rhythm of the various songs (see Newton, 1991, p. 44).

Method. Participants were 80 Euro-Americans and 84 Asian-Americans, with pairs run one at a time. The experimenter explained that we were studying people's ability to assess whether others can identify familiar songs when their rhythms are tapped. There was a brief get-acquainted session for the pair and then the experimenter played music samples for the participants to ensure that all knew the names and beats of the songs in the study. The experimenter explained that in this study, he would play a tape in which the rhythm of the song was tapped out, without vocals, instrumentation, or any other clue to the song's identity.

At that point, the experimenter gave Partner A of the pair a list of five songs in the order that their rhythms would be played. For each song, partner B's task was to guess which song was being played as well as his or her confidence in the guess. Partner A's task was to indicate the likelihood that partner B would correctly identify the song. In the cognitive load condition, partner A was also given the task of rehearsing an eight-digit number. In the no-load condition, no such task was given to partner A. (Partner A and partner B were separated by a divider so they could not see each other.)

Results. As shown in Fig. 7, the ethnicity \times cognitive load interaction emerged. In the no-load condition, Asian-Americans were relatively more likely than Euro-Americans to discern which songs would be correctly detected by their partner ($M = .63$ for Asian-Americans versus $M = .52$ for Euro-Americans). In the load condition, this pattern reversed with Euro-Americans improving their performance and Asian-Americans showing declines in performance ($M = .49$ for Asian-Americans versus $M = .60$ for Euro-Americans). Thus, the interaction was significant, $F(1,78) = 4.45$, $p < .04$, effect size $f = .24$. Under no-load conditions, Asian-Americans were more accurate, presumably because they were attending to the beat "out there" in the world, whereas Euro-Americans were attending to their own internal representations of the song in their heads. When load was introduced, the Asian-Americans became less accurate whereas the Euro-Americans became more accurate, presumably because Asian-Americans' default attention to the objective stimuli was disturbed whereas it was

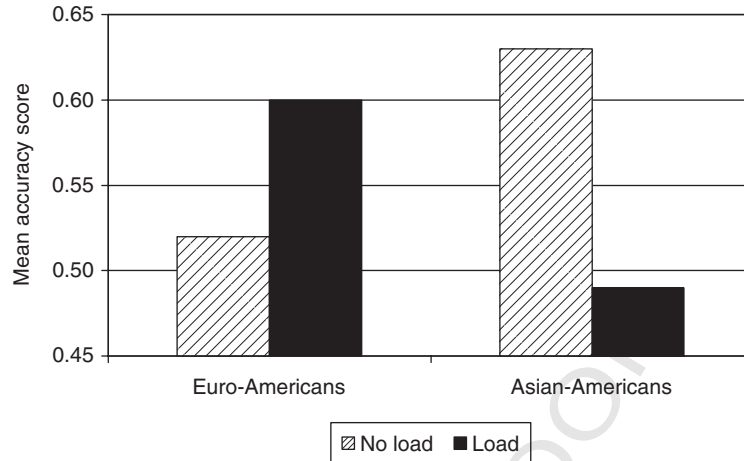


Fig. 7. Euro-Americans' and Asian-Americans' accuracy under load and no load conditions in figuring out whether their partner can identify a song just from the tapping sounds.

Euro-Americans' default attention to their own idiosyncratic representations that were disturbed.

VIII. Confusing What Is in One's Own Head with What Is in Other People's Heads: The Illusion of One's Own Transparency and Empathy-as-Projection

Section VII examined the focus of attention and how one can confuse what is in one's own head with what exists in external reality. Sections VIII and IX extend this point by examining the way one may confuse what is in one's own head with what is in other people's heads. Two related phenomena are examined in this section. The first is what Gilovich et al. (1998) have called the "illusion of transparency" in which a person believes that others know and understand her feelings to a greater extent than they actually do. The second—which might be called the "illusion of empathy"—has to do with the way a person may falsely believe she is empathizing with or understanding others. Thus, the first error involves falsely believing that others know us, whereas the second error involves falsely believing that we know others. Both of these errors are rooted in the phenomenology of the insider perspective.

In the "illusion of transparency" or what Vorauer and Ross (1999) have called the "failure to suppress the self," people overestimate the extent to which others can read their thoughts and feelings (see also Vorauer, Cameron, Holmes, & Pearce, 2003; Vorauer & Claude, 1998). In very clever

analyses, both Gilovich *et al.* as well as Vorauer and Ross (1999) showed that these illusions derive from attending too much to one's own internal experiences. Thus, in one study, Gilovich and colleagues had participants lie or tell the truth to a group of their peers and then guess whether these peers could catch their lies. As Gilovich *et al.* (1998) note, the person telling the lie in most cases will feel a certain discomfort with lying—that is, there is a certain subjective unease, nervousness, or physical arousal that a person feels when lying. Under the “illusion of transparency,” one believes that others can pick up on one's own emotion and discomfort to a greater extent than they actually can; one's own phenomenology of unease dominates. Importantly, both Gilovich and colleagues as well as Vorauer and Ross (1999) showed that the extent of this bias depended on participants' own attentiveness to their internal states. The more conscious they were of their own thoughts and feelings, the more they thought that others knew those feelings (see also Laing, 1974, p. 338, on “‘plate glass’ feelings.”)

The process may work differently for Asian-Americans, however, because of a habitual tendency to take the outsider perspective and norms that require overriding personal preferences in favor of what the group deems is important (Morling, Kitayama, & Miyamoto, 2002; see also Morling & Fiske, 1999; Rothbaum, Morelli, Pott, & Liu-Constant, 2000; Weisz, Rothbaum, & Blackburn, 1984; Ybarra & Trafimow, 1998). That is, in Asian culture, part of being a good group member means going along with what other people want and suppressing one's own personal desires and emotions for the sake of harmony. One may think or feel X but express Y. In this case, attentiveness to one's own internal psychological or physiological states would make very salient the discrepancy between what is being privately felt and what is being publicly shown to others. And thus, the more attentive to internal states, the *less* Asian-Americans should show this illusion of transparency. The ethnicity X self-consciousness interaction in this study would follow from greater introspective self-consciousness, leading to more illusion of transparency for Euro-Americans and less illusion of transparency for Asian-Americans.

If the illusion of transparency involves a person overestimating how well others know him, the illusion of empathy relates to the opposite mistake of a person overestimating how well he knows others. The root of empathy, at least in theory, is understanding. Among other methods, it can be achieved through listening and watching other people [“what is this person (verbally or nonverbally) expressing?”]; it can be achieved by knowing something about the person's background, preferences, and habits (“what would this person think and feel in their situation, given what I know about them?”); or it can be achieved through projecting oneself (“what would *I* think and feel in their situation?”). This typology of methods obviously makes the methods seem more separate than they actually are; however, on the basis of insider

versus outsider perspective taking, we would expect that Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans would differ in their general routes to understanding others. That is, generally speaking, Euro-Americans with their insider perspective should implicitly follow the third method (“how would I feel?”). Asian-Americans, with their greater attention to the external world, should more likely follow some combination of the first two methods.

In the present study, sizing up another’s thoughts and feelings involves detecting when they are lying. The lie-detecting procedure used below (in which people are randomly assigned to lie or tell the truth to strangers) is a bit artificial and does have its limits (more on that below) (Hoshino-Browne & Cohen, 2004). However, there are some advantages to this procedure. The first is that there are known, reliable signals that liars produce (Mann, Vrij, & Bull, 2002). Most people are not very good at detecting those signals; but theoretically, if a person is paying close attention to the other person, she should be able to pick up these signals and be reasonably accurate in figuring out when the other person is lying. Thus, if Asian-Americans use attention to the world as their primary way of empathizing or understanding, these reliable signals should mean that there will be a positive relationship between empathy and accuracy in lie detection.

The second advantage of the procedure below is that it gives us greater clarity on how the Euro-Americans are empathizing. The prediction is that from their insider perspective, Euro-Americans will engage in a crude sort of projective “matching” as they try to read other people. Thus, if Euro-Americans are caught up in the phenomenology of their own internal emotions, they may engage in a very crude sort of projection where their own discomfort with a given topic gets projected onto others. All other things equal, a person will be more uncomfortable about a topic they have lied about than one they have not lied about. And so, from their insider perspective, this discomfort and unease with a given topic would be projected onto the other as the other’s discomfort and unease, and thus a person should be more likely to believe that the other is lying about what she herself has lied about. For Euro-Americans then, we would expect empathy to be correlated with this crude form of projective matching.

As Nickerson (1999) has pointed out, trying to figure out other people by thinking about ourselves is often a good strategy. It can be done deliberately as a person consciously tells himself to think about how he would feel in another’s situation, or it can be done unconsciously or nondeliberately as the person more or less projects himself onto the other without explicitly realizing that he is doing so. An advantage of the experimental setup below is that in this study, we can (almost surely) rule out the possibility that participants are using projection as a consciously chosen, deliberate strategy. [If participant A knows that participant B has been randomly assigned to lie to either

the first or second statement and knows that he (A) has independently been randomly assigned, then he knows that his own feelings are obviously completely uninformative about what the other person might be thinking or feeling.]

To restate, the insider and outsider perspectives should affect how we perceive other people. First, the more Euro-Americans dwell on their own internal phenomenology, the more likely they should show the illusion of transparency. For Asian-Americans, who habitually take the outsider perspective, the opposite should be true: attention to the internal should highlight how what is privately felt and publicly shown can be quite different. Thus, we would expect an ethnicity \times self-consciousness interaction in predicting the illusion of transparency. Second, as a result of their insider perspective, Euro-Americans should try to understand and figure out others by more or less unconsciously projecting themselves onto others. For Asian-Americans, empathy should be less likely to involve projecting oneself onto others. Further, because there are reliable signals people emit when they lie, attention to the outside world should mean that empathic Asian-Americans will pick up these signals and be able to more accurately guess when the other person is lying. These last two effects involve (1) an ethnicity \times empathy interaction in which empathy is positively related to this crude form of projective matching for Euro-Americans and (2) an ethnicity \times empathy interaction in which empathy is positively related to actual accuracy in telling the difference between lies and truth for Asian-Americans.

Method. Participants were 49 Euro-Americans and 53 Asian-Americans. The experimenter explained that this study was about how well people could discern lies from truth, and that participants would take turns lying and telling the truth to each other. Each participant received the same six pairs of statements. For example, (1a) "Describe your favorite movie and why you like it." and (1b) "Describe your favorite book and why you like it." For each round, partner A and partner B were each randomly assigned which statement to tell the truth to and which to lie to. Partner A went first, telling a lie to the assigned statement and the truth to the other. Partner B's task was to guess which of the two answers was the lie and which was the truth, and partner A's task was to indicate her chance of getting caught. Then partner B took his turn, with partner A guessing which answer was the lie and partner B estimating his own chance of getting caught. The process continued for six rounds. Participants then filled out the Davis (1980) Empathy Scale and the Self-consciousness Scale (Fenigstein, Scheier, & Buss, 1975), which had our measure of private self-consciousness.

Illusory transparency was calculated as a person's estimate for the chance that he or she would be caught, controlling for the chance that he or she actually was caught. Lie detection accuracy scores were computed as the

proportion of times a person was correct in guessing which of the partner's answers were lies.

Results. Regression analyses supported all three hypotheses. First, there was a significant ethnicity \times private self-consciousness interaction predicting the illusion of transparency, with self-consciousness correlating with relatively more illusion of transparency for Euro-Americans and relatively less illusion of transparency for Asian-Americans, (see Fig. 8), $t(98) = 2.05$, $p < .05$, effect size $f = .21$.¹⁰ Second, there was also a significant interaction of ethnicity \times empathy in predicting accuracy in figuring out when the other person was lying, $t(70) = 3.23$, $p < .002$, effect size $f = .39$. The more empathic Asian-Americans were, the more likely they were to figure out when the other person was lying versus telling the truth ($r = .37$). For the Euro-Americans, the relation between empathy and accuracy was nonsignificant and, in fact, slightly negative.

However, Euro-American empathy scores were correlated with their tendency to unconsciously project their own discomfort of lying onto others. As shown in Fig. 9, those who were most empathic (as indicated by self-report on the Davis scale) were relatively more likely to engage in a crude projective matching of their own discomfort with a given topic, whereas this was not

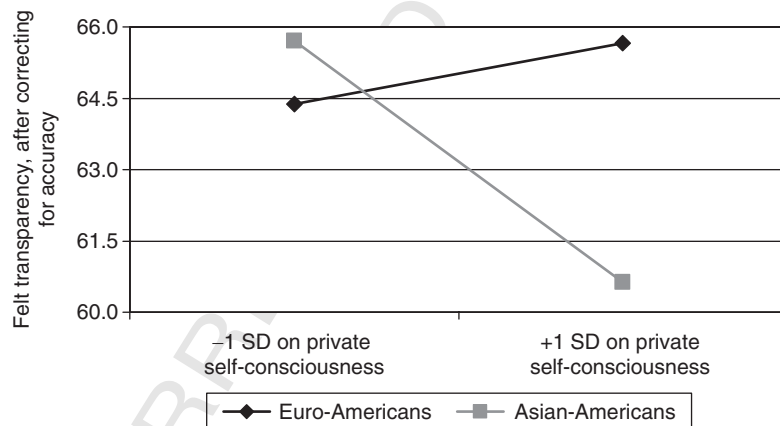


Fig. 8. Felt transparency for Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans as a function of their private self-consciousness.

¹⁰In Studies 6 and 7, individuals are nested within dyads and groups. Regression analyses were run with the statistical package SUDAAN that takes nesting into account. Analyses that ignore the nesting give similar results.

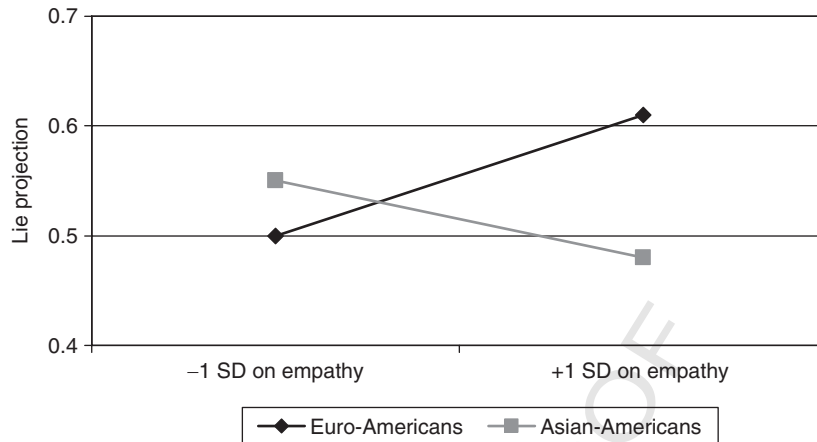


Fig. 9. Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans of high or low empathy and their tendency to project their own lies or discomfort onto others.

at all true for Asian-Americans [interaction $t(70) = 2.09$, $p < .04$, effect size $f = .25$].

Overall then, the insider perspective on the self seemed to drive the Euro-Americans to both the illusion of transparency and the illusion of empathy. Their own phenomenology dominated their perceptions, and they were likely to be biased by attention to their own inner feelings when they were trying to figure out what others knew about them and also what they knew about others. On the other hand, being more likely to take the outsider perspective and get outside their own heads, Asian-Americans did not show these effects. Taking an outsider perspective on the self, the more attention one paid to the internal, the more one realized how internal feelings and public expressions can differ. Further, getting outside of one's own head allows one to take a different route to empathy. Instead of inadvertently projecting one's own thoughts and feelings onto the other to understand them, one is able to focus attention on the other and pick up reliable cues that provide for greater accuracy.

IX. Projection-as-Empathy in a Group Setting

In the present study (done with Alison Luby), we wanted to extend the projection-as-empathy finding of the last study in two ways. First, we wanted to examine projection-as-empathy in a more natural setting.

That is, instead of taking turns lying, participants would be involved in a three-person group discussion. After the discussion, they would be asked how much they liked the other members of the group, and they would be asked to guess how much the other members of the group liked each of the other people. Three-person groups (rather than dyads) allowed us to extend the findings in a second way. From participants' ratings, we were able to look at two different sorts of insider projections: in *reciprocal projection*, Person A might believe that others felt toward her the way she felt about others; and in *third party projection*, Person A might believe that others felt toward C the way she felt toward C (see also Newcomb, 1961). The prediction was that because Euro-Americans are more likely to project their insider bias onto others as they empathize, both forms of projection would be positively correlated with Euro-Americans' empathy scores. In contrast, this projection-as-empathy effect should not hold for Asian-Americans. An ethnicity \times empathy interaction was expected to predict both reciprocal and third-party projection.

Method. Sixty Euro-Americans and 60 Asian-Americans participated in three-person discussion groups and were assigned to come to a collective decision about which of two fictional drugs to market (Karau, 1994). After this collective decision was reached, the experimenter explained that she also wanted to learn people's private opinions, and she gave a questionnaire to each participant individually. Relevant to the issue of projection, the questionnaire asked about (1) how much the participant liked the other group members and (2) how much the participant thought that each of the other group members liked the people in the group.

Results. Regression analyses were consistent with the hypothesis that Euro-Americans took their own insider perspective and projected it onto others as they tried to understand others' thoughts and feelings. There was a significant ethnicity \times empathy interaction predicting reciprocal projection, as empathy was associated with greater reciprocal projection for Euro-Americans but not for Asian-Americans (interaction $t = 2.17, p < .04$, effect size $f = .2$). In addition, the same interaction was shown for third-party projection, with empathy again being associated with more projection for Euro-Americans but not for Asian-Americans ($t = 2.2, p < .03$, effect size $f = .2$).

A. DISCUSSION OF SECTIONS VIII AND IX

In Section VIII, it was shown that Euro-Americans were likely to engage in empathy-as-projection in the dyadic lie detection task. In this section, it was shown that the empathy-as-projection finding replicated in a triadic group

discussion setting with both reciprocal and third-party projection. In neither of these last two studies did Asian-Americans show the same insider bias of empathy = projection. (If anything, it was the opposite: projection was something *unempathic* Asian-Americans did.)

There are different ways people can attempt to understand others; and this inherent ambiguity is part of the definition of the English word “empathy.” The American Heritage Dictionary online (2003) lists two definitions of empathy that reflect two different routes to understanding: “(1) Identification with and understanding of another’s situation, feelings, and motives. See synonyms at pity. (2) The attribution of one’s own feelings to an object.” The Oxford English Dictionary online (2003) conflates these two meanings: “The power of projecting one’s personality into (and so fully comprehending) the object of contemplation,” with the Oxford English Dictionary definition assuming that projecting one’s own feelings leads to “fully comprehending.” There is one English word “empathy,” but it seems to cover, or at least make ambiguous, two quite distinct processes. In contrast, both Chinese and Japanese have at least two words that separate these processes; *Yiqing* versus *Tongqing* in Chinese and *Kanjo-inyu* versus *Kyokan* or *Kyomei* in Japanese correspond to the processes of projection versus entering into the other’s perspective, respectively.

A final note: That those with the highest empathy scores projected the most (among Euro-Americans) has the potential to produce some very ironic outcomes. That is, if I do not consciously realize that I am using the empathy-as-projection technique (as was almost surely the case in Section VIII and as may have been the case in Section IX), my perceptions and understanding of the world may become quite circular. Thus, the irony: I project my thoughts and feelings onto another person, and then I become surprised at how much kinship I feel with that other person, how well I can read his thoughts, and how well I feel I know him generally, because—amazingly!—he is just like me.

X. Characterizing the World

How people characterize objects and actions has been seen as quite fundamental by psychologists and others studying culture (Chua, Leu, & Nisbett, 2005; Imai & Gentner, 1997; Menon, Morris, Chiu, & Hong, 1999; Morris & Peng, 1994; Nisbett et al., 2001; Norenzayan, Smith, Kim, & Nisbett, 2002). Our phenomenological experience of an event is fundamentally tied up both with our perceptions of causation (Heider, 1944; Nisbett, 2007; Peng & Knowles, 2003; Storms, 1973; Taylor & Fiske, 1975; Wegner, Fuller, &

Sparrow, 2003; Wegner, Sparrow, & Winerman, 2004) and with our beliefs about the inherent properties of persons and things (MacLeod, 1947). In this section, we examine characterization as it applies to either seeing the world through one's own eyes or attempting to enter into another person's perspective on the world. Further, we examine how these tendencies may change as children develop across the elementary school years.

In this study, if Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans experience the self and the world from an insider or outsider perspective, this should fundamentally affect the way they come to characterize the reality around them. At the very basic level of description, do children learn to characterize the world through what they can see through their own eyes as they observe the actions of others? Or, do children learn to characterize the world through getting into the minds of others and examining what those others might be thinking and feeling (Lillard & Flavell, 1990)? The prediction in this study was that as elementary school children get older, there will be a movement from the first type of "objective," observable characterization of behavior toward the second type of "subjective" characterization of others' thoughts and feelings; and in particular, this developmental trend to enter into others' internal experiences will be especially pronounced for Asian-American children.

In this study (done with Tanya Smith), we pitted observable, behavioral descriptions versus unobservable, internal descriptions as participants characterized scenes involving others. Both types of characterizations by themselves were incomplete. Thus, children might be shown a picture of a man playing with a baby as both appeared quite happy. A description of "The man is playing with the baby" is incomplete in that it does not tell us if the man is happy, bored, surprised, frustrated, and so on. A description of "The man is happy with the baby" is incomplete in that it does not tell us whether the man is playing with the baby, feeding the baby, simply staring at the baby, and so on. The child thus has to concentrate on the scene's most salient features, even if that means leaving some other information out.

Further, the pictures in this study involved both social/interactional scenes and those without such social/interactional content. The essential features of such scenes are predicted to differ for Asian-American children. It is social situations that cue perspective switching. And thus, we expect that as Asian-American children get older, it will be social or interactional situations (rather than nonsocial ones) that will show the greatest developmental shift away from behavioral descriptions and toward descriptions of others' internal states.

Method. Participants were 62 Euro-American and 46 Asian-American children, ages 5–12, drawn from two multiethnic schools. Participants were shown a series of 15 pictures and drawings. The eight drawings were from Lillard and Flavell (1990) and the pictures were added to present a greater

range of stimuli. Some of the stimuli showed a person (child or adult) interacting with others in a social situation (e.g., a man playing with a baby, a boy hugging his mother, and so on), whereas other stimuli showed a person alone (e.g., a boy looking at some cupcakes, a girl opening a box, and so on). For each picture, the child was asked, "What's the best way to describe this picture to a friend?" One of the options described the picture in terms of the internal, unobservable states of the actor (e.g., "She is feeling nervous," "He is very happy with the baby"), whereas the other described the picture in terms of the behavior of the actor that could be directly observed (e.g., "She is talking into the microphone," "He is tickling the baby").

Results. For social/interactional situations, Asian-American children showed a developmental trend away from describing scenes by observable behaviors they could see with their own eyes and toward describing scenes by the internal, unobservable thoughts and feelings of others ($r = .31, p < .03$). Euro-American children showed no such developmental trend ($r = -.06$). (Thus, the ethnicity \times age interaction in regression, $p < .05$.) Importantly, this was only true for the social situations, not for the nonsocial ones. This helps rule out any response bias explanation and highlights the way that it is social situations that pull for this emphasis on attending to the internal, unobservable aspects of a scene. The three-way interaction of ethnicity \times age \times social/nonsocial scene was significant in a regression at $t = 2.42, p < .02$, effect size $f = .23$.

A. POSSIBLE FUTURE STUDIES

For the simple pictures in this study, we forced the distinction between describing a person's behavior versus describing her thoughts and emotions. However, as stimuli get more complex, so will people's characterizations. Complex characterizations are likely to contain a mix of the observable behaviors and unobservable feelings of other people. However, some details will always have to be left out of the representation and some will simply fade more quickly over time. As time passes, memories of an event are likely to be simplified to their gist, and thus, even for complex scenes, it would not be surprising if cultural differences become even greater as temporal distance from a scene increases, with observable behaviors becoming relatively more prominent in the memories and representations of Euro-Americans and unobservable thoughts and feelings becoming relatively more prominent in the memories and representations of Asian-Americans (see also Libby & Eibach, 2002; Peterson, 1981). An interesting experimental test of this would involve showing pictures or film clips to participants and then coming back

to them, say, a day, a week, a month, or a year later and asking them to recall what they were shown. Responses like “I remember that situation involved something where a boy felt really nervous about messing up in front of others” versus “I remember that situation involved a boy shooting free throws” would be informative about what participants recalled as particularly salient. Further, selective description and selective recall have implications for communication as stories get told and retold to others (Bartlett, 1932; Cohen & Nisbett, 1997; Lyons & Kashima, 2001). The “sharpening and leveling” (Allport & Postman, 1947) of the stories should reflect the prevailing biases of the culture, and thus as the stories are told and retold, we might expect that Euro-American stories are relatively more likely to turn into stories of actions and observable events whereas Asian-American stories are relatively more likely to turn into stories about the thoughts and feelings other people have, the internal lives that occur below the surface veneer of events. Patterns of characterization, memory, and communication are likely to be mutually reinforcing. What we communicate is based on our internal representations of events and becomes further tailored to what we think our audience is interested in hearing (Chiu, Leung, & Kwan, 2007; Wang, 2004; Wang & Conway, 2004; Wang & Ross, in press; Wang et al., 2000). And conversely, what we selectively attend to and remember about scenes is based, to some degree, on what we know we will have to (or want to) communicate to others (Zajonc, 1960).

XI. General Discussion

The studies described in this chapter are consistent with the notion that the phenomenological gestalts are different for Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans in some fundamental ways. It is not “simply a metaphor” to say that Asian-Americans are more likely to see themselves the way another person would (see also Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff & Johnson, 1982). In memories of situations where they are at the center of attention, Asian-Americans really did see themselves the way an outsider would have. In our self-control, “mental toughness” task, when others were made salient, Asian-Americans reported that they really were more likely to have a third-person, detached experience of looking at themselves as they tried to control their pain sensations. In reading stories and visualizing and embodying narratives, they were relatively more likely to make a mental model in which they imagined their friends’ experience from a first-person perspective and their own experience from a third-person perspective. And when they experienced a variety of emotions, the habitual representation of the generalized other was looking back at them. When they felt ashamed, they saw faces as

looking at them with contempt; when they felt sad, they saw faces looking at them with sympathy; when they felt angry, they saw faces looking at them with fear; and so on. In all these ways, the self is experienced as the object rather than the subject.

Because they saw themselves through other people's eyes and got out of their own heads, Asian-Americans were less likely to fall prey to egocentric errors. Euro-Americans rather than Asian-Americans were more likely to be overwhelmed by their own "insider" phenomenology and project their internal experiences onto the outside world. Euro-Americans were likely to confuse what was in their own heads with what was objectively out there in the world. In the music tapping study, they did not realize how far "beyond the information given" their own idiosyncratic representation of a song went as they added orchestration, voices, and synthesizers to the sparse tapping noises that were "out there" in reality. Further, they were likely to confuse what was in their own heads with what was in other people's heads. In the lie detection study, they were relatively more susceptible to the "illusion of transparency" as they dwelled more in their own phenomenological experience. In both dyadic groups (the lie detection study) and triadic groups (the group interaction study), they empathized by projecting their own internal thoughts and feelings onto other people. They engaged in empathy-as-projection even when their feelings would be definitionally and obviously uncorrelated with others' feelings (as in the lie detection study) or when their feelings were simply empirically uncorrelated with others' feelings (as in the group interaction study). In the group study, they engaged in empathy-as-projection both when they were judging other people's reaction toward them and when they were judging other people's reaction to a third party. Finally, in a developmental study, Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans showed starkly different maturational patterns as they learned to characterize the world. When they chose between characterizing social scenes in terms of either observable behaviors that they could see with their own eyes versus trying to enter into another's perspective by attempting to understand the other's thoughts and feelings, Asian-American children showed a developmental trend from the former to the latter whereas Euro-American children did not.

These results suggest some fundamental differences in the phenomenological experience of self and the world. Most research on cross-cultural differences has focused on ideologies—values, beliefs, attitudes, and so on—rather than on phenomenologies. In research on culture and self, for example, more attention has been paid to the contents of self than to the way the self is experienced. It has focused on *what* we think about rather than *how* the raw sense data from the world is turned into our conscious experience. As we noted in the introduction, however, an emphasis on the how and on the

construction of phenomenological experience is important for two (very different) reasons.

A. UNDERSTANDING FELT EXPERIENCE

First, to restate, the phenomenological experience is important in its own right. In a famous essay, Nagel (1974) asked, “What is it like to be a bat?” One of Nagel’s points was an antireductionist argument about human consciousness. That is, Nagel argued that an essential aspect of consciousness is subjective experience. Thus, even if we understood all the biology of the brain down to the last synapse, we could not truly claim to have understood consciousness unless we understood humans’ subjective experience. It *feels* a certain way to be a human, and it feels very different than it would feel to be a bat. There are certain *qualia* to our subjective consciousness of the world, and without these qualia we cannot understand the essential nature of human experience.

Now it is obviously *not* the case that Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans are like humans and bats. However, it is the case that their phenomenological experience of being a self in the world can be quite different in certain situations. The qualia of these feelings cannot be reduced to differences in values, beliefs, attitudes, norms, and so on. Without understanding the subjective nature of how the Asian-American or Euro-American self in the world is experienced, it would be difficult to claim that psychologists have understood what it is to be an encultured being. Our understanding is incomplete without the phenomenological data (see also Mesquita & Frijda, 1992; Rozin, 2001; Shweder, 1997). Thus, it is extremely important to know about the *what* of culture (In what ways does the content of the self differ across cultures? What are the expectations and norms for various types of social behavior? What do people from different cultures believe and value? and so on). However, it is also important to understand the *how*—how does our subjective experience of the self and of the social world differ.¹¹

¹¹Taken to an extreme, Nagel’s argument could imply that people from two cultures (or even two people from the same culture) could never understand each other. However, as Nagel (1974) notes: “It is often possible to take up a point of view other than one’s own, so the comprehension of such facts is not limited to one’s own case. There is a sense in which phenomenological facts are perfectly objective: one person can know or say of another what the quality of the other’s experience is. They are subjective, however, in the sense that even this objective ascription of experience is possible only for someone sufficiently similar to the object of ascription to be able to adopt his point of view—to understand the ascription in the first person as well as in the third, so to speak. The more different from oneself the other experiencer is, the less success one can expect with this enterprise (p. 441).” Given the substantial common ground between all

B. PHENOMENOLOGY AND IDEOLOGY: THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE

Second, understanding phenomenological experience is important because it is probably a key link in two of the most important problems having to do with psychology and culture today. That is, how do we connect culture and individual level psychology, and how do we reconcile long-standing cultural traditions (that sometimes persist over millennia) with the notion that culture is dynamic, not static. Hong et al. (2000) have talked about “dynamic constructivism” and Kitayama and Markus (1999) about the “mutual constitution” of psyche and culture. In either case, what is happening is that cultures and individual-level psyches are constantly recreating each other. Macro-level cultural patterns and micro-level individual experiences reinforce and recreate one another. In the context of this chapter, we suggest that it is important to consider how micro-level phenomenological experience and macro-level cultural ideologies are linked together in bidirectional causation.

This bidirectional causation implies (1) that beliefs, attitudes, and values structure our basic phenomenological experience of the world in systematic ways and (2) that certain types of phenomenological experiences create certain sorts of beliefs, values, and attitudes about the world.

1. The Lessons of Experience from the Outsider Perspective

Think, for example, of what lessons one draws from an “outsider” phenomenological experience of the self and social world (see top panel of Fig. 10). For example, the experience of seeing oneself in memory as an outsider would make it evident that the individual is embedded in a social context where he or she is being watched and watched over by other people. In real-time action, online third-person experiencing would have the same effect. Additionally, the experience of relational projection is literally the experience of having the generalized other look on. And finally, constructing mental models in which I take the first-person perspective of close friends and the third-person perspective on myself highlights the significance of the group, draws attention to the thoughts and feelings of close others, and strengthens the bonds of sympathy

human beings, understanding is probably limited in most cases only by failures of imagination, analogy, or vocabulary. More colloquially, the absurdity of taking the argument about subjectivity and unbridgeable chasms too far is reminiscent of the quip attributed (perhaps apocryphally) to Walker Percy: The average deconstructionist is an academic who argues for the incomprehensibility of language just before calling his or her spouse to ask them to order a pizza. Yes, there is a sense in which language will involve ambiguity and referential difficulties, but it usually works well enough to get the large double sausage with pepperoni home more or less on time.

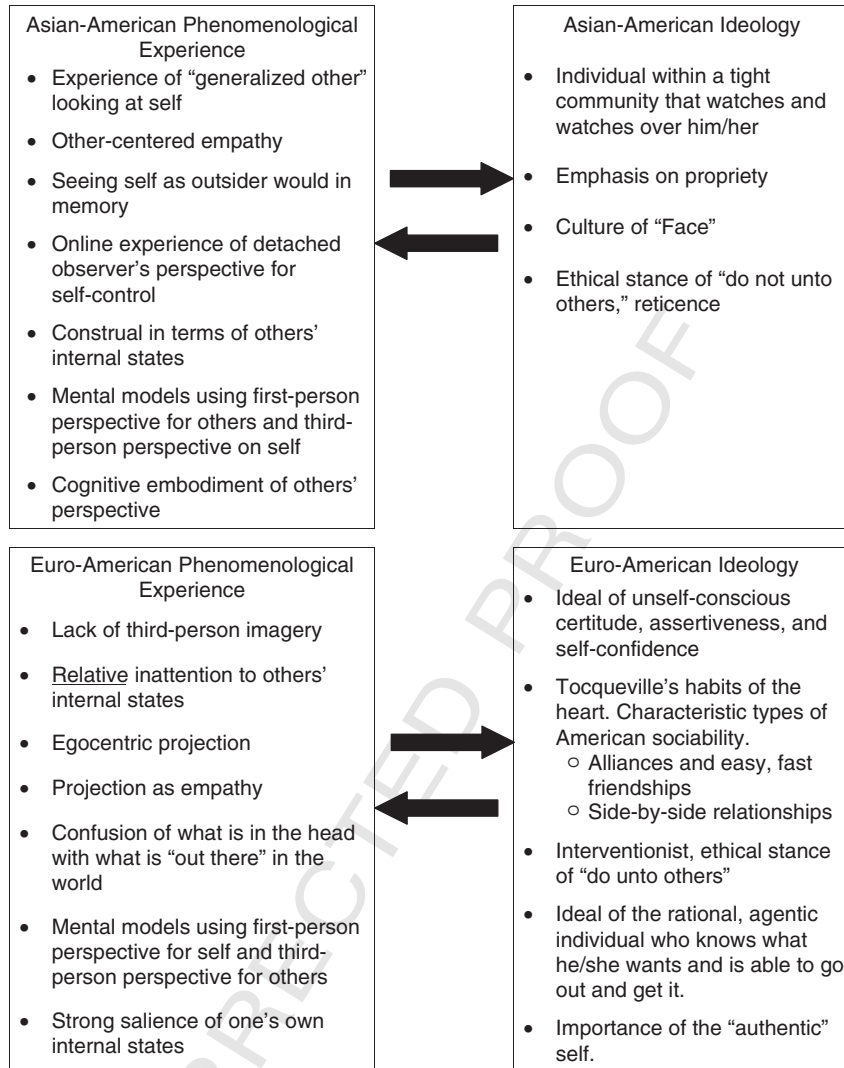


Fig. 10. Phenomenology and ideology: The embedded (and embodied) assumptions and lessons of experience from the insider and outsider perspectives.

between group members. The lessons of experience are that the self is a social object, these lessons highlight the importance of propriety before others, and they enable the self-scrutiny or self-criticism that drives one to improve and meet others’ expectations. The metaphor of “face” is one of the central concepts in East Asian societies and this metaphor fits in quite nicely with the

phenomenological third-person experiencing of self we have been describing. Literally, one can never see one's own face, *except by taking the perspective of other people and looking at oneself the way others would*. The face is something that can *only* be seen from the outside. The West, too, uses the metaphor of "face," but it is probably not a coincidence that the metaphor was imported from the East. "Saving face" is an idiom derived from Chinese expressions and developed by English expatriates in China (Oxford English Dictionary online, 2003).

And perhaps it is worth considering other parallels between the concept of "face" as a metaphor and the literal, physical instantiation of one's face. In another stunning experiment, Miyamoto, Kitayama, and Schwarz (2004) have illustrated how emotions become most psychologically real to Japanese participants when they are experienced in the gaze of another. The details and background of the experiment bear some fleshing out for the purposes of examining the metaphor. In earlier studies done at the University of Illinois and Manheim University, Strack, Martin, and Stepper (1988) cleverly provided support for the facial feedback hypothesis of emotion. Briefly, respondents examined cartoons as they were instructed (under a cover story) to hold a pen between their teeth or between their lips. Holding the pen between the teeth produces a facial expression characteristic of a smile as the lips spread. In contrast, holding the pen between the lips produces a facial expression characteristic of negative affect as the lips purse. Strack et al. (1988) found that those who held the pen between their teeth (simulating a smile) thought the cartoons were funnier than those who held it between their lips (simulating a pout). Miyamoto et al. (2004) repeated this study in Japan and found startling results. Individual Japanese participants showed no evidence of the facial feedback effect when they saw the cartoons. The expressions on their face had no implications whatsoever for their own subjective emotional state. However, when Japanese participants were put in front of a poster with schematic drawings of faces, the facial feedback effect emerged. Thus, *only under the gaze of these schematic others* did the expressions on their own face have any meaning. Only in this state where they imagined they were being looked at did the contortions of their face have any implications for their subjective state. We should not push the point too far. However, in this study, just as the concept of "face" is meaningless without an audience, so also are the physical expressions of one's actual face meaningless without being gazed on by an imagined other. More generally, Miyamoto et al.'s findings (2004)—along with the dissonance findings of Kitayama et al. (2004)—imply that for the Japanese, experiences become most psychologically real when one is taking the outsider perspective on oneself and simulating the gaze of the generalized other. The phenomenological experience of emotion under these circumstances supports and is supported by the Japanese cultural idea that

emotions are essentially *interpersonal* (rather than *intrapersonal*) experiences [Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Kitayama, Markus, & Kurokawa, 2000; Mesquita, 2001; Mesquita & Leu, 2007; for a parallel notion of emotions as essentially interpersonal rather than internal see also, Levenson, Ekman, Heider, and Friesen's work (1992) with the Minangkabau of West Sumatra. Unlike American participants who posed for researchers, Minangkabau men who posed facial expressions of anger, fear, disgust, sadness, and happiness did *not* report subjectively experiencing these emotions. Among other possibilities, this could be because the "critical element" of emotion in Minangkabau culture is "the meaningful involvement of another person" (Levenson et al., 1992, p. 985). Additionally, for experiments on "face" and the incorporation of public representations and the generalized other's perspective, see experiments in Kim and Cohen (2007)].

2. *The Lessons of Experience from the Insider Perspective*

On the other hand, think of the lessons one draws from insider experiences (see bottom panel of Fig. 10).

An ideal type. The unconscious confusion of what is in my head, what is out there in reality, and what is in your head will lead to the confidence that my perception of reality is correct, that you as well perceive the same things I do, and that we understand each other. In these circumstances, there is no reason to be reticent, to doubt my perceptions, or to make obsessive efforts to consider other perspectives. These experiences create the person with the self-assurance, the confidence, the certitude in one's convictions, and the action orientation that is one of the ideal American types.

A person of this ideal type (1) knows what he or she wants and (2) is able to go out and get it. The certitude, conviction, and action orientation that derive from the insider experience obviously relate to the latter point (*going out and getting* what one wants). And in a loose culture where harmony is valued less than it is in a tight culture, even the obliviousness or insensitivity to others (which is sometimes produced by the insider perspective) may be efficacious because it allows for the single-minded pursuit of one's goals. (Or, if it is not efficacious, the insensitivity to others will be at least less severely punished in loose rather than tight cultures.)

With respect to the former point, *knowing* what one wants often demands an attentiveness to and a focus on one's internal thoughts and desires (see also Wang, 2004; Wang & Conway, 2004; Wang et al., 2000). Such attentiveness to the internal can lead to egocentric thinking, as in the studies here. However, in a culture that views "true" preferences and beliefs as those that are internal to the person and are uncontaminated by the influence of others (Kitayama et al., 2004), such attention to the internal may be necessary for

being an “authentic” person, with clear preferences, desires, and beliefs that make up one’s individuality.

To crudely simplify, we might summarize by saying that Euro-Americans (compared to Asian-Americans) are more likely to take the insider perspective because: (1) they *can*. (Obliviousness to others will simply be punished less in a loose culture than in a tight one.) And (2) they *have to*. (It is one of the cultural imperatives in Euro-American culture to figure out what you want and to go get it. To *know* what you want takes a lot of attention to your internal world. And to *get* what you want, it sometimes helps to have self-assurance, certitude, and occasionally, obliviousness to other people.)

Alliances and side-by-side relationships. The insider experience further ties into the patterning of relationships between one person and another as well as between a person and the group. That is, it has been remarked that Americans prefer their relationships “side-by-side” rather than “face-to-face,” and related to the conception of the “side-by-side” orientation are Americans’ treasured egalitarianism, the varied cooperative but weak ties with peers described by Tocqueville, and more generally, an individualism that makes it easy for Americans to form relationships but at the same time keeps these relationships relatively shallow [see observations by Mead (1965), following the lead of Kurt Lewin]. We suggest that the insider perspective that Euro-Americans take on the world facilitates this. Thus, the Euro-American insider perspective that creates empathy-as-projection facilitates a fast sort of knowing that gives Americans great skill at forming quick friendships and a great many genial acquaintances. The insider perspective also makes Euro-Americans quite ready to assume that others perceive reality similarly and thus makes Euro-Americans ready to assume others’ agreement (see also Thorne, 1987). This (real or illusory) agreement creates a readiness for action and a willingness to join with peers to accomplish something that all are presumably side-by-side in working toward (thus, the creation of the many goal-directed associations and organizations that Tocqueville described). And we think it is significant here that Tocqueville described these associations as essentially directed toward a goal. The aim of these associations was not the building of relationships per se, but rather these associations were often ad hoc *alliances* for the purposeful accomplishment of some goal that Americans were working side-by-side, shoulder-to-shoulder, and arm-in-arm to achieve.¹² If Tocqueville’s *Democracy in America* (2000, xvii) is indeed both “the best book ever written on democracy and the best book

¹²C. S. Lewis in his book, *The Four Loves*, proposes a similar notion in characterizing Friendship and Companionship (versus Eros). Lovers are “face-to-face,” concerned with each other. Friends and Companions are “side-by-side” in pursuit of some common goal. Friendship (and Companionship), he notes, “must be *about something*” (Lewis, 1960, p. 98, emphasis added).

ever written on America,” it is so because it got something essentially right about a nation of egalitarian individualists ready to quickly form and quickly dissolve side-by-side alliances in pursuit of goals and “self-interest rightly understood” as common interest (book 2, chapter 8). The insider phenomenology—and the characteristic patterns of sociality to which it leads—works quite well for individuals and their “habits of the heart” in such a system.

At the same time, whereas the insider perspective allows for fast friends and alliances, it can also lead to a false sense of knowing; thus, these relationships can lack the intimacy that is found in “face-to-face” relationships where people must take time to listen and where the relationship itself (rather than some common goal) is the focus of attention. In essence, by allowing people to presume agreement and preventing them from probing for a deeper knowing, the insider perspective facilitates the fast, genial, but relatively superficial side-by-side relationships that Euro-Americans are skilled at building. Again, the insider perspective and the “habits of the heart” Tocqueville described are congruent. (Note: this is *not* to say Euro-Americans lack truly intimate relationships—only that they accumulate a great many of the side-by-side kind).¹³ [See also work by Yuki and colleagues (Yuki, 2003; Yuki, Maddux, Brewer, & Takemura, 2005) arguing that Japanese tend to pay close attention to the habits and preferences of in-group members, whereas Americans tend to simply assume that their in-group members are more or less similar to them.]

Interventionist, “Do unto others” morality. Finally, there are also implications of the “empathy-as-projection” phenomenology and the readiness for action that relate to some very basic ethical creeds of Western and Eastern philosophies. In Christianity, the Golden Rule is expressed as “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” In the *Analects*, Confucius states the rule in the *negative* as “What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others.” Philosophers and theologians have grappled with the question of the differences between the positive and negative phrasing of the rule. Some have dismissed the issue merely as a grammatical quibble. Others have argued that the positive injunction encourages us to project our

¹³Some of Margaret Mead’s observations tend to trivialize this aspect of American sociability by focusing on how superficial the connections can sometimes be. Mead noted how Americans can bond over similarities that Europeans find trivial. Mead snickeringly describes the “feverish grabs at a common theme”—“enthusiastic preferences for the same movie actor, the same brand of peaches, the same way of mixing a drink”—that Americans use to create rapport (Mead, 1965, pp. 34–35). These are questions that “say diagrammatically, ‘Are you the same kind of person I am? Good, how about a Coke?’ ” (Mead, 1965, p. 29). In Mead’s example, a trivial, tenuous connection is established, and this calls forth egocentric projections that make the two Americans think they are brothers under the skin.

own desires onto others as we assume that others are essentially similar to us, whereas the negative injunction encourages more reticence and limits the scope of our projections and actions. Philosopher Antonio Cua (1995), for example, argued that “the negative formulation of the Golden Rule may thus be construed as a counsel of modesty, which stresses the importance of being aware of one’s limited perspective” (Weiss, 1995, p. 506). Mitchell (1993) views the difference in phrasing as essentially superficial, but acknowledges the ambiguity of interpretation: “The point of the Golden Rule is empathy. Jesus certainly didn’t mean it as a projection of egoism, but it has often been taken that way. So the ‘negative’ is perhaps the more helpful one” (p. 189). The negative restrains the impulse toward universalizing (for better or for worse). (More colloquially, it echoes Shaw’s quip (1903) in *Man and Superman*: “Do not do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Their tastes may not be the same.”)

In terms of the paths described in Fig. 10, the phenomenological experience of empathy-as-projection; the confusion between what we think, feel, and prefer and what other people think, feel, and prefer; and the naïve realism of mistaking what is in our heads with what is really out there in the world is quite consonant with a system of ethics that encourages one to “do unto others” on the basis of perceived similarity. And conversely, experiences that highlight the limitations of one’s own perspective are likely to be associated with a much less interventionist system of ethics. Attempting to think in terms of another person’s thoughts, feelings, and imagery will not always be successful (especially given the difficulties that arise when one lives in a culture where harmony is valued and true preferences cannot always be revealed.) However, the attempt to see the world through another’s perspective is probably enough to prevent at least some actions that might have arisen from an egocentric projection of one’s own desires, beliefs, and values.

We close this discussion on the lessons of experience by offering the “reverse” thought experiment from the introduction. That is, imagine two societies where a group of individuals begin “tabula rasa” as rational but unencultured beings. In society A, imagine the individuals such that each person (1) has the phenomenological experience of seeing herself as an outsider would in memory, in real-time experience, and in her mental models; (2) has the habitual feeling of being watched by a generalized other; (3) has the imagery of imagining and embodying another’s sensations and perceptions; (4) construes situations in terms of other people’s internal states; and (5) empathizes through paying careful attention to other people. What kind of culture would emerge from the interactions of people in society A? On the other hand, imagine society B, where the average individual (1) surveys the world only through her own eyes in memories, real-time experience, and mental models; (2) is overpowered by her own internal thoughts and

sensations such that she unknowingly projects her own experience onto other people and also confidently confuses what is in her own head with objective reality; and (3) learns to characterize the world in terms of what is immediately visible to her rather than in terms of other people's internal thoughts and feelings. What sort of culture would emerge from the interactions of people in society B? It would be our contention that one possible result is that the people in society A would develop a tight, collectivistic culture, where the individual is seen as embedded in a community that watches and watches over her, where a concept such as "face" would be important, where sympathy would be prized, and where behavior would be guided by norms of propriety and circumspection. On the other hand, the people in society B would develop a culture that would prize individualism, agency, and assertiveness; hold freedom as a prominent ideal; create side-by-side relationships based on common interests; foster a sociability where an easy, fast sense of knowing allows friendships and alliances to both quickly develop and dissolve; would view "genius" as deriving from the belief that "what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men;" and would develop an interventionist ethical code in which benevolence is to "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" (Fig. 10).^{14,15}

¹⁴Of course, there are multiple possible cultures that could emerge in society A and society B, because people's mutual interdependence leads to multiple possible equilibriums (see also Cohen, 2001). We simply present one plausible outcome. We also note that the reverse thought experiment begs the question of why people in different societies have different structures of phenomenological experience in the first place. This issue underscores our belief in bidirectional causality and feedback loops between micro-level experience and macro-level culture. Finally, we recognize that with their evolutionary history, humans do not enter the world *tabula rasa*. Nor (past early infancy) can they be unencultured (Konner, 2002).

¹⁵On the surface, there seems to be a paradox between Euro-Americans' belief that (1) they are unique but that (2) others are just like them. Potentially, this may result from the different degrees to which the self and others are cognitively elaborated in the minds of Euro-Americans, which then allows for a classic framing effect in similarity judgments. (All other things equal, if object A has a richly elaborated schema and object B has a poorly elaborated schema, then B will seem more similar to A than A is to B. And thus, Markus and Kitayama (1991) showed that North Americans were relatively more likely than South Asians to see *others as similar to the self*, but they were relatively less likely than South Asians to see the self as similar to others.) Potentially also, the false consensus and false uniqueness effects are examples of Euro-Americans' motivated, self-enhancing cognitions (Heine & Lehman, 1995, 1997a,b; Heine & Renshaw, 2002; Heine, Takata, & Lehman, 2000; Heine et al., 2001; Oishi, 2002; Oishi & Diener, 2003; Snibbe, Kitayama, Markus, & Suzuki, 2003; Tweed, White, & Lehman, 2004; Wang, 2004; White & Lehman, 2005). That is, Euro-Americans generally tend to show false consensus on matters of opinions and on undesirable behaviors, whereas they tend to show false uniqueness on matters of ability or on desirable behaviors (Myers, 1990; but see Kruger, 1999; Miller & Prentice, 1994). For the present purposes, however, both false uniqueness and false consensus can also be seen as evidence of the more general point that Euro-Americans can *sometimes* be drastically out of touch with what other people are thinking, feeling, and doing.

C. OTHER EXAMPLES OF MICRO-LEVEL EXPERIENCE AND MACRO-LEVEL IDEOLOGY IN HOMEOSTASIS

That the individual-level phenomenology of self is tied up with our ideological beliefs about the individual and the group is related to the more general point that micro-level experience and macro-level cultural ideology can be mutually reinforcing as cultures and individual psyche “make each other up” (see Fig. 11). Thus, for instance, discussing how social interdependence and general cognitive styles are related, Nisbett et al. (2001) have argued that a hierarchical, collectivistic social order that stressed social interdependence in Asia led to a style of thinking where attention was directed toward the larger social field. Taking the metaphor of Asian holistic philosophy (versus Greek atomistic philosophy) literally, Nisbett and colleagues argued that habitual attention to the social field led to a perceptual and cognitive style that literally makes salient “backgrounds” rather than central objects, relations between entities rather than entities themselves, contexts rather than properties in isolation, and so on (Ji, Peng, & Nisbett, 2000; Ji, Zhang, & Nisbett, 2004; Kitayama, Duffy, Kawamura, & Larsen, 2003; Norenzayan, Choi, & Peng, 2007). Thus, “holistic” cultural and social structural arrangements led to a holistic style of perception and cognition, and this holistic thinking style in turn reinforced cultural assumptions about the importance of the group, the power of situations, and the inherent interdependence of people (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Choi, Nisbett, & Norenzayan, 1999; Hong et al., 2000; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994). If “behavior engulfs the field” and leads to a focus on the individual actor for American perceivers, perhaps one should say that “relationships engulf the field” (or are more likely to do so) for Asian perceivers (Heider, 1944). Quoting Resnick (1994, pp. 476–477), Nisbett et al. (2004) argue that “the tools of thought . . . embody a culture’s intellectual history. . . . Tools have theories built into them, and users accept these tools—albeit unknowingly—when they use these tools.” Eastern holistic (or Western analytic) cognitive and perceptual styles “exist in homeostasis with the social practices that surround them” (Nisbett et al., 2004, p. 56).

Bidirectional causality. That micro-level phenomenology and macro-level cultural ideology can affect each other causally implies that (1) temporarily changing phenomenology should lead to a (temporary) change in the endorsement of various ideological beliefs and (2) conversely, temporarily making certain ideological beliefs salient should lead to (temporary) changes in phenomenological experience. Regarding these points, three sets of studies are quite interesting. First, one of the manipulations from objective self-awareness research and from self-objectification theory is to put a study participant in front of a mirror. In a study with Japanese and North American college students, Heine (2005) had participants evaluate themselves either in

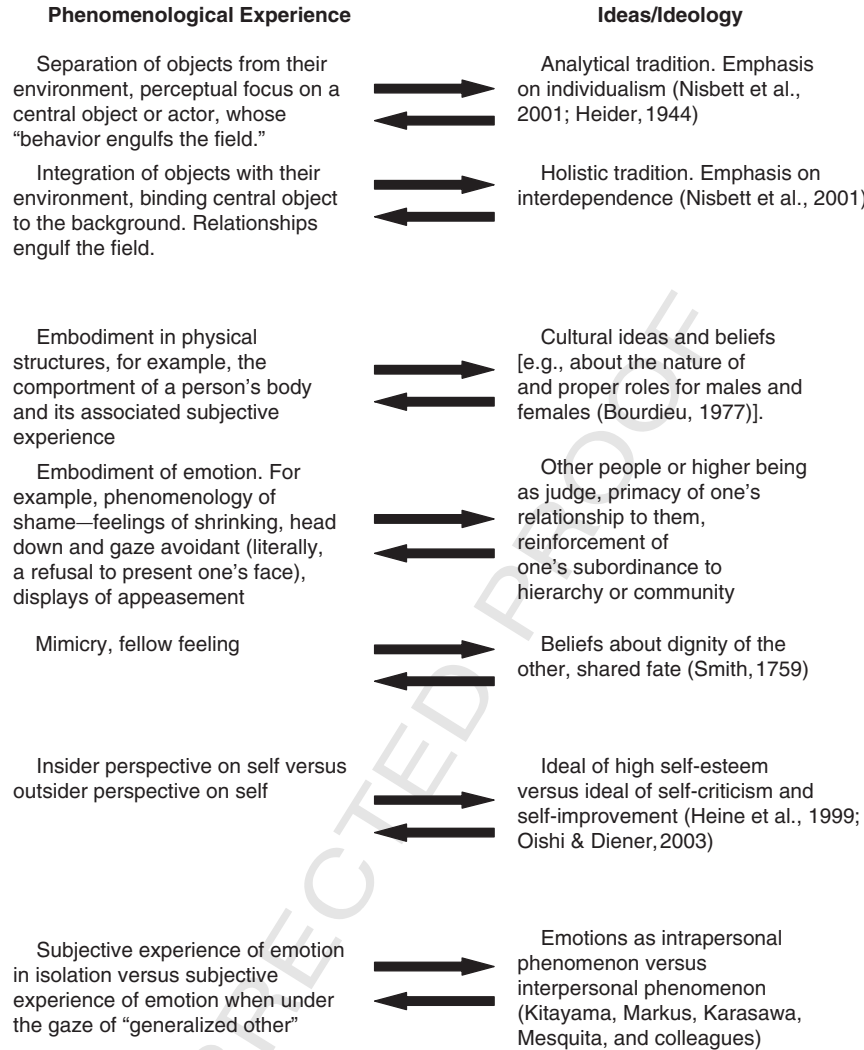


Fig. 11. Further examples of phenomenological experience and cultural ideas in homeostasis.

front of a mirror or not in front of a mirror (the control condition). He found that for Japanese, their self-assessments were unaffected by the presence or absence of a mirror. On the other hand, for Americans in the control condition, their self-assessments were very positive. However, when the Americans

were put in front of a mirror, they became more self-critical such that Americans in front of a mirror now produced self-assessments similar to those of the Japanese. It seems that for Americans, giving them the phenomenology of the self-as-object produces the same sorts of self-critical practices that Japanese routinely show (Heine et al., 1999; Oishi & Diener, 2003; see Fig. 11). Further, the absence of a mirror effect for the Japanese suggests that the Japanese, even in the control condition, may experience the same sort of self-as-object phenomenology that the mirror induces. Obviously, the data are not conclusive because similar effects can derive from different causal processes, but they are suggestive.

Second, another intriguing study was done by van Baaren, Horgan, Chartrand, and Dijkmans (2004) on the bidirectional causation between behavioral mimicry and a holistic (context-dependent) thinking style. Behavioral mimicry is the simple (probably unconscious) tendency to imitate the gestures and actions of people with whom we are interacting (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999). van Baaren and colleagues showed not only that holistic thinkers were more likely to mimic than analytic thinkers were. They also showed that: (1) a confederate who mimicked participants caused participants' thinking styles to become more holistic and (2) a prime that induced participants to think holistically caused them to show increased mimicry of a confederate. In this latter case, participants who were induced to attend to stimuli holistically [either by focusing on global (versus local) processing or by focusing on the *relationship* of objects within a picture] were subsequently more likely to mimic the behavior of an experimental confederate. Thus, there seemed to be a reciprocal loop: an imitative action tendency seemed to both cause and be caused by a certain attentional focus/cognitive style. The phenomenology and the imitative tendency reinforced each other.

Such findings are perfectly consonant with the argument of scientists who contend that mimicry may be the root of empathy. "Mirror neurons" fire in humans (and monkeys) when we perform an action X or when we watch another perform an action X (Carr, Iacoboni, Dubeau, Mazziotta, & Lenzi, 2003; Ramachandran, 2003). Neural activation when we simply observe an emotion is similar to that shown when we imitate the emotion. And similar brain activation occurs when a person receives pain and when he or she sees a loved one about to experience the same pain (Singer et al., 2004). Mimicry and a feeling of empathy go together quite naturally (Bower, 2003; Smith, 1979). Again, the phenomenological experience here may be crucial: the feelings that make it feel like one has just undergone the same experience as another probably derive from and also give rise to some sense of solidarity and kinship with the other. One feels another's emotions because there is a common bond with the other, but one also probably feels a common bond *because* one feels the other's emotion (Fig. 11; see also Chartrand & Bargh,

1999; Lakin & Chartrand, 2003; Lakin, Jefferis, Cheng, & Chartrand, 2003; van Baaren, Maddux, Chartrand, de Bouter, & van Knippenberg, 2003).

Third, fascinating studies have also shown the effects that occur when an independent or interdependent social orientation is primed in participants. More specifically, raising the salience of independence or interdependence, or in the case of Chinese biculturals, raising the salience of one's Chinese heritage or American heritage, produces a number of quite subtle effects. Thus, making one's independence or interdependence salient changes the way one processes stimuli in terms of local versus global focus as well as influences the extent to which people attend to the relations between stimuli (Kuhnen, Hannover, & Schubert, 2001; Kuhnen & Oyserman, 2002). For bicultural individuals, having participants look at Chinese (versus American) icons makes them more likely to characterize a scene in terms of group (versus individual) behavior (Hong et al., 2000). Our ideological beliefs and the phenomenological structure of our personal experience go hand-in-hand because perceiving the world a certain way leads to certain beliefs and holding certain beliefs leads to perceiving the world a certain way.

D. PHENOMENOLOGY, METHODOLOGY, AND INTROSPECTION: THE INVISIBILITY AND THE STRENGTH OF THE SOFT EMBODIMENT OF CULTURE

Methodologically, discerning the structure of personal experience can sometimes be more difficult than discerning beliefs. There are pitfalls and perils to asking people about their attitudes, but overall, researchers can generally get a decent accounting of people's beliefs (Heine, Lehman, Peng, & Greenholtz, 2002; Oishi et al., 2005; Peng, Nisbett, & Wong, 1997; Schimmack, Oishi, & Diener, 2005). Other people's phenomenological experience, however, is not something that will "pop-out" to researchers. We can observe other people's behaviors and listen to what they say, but the structure of their phenomenological experience is not obviously and immediately accessible to us.

We have found, at least in discussing the matter with participants, that whereas some recognized that Asian-Americans tend to focus more on the group and Euro-Americans tend to focus more on the individual, they were not aware that people from the two cultures might have such phenomenologically different experiences. The nature of these experiences is not so readily articulated to researchers for two reasons. First, sometimes participants do not have the language to describe their experiences. A good example here is first-person versus third-person memory. Many people whom we discussed memory with had had both first- and third-person memories, but

they had never really thought about the distinction, had not reflected on the experience, and did not have the ready terminology to describe it. Second, many people generally assumed that the way their phenomenological experience was structured was basically “the way everybody does it” (similar to the way a person generally assumes her experience of the color “blue” and other people’s experience of the color blue are pretty much the same). Perhaps this belief in direct perception or this sort of primitive realism is the ultimate egocentrism error. However, what makes phenomenological experience so hard to get at is also what makes it so powerful. *Because it is rarely reflected on and because it is the felt experience we are conscious of rather than the raw data of our senses, the powerful influence we exert on the shape and structure of our thought can go unnoticed by ourselves and by others.*

Bourdieu (1977) has made similar points—both about (1) the link between ideology and phenomenology and (2) the strength of an ideology that has become *embodied and perhaps hidden* in people’s subjective experience. Regarding the first point and also arguing that much cultural learning does not take place in the form of explicit declarations of rules, he argues that: “In all societies, children are particularly attentive to the gestures and postures which, in their eyes, express everything that goes to make an accomplished adult—a way of walking, a tilt of the head, facial expressions, ways of sitting and of using implements, always associated with a tone of voice, a style of speech, and (how could it be otherwise?) a certain subjective experience” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 87; see also Bem, 1972; Cacioppo, Priester, & Bernston, 1993; Chen & Bargh, 1999; James, 1890; Laird, 1974).¹⁶ A culture’s ideas become “em-bodied” in individuals: In Bourdieu’s example, this embodiment is “hard”—it is in the way we literally comport our physical bodies. In the studies we have run, this embodiment is “soft”—it is in the way we cognitively represent and psychologically structure our bodily experience, from either an insider or an outsider perspective (Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002; Niedenthal et al., 2005; Zajonc & Markus, 1984).

Regarding the second point, this embodiment makes an ideology particularly powerful and resistant to change because its expression has become so implicit and so natural. Bourdieu makes the strong argument that “the principles embodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot

¹⁶The same point about children learning adult values through mimicry and embodiment can also be made in reverse. Adults can learn about the views, values, and experience of a child through mimicry of the child. Imitate a child for an hour or a day and one can come to appreciate the wonder of small things (such as how much can be found between the cracks of a sidewalk), the peace and simplicity of repetition, the arbitrariness of many social norms, the urgency of the moment (why do kids run everywhere?), and an implicit theory of learning that lets you get up and try again after you have literally fallen down 50 times already that day.

even be made explicit; nothing seems more ineffable, more incommunicable, more inimitable, and, therefore, more precious, than the values given body, *made* body by the transubstantiation achieved by the hidden persuasion of an implicit pedagogy, capable of instilling a whole cosmology, an ethic, a metaphysic, a political philosophy, through injunctions as insignificant as ‘stand up straight’ or ‘don’t hold your knife in your left hand’ ” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 94). Bourdieu perhaps overstates the case, but we agree with the general point that ideas implicit or embodied in a phenomenology (and sometimes “hidden” in a phenomenology) can be particularly powerful and resistant to challenge.

E. GENERALIZATION

In this chapter, we have compared Asian-Americans and Euro-Americans. However, the outsider perspective is, of course, not unique to Asian-Americans. For example, in the strong honor cultures of North Africa, the self-as-seen-by-others is of paramount importance. Bourdieu (1965, p. 212) wrote: “Perhaps the conclusion is that the important position accorded to the sentiment of honour is characteristic of ‘primary’ societies in which the relationship with others, through its intensity, intimacy, and continuity, takes precedence over the relationship with oneself; in which the individual learns the truth about himself through the intermediary of others; and in which the being and the truth about a person are identical with the being and truth that others acknowledge in him.” Though there are important differences between face and honor (Leung & Cohen, 2004), this description of honor cultures resonates well with descriptions of the face cultures of East Asia. The Japanese salaryman (businessman) in the modern corporate hierarchy and Bourdieu’s Kabyle villager in Algeria both may share a structure of experiences where one takes an outsider’s perspective on oneself [see experiments on face in Kim and Cohen (2007), showing how what is publicly known about the individual becomes represented in the private self for Hong Kong respondents; see also Fischer, Manstead, & Mosquera, 1999; Mosquera, Manstead, & Fischer, 2002].

Additionally, in cultures where God is always watching, one might expect to find people also taking the outsider perspective on themselves. And here, the effect might not be limited to social situations. An omniscient God will know how one behaves no matter where one is, and further, an omniscient God will know what one is thinking—regardless of how one outwardly behaves. After a wrongdoing then, one does not “simply” feel guilt; one feels *shame* before witnesses and before God. In fact, this shame versus guilt distinction—and the relative decline of shame as compared to guilt in the

West—can be seen in the various English translations of the Bible in the past four centuries. In the King James Version of the Bible (published in 1611), shame is mentioned five times as often as guilt. By the turn of the twentieth century, the ratio was down to 3:1. And in the relatively secularized society of North America today, that ratio is now down to 1:1 (see Cohen, 2003 for further discussion). Shame indicates one's submission to a community or a deity (see also Fig. 11, row 4). Shame focuses on how the self would be seen by others, and in deeply religious cultures where shame is acutely felt, the same outsider perspective may be more common as people think about how other people or God are looking on.

In the studies above, it is probably not the Asian-Americans that are unusual. Instead, modern North Americans and modern Europeans may be the proverbial “anthropological veto” to the universal rule: It is they who may have the peculiar “default” phenomenology (Konner, 2002; Sanchez-Burks, 2002). The question then becomes not, do other groups share the same effects as Asian-Americans, but rather, what groups might show the same phenomenology as the Euro-Americans? To do a cultural census on this point is an undertaking worthy of Sisyphus. For now, we simply speculate that around the world, the tendency to experience the world from the “inside out” even in social situations is probably less common than the tendency to take the outsider perspective in such situations. Again, Euro-Americans may not realize the peculiarity of their “default” phenomenology (and the peculiar ideology it is tied up with) because such is the nature of the phenomenological effect—starting with oneself and experiencing the world from the “inside out” just feels so natural to Euro-Americans that it may seem “strange” to have it another way. For groups where the self is predominately realized through other people, such an outsider phenomenology may not seem so very strange or awkward at all.

F. SUMMARY

In sum, we have tried to argue that Euro-Americans and Asian-Americans have phenomenological gestalts that can be different in some very basic and fundamental ways. Euro-Americans are likely to experience the world from the “inside out,” starting with their own experience and projecting it onto others. Asian-Americans are likely to experience the self from the “outside in,” taking an observer's perspective on the self. This ability to get outside one's own head may work against the egocentric biases that Euro-Americans are susceptible to when they allow their own internal phenomenology to dominate.

These differences are far from absolute—people from both cultures are able to take both insider and outsider perspectives (as seen in Sections IV, V, VI,

and X), but there are differences in the “default” perspective one takes in social situations (Rozin, 2003). The insider–outsider differences are not “simply” metaphorical but reflect the real, felt experience of people. And these differences in the phenomenology of experience are intimately related to differences in cultural ideologies about the individual, the group, and tight versus loose social norms. The ideologies and the phenomenologies probably mutually reinforce each other. Thus, seeing the self from a third-person or generalized other’s perspective reinforces (and is reinforced by) the idea that the individual is part of a group and is watched and watched over by other people. Similarly, experiencing the world from the inside out helps create (and is created by) the self-assured, confident, genial, and ready-for-action individual that is one of the ideal American types.

The differences outlined here are not peculiar to the Asian-American versus Euro-American distinction, though when it comes to various situations, it may be that the “default” Euro-American phenomenology is relatively unusual across the globe. People may not spontaneously articulate that they are taking either an insider versus an outsider perspective on the self, in part because it feels so natural that to do something else would seem strange. That is, we may see the self and the social world through either an insider or outsider perspective, but we often may not spontaneously think about how that perspective was created and how that perspective shapes our experience of and beliefs about reality. Nevertheless, understanding the structure of personal experience is crucially important for at least two reasons. It is important both in and of itself if psychologists are to capture the lived experience of what it means to be in one culture or another, and it is important if we are to understand the way that micro-level psychological processes (such as individual-level phenomenology) and macro-level culture recreate each other.

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