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The Perceiver as Perceived: Everyday Intuitions About the Correspondence Bias

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This research examined people's intuitions about the *correspondence bias,* or the tendency to favor dispositional rather than situational explanations of behavior. In 3 studies, constrained actors overestimated the magnitude of observers' correspondent inferences. Additional studies indicated that this overestimation is due to people's oversimplified theories about the attributional processes of others. In one, Japanese participants, whose culture places greater emphasis on situational explanations of behavior, did not overestimate the correspondent inferences of observers. In other studies, participants indicated that they thought others' attributions are more influenced by an actor's behavior than by the factors constraining the behavior. Discussion focuses on whether people believe others are more prone to the correspondence bias than they are themselves and on the consequences of overestimating the correspondence bias in everyday interaction.

Psychologists have learned a great deal about people's attributions for others' behavior (Gilbert, 1998; Jones, 1990) but relatively little about people's beliefs regarding others' attributions about them. This is an unfortunate imbalance because, as Jones (1990) notes, "Perceivers are also actors, and target persons are also perceivers. . . . Insofar as . . . our actions are shaped or influenced by the effects we desire to have on others, we obviously make use of our knowledge of attributional processes" (p. 193; see also Jones, 1964; Schlenker, 1980). But what do people know about the attributional processes of others? We investigate this question by studying people's intuitions about what is among the most pervasive and best-understood attributional biases, the correspondence bias.

The *correspondence bias* refers to people's tendency to favor dispositional explanations for others' behavior in lieu of equally informative situational explanations (Gilbert & Malone, 1995; Jones, 1979, 1990). The bias is so widespread and robust and so often leads to erroneous inferences that Ross (1977) termed it the *fundamental attribution error.* Ichheiser (1949) provided an early description of the correspondence bias:

> In interpreting actions as manifestations of personal characteristics, under disregard of the all-important role played by social situations, we chronically misinterpret the actual underlying motivations. Again and again, instead of saying that Dan or Tom or Sam behaved (or did not behave) in a specific way because he was placed in a specific situation, we are prone to believe that he behaved (or did not behave) in a certain way because he possesses (or does not possess) certain specific personal characteristics. (p. 47)

In one of the earliest, now classic, demonstrations of the correspondence bias, Jones and Harris (1967, Study 2) showed that people who read essays that either endorsed or opposed Fidel Castro's Cuban regime believed the author's true beliefs were aligned with the direction of the essay, even when the topic of the essay had been assigned by a debate coach. In a more recent demonstration, Gilbert and Jones (1986) showed that observers who believed it was they themselves who induced actors to read either conservative or liberal prewritten responses nonetheless inferred that the actor's behavior was indicative of his or her

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perceptions, the actor may not anticipate the correspondence bias because constrained behavior usually does not alter self-perceptions (Snyder & Jones, 1974), although it does alter observers' impressions.

Another line of research that suggests people may not anticipate the correspondence bias is work on the *illusion of transparency,* or people's tendency to overestimate the observability of their internal states to outsiders (Gilovich, Savitsky, & Medvec, 1998; Van Boven, Medvec, & Gilovich, 1999). The illusion of transparency implies that actors whose behavior is tightly constrained and therefore not reflective of their underlying dispositions may nonetheless think that their true beliefs tend to "leak out" and are readily discerned.

These two lines of research led us to predict that people would not fully anticipate the correspondence bias. As will become clear, however, the results of our first two studies soundly refute this prediction. In these studies, we found strong and consistent evidence that actors are not only aware of the correspondence bias, they tend to overestimate its magnitude. We examined two explanations of these findings in Studies 3a and 3b. The overall pattern of data suggests that people apply an oversimplified intuitive theory about the attributional processes of others—a theory that others are inveterate dispositionalists who leap too quickly from acts to dispositions. A final pair of studies extends this analysis by showing that people think others' attributions are more influenced by a constrained actor's behavior than by the factors constraining the actor's behavior. Discussion focuses on whether people believe others are more prone to the correspondence bias than they are themselves and on the potential consequences of overestimating the correspondence bias in everyday social interaction.

Study 1

Method

Participants and procedure. Ninety-two Cornell undergraduates participated in exchange for course credit in introductory social science courses.

We first preselected 20 speakers on the basis of their attitudes about affirmative action. As part of an attitudes questionnaire completed earlier in the semester, students rated their agreement with the statement "I am a supporter of affirmative action policies for hiring women and minority individuals" on a 15-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (15). We classified students in the upper third of the distribution as supporters of affirmative action (M = 13.30) and students in the lower third as opponents (M = 2.70).

We then recruited speakers over the telephone for a study on "speech writing." On arrival at the lab, speakers were told their task would be to write and deliver a short speech that would be videotaped and used in a study of person perception. Speakers were told they would be randomly assigned to write and deliver speeches that either supported or opposed the use of affirmative action policies in academic admissions decisions. In actuality, all speakers were asked to write speeches favoring the position at variance with their true attitudes. Thus, the 10 speakers who supported affirmative action were asked to write and deliver anti-affirmative action speeches, and the 10 speakers who opposed affirmative action were asked to write and deliver pro-affirmative action speeches.

Before writing their speech, speakers were given a "model speech" ostensibly written by a student in a previous session of the experiment. (In actuality, we crafted the model speech to provide speakers with a general framework and some useful ideas for their own speeches.) We encouraged speakers to use the model speech as an outline for their own speeches, but they were also urged to use their own ideas as much as possible. Speakers were given 30 min to write their speeches.

Afterward, we videotaped speakers delivering their speeches from behind a podium. The experimenter introduced each speaker by saying: "This is Speaker number [X]. We have asked speaker number [X] to write a short speech entitled 'Why colleges and universities should [should not] use affirmative action policies in their admissions decisions.'" This introduction made it clear that the topic of the speech had been assigned by the experimenter. When speakers finished delivering their speeches (usually within 5 to 8 min), they completed the dependent measures and were debriefed.

In the second phase of the study, 72 observers arrived at the lab in groups of 3 to 5 and were told they would watch another student delivering a speech on the issue of affirmative action. Each group of observers watched a single speech. We explained that their task was to estimate the speaker's true attitude toward affirmative action. To assist observers in their task, we provided them with copies of the consent forms and instructions that we had given to the speakers prior to writing their speeches. The consent forms, instructions, and the experimenter's videotaped introductions of the speakers made it abundantly clear that the speakers had no say in deciding the topic of their speeches.

Dependent measures. To verify that all speakers delivered truly counter-attitudinal speeches, they rated their agreement with the statements "In general, I support affirmative action" and "I am a supporter of affirmative action laws for hiring women and minority individuals" on 13-point scales ranging from *I don't agree at all* (−6) to *I agree very much* (+6).

The primary analyses involved comparisons between the observers' inferences about the speakers' true attitudes and the speakers' predictions of those inferences. Thus, after viewing a speech, observers rated how much they thought the speaker would agree with the two statements described above on 13-point scales ranging from *Speaker doesn't agree at all* (−6) to *Speaker agrees very much* (+6). They were instructed to consider carefully all of the information they had available to them (the consent forms, instructions, and the speeches) before making their ratings.

Speakers, in contrast, were told that their speeches would be shown to other students who would try to estimate their true attitudes about affirmative action. We explained that we would provide the observers with copies of the speakers' consent forms and instructions, thereby making it clear to speakers that the observers would be aware of the speakers' situational constraints. Speakers were asked to predict, as accurately as possible, the observers' estimates of the speakers' attitudes on the same rating scales described above.

Results

We combined the two ratings of support for affirmative action to create composite indexes of the speakers' actual attitudes, observers' inferences about the speakers' attitudes, and the speakers' predictions of those inferences (Cronbach's αs = .92, .89, and .75, respectively). All analyses in this study use the speaker as the unit of analysis.

Manipulation check. Our original prediction was that speakers would underestimate the correspondence bias because they would feel as though their own attitudes, which were in opposition to the topic of their speech, would be transparent to observers. To provide a fair test of this prediction, the speeches must be at odds with the speakers' true beliefs. Because we selected speakers from the upper and lower thirds of the distribution of attitudes toward affirmative action, we would expect subsequent measures of their attitudes to be somewhat regressive. Despite these regressive tendencies, speakers' postspeech attitudes remained opposed to the topic of their speech: Speakers who delivered pro-affirmative action speeches supported affirmative action less (M = −3.9)

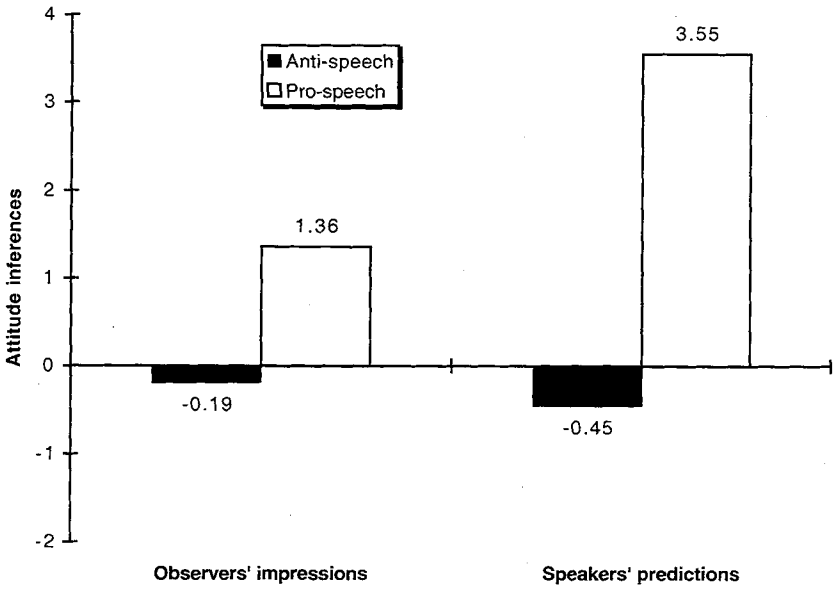

Figure 1. Observers' inferences of speakers' attitudes toward affirmative action and speakers' predictions of observers' inferences.

than speakers who delivered anti-affirmative action speeches ($M = 3.5$), $t(18) = 5.18$, $p < .001$.

Observers' inferences and speakers' predictions. To examine the accuracy of speakers' predictions of observers' inferences, we conducted a 2 (direction of speech: pro- vs. anti-affirmative action) × 2 (role: observer vs. speaker) analysis of variance (ANOVA) on participants' attitude inferences. As might be expected, there was a main effect for direction of speech, $F(1, 18) = 21.81$, $p < .001$. The left portion of Figure 1 indicates that observers who watched a pro-affirmative action speech erroneously inferred that the speaker supported affirmative action more than did observers who watched an anti-affirmative action speech, $F(1, 18) = 4.93$, $p < .05$. The right portion of Figure 1 shows that speakers, to our surprise, not only anticipated the correspondence bias, $F(1, 18) = 17.06$, $p < .001$, they overestimated its magnitude, as evidenced by a significant interaction between direction of speech and role, $F(1, 18) = 4.70$, $p < .05$.[1]

Simple effect tests indicated that this discrepancy between actual and anticipated attitude inferences was most pronounced among speakers who delivered pro-affirmative action speeches, who overestimated by more than two scale points how much observers would infer that they truly endorsed affirmative action, $t(9) = 4.21$, $p < .01$. Those who delivered anti-affirmative action speeches likewise overestimated how much observers would infer that they opposed affirmative action, although their degree of overestimation was not statistically significant, $t < 1$.[2]

Finally, in contrast to the self-perception as meta-perception hypothesis (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993), speakers did not appear to use their own attitudes as a basis for estimating observers' inferences. The correlation between speakers' own attitudes and their predictions of the observers' inferences, controlling for condition, was negligible, $r = .12$, *ns*.

Discussion

The results of Study 1 were exactly counter to what we had expected. On the basis of previous research, we predicted that speakers would not fully anticipate the correspondence bias because they would overestimate the transparency of their true attitudes, which were at odds with the direction of their speech. Instead, we found that speakers not only predicted that observers would conclude that their privately held beliefs were in line with what they had said in their speeches, they also overestimated the extremity of the observers' correspondent inferences. This was true even though speakers knew the observers were aware that the experimenter had assigned the topic of the speech. Furthermore, speakers did not appear to believe their true attitudes would be at all discernible, as there was no correlation between their own attitudes and their predictions of observers' inferences.

Two elements of Study 1, however, may have artificially produced this pattern of results. First, speakers may not have been convinced that observers were fully aware of the speakers' situational constraints, and thus may have questioned whether the observers would be in a position to moderate their correspondent inferences. Second, because speakers were preselected for their relatively extreme attitudes toward affirmative action, they may

[1] There also appears to be a main effect in people's estimates such that speakers expected relatively pro-affirmative action attributions and observers saw relatively pro-affirmative action attitudes. This is likely due to the widespread, though erroneous, belief among Cornellians that most students support affirmative action (Van Boven, in press).

[2] We also examined the accuracy of speakers' predictions by computing the correlation between their predictions and the observers' inferences, controlling for the direction of the speech. This correlation was not significant, $r = -.05$, nor were similar correlations in Studies 2, 3a, or 3b, *r*s ranged from $-.01$ to .28, all *ns*.

have viewed their moderate speeches as more extreme than did the observers, whose attitudes were, on average, more ambivalent. A speaker with strongly anti-affirmative action attitudes who wrote and delivered a pro-affirmative action speech, for example, may have viewed the moderately worded speech as more laudatory of affirmative action than did the observers. In Study 2, we addressed these concerns by using a method that made it abundantly clear that the actors' behavior was constrained and by randomly assigning participants to conditions.

Study 2

Study 2 used a paradigm developed by Gilbert and Jones (1986) to examine the effects of perceiver-induced constraint on the correspondence bias. Participants were randomly assigned to the role of questioner or responder. Communicating over an intercom system, questioners asked responders 20 questions about the responders' general outlook on life. Following each query, the questioner signaled the responder to read one of two prewritten replies: a positive, altruistic reply or a negative, selfish reply. The experimenter manipulated whether the majority of answers elicited by the questioner was altruistic or selfish. Questioners then indicated their impressions of the responders' true personalities, and the responders predicted the questioners' impressions. This procedure ensured that the observers were well aware of the actors' situational constraints (Gilbert & Jones, 1986) and that the actors knew the observers understood the actors' constraints.

Method

Forty-eight Cornell undergraduates participated in pairs in exchange for course credit in introductory social science courses. After ensuring that they did not know each other, we told participants that the experiment dealt with how people form impressions. Participants were told they would be randomly assigned to one of two roles, a questioner or responder, and that the questioner's job would be to read a series of 20 questions to the responder. The responder would then answer each question with one of two pre-written replies. The added twist to the basic question-and-answer procedure was that after the questioner read each question, the experimenter would instruct the questioner to signal the responder to read one of the two responses. In this way, the questioners themselves constrained the responders' behavior.

Participants flipped a coin to determine their roles and were then led to separate soundproof rooms. Inside each room was a set of instructions that explained the procedure in detail. Also in each room were intercoms over which questioners and responders could communicate, signal boxes that questioners used to light a red or green light on the responders' signal boxes, and copies of the 20 questions and answers.

The 20 questions concerned the responders' outlook on life and sense of morality. For each question, there were two responses: an altruistic, kind-hearted, and morally upstanding response, and a selfish, cold-hearted, and morally questionable response. After the questioner read each question over the intercom, the experimenter instructed the questioner either to signal the responder to read an altruistic answer by lighting a green light on the responder's signal box, or to signal the responder to read a selfish answer by lighting a red light on the signal box. Participants practiced with two unrelated questions to familiarize themselves with the procedure.

The experimenter called for the questioner to elicit 80% altruistic responses in the altruistic condition and 80% selfish responses in the selfish condition. In the altruistic condition, for example, when the questioner asked "Do you consider yourself to be sensitive to other peoples' feelings?" the experimenter instructed the questioner to signal the responder to read: "I try to be sensitive to others' feelings all the time. I know it is important to have people that one can turn to for sympathy and understanding. I try to be that person whenever possible." In the selfish condition, in contrast, the experimenter instructed the questioner to elicit from the responder: "I think there are too many sensitive, 'touchy-feely' people in the world already. I see no point in trying to be understanding of another if there is nothing in it for me."

After responders answered all 20 questions, questioners indicated their impressions of the responders' "true, underlying personalities" three ways. First, they rated their overall impression of the responder on a 13-point scale ranging from *not very positive* (0) to *very positive* (12). Second, they rated how well a number of traits (*likable, trustworthy, selfish, greedy, dependable, altruistic,* and *kind-hearted*) described the responder on 13-point scales, each ranging from *not very* [*trait like*] (0) to *very* [*trait like*] (12). Finally, questioners rated how likely the responder would be to sacrifice his or her own material well-being to help someone else on a 13-point scale ranging from *not likely* (0) to *extremely likely* (12).

Responders were asked to predict the questioners' ratings as accurately as possible. We provided responders with exact copies of the dependent measures we had given the questioners, and asked responders to predict the questioners' answers. Participants were thoroughly debriefed following completion of the dependent measures.

Results

After appropriate reverse scoring, we combined the nine different measures of the questioners' impressions of the responders' personalities and the nine different measures of the responders' predictions of those impressions into two composite measures (Cronbach's αs = .97 and .96, respectively). We then conducted a 2 (condition: altruistic vs. selfish) × 2 (role: questioner vs. responder) ANOVA on these actual and anticipated impressions. This analysis revealed a main effect of condition, $F(1, 22) = 34.04$, $p < .001$, and a significant interaction between condition and role, $F(1, 22) = 5.84$, $p < .05$. Consistent with previous findings (Gilbert & Jones, 1986), and as indicated in the left portion of Figure 2, questioners in the altruistic condition formed more favorable impressions of the responders than did questioners in the selfish condition, $F(1, 22) = 6.66$, $p < .05$. Thus, even though questioners were aware of the responders' situational constraint (after all, it was the questioners themselves who supplied it), they nonetheless acted as if the responders' behavior was at least somewhat informative about their true personalities.

In line with the findings of Study 1, and in sharp contrast to our original predictions, responders not only correctly anticipated the correspondence bias, $F(1, 22) = 45.83$, $p < .001$, they overestimated its magnitude (right portion of Figure 2). Simple effect tests indicated that responders in the selfish condition thought that questioners would have less favorable impressions of them than they actually did, $t(11) = 2.43$, $p < .05$, and responders in the altruistic condition thought that questioners would have more favorable impressions of them than they actually did, although this latter difference was not significant, $t < 1$.

Discussion

Study 2 replicated the findings of Study 1, soundly refuting our original hypothesis that people would not fully anticipate the correspondence bias. Actors whose responses were constrained by the observers themselves nonetheless thought that the observers

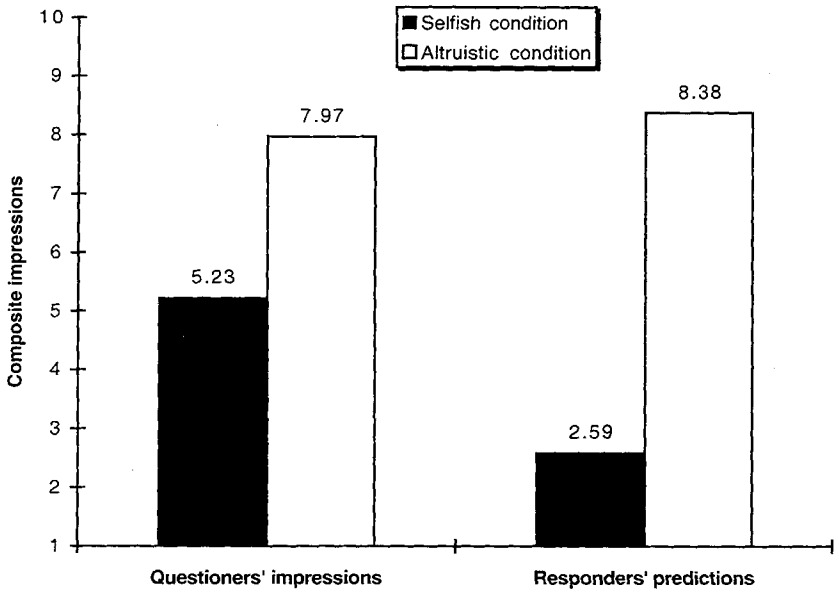

Figure 2. Questioners' impressions of responders and responders' predictions of questioners' impressions.

would make insufficient allowance for those constraints. The adjustments made by the observers were indeed insufficient, but not to the extent expected by actors.

Forced to set aside our original predictions, we considered two alternative hypotheses for these surprising findings. The first is that people might base their estimates of others' attributions on a very simple intuitive theory—that other people are inveterate trait theorists who leap too quickly from acts to dispositions. In other words, people may think that others' attributions follow a naïve calculus that maps dispositions directly on to behaviors, with little regard for the situational factors that might have produced the behaviors. To the extent that observers correct their initial dispositional characterizations in light of prevailing situational constraints, this intuitive theory will lead people to overestimate the correspondence bias.

Alternatively, actors' rather extreme predictions may have resulted from their concerns about being evaluated by others. Actors in both studies may have felt as though their social identities were on the line, and may have been deeply concerned with how they would be evaluated by observers. This concern may have translated into inflated predictions about the extremity of observers' attributions. Actors, in other words, may have viewed their concerns regarding the evaluative risks they faced as informative about the questioners' actual impressions. They may have reasoned, "if I am this concerned, there must be some reason for it" (Savitsky, Medvec, Charlton, & Gilovich, 1998; Schwarz, 1990; Schwarz & Clore, 1983).

We designed Study 3a to distinguish between the oversimplified intuitive theory account and the evaluative concerns hypotheses by employing "witnesses" who watched the interaction between questioners and responders and who predicted the questioners' impressions of the responders. If responders' predictions of questioners' attributions were based on an oversimplified intuitive theory that views others as strict dispositionalists, then witnesses should likewise overestimate the extremity of questioners' impressions because witnesses hold the same intuitive theory. If, in contrast, it is responders' evaluative concerns that cause them to overestimate the correspondence bias, then their predictions of questioners' impressions should exceed those made by witnesses because the witnesses' identities are not on the line.

Study 3a

Method

Sixty Cornell undergraduates who did not know each other participated in groups of three in exchange for course credit. One student was assigned the role of questioner, another the role of responder, and a third the role of witness. Instructions and dependent measures for the questioner and responder were the same as in Study 2. Witnesses were seated next to the responders and given a copy of the 20 questions and answers. They were told that their task was to watch the "interaction" between the questioner and responder unfold.

As in Study 2, there were two experimental conditions. In the altruistic condition, the questioner was instructed to elicit 80% altruistic responses from the responder. In the selfish condition, the questioner elicited 80% selfish responses. Following the interaction, questioners rated the responders on the same scales used in Study 2, and responders predicted those ratings. The witnesses also predicted the questioners' ratings of the responders.

Results

After appropriate reverse scoring, we combined the nine measures of the questioners' impressions of responders, responders' predictions of those impressions, and witnesses' predictions of the questioners' impressions into three composite measures (Cronbach's αs = .94, .98, and .97, respectively). The means of these ratings are displayed in Figure 3.

To compare questioners' impressions to responders' and witnesses' predictions of those impressions, we conducted a 2 (condition: altruistic vs. selfish) × 3 (role: questioner vs. responder vs.

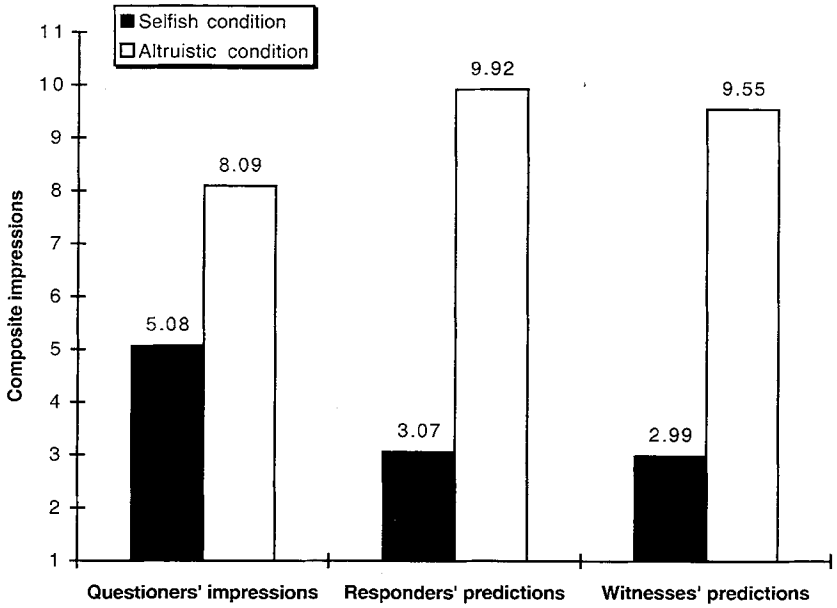

Figure 3. Questioners' impressions of responders, responders' predictions of questioners' impressions, and witnesses' predictions of questioners' impressions.

witness) ANOVA on participants' inferences. As expected, this analysis yielded a main effect for condition, $F(1, 18) = 93.97$, $p < .001$. The left portion of Figure 3 shows that, in concert with the results of Study 2, questioners in the altruistic condition held more favorable impressions of the responders than did questioners in the selfish condition, $F(1, 18) = 9.55$, $p < .01$, a result that, as indicated by the middle and right portions of Figure 3, was anticipated by both responders and witnesses, $Fs(1, 18) = 49.14$ and 44.89, respectively, both $ps < .01$.

The ANOVA also yielded a significant condition by role interaction, $F(2, 36) = 7.69$, $p < .005$, reflecting responders' and witnesses' overestimation of the extremity of questioners' impressions. Orthogonal contrasts indicated that the mean of responders' and witnesses' predictions of questioners' impressions were more extreme than questioners' actual impressions, $F(1, 18) = 12.12$, $p < .005$, and that responders' and witnesses' predictions were not significantly different from one another, $F < 1$. Taken together, these findings lend support to the oversimplified intuitive theory account and provide evidence against the evaluative concerns hypothesis.

Subsequent simple effect tests revealed that responders and witnesses in the altruistic condition thought that the questioner would form more favorable impressions of the responder than was actually the case, $ts(18) = 8.71$ and 8.53, $ps < .01$. Responders and witnesses in the selfish condition thought that the questioners would hold less favorable impressions of the responders than was actually the case, $ts(18) = 1.95$ and 2.62, $ps < .10$ and .05, respectively.

Discussion

Study 3a replicated the findings of Studies 1 and 2 and provided evidence against the hypothesis that actors' overestimation of the correspondence bias stems from their evaluative concerns. Witnesses, who observed the interaction between questioners and responders, overestimated the extremity of questioners' impressions of responders to the same degree as responders themselves. A more plausible account of the findings of the first three studies, then, may be that people tend to have an oversimplified intuitive theory that others are inveterate dispositionalists—a theory that leads them to overestimate the magnitude of the correspondence bias. This account may also help explain a recent finding that actors, but not observers, are aware of the actor–observer effect, or the tendency for actors to emphasize situational causes of their behavior more than observers (Krueger, Ham, & Linford, 1996; see also Nisbett, Caputo, Legant, & Marecek, 1973). Actors correctly anticipate that observers will view actors' behavior as more consistent than actors do themselves, but observers do not anticipate that actors will view their own behavior as less consistent than observers view actors' behavior. One explanation for this finding is the asymmetry of information available to actors and observers: Actors taking an observer's perspective have to imagine they have less information than they do, an easier task than that faced by observers taking an actor's perspective, who must imagine that they have more information than they do (Krueger et al., 1996). Our results suggest a simpler interpretation: Actors and observers both think that others are dispositionalists and therefore predict that others will view an actor's behavior as relatively consistent over time. Actors, who tend to view their own behavior as less consistent, will therefore perceive a difference between their own and observers' perceptions, whereas observers, who already view the actor's behavior as relatively consistent, will not perceive a difference between their own and the actor's perceptions.

If people have intuitive theories about the dispositionalist nature of others' attributional tendencies, where do such theories originate? One likely source are the folk theories prevalent in a given culture. There is substantial cross-cultural variation

in people's folk theories about the underpinnings of human behavior (Lillard, 1997). If people's intuitions about others' attributions originate in part from these folk theories, it follows that individuals in cultures whose folk theories place less emphasis on internal attributes as causes of behavior (such as collectivist cultures in East Asia) should be less likely to overestimate the correspondence bias. Study 3b investigated this possibility by replicating Study 3a with participants from a collectivist culture.

Study 3b

Cultural psychologists have noted that people in collectivist, East Asian cultures (e.g., China, India, Japan, and Korea) have relatively situation-centered folk theories about the causes of behavior compared with people in individualistic cultures in the West (e.g., Western Europe and North America). People in Western, individualistic cultures tend to have person-centered folk theories that view human behavior as a reflection of the internal attributes of the actor. Folk theories in East Asian cultures, in contrast, place greater emphasis on situational or social pressures as determinants of behavior (Cousins, 1989; Hsu, 1953; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994).

If people's intuitive theories about others' attributions are tied to the folk theories prevalent in their culture, it follows that individuals from a collectivist culture will be less likely than those from an individualist culture to overestimate the correspondence bias. Study 3b tested this hypothesis by replicating Study 3a with a sample of Japanese participants. We expected that in contrast to the American participants in our first three studies, Japanese participants would not overestimate the magnitude of the correspondence bias.

Method

Seventy-two undergraduates at Nihon University in Tokyo, Japan, participated in groups of three in exchange for a small gift (a Nihon University pen). Participants were randomly assigned to the roles of questioner, responder, and witness. All materials were translated into Japanese; otherwise the procedure was identical to that of Study 3a.

To ensure that the instructions and dependent measures were translated accurately, all materials were first translated independently from English to Japanese by two people, one a native English speaker and the other a native Japanese speaker. Differences between the two versions were resolved through discussion among the two translators. The Japanese version was then translated back into English by a native English speaker residing in Japan. Inconsistencies between the back-translated English version and the original English version were resolved through discussion among all three translators.

Results

After appropriate reverse scoring, we combined the nine measures of questioners' impressions of responders, responders' predictions of those impressions, and witnesses' predictions of those impressions into three composite measures (Cronbach's αs = .94, .93, and .97, respectively). The means of these composite measures are displayed in Figure 4. The left portion of the figure shows that Japanese questioners, like their American counterparts in Studies 2 and 3a, exhibited the correspondence bias, erroneously believing that the responders' behavior was at least somewhat indicative of the responders' personalities.

More important are the middle and right portions of Figure 4, which show that although both responders and witnesses anticipated the correspondence bias, neither overestimated its magnitude. Indeed, a 2 (condition: altruistic vs. selfish) × 3 (role: questioner vs. responder vs. witness) ANOVA on the compo-

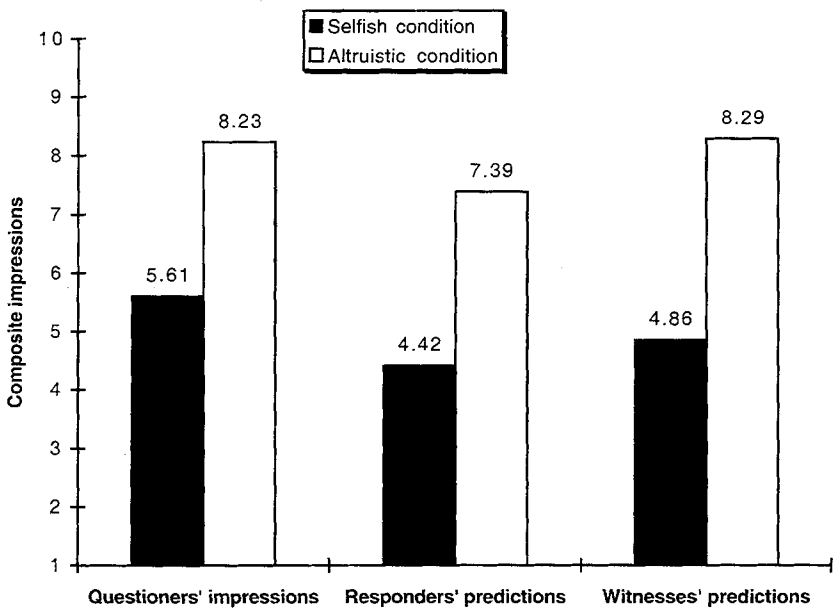

Figure 4. Japanese questioners' impressions of responders, responders' predictions of questioners' impressions, and witnesses' predictions of questioners' impressions.

site measures yielded only a main effect of condition, $F(1, 22) = 50.56$, $p < .001$.[3] Simple effect tests indicated that Japanese questioners exhibited the correspondence bias and responders and witnesses both anticipated this bias, $ts(22) = 3.79$, 5.31, and 5.66, Bonferroni corrected $ps < .05$.

To examine our key prediction that the Japanese responders' and witnesses' predictions of the questioners' impressions would differ from those made by their American counterparts, we performed an analysis of the combined data from Studies 3a and 3b. Of course, because participants were not randomly assigned to culture, the results of this analysis should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, a 2 (culture: Japanese vs. American) × 2 (condition: altruistic vs. selfish) × 3 (role: questioner vs. responder vs. witness) ANOVA on the composite measures yielded a significant three-way interaction, $F(2, 80) = 3.71$, $p < .05$. This interaction captures the fact that the American responders and witnesses overestimated the extremity of the questioners' impressions and the Japanese responders and witnesses did not. To examine this three-way interaction further, we conducted a contrast to test whether the two-way interaction between selfish versus altruistic condition and questioners' impressions versus the mean of responders' and witnesses' predictions of those impressions was greater for American participants than for Japanese participants. The contrast was indeed significant, $F(1, 40) = 6.23$, $p < .025$, indicating that culture moderated participants' overestimation of the correspondence bias, consistent with the hypothesis that people's intuitive theories about others' attributions are tied to the folk theories prevalent in their culture.

Discussion

Japanese participants in this study did not significantly overestimate the magnitude of the correspondence bias. This contrasts with the results of the first three studies, in which Americans thought that perceivers would make more extreme dispositional inferences than perceivers actually did. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that people's intuitive theories about how others make attributions stem in part from the folk theories prevalent in their cultures, and that East Asians' folk theories emphasize situational determinants of behavior more than Westerners' folk theories. But these findings provide only indirect support for the oversimplified intuitive theory account of the present studies. In Studies 4a and 4b, we aimed to provide more direct evidence that Westerners believe that others are dispositionalists whose attributions are linked closely to a constrained actor's behavior.

Before turning to those studies, however, one potentially surprising finding from Study 3b warrants discussion—namely, that Japanese questioners were prone to the correspondence bias to the same degree as their American counterparts. This finding is at odds with research suggesting that East Asians are less prone to the correspondence bias than are Westerners (Masuda & Kitayama, 1998; Miller, 1984; Morris & Peng, 1994). Other recent studies, however, have documented correspondent inferences among East Asians in some situations (Choi & Nisbett, 1998; Iyengar, Lepper, & Ross, 1999; Masuda & Kitayama, 1998). One study, for example, found that the tendency for Asians to make situational attributions for undesirable behavior may be restricted to attributions about in-group members and that individuals outside the in-group, such as strangers, may receive less charitable attributions (Iyengar et al., 1999). The participants in the present studies, of course, were all strangers, so a correspondence bias among Japanese participants in this paradigm is unsurprising. An attempted integration of the mixed findings regarding cultural differences in the correspondence bias is beyond the scope of this article. In the interest of brevity, then, we simply offer the present finding of a significant correspondence bias among East Asians in the perceiver-induced constraint paradigm as a contribution to the growing literature on the attributional tendencies of people in different cultures.[4]

Study 4a

To examine people's intuitions about how others make attributions for constrained behavior, we described the procedure used in Study 1 to a group of 34 Cornell undergraduates. That is, we told participants about a study in which the experimenter asked students to deliver a speech about affirmative action and in which the topic of the speech was at odds with the speaker's true attitude. Participants were told that the speech was videotaped and shown to observers, who estimated the speaker's true attitude toward affirmative action. It was explained that the observers also read the speaker's written instructions, making it clear that the experimenter had assigned the topic of the speech.

Participants described in their own words how they thought the observers would estimate the speaker's true attitude toward affirmative action by listing factors they thought would influence observers' estimates. These descriptions were then coded for the presence or absence of three factors: (1) *paralinguistic* factors such as facial expressions and body language; (2) *situational* factors such as the assignment of the speech by the experimenter and the constraints of being in an experiment; and (3) *behavioral* factors such as the strength and quality of the arguments presented and the "words used by the speaker." Two people performed the coding, one of whom was unaware of the hypothesis. The two coders

[3] Readers may notice a "humility" trend such that responders underestimated the overall favorability of observers' impressions, $F(1, 22) = 6.65$, $p < .05$. This is consistent with norms in East Asia against excessive self-aggrandizement (Kitayama, Markus, Matsumoto, & Norasakkunkit, 1997).

[4] We cannot resist, however, offering our own speculation for why the correspondence bias might be observed in some instances among East Asians but not in others. As Gilbert and Malone (1995) noted, the correspondence bias is multidetermined. It seems likely that the different mechanisms that give rise to the bias might be differentially malleable across cultures. In particular, higher level cognitions that give rise to the correspondence bias may be more prone to cultural influence than lower level mechanisms. Intuitions about the strength of dispositions in relation to situations (Reder, Fletcher, & Furman, 1989), for example, may vary significantly from culture to culture; some cultures imbue perceivers with different ideas about the power of situations. However, an anchoring-and-adjustment mechanism in which perceivers attempt to adjust from relatively automatic dispositional inferences (Gilbert, 1989; Quattrone, 1982; Uleman, 1987; Winter & Uleman, 1984), but do so insufficiently, may be less prone to cultural influence because it is based on a more fundamental cognitive process. This line of reasoning suggests that paradigms that primarily tap anchoring-and-adjustment processes should be less likely to evidence cross-cultural variation than paradigms that rely on perceivers' intuitions about the power of situations. Examination of this claim, of course, remains for future research.

agreed on 100 of the 102 units coded (3 units for each of the 34 descriptions); the two discrepancies were resolved in favor of the coder who was unaware of the hypothesis.

Nearly all participants (94%) mentioned that observers would base their estimates of the speakers' true attitudes toward affirmative action on paralinguistic factors. More important, 56% of participants mentioned that behavioral factors (i.e., the speech) would influence the observers' impressions, but only 9% said that situational factors would influence observers' impressions, binomial $z = 5.87$, $p < .01$. These data are consistent with the hypothesis that people think that others are dispositionalists whose attributions for the behavior of a constrained actor are tied more closely to the actor's behavior than to the factors constraining the behavior. Note, too, that the paralinguistic factors that nearly everyone mentioned may also reflect participants' belief that observers look to the person rather than to the situation when making attributions for constrained behavior.

One potential problem with these findings is that some participants may have thought the situational and behavioral factors were obvious and may not have mentioned them because they wanted to avoid redundancy (Grice, 1975; Schwarz, 1994). We addressed this worry in Study 4b by highlighting the attributional dilemma faced by the observers in Study 1 and asking participants to directly compare the influence of the behavior and the situation on observers' attributions.

Study 4b

We provided 39 Cornell undergraduates with the same description of Study 1 that was read by participants in Study 4a. We then drew participants' attention to the attributional dilemma faced by the observers in that study:

> Observers may have been in a difficult position when they tried to estimate the speaker's attitude toward affirmative action. On the one hand, they saw the speaker deliver a speech that supported or opposed affirmative action. Thus, observers may have been inclined to think that the speaker believed the arguments he or she espoused. On the other hand, observers knew that the topic of the speech was assigned by the experimenter, so they may have been inclined to moderate the extent to which they thought the speaker believed the arguments he or she espoused.

Participants then rated which consideration they thought played a greater role in observers' impressions of the speaker's attitude toward affirmative action on a 9-point scale ranging from *the fact that the topic of the speech was assigned by the experimenter* (−4) to *the arguments the speaker presented* (+4).[5] As expected, 70% of the participants circled positive numbers, indicating that they thought the observers' impressions would be more influenced by the speaker's behavior (the arguments the speaker presented) than by the knowledge that the topic of the speech was assigned by the experimenter, binomial z against a null value of 50% = 2.40, $p < .05$. The mean rating was +0.97, significantly greater than the midpoint (0) of the scale, $t(38) = 2.62$, $p < .025$. The findings of Studies 4a and 4b thus indicate that people think others' attributions are indeed dispositionalist—people think that others' attributions are more influenced by the behavior they observe than by the situational context.

General Discussion

We consistently found that American students overestimate the extremity of others' dispositional attributions for constrained behavior. Participants in Study 1 who delivered speeches on affirmative action that were at variance with their true attitudes predicted that observers would draw more extreme inferences about them than observers actually did. Participants in Studies 2 and 3a, whose behavior was constrained by observers, again overestimated the extremity of observers' impressions. We suggested that this overestimation stems from people's oversimplified intuitive theories that others are inveterate dispositionalists who leap too quickly from acts to dispositions. In line with this account, witnesses of the interaction between actors and observers in Study 3a overestimated the extremity of observers' impressions to the same degree as did actors, ruling out evaluative concerns as the cause of actors' overestimation of the correspondence bias. Study 3b revealed that Japanese participants did not overestimate the magnitude of the correspondence bias, a finding that follows from the hypothesis that Westerners' dispositionalist intuitions about others' attributions stem partly from the folk theories prevalent in their culture. Finally, Studies 4a and 4b showed that Westerners think observers' attributions are more influenced by an actor's constrained behavior than by the factors constraining the actor's behavior.

Taken together, these studies indicate that people believe that the attributional tendencies of others are insufficiently sensitive to situational constraints. But how do people view their own attributional tendencies? Do they acknowledge a similar insensitivity in themselves? We suspect not. People are doubtless aware of the many times they have tried to take account of another person's constraints before rendering judgment about that person's behavior. Even if such attempts to factor in situational constraints are ultimately insufficient, they do not seem insufficient to the person making them. Each person's phenomenological experience, then, is that "I, at least, take situational constraints into account."

We have recently obtained evidence that people do indeed believe that they are more sensitive to situational factors and less prone to the correspondence bias than others (Van Boven & Gilovich, 1999). In one study, conducted shortly after Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, both students at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, shot and killed 12 of their fellow students and one teacher before killing themselves, we asked participants how much they thought various factors contributed to the shooting and how much they thought their peers would think those factors contributed to the shooting. Some factors centered on the dispositions of the two boys (e.g., that they were cruel and hateful), others centered on social–environmental influences (e.g., inadequacies within the family). Participants' ratings indicated that they thought their peers would cite the dispositions of the two boys as more of a contributing factor to the shooting than they did themselves and that their peers would consider various social–environmental influences as less of a contributing factor than they did. In another study, participants indicated that they thought their peers would make dispositional attributions for a constrained actor's behavior that they themselves felt were untenable. People's

[5] We counterbalanced across participants the elements located at the two ends of the scale. All were scored, however, with the positive numbers representing the arguments the speaker presented.

intuitive theories about the excessively dispositionalist tendencies of observers, then, seem to be theories about others' attributions, not their own.

Why might people have such biased perceptions of the correspondence bias? One possibility is that people like to think well of themselves (Alicke, 1985; Taylor & Brown, 1988), and in those contexts in which they consider the correspondence bias to be undesirable, they may wish to see themselves as less prone to the bias than others. Another possibility is that attention to situational factors is easier to notice in oneself than in others. If people believe that attention to situational constraints should be noticeable (they do, after all, notice their own), their failure to notice such attention in others may lead them to infer erroneously that there is nothing there to notice. Finally, people may think they are less prone to the correspondence bias than others because they measure the extent of their own bias by assessing the presence (or lack thereof) of some phenomenological trace of biased attributional reasoning. To the extent that biased processing simply does not leave such a phenomenological stamp (Kunda, 1987)—that is, to the extent that one's own biases operate subtly and subconsciously—people will have very little evidence of their own bias and thus infer that it is others who make unwarranted dispositional inferences. Moreover, even if one were to suspect oneself of engaging in biased attributions, pressures toward consistency and rationality would work to stifle such suspicions (Festinger, 1957). It would hardly seem sensible for observers in Study 1, for example, to infer that a speaker supported affirmative action while simultaneously thinking that such an inference was unwarranted. Such consistency pressures, of course, do not apply to people's perceptions of others' judgments.

How do we reconcile the present findings with the research on the "self-perception as metaperception" hypothesis and on the illusion of transparency that led to our original prediction that people would not anticipate the correspondence bias? With respect to the former, actors' behavior was constrained in the present studies but not in the studies that gave rise to the self-perception as metaperception hypothesis (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993). When people's social actions are freely chosen and therefore accurately represent their self-views, their self-perceptions may be a reasonable guide to observers' impressions. When people's actions are constrained, however, as they were in the present studies, they may recognize that their self-perceptions (which may not correspond to their overt behavior) are no longer informative about observers' impressions and so they may rely instead on the oversimplified intuitive theory we have examined here.

One might have nonetheless expected (as we did originally) that people would feel as though their true, internal states would be transparent to observers and would have "shown through" their constrained behavior (Gilovich et al., 1998; Van Boven et al., 1999). Because people's internal states were at odds with their behavior in the present studies, such beliefs could have led to an underestimation of the correspondence bias. One precondition for the illusion of transparency, however, is that "individuals must experience the internal state with some intensity" (Gilovich et al., 1998, p. 344). Although the illusion of transparency has been shown for emotions and desires—which by definition are experienced with some affective intensity—it has not been shown for attitudes or beliefs, which often have a colder quality. It is not clear whether the illusion of transparency applies to attitudes and beliefs, except perhaps those that arouse the type of passions that might "leak out." Such passions were clearly not aroused in our studies.

However the apparent inconsistency between the present results and the illusion of transparency is resolved, people's oversimplified intuitive theories about others' attributions in everyday life have numerous implications for social interaction. First, people's decisions about whether to engage in social actions are often based on their beliefs about how they will be seen by others. Because people tend to overestimate the extremity of others' unwarranted dispositional inferences, they may avoid situations in which their behavior might be seen as anything less than competent or successful. Someone who decides in midlife that she wants to learn to ski, for example, may hesitate to do so because she is afraid of what others will think of the lone adult on the bunny slope. Further, she may not realize that observers may empathize with her plight ("I can still remember how awkward I was when I was first learning to ski!") and moderate their impressions accordingly ("She's pretty good for someone just starting out") (Epley, Savitsky, & Gilovich, 1999). In the long run, any such tendency to avoid risky social actions may lead to feelings of emptiness and regret (Gilovich & Medvec, 1995).

Overestimation of the correspondence bias may also impact people's self-presentational behavior. People's desire to be seen in a particular way is often hampered by situational or social factors that constrain their behavior (Van Boven, Kruger, Savitsky, & Gilovich, in press) or by factors that cloud observers' interpretations of their behavior (Jones, 1964; Jones, Jones, & Gergen, 1963; Jones & Wortman, 1973). For example, people sometimes experience an "ingratiator's dilemma," in which their efforts to be liked by someone who is in a position of power over them are thwarted because the motivations for their actions are unclear—are their actions purely instrumental, or do they genuinely like the target of ingratiation? (Jones, 1964). An ambitious graduate student who wants to make a good impression on his advisor may worry that his complimentary behavior may seem self-promoting and insincere because of the advisor's power over the student's fate. Fortunately for the student, people tend to be quite susceptible to ingratiation through flattery: It may be hard for the advisor to see the student as insincere when he says such nice things about her (Jones & Wortman, 1973). Unfortunately for the student, however, the present findings suggest that he may nonetheless overestimate how much his advisor will take his behavior at face value, thinking he has "pulled off" the ingratiator's dilemma more skillfully than he has (Jones et al., 1963; Van Boven & Dawson, 1999).

Thomas Kuhn wrote that "Often . . . [a] discovery is not quite the one anticipated by a speculative and tentative hypothesis. Only as experiment and tentative theory are together articulated to a match does the discovery emerge" (1962, p. 61). We believe a (modest) discovery of this sort has emerged here. We began with the simple question of whether people whose behavior is constrained would anticipate that observers are likely to draw correspondent inferences about them even when the observers are fully aware of those constraints. For a variety of reasons, we originally expected that people would not fully anticipate the correspondence bias. Our findings were exactly the opposite. We consistently found that people not only anticipate the correspondence bias, they tend to overestimate its magnitude. We attributed this overestimation to people's oversimplified intuitive theories that others are

inveterate dispositionalists who give little regard to situational influences; we obtained support for this contention by showing that overestimation of the correspondence bias does not stem from actors' evaluative concerns and that Japanese participants, whose folk theories about the causes of behavior emphasize situational factors more than Western folk theories, did not overestimate the magnitude of the correspondence bias. We also found that people think others' impressions are more influenced by the behavior of a constrained actor than by the factors that constrain the actor's behavior.

Of course, much work remains to be done to establish the generality, robustness, and further implications of Westerners' oversimplified intuitive theories about others' attributions. The time has come to delve more deeply into the study of the perceiver as the perceived.

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