

## NEGOTIATING THE PLACE OF CULTURE AND EMOTION IN THE DIALOGICAL SELF (COMMENTARY ON CHOI & HAN)

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**ABSTRACT:** This commentary on Choi & Han's article attempts to extend the use of the Dialogical Self model to understand emotional experiences in broader sense. It focuses on the dynamics by which emotions are dialogically experienced in the everyday lives of individuals as a manifestation of the intersection between self and culture. It is argued that culture is distributed and inherently heterogeneous yet preserves a surface homogeneity that binds and facilitates communication between people of a cultural group. The underlying heterogeneity is explained both as a result of personality factors (and related idiosyncratic internalizations of prevailing cultural and value systems in a given society), as well as contextual factors. Both end up forming varying configurations of I-positions within the self that guide and shape emotional experiences and produce heterogeneity. It is argued that the dynamics of emotion *judgements* and the *communication* of those judgements is what reflects the underlying heterogeneity of culture *and* reproduces and reinforces the surface homogeneity.

**Keywords:** Dialogical self, culture, emotions, internalization, externalization, personal culture, collective culture, homogeneity and heterogeneity of culture

Choi & Han's (2008) account provides a comprehensive description of *Shimcheong*—a “complex” “indigenous” “cultural” emotion experienced in the everyday lives of Koreans. Their analysis offers insights into the historical, cultural, and contextual nature of *Shimcheong* as well as the functional aspects of this emotional state in reinforcing and reproducing the prevailing value of “we-ness” in Korean culture. This highlights how larger cultural and value systems shape emotional life and influence every aspect of an emotional experience, and in turn, why emotions cannot be understood outside of those larger systems (Solomon, 1984; Harré & Stearns, 1995; Heelas, 1996; Parrott & Harré, 1996).

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More interestingly, Choi & Han's account sheds new light on culture and emotion by using the Dialogical Self model to understand the interplay of different voices in the experience of *Shimcheong*. "From the perspective of the dialogical self, when *Shimcheong* is aroused, a number of voices or I-positions are brought in to engage in dialogue; other-within-self, me-within-other, me-within-me, past I-experience, etc".

Although dialogicality in this case is treated as a characteristic of this particular emotional state, its description certainly alerts us to the place of the *individual* in the experience of emotion. Most discussions on the cultural grounding of emotions, despite being very informative on cross-cultural issues, focus on the general cultural conventions related to theories of emotions. Possibly inadvertently, this ends up giving an ideological and misleading impression of culture as a stable and homogeneous system, downplaying the variations within cultures as well as individual and situational differences. And thus the interesting self-culture dynamics through which emotions are experienced by individuals are overlooked.

But as we know from a few noteworthy studies, emotional experiences within any culture can substantially change over time in response to changes in political systems, religious ideologies, etc (Stearns, 1995; Stearns & Knapp, 1996). Interestingly also, quantitative cultural studies of emotion show a greater variance *within* cultural groups than *between* cultures (Matsumoto, 2006). This heterogeneity is readily witnessed in everyday encounters in any culture. For example, it is quite common that in the same family, one would find a sibling who is known to be emotionally expressive, and another who is 'cold' and a third who gets easily angered and a fourth who gets disgusted by almost anything. In fact, the same person may be seen as emotionally expressive in one context (for example, with family) and completely cold in another (for example, with peers). *What accounts for the differences between and within individuals of the same culture in experiencing emotions? And how is this related to the larger value systems they all belong to?*

Given the heterogeneity witnessed in any culture, it is fair to claim that just as it is necessary to understand emotions as part of the larger cultural and value systems in a given context, it is also necessary to understand emotions in the light of the self, as it is "located" in this world (Harré & Gillett, 1994). Inspired by Choi & Han's use of the Dialogical Self model, a good point to start from would be to contemplate the following: if we consider the self to be dialogical, and if emotions are experienced as part of our everyday lives and not merely physiological responses to stimuli (Solomon, 1984), then the experience of emotions in any culture takes place as part of this "self as a heterogeneous society" (Hermans, 2003). This means that there is an embedded dialogicality in any emotional experience. It is this dialogicality and the varying configurations of voices and I-positions *between* individuals of the same culture, and *within* the self at different times, that accounts for the heterogeneity of culture. But

assuming that emotions are experienced as part of the dialogical self in everyday life is still a general statement that requires further investigation and raises the following questions: *what exactly happens in this dialogical process? What motivates the varying configurations of I-positions within the self and produces the variance in the experience of emotions? And how, despite this, do we still find a high degree of consensus as to the general conventions and theories of emotions in a given culture?*

The present account will attempt to explore those issues by addressing the following broad question: *How do emotions – grounded in culture – and their related conventions find their way into individual lives, producing heterogeneity within and between individuals of the same culture, yet retaining a higher-order homogeneity and consensus amongst members of the same cultural group?* I will start by providing a definition of culture as a distributed model, which will set the stage for looking at the intersection between self and culture more closely. The issues of *homogeneity* and *heterogeneity* of culture will be discussed in relation to Valsiner's (2000) distinction between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture*, Matsumoto's (2006) distinction between *cultural worldviews* and *cultural practices*, and Gregg's (1998) distinction between the *genotypic personality* and *phenotypic personality*. The three distinctions are important in understanding the dynamics of internalizations and externalizations in any culture. In the light of those dynamics, the intersection between self and culture in the everyday life of individuals is manifested in the Dialogical Self, whose varying configurations of I-positions simultaneously produces heterogeneity and homogeneity. This is most evident in the process of *judgement* and *communication* that is central to any emotional experience and which brings the intersection of self and culture to light.

### **Culture and Self**

Matsumoto (1994) effectively argues that studies of emotion lack a good definition of culture itself. Culture, in many of those studies, is often defined by country, which leads to serious shortcomings. It could also be argued that this definition of culture should also include the *individual* person and their relationship to this culture. Therefore, in the following, a definition of culture and a theoretical approach for understanding the intersection between culture and self will be provided and will guide the argument presented in this paper. This framework will propose a view of culture as having both homogeneous and heterogeneous qualities.

### **A Distributed Model of Culture**

Culture here is understood as a dynamic and heterogeneous system (Wessells, 2006). It is *not* a “shared” system of values and meanings, but rather a “distributed” one among people of a particular group (Gregg, 2005). This means that

Different features are appointed to men and to women; to the old and to the young; to city dwellers and to villagers or nomads; to the educated and to the illiterate; and to pious believers and to those who have strayed. Even within families, individuals internalize versions of their culture so divergent that they get in the way of understanding each other's lives. Culture is not to be found in a static system of shared values or meanings, but lives in patterned *dialogues* and *debates* about values and how they should be lived. (Gregg, 2005, p. 9)

This view of culture points to the importance of studying the 'collective culture' as well as the 'personal culture' (Valsiner, 2000). Learning the general values and meanings in a given society is important, but equally important is studying the variations within each culture as well as the creativity of each person (Becker, 1997) in appropriating subsets of this culture (Gregg, 2005) to form their "personal culture" (Zittoun, 2006).

Both Valsiner (2000) and Gregg (1998) provide insightful ways of looking at the relationship between the larger cultural system and its relation to individual lives. Valsiner (2000) explains the co-existence of *collective* and *personal* cultures as a dynamic process of internalizations and externalizations. He argues that the externalizations of personal meaning systems serve to form a relatively stable collective culture.

So, my collective culture may consist of all of my experiences of other persons – friends, acquaintances, passers-by, beggars at church steps, policemen in the street, TV personages, ... These other persons have externalized their personal-cultural systems in specific ways. I, living my own life, encounter the results of these externalizations and use those as input into my own construction of my personal culture. I externalize the results of that construction, and thus become one of the participants in the collective culture of somebody else. (Valsiner, 2000, p. 56)

In that sense, the *communication* between persons, which entails externalizations of their respective *personal cultures*, leads to the construction of the *collective culture*. This means that *collective culture* is heterogeneous by nature. However, dissimilar externalized meanings can create *consensus* which may in turn start functioning as a leading 'voice' in interpersonal interaction, thus reducing the heterogeneity (Valsiner, 2000). This means that there is homogeneity ("leading voice") at the surface, covering an underlying heterogeneity. How can we further understand this process?

### **Culture as Homogeneous and Culture as Heterogeneous**

#### **The Origin of Perceived Homogeneity**

The above distinction between *personal* and *collective* cultures is important in emphasizing the underlying heterogeneity of culture in its broad sense. But the overarching and relatively stable *collective culture* that is based on the *consensus* that

starts acting as a leading ‘voice’ (Valsiner, 2000) has been the subject matter of most cultural studies of emotions. This *collective culture* (homogeneous on the surface) is where the broad cultural values and worldviews that inform the theories of emotion in a given culture are found. It is related to what was described by Matsumoto (2006) as *cultural worldviews*. These are the verbal descriptions (oral or written) about culture based on social constructions of reality expressed in consensual ideologies about one’s culture. There is usually consensus amongst members of a cultural group about what they entail, and they are usually perpetuated through novels, talk, and thought about one’s culture. Interestingly, even non-conforming members of a particular culture would propagate those worldviews when asked to describe their culture, despite this being in contradiction to their actions (Matsumoto, 2006). But this is exactly the function of those worldviews and the theories of emotions they inform (including display rules, metaphors, expressions, emotion language and talk, etc). Namely, they have important social functions such as facilitating communication between members of a group, and enhancing and maintaining group harmony and cohesion (Matsumoto, 1996). In other words, they provide a frame of reference for members of a particular culture, which in the case of emotions serves in shaping conventions and judgements. This is also where ingroup/outgroup boundaries are established (Matsumoto, 1996), and where the differences *between* cultures are most apparent. As we know from cultural studies of emotions, there are considerable differences between cultures in terms of the numbers of emotions they identify, in terms of emotion talk and vocabulary, in terms of the meanings and judgements attached to emotions, and in the nature and extent to which emotions are embodied (Solomon, 1984; Matsumoto, 1996; Heelas, 1996; Parrott & Harré, 1996; Dzokoto & Adams, 2007). Those tendencies and trends in the experience of emotions in any given culture are closely tied to the larger *collective culture*.

It is evident, for example, that predominant worldviews in a given culture become a core aspect of people’s selves and identities, and in turn play a major role in emotional lives (Landman, 1996). Landman (1996) critically describes how *regret* has a “bad reputation” and is considered a dysfunctional negative emotion in twentieth century United States. This is due to the predominant representation of regret as linked with depression, waste of time, failure of rationality, helplessness; all being obstacles to the North American ideals of optimism and action-oriented ethos. Regret is somewhat a “cultural taboo”. On the other hand, arguing from an Islamic worldview, the contemporary Egyptian/Islamic philosopher Mustafa Mahmoud (1998) criticizes Western psychology for endorsing this negative view of regret, and instead stresses that *regret* and repentance reflect a well-balanced, healthy and strong inner self that is willing to revise and realize its wrongdoings and follow the right path of God.

Those cultural/religious worldviews that shape emotions do reflect general representations and judgements in a particular culture, yet they still obscure the variations within culture and the dynamics by which individuals of those cultures

experience emotions in the light of those worldviews. For example, would different individuals with different life circumstances and different internalizations of religious values experience regret in the same way? This question takes us to the following:

### **The Reality of Heterogeneity**

The *cultural worldviews* (Matsumoto, 2006), embedded in the *collective culture* (Valsiner, 2000), and based on people's views about what their culture entails are the place from which cultural theories of emotion are derived. But as Matsumoto (2006) convincingly argues, the seemingly coherent *cultural worldviews*, which give a misleading impression of culture as homogeneous and stable need to be distinguished from *cultural practices*, "which are discrete observable objective and behavioural aspects of human activities in which people engage related to culture" (p. 35). *Cultural practices* show individual differences and reveal the dynamics of heterogeneity within any culture. But what motivates this heterogeneity, and what exactly is the relationship between the *personal culture* and the *collective culture*? Heterogeneity can be a function of differences between individuals in internalizing their *collective cultures*, and/or differences in context. Each will be discussed in turn from a Dialogical Self perspective.

**Heterogeneity as a result of different internalization/externalization dynamics.** In discussing how culture finds its way into individual lives, Gregg (1998) extends the distributed model of culture (outlined above) to emphasize the important distinction between the *genotypic* and *phenotypic* personalities. The *genotypic* personality is that part of the self that is "non-representational, consisting of often diffuse states of affective arousal, feeling tone, and mood with which an individual recurrently contends...much of (it) arises from temperament and early experiences" (p.144). On the other hand, the *phenotypic* personality is the "representational" part of the self that interprets and organizes the affective tensions of the *genotypic* personality in a culturally meaningful way. Following from this, appropriating subsets of a culture's features is inherently idiosyncratic, as a function of *genotypic* personalities and life circumstances. Therefore, hypothetically speaking, even if two people appropriate the same subsets of features from their culture, their *genotypic* personalities would lead to an idiosyncratic *re-fashioning* of those features and in turn, an idiosyncratic representation of those features in their individual lives.

From a developmental perspective, children are socialized in a world where theories of emotions pre-exist. They learn early in life about the *collective culture* they live in and accordingly, how to manage and regulate their emotional expressions according to the conventions of their culture (Matsumoto, 1996; Landman, 1996). They grow to be accustomed to the appropriate 'display rules', which become automatic responses to emotion stimuli afterwards (Matsumoto, 1996). But in this process of socialization and development, children and adolescents internalize core cultural

attitudes, emotions, and values in idiosyncratic ways depending on personality factors, significant others, and subjective tendencies (Gregg, 2005). In other words, as they perform those culturally prevalent styles of conduct, they eventually feel as others do in similar situations, or at least, they learn what their culture expects them to feel in a given situation. However, individuals will vary in the way they will react to culturally prescribed feelings, and in the attitudes they will develop to those. Some individuals will react 'against' what their culture expects them to feel and do (Gregg, 2005), or will develop certain tendencies of emotional expression in certain contexts. Those idiosyncratically internalized values and worldviews become voices in the repertoire of the self and serve in shaping and guiding emotional responses.

For example, as opposed to many Western cultures, religion and its associated worldviews and values is seen as a core aspect of people's everyday lives in many parts of the Middle East (Gregg, 2005; 2007). One's relationship with God is seen to be a determinant factor of much of a person's life. Deviation from the path of God is seen as unhealthy and as a cause for many ill-habits and behaviours (Sayed, Collins, & Takahashi, 1998). This worldview shapes many people's emotional experiences. For example, loss and grief are seen as the will of God. Happiness is believed to be a gift from God, and so forth. But in a culture where religion is vibrant in everyday life, people would still differ as to how they relate to this larger value system. It will enter some individuals' lives more strongly than others, depending on their *genotypic* personality. For some, it will represent a strong leading voice in their dialogical self, for others it will remain in the background until the situation calls for it, and yet for others, it will represent the voice of the enemy (having developed a stance against it due to unpleasant religious upbringing, for instance). This passage from *The Day the Leader was Killed* shows how religion can become a leading voice in the experience of emotion; in this case *nostalgia*.

Behind the closed panes, I can see the River Nile and the trees. Our house is the oldest and smallest one on Nile Street: a dwarf amid modern buildings. The River Nile itself has changed and, like me, it is struggling against loneliness and old age. We share the same predicament: it, too, has lost its glory and grandeur and is now no longer even able to get into a tantrum. And then, so much poverty and so many loved ones departed; so many cars, so many fortunes! A cloudy day with premonitions of rain. On such days, it was fun to go on a trip to Qanater Gardens. Old friends would get together for a meal of fried chicken and potatoes, and drinks. And the record player playing old favourites. They are all skeletons now and their carefree, mirthful laughter has gone with the wind!...The Prophet, God bless him and grant him salvation, said: "Ye slave of God, be in this world as a stranger or passerby and reckon yourself among the dead." The Messenger of God has truly spoken. (Mahfouz, 1985/1997, pp. 7-8)

Religion here functions as a leading voice in judging and living this emotional experience for this old man. It may not function in the same way for another person from the same culture, despite the common religious value.

In short, individuals in any culture will internalize their *collective culture* differently depending on their temperaments, projects, upbringing, etc, and this will affect the creation and configuration of I-positions and voices within the self and in turn, will shape the way they experience emotions. Another important issue here is *context*, which takes us to the following discussion:

### **Heterogeneity as a result of context**

The same individual may experience emotions in substantially different ways, depending on past interactions with a person, past experience of this emotion in this context, what is culturally expected in this situation, and what the person feels about what is culturally expected in this situation, etc. The Dialogical Self offers a powerful way of understanding situational dynamics. Hermans (2003) clearly argues that “As located in such a wide multivoiced self, the individual identifies at some point more with one position than with another, even if fluctuations in situation and time permit the I to fluctuate among diverse or even opposite positions (p. 100).

The role of context in the experience of emotion can be best understood through what Hermans (2003) calls the “Innovation of the Self”, which can take place in three ways: The *first* includes the introduction of a new “I” position into the system, which then becomes part of the organization of the self. The *second* form of innovation happens through a reorganization of the self, when positions that already existed in the self, but were hidden in the background, are brought to the surface and come to play a more significant role in the foreground. The *third* involves new forms of coalition between already existing “I” positions, thus creating new “subsystem” within the self. Following are a few examples:

**The Introduction of a New “I” Position into the System.** Lila Abu-Lughod (1988) is an anthropologist whose father is Arab and Muslim and her mother is American. Having been brought up in the United States, she identified more with the North American culture than with the Arab culture. Her Arabic was broken and she was not religious. When studying the Awlad-Ali Bedouins in Egypt, Abu-Lughod experienced interesting shifts in her identity as seen by her informants, as well as by herself. Because her father had introduced her to the community, the tribe’s elder and his relatives took seriously their obligation to her father who had entrusted them with her care. To them, she became a “*dutiful daughter*,” and was under their constant care and protection, due to the strict Bedouin code of honour. Coming from a different culture, Abu-Lughod (1988) did not always identify with the values of the community (even though she complied). However, she was surprised by the extent she had



internalized the values of modesty while playing the role of a *dutiful daughter* during an incident that took place after she had lived in the community for many months...

Women from most of the neighboring households in the hamlet had gathered at our household to prepare a feast...I had been bending over a large tray of rice, intent on my task of cleaning it, when I sensed a stillness. I looked up and saw that all the women had covered their faces with their black veils. Without thinking, I turned toward the house to see why. I found myself face to face with a dignified old man, not a relative, whom I had never seen before. We stared at each other, I blushed deeply, and ran into the nearest doorway.” “It was at this moment, when I felt naked before an Arab elder because I could not veil, that I understood viscerally that women veil not because anyone tells them to or because they would be punished if they did not, but because they feel extremely uncomfortable in the presence of certain categories of men. Veiling becomes an automatic response to embarrassment, both a sign of it and a way of coping with it. (Abu-Lughod, 1988, p. 155)

This incident shows that the new “I” position of a *dutiful daughter*, and the associated internalized value of modesty, allowed Abu-Lughod to judge this social situation differently and therefore experience the emotion of embarrassment quite differently from the way she would have experienced embarrassment had she been in the United States.

### **Reorganization of the Self: Foregrounding and backgrounding existing I-positions**

Foregrounding and backgrounding of existing I-positions may cause a person to experience emotions differently. Here I could relate an example from a colleague’s story of her fieldwork, where she gets to experience disgust in a completely different manner. As part of her work, she usually does fieldwork in the urban slums and public hospitals in Cairo where the standards of hygiene are quite different from what she is used to in her everyday life. Judged by her parents, friends, and colleagues as hyper-sensitive to cleanliness and hygiene, incidents she encounters during her fieldwork (such as drinking dirty tap water, eating from dirty carts on the street, sitting on the sidewalk, etc), would be normally considered disgusting. However, during her fieldwork she is able to do what she would otherwise see as disgusting without any difficulty and in fact, without feeling a hint of disgust. What I imagine happens here is that her I-position as the hyper-clean/obsessed with hygiene, Egyptian who comes from a privileged part of society is backgrounded, and her I-position as a regular Egyptian, concerned with her fellow-Egyptians’ lives, and living with the same worries and standards, becomes foregrounded and leads her experience of disgust.

**Forming New Coalitions Between Already Existing “I” Positions.** The same old man who was cited above from *The Day the Leader was Killed* explains to us how in his solitude, the weekly visit of the housecleaner brings him the joy of imagining yet controlling an impulse of flirtation:

...I enjoy being alone with her: a weekly diversion which brings back reminiscence of a bygone dream. Being alone with her disrupts my daily routine...divided by the time factor, the old “I” comes face-to-face with the present “I” as they attempt—but fail—to communicate in two very different languages. Then, from its old reserves, the heart steals a fleeting heartbeat whose lifespan lasts but thirty seconds. When she bends forward to unroll the carpet, I imagine that I have gently pinched her. Just a figment of my imagination, for I am completely in control of myself, and she has no qualms whatsoever about me. In fact, she is very much like a man as far as energy, strength, and tenacity go. *O God, forgive us should we forget or err.* (Mahfouz, 1985/1997, p. 22).

Here we see this man’s present “I” (the religious old man) coming together with his old “I” (the flirtatious playful man) to uniquely weave this emotional experience involving traces of solitude, desire, fantasy, joy, and reminiscence. The experience is wrapped up and evaluated by a leading religious voice (as we have seen in the previous example of *nostalgia*) which represents the orientation of the present “I” yet still gets to experience things differently when hooked up with the old “I”.

### **Communication & the Judgement of Judgement**

The examples on the Innovation of the Self bring the issues of *judgement* and *communication* to the fore. It is well-agreed upon that the experience of emotions involves a great deal of judgement. Feeling and/or expressing an emotion conveys an evaluative judgement that the person has made in response to an emotion stimulus. Those judgements are influenced by the moral, aesthetic, and prudential standards (or values) in a given culture (Harré & Gillett, 1994; Stearns, 1995) –for example, what counts as disgusting; what counts as embarrassing, etc. Yet, as we have seen from the above discussions, cultures are heterogeneous and variations within cultures and within individuals are quite common, and it is precisely the issues of *judgement* and *communication* that bring the cultural conventions (homogeneity) with the variance (heterogeneity) together – or what have been referred to here as *personal* and *collective* cultures.

The *personal culture*, with its own idiosyncrasies and the particular configuration of I-positions and voices in a particular situation would inform the immediate judgement and consequent emotional expression, display, etc. But the person’s own reflection on their emotional experience (the second order judgement of this emotion) is informed by the *collective culture* as a frame of reference. This can take place through one’s judgement of one’s own emotional tendencies or reactions in

particular situations, or could form the basis of other people's judgements of one's emotional tendencies or reactions in particular situations. For example, a person may recognize themselves as more easily embarrassed, which may be due to a number of factors ranging from temperament and upbringing to different moral standards. But this reflective judgement of one's emotional life takes place against a wider and more general frame of reference, which is the *collective culture*. Similarly, a person may be judged by other members of their culture as being expressive with their grief. This judgement will also reflect the *collective culture* that the person belongs to, which is used as a frame of reference to *judge* this person's immediate *judgement* of the situation that elicits the emotion.

In the above case of Abu-Lughod (1988), we can see that her immediate judgement of the social situation at the time caused her embarrassment. This was due to the powerful I-position of a dutiful daughter that led the configuration of other voices within her self in that context. Yet, what is also interesting is her second-order judgement *of* her immediate judgement. This second-order judgement, which saw her immediate judgement as unusual, reflected her *collective culture*, or frame of reference – in this case, the North American standpoint. As a *dutiful daughter*, she judged the situation as embarrassing. But, on reflection, and as a North American judging from the North American evaluation of the situation, she saw her immediate judgement of the situation as unusual.

This dynamic of judgement is intriguing, since it successfully represents the intersection between self (*personal culture*) and culture (*collective culture*). Subjective or personal culture and the Dialogical Self lead the person to form a judgement in a particular context that would shape the emotional experience. But the judgement *of* that judgement, by the experiencing person or another, will reflect the *collective culture* where consensual conventions and frames of references are embedded, and which have referential and communicative functions for members of a group.

This takes us back to the issue of *communication*, which Valsiner (2000) considers to be the means of externalizing *personal cultures* thereby producing the *collective culture*. How does this happen? In the context of our present discussion on emotions, it can be argued that the communication of this reflective second-order judgement of the immediate judgement of an emotion stimulus, to oneself or to others, through verbal or non-verbal cues, will not only echo the larger cultural conventions, but will also reinforce and reproduce them. Even non-conforming members of society will still indirectly reinforce and reproduce consensual culture through communication. For example, a non-conforming member could say something like, "I was not embarrassed by this situation because I do not believe that this situation should be embarrassing". In saying this, the non-conforming member inadvertently acknowledges the value system that sees that situation as embarrassing. In acknowledging this system, this member serves in reinforcing and reproducing it, despite rejecting it as invalid.

### Conclusion

This commentary was an attempt to understand the intersection between self and culture in the experience of emotions. It was inspired by Choi & Han's use of the Dialogical Self to understand the emotional state of *Shimcheong*, and sought to expand the use of this model as a framework for comprehending culture-self dynamics in the experience of any emotion in any culture. The starting point was that emotions should be understood as part of individual lives, just as they should be understood as part of the larger cultural and value systems. In this sense, it was suggested that considering the self to be dialogical automatically implies that emotions are experienced as part of this dialogicality. The particular configuration of I-positions and voices within the self will inform the way emotions are experienced in a particular context. This assumption necessitated an inquiry into what possibly happens during this dialogical process, and how self and culture feature in this configuration of I-positions to form emotional experiences.

Culture was considered as a distributed and inherently heterogeneous model that still had a degree of homogeneity and consensus at the surface. The function of this perceived homogeneity is to create a sense of continuity and belonging as well as strengthen and sustain harmony for members of a particular cultural group. This surface homogeneity was related to what Valsiner (2000) calls the *collective culture* and relevant to what Matsumoto (2006) calls *cultural worldviews*. This is the place where cultural conventions and theories of emotions are found. However, this surface homogeneity conceals the underlying heterogeneity in any culture, which is readily witnessed by the variations in emotional experiences between individuals in the same culture, and by the same individual across situations. This heterogeneity can be understood as a function of personality factors and contextual factors. Gregg's (1998) distinction between *genotypic* and *phenotypic* personalities offers a powerful framework for understanding how individuals idiosyncratically orient themselves towards the larger value systems they find themselves in. Such idiosyncrasies result in the formation of I-positions in the repertoire of the self, and guide the emotional experiences of individuals, producing heterogeneity. Yet, heterogeneity is also a function of context, which may lead to a re-configuration of positions and voices within the self in particular contexts, resulting in different experiences. Herman's (2003) idea of the Innovation of the Self proved useful in explaining heterogeneity as a result of context, and pushed the argument one step further to allocate the intersection between self and culture. It was argued that *judgement* is where the intersection lies. People's immediate evaluative judgement of an emotional stimulus will reflect their *personal cultures* as well as *contextual* configurations of I-positions. However, their reflective second-order judgement will echo the larger *collective culture* that is characterized by surface homogeneity. The *communication* of reflective judgements to oneself or to others, and

whether in agreement or disagreement, will serve in reinforcing and reproducing the prevailing theories of emotions and the larger cultural values they reflect.

Attending to self-culture dynamics and using the Dialogical Self as a framework for understanding emotional experiences can advance and benefit many areas of cultural research on emotions. For example, one of the other issues raised by Choi & Han is the issue of individualism and collectivism. Their account on *Shimcheong* shows us how individualism indeed has a place in Korean society, and how the dialogical experience of *Shimcheong* attends to this individualism while at the same time reinforcing the collective value of we-ness. But beyond *Shimcheong*, the Dialogical Self model allows us to recognize individualism and collectivism as values operating in any culture, entering individual lives in idiosyncratic ways, and operating in a dialogical fashion. Therefore, individuals in cultures oriented towards collectivism may have strong extended family and group loyalties but this is not going to prevent them from thinking of themselves as individuals with their own personal needs (Gregg, 2007). What is at work here is the tension between “group loyalties” and “personal ambitions” (Gregg, 2007). Individualism and collectivism are best approached as a continuum with each at one extreme; with “I” at one extreme, and “we” at the other extreme (Hermans, 2003; Gregg, 2005, 2007). From a Dialogical Self perspective, people from different cultures and even within the same culture will have a place somewhere along the continuum. What’s even more interesting is that depending on the situation or context, the same person will shift along the continuum – talking or feeling or acting more as “I” in some cases, and as “we” in others (Hermans, 2003). In the study of emotions, it is important to attend to the “joint” influences of collectivism and individualism (Matsumoto, 1996). What Choi & Hans’s analysis allows us to see is that individuality has a strong place in a collectivistic society, and is interestingly mediated by emotional experiences or interactions that seem at the outset geared towards collectivism. But adopting a Dialogical Self Model can help us study those dynamics in relation to other emotions in other cultures as well.

Another issue raised by Choi & Han is how the *other* features in the experience of *Shimcheong*. “...when *Shimcheong* is aroused, a number of voices or I-positions are brought in to engage in dialogue; other-within-self, me-within-other, me-within-me, past I-experience, etc”. A Dialogical Self approach makes it clear that just as Self is Other inclusive (Hermans, 2003), emotion is also Other inclusive (since its experience is inseparable from self-culture dynamics). This means that the *other* (real or imaginary) will be part of any emotional experience. Similarly, the “generalized other”, which represents the *collective culture* (Mead, 1934), will play a part in shaping an emotional experience. All of those *others* become different voices or “I” positions in the repertoire of the self, shaping experiences, including emotions. Their role in the experience of emotion will depend on their presence or absence in the particular configuration of I-positions and voices in a situation. Therefore, Choi & Han’s description of the

dialogicality embedded in the experience of *Shimcheong*, where “a number of voices or I-positions are brought in to engage in dialogue; other-within-self, me-within-other, me-within-me, past I-experience, etc can readily describe any emotion experienced interpersonally or intra-psychically in relation to an *other* (who can be a real, imaginary, or “generalized” other). For example, people may experience emotions differently in the presence of (real or imaginary) others, depending on past experiences with this person, expectations in this relationship, what is culturally appropriate in this interaction, and the orientation one has developed towards what is culturally appropriate etc.

In conclusion, it has been demonstrated that understanding the junction between self and culture can enrich our understanding of emotions. The Dialogical Self model has proved helpful as a theoretical framework as well as an analytical tool to decipher different influences and dynamics in the experience of emotions.

*Acknowledgement.* I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to Jaan Valsiner and Brady Wagoner for their valuable comments on the ideas presented in this paper.

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