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Perspective Taking: Reducing Prejudice Towards General Outgroups and Specific Individuals

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Previous research has found that perspective taking improves attitudes towards outgroups. We find that taking the perspective of an outgroup member not only improves attitudes towards outgroups, but also reduces prejudice and discriminatory behavior against other specific individual members of that outgroup. Experiment 1 demonstrates that perspective-taking improves liking towards another member of the outgroup, while experiment 2 finds that the improved liking does not generalize to all outgroups, only the group to which the target of empathy belongs. Finally, experiment 3 shows that perspective taking also increases helping behavior towards another member of the outgroup. Moreover, we find evidence that perspective taking improves intergroup attitudes through the induction of empathy.

KEYWORDS   discrimination, empathy, intergroup relations, perspective taking, prejudice

RESEARCHERS have found that perspective-taking induces empathy which, in turn, not only improves attitudes towards the target of empathy, but also improves attitudes towards the target's group. Eliciting empathy by taking the perspective of one outgroup member can generalize into more positive feelings for the entire outgroup (Batson et al., 1997; Clore & Jeffery, 1972).[1] For instance, Batson et al. (1997) found that inducing empathy for an AIDS victim, a homeless individual and a convicted murderer

generalized to improved attitudes towards those groups and that the improved attitudes lasted at least one to two weeks. Vescio, Sechrist, and

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Paolucci (2003) found that empathy arousal induced by instructing participants to take the perspective of the Black target, improved intergroup attitudes, regardless of whether the target acted stereotypically or not. Dovidio et al. (2004) found that participants asked to take the perspective of an African American man experiencing discrimination reported more positive attitudes towards African Americans as a whole. Finally, Galinsky and Ku (2004) found that participants with high self-esteem showed improved evaluations of outgroup members following an empathy manipulation. Thus, the evidence collected suggests that empathy has the potential to reduce prejudice towards outgroups (Batson et al., 1997; Clore & Jeffery, 1972; Dovidio et al., 2004).

While this work has found that eliciting empathy by taking the perspective of a single outgroup member can generalize into more positive feelings for the entire outgroup (Batson et al., 1997; Clore & Jeffery, 1972), it is not known whether empathy will also reduce bias toward other individual group members, and not just to the specific empathy target. Although this distinction may seem minor, it is important because discrimination often occurs in interpersonal interactions, not only on a systems level. For instance, hate crimes are expressions of hate against a group, but the criminal act is enacted against an individual. Thus, it is important for empathy not only to elicit positive outcomes towards a group when people think about the group at a theoretical or hypothetical level, but also when people are actually confronted with another individual from the same outgroup.

In the present set of studies, we extended the work on empathy and intergroup relations to show that eliciting empathy for one outgroup member could carry over to other *individual* group members. In study 1, we examined whether inducing individuals to put themselves in the shoes of an Asian American movie character could improve perceptions and evaluations for an Asian American college applicant. In study 2, we investigated whether these results could generalize to other groups. Specifically, we tested whether taking the perspective of an Asian American movie character could increase reported liking for an African American college applicant. Finally, in study 3, we investigated whether inducing individuals to feel empathy towards a target individual would lead people to show less ingroup bias in their helping behavior.

Study 1

In study 1, we examined whether a perspective-taking manipulation could improve participants' evaluations of another individual from the same outgroup as the target of empathy. We predicted that the participants who watched a clip from *The Joy Luck Club*, a movie depicting the experiences of Asian Americans, from the main character's perspective would show increased liking in their evaluations of an Asian college applicant.

Method
Participants Eighty-four non-Asian undergraduate students (38 male; 46 female)[2] from the University of Michigan participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit. Sixty-seven participants identified themselves as Caucasian, 4 as African American, 4 as Hispanic, and 9 as other.

Design and materials This study employed a 2 (viewing condition: perspective-taking or control) × 2 (applicant race: Asian or White) factorial design.

Manipulation and movie clip Participants watched a three-minute video clip from the 1993 film adaptation of Amy Tan's novel *The Joy Luck Club*. The clip features June, the main character, discussing with her mother the dilemma involved in the difficulty of growing up American while being held to more traditional Asian standards. This clip was pre-tested and selected among five other clips to be the most balanced in emphasizing both foreign (i.e. Asian) and familiar (i.e. American) group identities.

Participants were randomly assigned to the control or perspective-taking viewing condition

and told that the study examined cross-cultural experiences. In the perspective-taking condition, participants were told: 'While you are watching the following video clip, please imagine yourself in the position of the main character. As you watch it, try to imagine how June feels about what is happening. Try to imagine how it has affected her life and how she feels as a result.' In the control condition, participants were told: 'You are about to watch a short clip from the film *The Joy Luck Club*. As you watch it, try to imagine what a newspaper reviewer might think of the clip. Try to imagine what sorts of things a newspaper reviewer would choose to write about and how he or she would say those things.'

Applicant race and college application Participants were also randomly assigned to the *Asian* or *White* college applicant condition. Participants were asked to evaluate a college application for a high school student applying for admissions to the University of Michigan. This packet consisted of a completed admissions application packet, including transcripts and an essay, for Michael Young. The name Michael Young was chosen for the fictional applicant because the last name 'Young' is racially ambiguous and can be either an Asian or White last name. In the *Asian* college applicant condition, Michael Young identified himself as Asian American by marking off the Asian box when asked to indicate his ethnicity. In the *White* college applicant condition, Michael Young identified himself as European American by marking the Caucasian box when asked to indicate his ethnicity. All other information included in the application, transcript, and essay remained the same between conditions.

Procedure

Participants in the study were taken individually in a lab. room containing a television, a video cassette player, and a desk. The participant was handed a set of papers on which the instructions for the assigned viewing conditions (control or perspective-taking) were written. The instructions were administered in this way to keep the experimenter blind to the participants'

assigned viewing condition. The participant was given 10 minutes to watch the video clip and write the paragraph about their thoughts of the movie.

After participants had completed the paragraph, the experimenter told participants they were moving on to a second study and asked the participant to review an undergraduate college application packet and complete an accompanying questionnaire. The questionnaire asked the participant to indicate how much they liked the student, how well they thought they knew the student, and how likely they would be to admit the student to the University of Michigan on a 7-point Likert scale. After completing the applicant evaluation questionnaire, the participant was asked to complete a final questionnaire with general demographic information such as gender, age, and ethnicity. Upon completion of the final questionnaire, the participants were also asked to indicate what they thought the study was investigating. None of the participants guessed the hypothesis of the experiment.

Coding of paragraphs Two coders blind to the study's hypothesis coded the paragraphs that participants wrote. The coders received the following instructions: 'Please read the following paragraphs and answer the following three questions regarding each of the paragraphs.' They coded for 'How much the writer was putting themselves in June's (the main character) shoes?' ($\alpha = .84$) and 'To what extent does the writer explore how they would feel if they were in June's position in this situation?'[3] ($\alpha = .93$), using a scale of 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much). Finally, participants also coded for whether or not (i.e. yes or no) the writer made any mention of group membership (e.g. ethnic group membership, references to ingroups or outgroups) ($\alpha = .80$) (see Appendix).

Results

Perspective-taking manipulation check The codings of the paragraphs revealed that participants in the perspective-taking condition ($M = 5.17$) put themselves in the shoes of the main character significantly more than

participants in the control condition (M = 1.94); $t(82)$ = 9.89, p < .001, r = .73.[4]

Empathy and group membership   Participants in the perspective-taking condition expressed more empathic feelings in their paragraphs (M = 4.84) than participants in the control condition (M = 1.47); $t(82)$ = 9.12, p < .001, r = .71. However, there was no difference between the conditions in how much participants mentioned group membership, t < 1.

Liking for the target   The results fell in line with our predictions that participants in the perspective-taking condition would report greater liking for the Asian applicant than participants in the control condition. An ANOVA revealed a significant interaction for the variable 'liking' between the applicant race and viewing condition manipulation, $F(1,80)$ = 4.00, p < .05.

Participants who evaluated an Asian applicant showed an increase in their reported liking for the applicant after they had viewed the video following perspective-taking instructions (M = 5.45) compared to viewing the video in the control condition (M = 4.67); $t(80)$ = 2.32, p < 0.01, r = 0.25. However, viewing the video from the two different perspectives had no effect on the reported liking of the White applicant (perspective-taking M = 5.24; control M = 5.31); t < 1. Moreover, the participants in the control condition liked the White applicant significantly more than the Asian applicant, $t(80)$ = 1.99, p < 0.025, r = 0.22. Results for both Asian applicant/perspective-taking condition

and White/perspective-taking condition were found not to be significant, t < 1 (see Table 1).

Likelihood of being admitted and knowing the student   We found no effects in participants' responses to: 'How well do you think you know the student?' and 'How likely do you think you would admit the student to the University of Michigan?' There may have been no difference in the likelihood of admitting the student because the applicant was academically strong and clearly above the threshold for admission into the University of Michigan. The overall mean for knowing the student was (M = 3.31) and the overall mean likelihood of acceptance (M = 5.48). The relatively high mean for likelihood of acceptance might indicate a ceiling effect.

Mediational analyses   Mediational analyses using the procedures outlined in Baron and Kenny (1986) revealed that empathy mediated the relationship between perspective-taking condition and liking for the target when the applicant was Asian, but not when the applicant was White. When the applicant was Asian, we found that the perspective-taking manipulation significantly predicted how much participants reported liking the applicant (B = .931, $S.E.$ = .318, p = .007) and how much the participants expressed empathic feelings in their paragraphs, B = 3.78, $S.E.$ = .605, p < .01. Moreover, we found that empathic feelings predicted the degree of liking for the applicant, B = .142, $S.E.$ = .068, p < .05. However, when the empathic feelings were controlled for in the analyses, the relationship between the perspective-taking

Table 1. Study 1: Participants' reported liking for applicant

		Applicant race
Perspective manipulation	Asian	White
Perspective-taking condition	M = 5.45	M = 5.24
	SD = .67	SD = 1.09
Control condition	M = 4.67	M = 5.31
	SD = 1.15	SD = .89

Note: n = 22 for Asian applicant/perspective-taking, n = 12 for Asian applicant/control, n = 21 for White applicant/perspective-taking, n = 29 for White applicant/control. Response scale ranged from 1 (did not like the student) to 7 (liked the student very much).

manipulation and liking for the applicant became less significant, $B = .996$, $S.E. = .492$, $p = .05$. A Sobel test revealed that this drop in significance level was significant ($Z = 1.98$, $p < .05$), suggesting that empathy may partially mediate the relationship between the perspective-taking manipulation and liking for the applicant. On the other hand, when the applicant was White, we found that perspective-taking manipulation significantly predicted how much participants expressed empathic feelings. However, neither the perspective-taking manipulation nor the amount of empathic feelings expressed predicted their reported liking of the applicant.

Study 2

Study 1 revealed that perspective-taking induced empathy which in turn increased liking for an Asian American college applicant. Study 2 was designed to test whether inducing participants to put themselves in the shoes of an Asian American character might also increase liking for members of other minority groups, such as African Americans.

In addition, in study 2, we also altered our instructions for the control condition. The previous study asked participants to evaluate the movie. These instructions may have put participants in a critical state of mind and may not have made it an ideal 'control' condition. Thus, in this study, we simply asked participants to watch the movie without any additional instructions.

Method
Participants Eighty-eight undergraduate students (38 male; 50 female) from the University of Michigan participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit. Seventy-seven participants self-identified as Caucasian, 7 as Hispanic/Latino and 4 as other.

Design and materials This study employed a 2 (viewing condition: perspective-taking or control) × 3 (race of applicant: Asian, African American, or White) factorial design. Participants watched the same movie clip as in the previous

study, and were randomly assigned the same sets of viewing instructions (perspective-taking or control). However, we modified the directions given in the control condition. Rather than watching the clip as movie critic, participants were asked simply to watch the movie.

Participants were also randomly assigned to *Asian, African American* or *White* college applicant condition. Participants were asked to evaluate the same college application as the one used in study 1. However, we added an additional condition, the *African American* applicant condition, in which Michael Young identified himself as African American.

Procedure
The procedures for study 2 were the same as in study 1. Participants were asked to watch the video clip of *The Joy Luck Club* and to write a paragraph with their thoughts on the movie. After the participant finished writing the paragraph, the experimenter returned to give the participant the Positive and Negative Affect Schedules (PANAS; Watson, Clark, and Tellegen, 1988) questionnaire. This questionnaire was added to the procedure as a check to test whether changes in mood might be underlying difference among the conditions. Participants then reviewed the college application packet, completed the accompanying questionnaire and complete a final questionnaire. None of the participants guessed the hypothesis of the experiment.

Coding of paragraphs Again, two coders blind to the study hypothesis coded participants' paragraphs for: (1) 'How much the writer was putting themselves in June's (the main character) shoes?' ($\alpha = .93$); (2) 'To what extent does the writer explore how they would feel if they were in June's position in this situation?' ($\alpha = .93$); and (3) whether or not (i.e. yes or no) the writer made any mention of group membership ($\alpha = .74$).

Results
Perspective-taking manipulation check The codings of the paragraphs revealed that participants in the perspective-taking condition

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(*M* = 6.18) put themselves in the shoes of the main character significantly more than participants in the control condition (*M* = 1.42); *t*(87) = 22.18, *p* < .001, *r* = .92.

Empathy and group membership   Participants in the perspective-taking condition expressed more empathic feelings in their paragraphs (*M* = 5.43) than participants in the control condition (*M* = 1.19); *t*(87) = 16.12, *p* < .001, *r* = .87. Participants in the perspective-taking condition also mentioned group membership more frequently (*M* = 1.99) than participants in the control condition (*M* = 1.70); *t*(87) = 4.64, *p* < .001, *r* = .44.

Mood measure   A 2 (viewing condition) × 3 (applicant race) ANOVA indicated that there were no differences in positive, negative, or anxious moods for participants among the different conditions. We found no main effects or any interaction effects.

Liking for the target   The results were consistent with the results from study 1. A 2 (viewing condition: perspective-taking vs. control) × 3 (applicant race: Asian, White, African American) ANOVA revealed no main effects for condition or applicant ethnicity, but did reveal a significant interaction for the applicant race and viewing instructions manipulation, *F*(2, 82) = 3.09, *p* = .05.

In the Asian applicant condition, participants showed an increase in their reported liking for the Asian applicant in the perspective-taking condition (*M* = 5.63) compared to the control condition (*M* = 4.33); *t* (82) = 2.87, *p* < 0.01, *r* = 0.30. However, viewing the video from the two different perspectives had no effect on the reported liking of the African American applicant (perspective-taking *M* = 5.21; control *M* = 5.44); *t* < 1 or White applicant (perspective-taking *M* = 5.14; control *M* = 5.08); *t* < 1. The participants in the control condition liked the Asian applicant significantly less than the White applicant (*t* (82) = 1.76, *p* < 0.05, *r* = 0.19) and also the African American applicant, *t*(82) = 2.33, *p* < .05, *r* = .24. The differences between ratings of liking in the perspective-taking condition were not significant (see Table 2).

It is interesting to note that the Asian applicant in the control condition was not only liked less than the White applicant, but also the African American applicant. This is a surprising finding. It is possible that participants rated liking the African American applicant more because they may perceive less threat and competition from an African American applicant than from an Asian American applicant. This would be consistent with other findings on prejudicial attitudes towards Asian Americans (e.g. Lin, Kwan, Cheung, & Fiske, 2005). Participants might also be engaging in self-presentation effects, not wanting to appear prejudiced on an explicit measure of liking for an African American target.

Mediational analyses   Once again, we found that empathy significantly mediated the relationship between the perspective-taking condition

Table 2. Study 2: Participants' reported liking for applicant

Perspective manipulation	Applicant race		
	Asian	White	African American
Perspective-taking condition	*M* = 5.63	*M* = 5.14	*M* = 5.21
	SD = .96	*SD* = 1.35	*SD* = 1.37
Control condition	*M* = 4.33	*M* = 5.08	*M* = 5.44
	SD = 1.23	*SD* = 1.55	*SD* = 1.09

Note: *n* = 16 for Asian applicant/perspective-taking, *n* = 15 for Asian applicant/control, *n* = 14 for White applicant/perspective-taking, *n* = 13 for White applicant/control, *n* = 14 for African American applicant/ perspective-taking, *n* = 16 for African American applicant/control. Response scale ranged from 1 (did not like the student) to 7 (liked the student very much).

and liking for the target when the applicant was Asian, but not when the applicant was White or African American. When the applicant was Asian, we found that the perspective-taking manipulation significantly predicted how much participants reported liking the applicant ($B = 1.29$, *S.E.* $= .395$, $p < .05$) and how much the participants expressed empathic feelings in their paragraphs, $B = 4.09$, *S.E.* $= .419$, $p < .01$. Moreover, we found that empathic feelings predicted the degree of liking for the applicant, $B = .248$, *S.E.* $= .087$, $p < .05$. However, when the empathic feelings were controlled for in the analyses, the relationship between the perspective-taking manipulation and liking for the applicant became marginally significant, $B = .565$, *S.E.* $= .896$, $p = .661$. A Sobel test revealed that this drop in significance level was important, $Z = 2.74$, $p < .01$.

However, when we ran this series of regression for the White and African American condition, the only significant result that we found was that condition predicted empathic feelings, but neither condition nor empathic feelings predicted reported liking for the participant.

In running the same analyses on mentions of group membership, once again, we found that the only significant result was that condition predicted the frequency of mentions of group membership. Thus, mentions to group membership did not seem to mediate the effects that we observed.

Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated that perspective-taking induced feelings of empathy for one member of a racial group which led to improved attitudes toward other individuals of that group. In study 3, we examined whether inducing empathy led to less discrimination in helping behaviors toward members of the racial out-group.

Method
Participants Forty-nine non-Asian undergraduate students (15 male; 34 female) from the University of Michigan participated in this experiment in exchange for course credit. Thirty-nine participants self-identified as Caucasian, 2 as African American, and 8 as Hispanic.

Design and materials This study also employed a 2 (viewing condition: perspective-taking or control) × 2 (confederate race: Asian or Caucasian) factorial design. Similar to studies 1 and 2, participants were randomly placed in either a perspective-taking condition or control condition. The second factor in the design was the race of the confederate (Asian or Caucasian) who dropped a set of keys. Six people—4 Caucasian (2 female; 2 male) and 2 Asian confederates (1 female; 1 male)—played the part of the confederate in this study.

Procedure
Participants were run individually. The first part of the experiment was identical to studies 1 and 2. Participants were asked to watch the three-minute video clip of *The Joy Luck Club* following the perspective-taking or control instructions, to write a short paragraph and fill out the Positive and Negative Affect Schedules (PANAS; Watson et al., 1988) questionnaire.

After participants had completed the PANAS, they filled out a final questionnaire asking basic demographic information including their gender, their race, their major and what they believed the experiment was investigating. Upon completion of the final questionnaire, the experimenter gave the participant credit for participation, and escorted the participant out of the room. Right before leaving, the experimenter told the participant, 'This building can be very confusing, so the best way to exit would be to go right down the hallway toward the stairwell.' As the experimenter was giving the participant these directions, the experimenter made sure that the participant was positioned in the hallway so that the participant could clearly see the confederate seated on a bench next to the doorway of the experiment.

During this time, the confederate who was blind to the participant's experimental condition, got up from the bench, making a lot of noise while doing so to ensure that the participant

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and experimenter would notice him or her. The confederate then walked in the same direction the experimenter instructed the participant to go, making sure that he or she remained a few feet ahead of the participant. The confederate then dropped a set of keys and continued walking, pretending that he or she did not notice. The keys fell down on a hard surface floor and made a loud clunking noise when they hit the ground. The experimenter remained behind to observe and record whether or not the participant looked down when they heard the clunking noise to make sure that the participant noticed the keys, and whether or not the participant helped the confederate by calling out or picking up the dropped set of keys. Participants were coded as not helping if they reached the door to the staircase at the end of the hall and didn't call out to the confederate or pick up the keys.[5] When the participant reached the exit, he or she was stopped, debriefed, and thanked by both the experimenter and confederate. None of the participants guessed the hypothesis of the experiment.

Coding of paragraphs   Similar to the first two studies, coders coded participants' paragraphs for: (1) 'How much the writer was putting themselves in June's (the main character) shoes?' (α = .94); (2) 'To what extent does the writer explore how they would feel if they were in June's position in this situation?' (α = .81); and (3) whether or not (i.e. yes or no) the writer made any mention of group membership (α = .92).

Results

Perspective-taking manipulation check   The codings of the paragraphs revealed that participants in the perspective-taking condition (M = 5.97) put themselves in the shoes of the main character significantly more than participants in the control condition (M = 1.81), $t(43)$ = 13.23, p < .001, r = .91.

Empathy and group membership   Participants in the perspective-taking condition expressed more empathic feelings in their paragraphs (M = 5.87) than participants in the control condition (M = 1.28), $t(38)$ = 10.86, p < .001, r = .87. Interestingly, participants in the perspective-taking condition mentioned group membership less frequently (M = 1.68) than participants in the control condition (M = 2.00), $t(38)$ = –2.92, p < .003, r = .43.

Helping   The data collected from all 49 non-Asian participants were recorded. Four participants were dropped because they walked in the wrong direction, or started talking on their cellphone, and another five participants were dropped for not looking down when the keys were dropped and made a clunking sound. This left us with only 40 participants. We considered the participants to have helped if they called out to the confederate or picked up the keys. Participants' overall helping was evaluated as either 'yes' (coded as 1) or 'no' (coded as 0). Thus, a higher mean in the condition referred to more help. In our analyses, we found no effect for participant or confederate gender. Twenty-eight of the participants were run with confederates of the same sex, and 17 of the pairs were run with confederates of the opposite sex. The assignments to same or opposite sex confederates were random and we found no effect for same or opposite sex trials.

A 2 × 2 factorial ANOVA revealed no main effects for viewing condition or confederate race. However, we found a significant interaction for participant helping between the confederate race and viewing instructions, $F(1,36)$ = 5.45, p < 0.026. Participants in the control condition helped the Caucasian confederate more than the Asian confederates, $t(36)$ = 2.28, p < 0.01, r = 0.33. However, in the perspective-taking condition, participants did not differ in how much they helped the Caucasian or Asian confederates (t < 1). Moreover, when the confederates were Asian, participants in the perspective-taking condition (M = 0.89) helped significantly more than participants in the control condition (M = 0.45); $t(36)$ = 2.28, p < 0.01, r = 0.33. However, when the confederates were Caucasian, we found no significant difference in helping behavior for participants in the perspective-taking condition (M = 0.90) compared to the

control condition ($M = 0.70$); $t(36) = 1.04$, $p = .16$ (see Table 3).

Mood measure   A 2×2 factorial ANOVA indicated that there were no differences in positive, negative, or anxious moods for participants among the different conditions. There were no main effects or any interaction effects. Positive, negative or anxious moods were not significantly correlated with helping.

Mediational analyses   We found that empathy significantly mediated the relationship between perspective-taking condition and helping for the target when the confederate was Asian, but not when the confederate was White. When the confederate was Asian, we found that the perspective-taking manipulation significantly predicted how much participants helped the confederate ($B = .434$, *S.E.* $= .201$, $p < .05$) and how much the participants expressed empathic feelings in their paragraphs, $B = 5.18$, *S.E.* $= .329$, $p < .01$. We found that empathic feelings significantly predicted helping for the confederate, $B = .081$, *S.E.* $= .038$, $p < .05$. However, when the empathic feelings were controlled for in the analyses, the relationship between the perspective-taking manipulation and helping was no longer significant, $B = 1.02$, *S.E.* $= .781$, $p = $ n.s. A Sobel test revealed that this drop in significance level was significant, $Z = 2.11$, $p < .05$.

However, when we ran this series of regression for the White confederate condition, the only significant result we found was that condition predicted empathic feelings, but neither condition nor empathic feelings predicted reported liking for the participant. We found a similar pattern of results when we ran the same analyses on whether participants mentioned group membership. For both Asian and White confederate conditions, we found that the only significant result was that the condition predicted mentions of group membership. Group membership did not predict helping behaviors. Thus, mentioning group membership did not mediate the effects that we observed.

Discussion

Taken together, these three studies demonstrated that empathy may be an effective tool for improving intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Study 1 revealed that the perspective-taking manipulation which induced empathy towards an outgroup target increased self-reported liking for another member of the target's group. In study 2, we found that the perspective-taking manipulation improved liking for the individuals in the target's group but not for individuals in other groups. Finally, study 3 demonstrated that taking the perspective of an Asian target in a video clip increased helping behaviors toward a different Asian target. We also found evidence that empathy mediated these effects.

Impressively, the increase in helping behavior observed in study 3 occurred in the absence of any social pressures to behave kindly toward the target, further bolstering the argument that it was empathy and not social desirability pressures fueling the change in behavior. Additionally, the helping behaviors occurred outside of the

Table 3. Study 3: Participant helping behavior

	Confederate race	
Perspective manipulation	Asian	White
Perspective-taking condition	$M = .89$ $SD = .33$	$M = .90$ $SD = .32$
Control condition	$M = .45$ $SD = .52$	$M = .70$ $SD = .48$

Note: $n = 11$ for Asian confederate/perspective-taking, $n = 9$ for Asian confederate/control condition, $n = 10$ for White confederate/perspective-taking condition, $n = 10$ for White confederate/control condition. Response scale ranged from 0 (participant did not help) to 1 (participant helped).

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experimental context, demonstrating that the manipulation's effects extended beyond the study session. With study 3, we established criterion validity for our empathy manipulation by demonstrating real-world effects. None of the participants in the study were able to guess the purpose of the study.

There are several limitations to our study. One limitation of our third study was that the behavioral measure used echoed Asian stereotypes. It is possible that the empathy manipulation activated stereotypical traits associated with Asians such as *helpfulness* and *politeness.* Participants might have been more helpful because of the activated stereotypes, rather than because of increased empathy (see Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996).

We believe this is an unlikely explanation for our findings, however. Previous research has shown that improving attitudes toward an outgroup reduces the activation of stereotypes (Galinsky & Moskowitz, 2000; Rudman, Ashmore, & Gary, 2002) and that inducing empathy towards an outgroup target improves ingroup attitudes, regardless of the stereotypicality of the target (Vescio et al., 2003). Between the fact that our empathy manipulation has previously been shown to improve intergroup attitudes, and our finding of empathy mediating our effects, we believe that empathy effects are a more likely explanation for our findings than stereotype activation.

A second limitation associated with our studies is that we only used one clip across all the studies. Although this clip was chosen after extensive pre-testing, the use of only a single clip reduces the generalizability of our results, and does not allow us to establish the boundaries or to narrow in on the processes contributing to our effects. For instance, in pre-testing the clips, we chose a clip that was balanced in its emphasis of both foreign (i.e. Asian) and familiar (i.e. American) group identities. Would we be able to find these results if we had chosen a clip that emphasized one identity over another? Similarly, we chose a clip that was particularly poignant. Would we find these effects if we had chosen a less poignant clip? Following up on these questions would allow us to gain insights into

the nature of empathy that was elicited by our manipulation.

Past studies have also found that feelings of guilt and recognition of injustice about treatment of minorities mediated the effects of perspective taking to create more positive attitudes towards the outgroup (Dovidio et al., 2004). It is interesting to note that we were able to elicit improved attitudes and feelings with very subtle manipulations that don't directly refer to experiences of discrimination. In our study, the particular movie clip we used had no inter-race interactions, and did not refer to any White-Asian dynamics. Rather the clip was focused on negotiating a mother and daughter relationship. This pattern of results suggests two interesting possibilities: (1) that feelings of guilt at the treatment of minorities are so well ingrained in majority group members that guilt could be elicited with very subtle manipulations, and/or (2) that in addition to guilt, other emotions associated with empathy could also elicit improved attitudes and behaviors.

It is also interesting to note that Davis et al. (2004) found that participants who were given no instructions defaulted to empathic thoughts, while in study 2, participants who were given no instructions did not default to empathy. One possible explanation for the difference in participants' responses in our study and Davis et al.'s (2004) study was that the target of empathy used in Davis et al.'s (2004) study was an ingroup member while the target in our study was an outgroup member. This may suggest that empathy may be more naturally elicited for ingroup members than outgroup members.

The difference in how people may be more naturally inclined towards empathy for ingroups than outgroups may provide insights into processes underlying ingroup bias in helping behavior. Past research has found that empathy was a stronger predictor for ingroup helping than outgroup helping (Stürmer, Snyder, Kapp, & Siem, 2006; Stürmer, Snyder, & Omoto, 2005). We found that while empathy for the out-group may not be naturally elicited in default settings, empathy for outgroups could be induced through experimental manipulations and that

these manipulations could eliminate group bias in helping.

In sum, this research makes several significant contributions to the literature. First, it establishes empathy as an effective tool for increasing liking and decreasing discriminatory helping behaviors towards members of the outgroup. Second, we contribute to the empathy literature by showing that empathy induced for one member of an outgroup is extended to other individual members of the outgroup. Third, we find that the effects of empathy for the outgroup apply only to the group that is the target of empathy; it does not impact other groups. These findings point to promising avenues, not only for future research, but for interventions to improve intergroup relationships.

Notes

1. We define empathy as an other-directed emotion that is elicited in response to observing the experiences of another person, which may create a sense of oneness with the target (Cialdini, Brown, Lewis, Luce, & Neuburg, 1997). Researchers have differentiated between many types of empathy. For instance, researchers differentiate between cognitive empathy, which is elicited through taking the perspective of another person, and emotional empathy, which refers to the emotions one feels in response to observing the experiences of another person (Duan & Hill, 1996; Stephan & Finlay, 2003). Researchers also differentiate between parallel empathy, feeling what the target is feeling, and reactive empathy, feelings elicited in response to the experiences of another person (Finlay & Stephan, 2000; Stephan & Finlay, 2003). Our perspective manipulation combines aspects of the past manipulations that other researchers have used to induce empathy (i.e. imagining how the other person would feel and imagining how you would feel in the other person's place). In the studies reported in this article, we elicited parallel, cognitive empathy.
2. We found no gender differences in any of the analyses that we conducted for any of the studies.
3. In our pre-testing, we found that the raters reported that the video clip was poignant and elicited emotions such as warmth, social pressure, unhappiness, frustration, love, and closeness. The emotions revealed in the paragraphs by the participants were similar.
4. All of the *t*-tests reported in this section as well as the results sections for studies 2 and 3 are one-tailed.
5. Participants who did not help usually walked around the keys and down the hall. Participants walking around the keys rather than through the keys suggests that participants are at the very least aware of where the keys are. Moreover, participants had to pass the keys because the hallway limited the range of motion they could take. In debriefing, participants who did not help offered explanations such as believing others would help, being in a hurry, believing the confederate would come back for it, or not noticing. In addition, participants were unlikely to believe that they were being observed as some subjects expressed surprise at the final dependent measure and the participants walked away with their back turned to the experimenter and none of them looked back to check if the experimenter was still there.

Acknowledgments

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Appendix

Coding examples

1. 'How much the writer was putting themselves in June's (the main character) shoes?'

Sample statements from a paragraph coded a 7 (high):

> I would have very similar feelings in her situation. Someone she loves very much has high hopes and expectations. This girl feels like she has not lived to those hopes and expectations. Like the main character, I would feel disappointed, superior.

Sample statements from a paragraph coded a 1 (low):

> The Joy Luck Club based on the book by Amy Tan, revolves around the experiences of immigrant Chinese and their children. Each family must cope with problems that stem from many differences … The movie seeks to present how families with Asian heritage deal with a variety of problems.

2. 'To what extent does the writer explore how they would feel if they were in June's position in this situation?'

Sample statements from a paragraph coded a 7 (high):

> Initially I would have felt very insecure and helpless, unable to change the life I was born into. I would have also felt somewhat meaningless and ashamed at not being able to live up to the expectations of my mother. My feelings would have changed, however, as my mother revealed to me that I was indeed special to her. I would have felt loved and cared for, and would have experienced a change from my pessimistic disposition.

Sample statements from a paragraph coded a 1 (low):

The overall presentation of the clip was fair. The cinematography was average and of a standard style.

3. Whether or not the writer made any mention of group membership.
Sample statements from a paragraph coded yes:

The movie portrays the difficulties that arise between those who immigrated to America and their children. While a gap exists between all generations, the cultural gap is larger between 1st generation immigrants and 2nd generation immigrants.

Paragraphs coded 'no' had no statements about group membership.

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