

**Introduction to Psychology**  
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**Lecture – 26**  
**Emotion - Culture and Emotion**

Now, let us talk about the influence of the, impact of the, effect of culture on emotional expression. I will like to begin with an interesting experiment of a prism.

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### Culture & Emotion

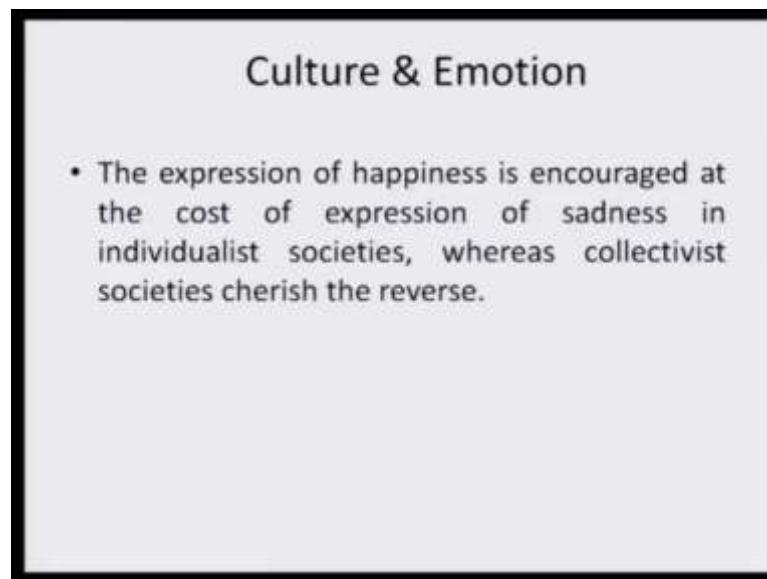
- Friesen (1972): Participants had to view a stressful film alone and with the experimenter.
- Pan-cultural facial signals were observed during spontaneous expression of emotions in isolated condition (viewing the film alone).
- Culture-specific expressions were observed in social reciprocation condition (viewing the film with the experimenter).

What interestingly this experiment wanted was that the participants, they had to view a film which was extremely stressful and there were two conditions, either you view the film all alone or you view the film with the experimental, two situations. What was finally, observed now the pan cultural facial signals they were observed during this spontaneous expression of emotion, when the participants they were viewing the film all alone. And cultural specific expression was observed in social reciprocation condition, that is when the individual, the participant was viewing the film with experiment; that means that when you have people from your own cultural background around you, your face largely reflects the cultural specific expressions and when you are all alone it is pan cultural expression that you show through your face.

So, this is an interesting distinction, that means, again go back to learning where we said, know there is something called social facilitation. You behave little differently, when you

are in a group. So, when you are in a group of people who share your culture, then you show now heightened degree of culture specific singles on your face. This was an interesting experiment. Now the expression of happiness is largely encouraged in collectivist culture compared to individualistic culture, where in the case of individualistic culture the expression of personal feelings you can very conveniently express it whereas collectivist culture they would demand that you should largely express the positive emotions on your face.

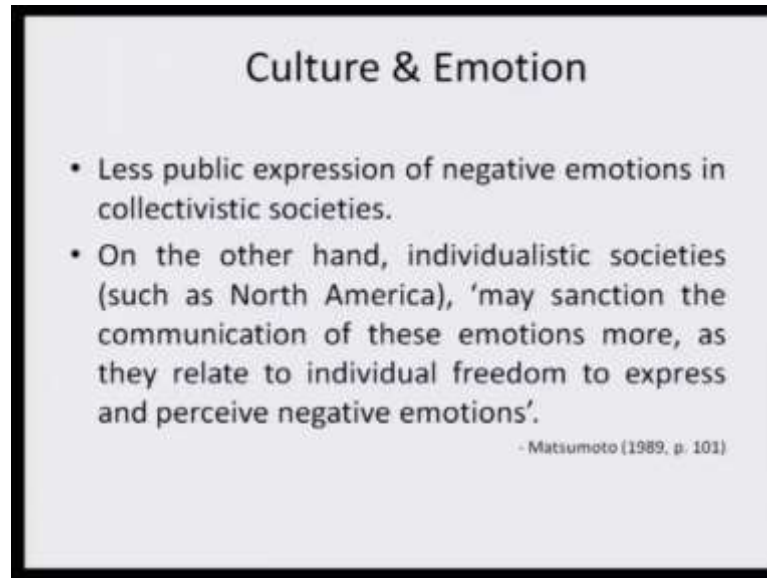
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Individualistic culture you can very happily know represent your sadness in a given situation, but collectivist culture will have by and large will encourage you to now mask your sadness, to neutralize your sadness, one of these two conditions and if you can of course cover it up with certain degree of happiness that could be the best. Look at your early morning interaction with people around you, in our culture India when you ask somebody, How are you? The standard reply is fine. Very few people say good. Most of us say fine. So, the good days extended to the heightened degree that is what we express. Whereas, in several individualistic societies you would realize that many people, when you ask them, how are you? They would largely say not so bad; not so bad is an expression that you would never ever see in this culture.

So, that is the big difference, that is what you call the encouragement that you unknowingly acquire which actually is a part of the social influence, the cultural influence.

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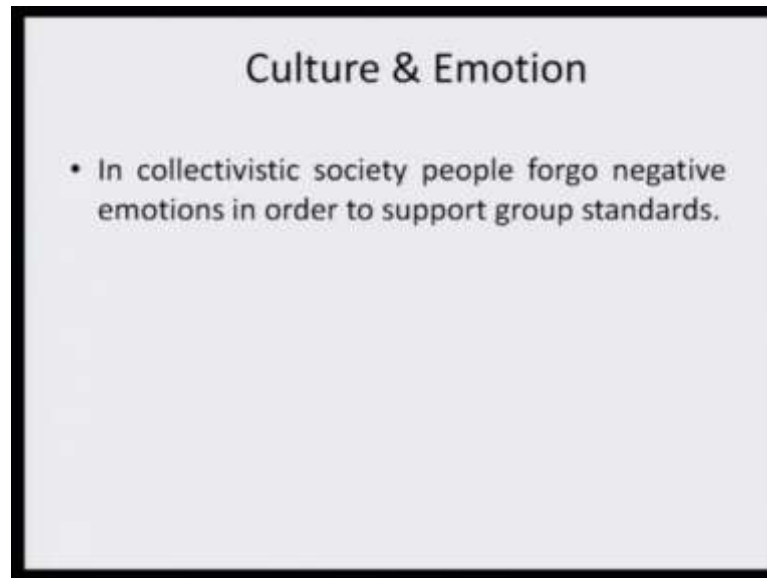
**Culture & Emotion**

- Less public expression of negative emotions in collectivistic societies.
- On the other hand, individualistic societies (such as North America), 'may sanction the communication of these emotions more, as they relate to individual freedom to express and perceive negative emotions'.

- Matsumoto (1989, p. 101)

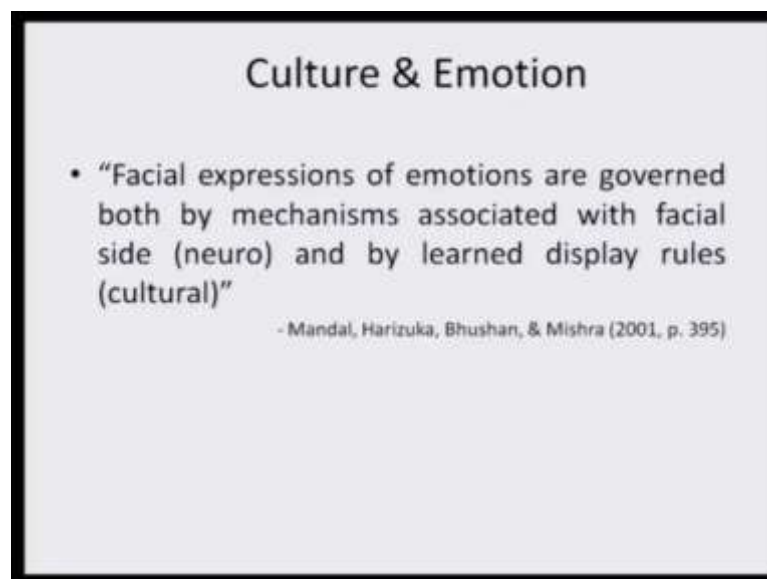
Several studies have demonstrated that very little negative emotions are publicly expressed in collectivist society. Whereas, in the case of individualistic society, I am quoting Matsumoto who says that individualistic societies may sanction the communication of these emotions more. As they relate to individual freedom to express and perceive negative emotions.

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Now, in collectivistic society people forgo negative emotions in order to support group standards. Everybody says I am good, I am fine and you want to know somewhere come closure to that type of the standard, that the group is maintaining and therefore, wherever you ask in the morning, Good morning. How are you? and you say good or you say fine. We are going through the brief introductory psychology course and therefore we will not go in to the details of studies on the effect of culture on emotion, but I must just refer to it. You need not go into the details of it.

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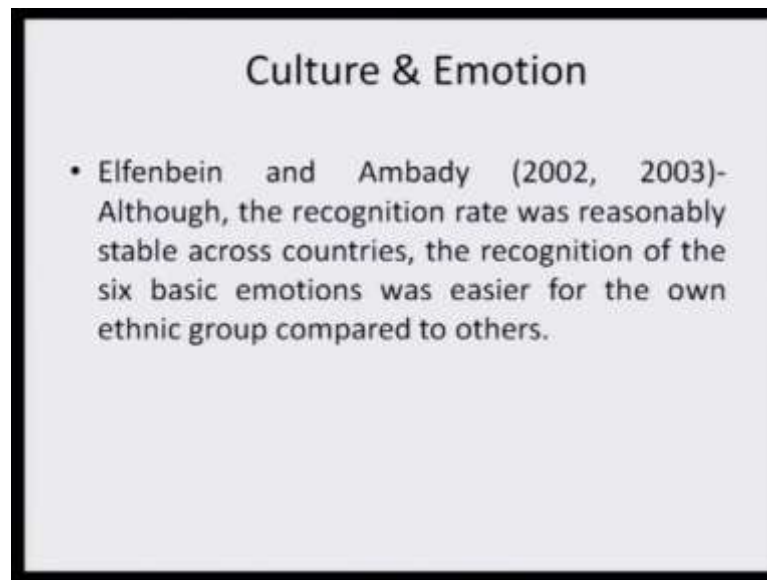


That, there is a theory called a Neuro cultural theory of emotion which basically says that the facial expression of emotion will have mechanisms which are associated with side of the face. The expression which is neurally governed and the display rules that you learned from the culture.

So, what happens? We have the two sides of the face. The left and right side and neurally, there are two mechanisms. One what is called as the Contra lateral mechanism. You remember in the case of sensation we talked about, when we were looking at the visual process that at optic chiasm, the neural fibers they criss-cross. So, from the left eye they go to right lateral geniculate nucleus and then to the right side of the brain. So, contra lateral mechanism would mean that from the left side, the information goes to the right hemisphere of the brain and from the right side, the information goes to the left hemisphere of the brain that is contra lateral. There is also certain type of interventions what is called as Ipsilateral. Ipsilateral means from the right side of the face, the information goes to the right hemisphere. So, this is going to the same side therefore, it is called Ipsilateral.

Now, we have contra lateral as well as ipsilateral control for our facial expression, as far as the neural connections go, but there are also display rules which are cultural specific and we learned them and therefore the neuro-cultural theory says that there is what you call neural program which governs your expression, but there is also something called cultural conduct rule, the display rules that we also follow.

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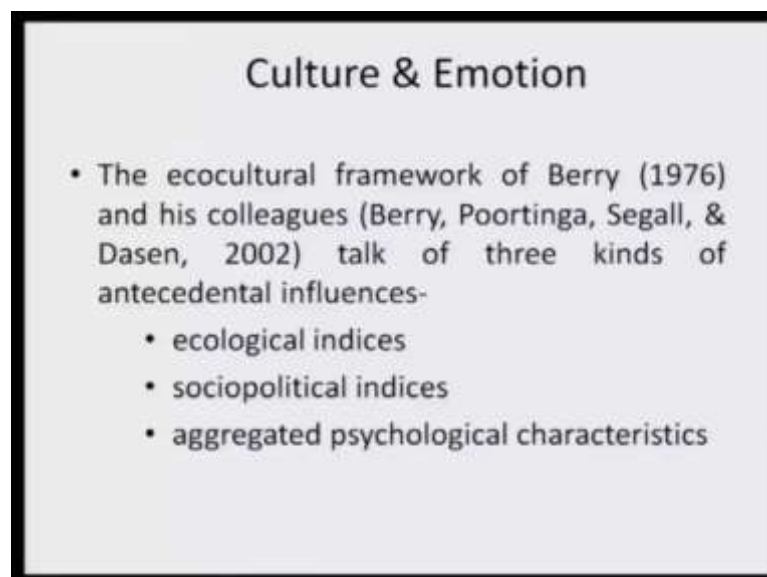


**Culture & Emotion**

- Elfenbein and Ambady (2002, 2003)- Although, the recognition rate was reasonably stable across countries, the recognition of the six basic emotions was easier for the own ethnic group compared to others.

Another interesting study which suggest now that the 6 basic emotions that we have talked ,about they are much easier to understand, if you are looking at the expressions from your own ethnic group, so if I am from given group if I look at the expressions of the people from my own group, I can recognize the basic emotions very clearly, but if I look at the expressions of people from alien background, from a different cultural background then I might commit error.

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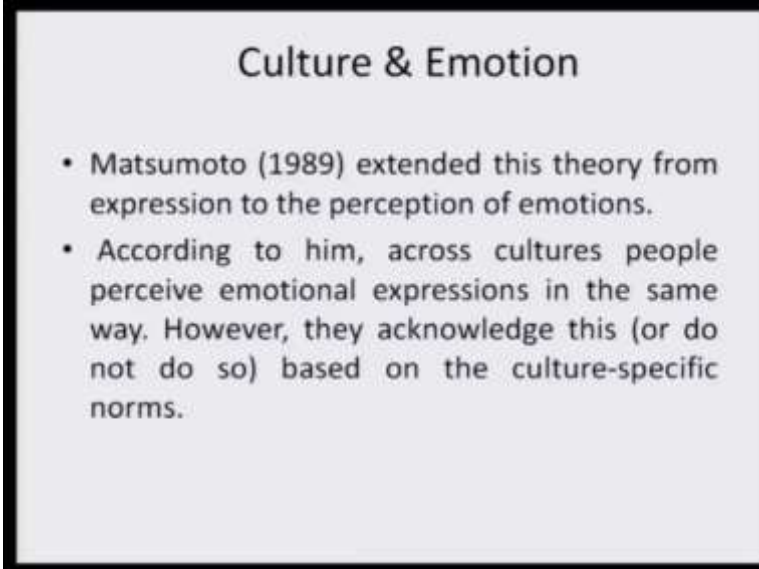


**Culture & Emotion**

- The ecocultural framework of Berry (1976) and his colleagues (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002) talk of three kinds of antecedental influences-
  - ecological indices
  - sociopolitical indices
  - aggregated psychological characteristics

Now, if the eco cultural frame works of Berry and his colleagues, they talked about three types of antecedental influences on emotion. The ecological indices, the sociopolitical indices and the aggregated psychological characteristics now, you can see know you have the ecological components coming into being; you have the socio political component coming into being as well as the psychological characteristics. So that means, that the emotional expressions that we give in our day to day life is not a pure psychological phenomena rather it does take into account the ecological suitability of the expression it does take into account the social conduct, the display rules and all these things combined together.

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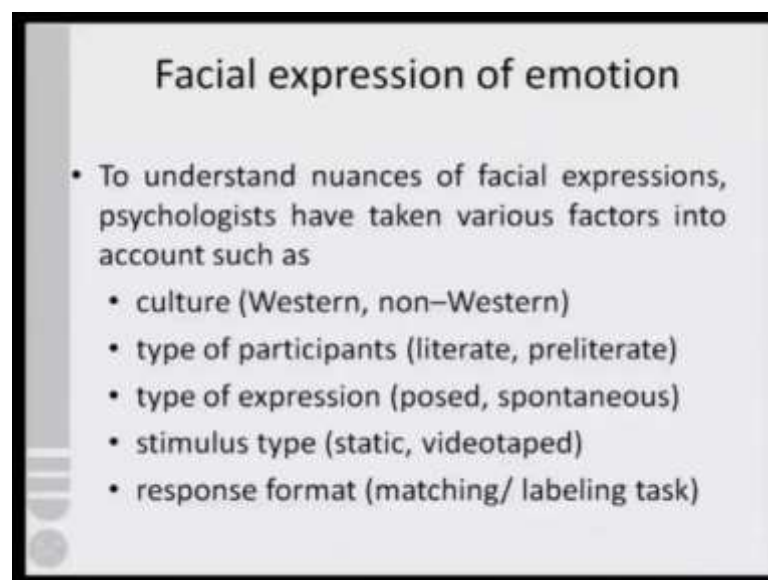
### Culture & Emotion

- Matsumoto (1989) extended this theory from expression to the perception of emotions.
- According to him, across cultures people perceive emotional expressions in the same way. However, they acknowledge this (or do not do so) based on the culture-specific norms.

Now, Matsumoto he extended this theory from expression to the perception of emotions and he says that across culture people perceive emotional expressions in the same way. However they acknowledge this based on the culture specific norms. So that would mean that in terms of perception of emotion, we are not different across culture, but when it comes to acknowledge it, whether I should recognize this or I should try to avoid it. So, that acknowledgement would be now cultural specific in nature. The cultural norms will decide whether you should be expressing this or you should not be doing so. For example, studies approve that the Japanese they usually mask their negative emotions with smiling. So, you keep a neutral expression on the face and if at all you have to express negativity, say for example, if you have to show sadness you try to mask your expression with a certain degree of smile. Whereas, in the case of oriental Indians it has

been realized that we de-intensify the negative emotions. So, fear and anger they are de-intensified you reduce the intensity of these emotions. Why is it essential for the Japanese to mask the emotion? Why is it essential for the oriental Indians to reduce the intensity of the negative emotions? Again it is the cultural specific norms. This is not known Matsumoto was saying, when he said that even though we are all by a large the same way then it comes to perception of the emotional expression, but having perceived it, it is not a guarantee that you would also acknowledge it. So, consciously we acknowledge it only based on cultural specific norms. It is very interesting to see that to understand the nuances of facial expression; psychologists have taken various factors into account. For instance people have looked at culture, right now we also focused exclusively on culture.

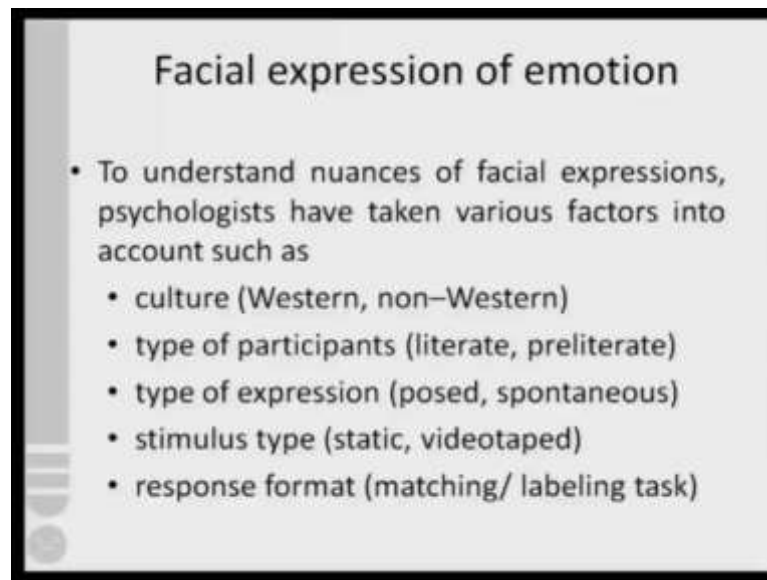
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So, comparing facial expressions of people from the western world versus people from the non western world or types of participants, literate versus preliterate - somebody who is educated; somebody who is not so or types of expression, either it is a posed emotion. I stand still in the front of a camera and then I put smile on my face, I show certain expression happiness, sadness whatever it is, but I pose for the photo session that is posed expression. Comparing this with spontaneous emotion, spontaneous would be that I am in a real life situation, where I express the emotion and I am clicked at that point of time it is the spontaneous expression.



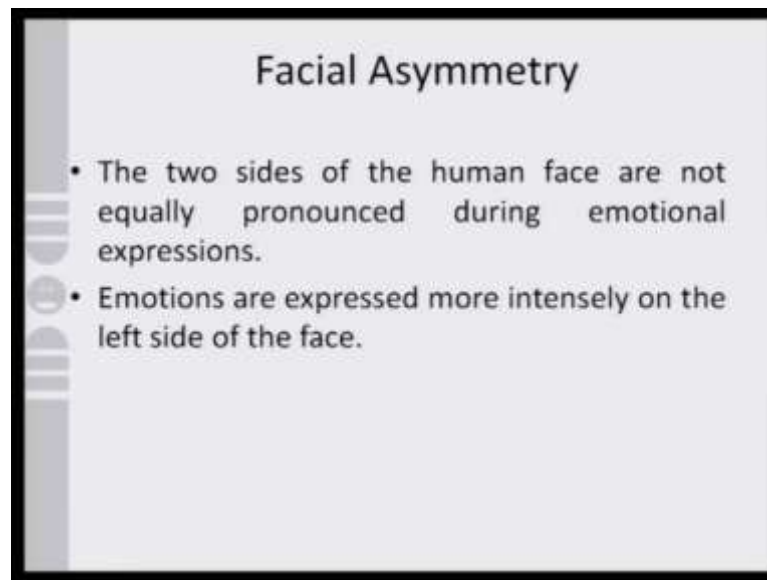
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You also have now the stimulus type variation - Static versus Videotaped type of an expression. Still image versus know strip of images, which primarily you can play in the sequence. So, it will have a start point and it will have the maximum intensity point before it comes to the neutral point.

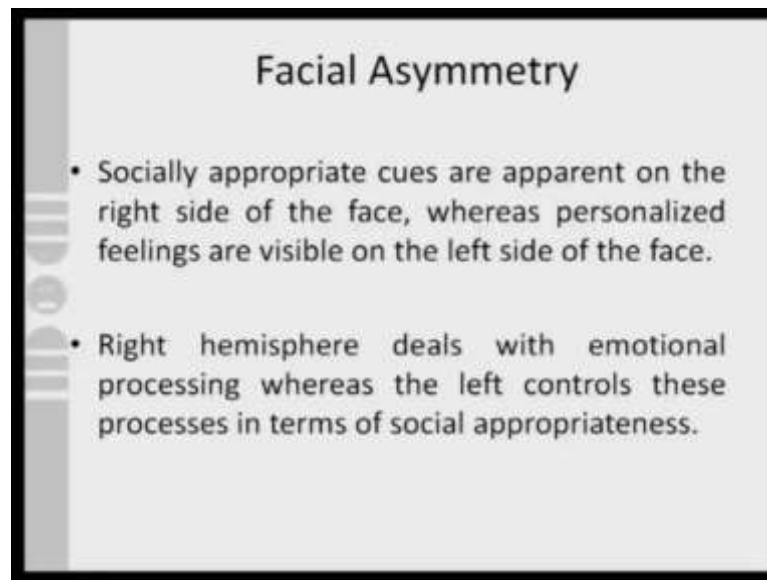
So, say for example, if I have to express happiness, so from the neutral stage my facial expression goes up to certain level of happiness and again it comes down. That would be the videotaped stimulus tape and then the response format where either you ask the respondents, the participant in the study to level the emotion. Level the emotion means I show you the images and then I ask you what this emotional expression is, you have to identify the emotion. So, let us now say for example, you look at the image and say this is a happy face. So, you have labeled the emotion. The second situation could be where you go for a matching task I give you a different individuals photograph expressing one emotion and then I show you some other individuals face, having the same emotion or a different emotion and I ask you to match it and I look at how accurately you can match the expression that was the base line versus the expression that you are seeing right now.

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All these factors had been taken into account in terms of studying human expression. What studies have also found is that the two sides of the human face, they are not actually equally pronounced when we express ourselves. Emotions that are expressed are you know intense on one side of the face. And largely it has been found that emotions are expressed more intensely on the left side of the face. So, say for instance this is my left side of the face. So, this side of the face this half of the face, would be form dominant in expression compare to the right side of the face. People also talk about the social face versus the personal face. So, one half of our face is largely suppose to reflect the social protocol, the socially desired response whereas, the other half is considered to be our personal face which actually reflects the inner feeling .

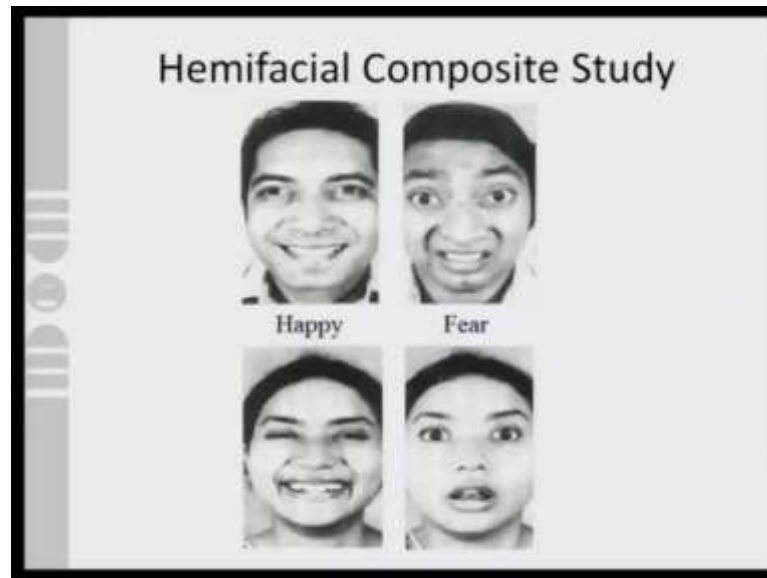
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So, socially appropriate cues, they are more apparent on the right side of the face, the left side of the face will have more and more of the personalized feeling. So, say if I am inwardly very happy, my left face will show pronounced happiness compared to my right face and say if I am in a situation where I have to show happiness, whereas internally I am not my right face will have that very degree of happiness, whereas my left face will not have that pronounced degree of happiness. Take an example, you are moving in a corridor and you meet couple of friends, right now we took the example that somebody ask you how are you and you say fine, culturally drawn norm. You meet somebody you say good morning and you say nice meeting you.

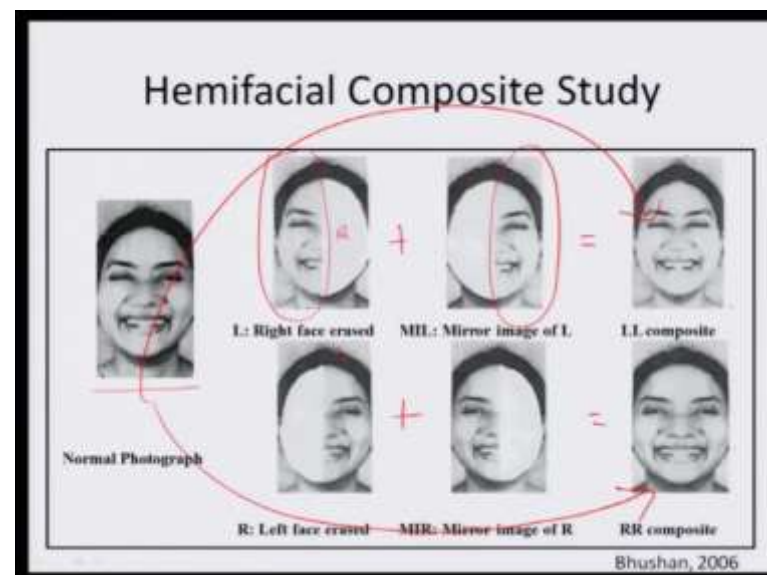
Now, you are socially supposed to meet the individual, greet the individual and say that it was a pleasure meeting you, whereas inwardly it is a great sense of discomfort for you or it might not be a great source of discomfort, but you are not so comfortable, not so happy there would be a clear distinction on the now two sides of the faces.

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Look at these two expressions. The happy face and the face depicting fear, what you are right now looking at is the normal configuration. Now it is if I tell you that the two sides of the face is not. Now what you call equally representative of the emotion, perhaps you will not rely in it. I am looking at the lady right now, who expresses happiness and then I will show you how the two sides of the faces are not the same.

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Now, you see this is the face that you saw, what I have done here is that the right side of the face, this is the right side of the face, this is erased. This is the mirror image, so this

face, this half, this is the Mirror image and these two things so this plus this has led to this face and this is basically the left-left composite. So, only the left side of the face and the reverse has been done here. So, here you have the right-right face. So, this is the left face, this is the left face, this is the mirror image of the left. So, this plus this and this is the result and then you see now the difference. Now this expression and this expression, these two faces although it has come out of the same thing. These two have come from the same photograph. You see the left-left and the right-right is not same. This means that the left face and the right face of this very lady were not expressing happiness to the equal degree, the magnitude was not the same.

So, this is what I was trying to say that the two sides of the face have also been found to represent two different you know level of intensity of emotion. Now that we have understood the significance of the face, Buck in 1918 propose the facial feedback hypothesis. This hypothesis basically proposes that the feedback that is received from the muscle they play a significant role in the subjective experience of emotion. So, how the muscles of the face contract or rarefact. So, that feedback is extremely helpful in terms of understanding and experiencing the emotion.

Now that we have come to facial muscles, so in our next lecture we would exclusively be talking about the musculature analysis of facial expression.