**East of West, West of East: A Matter of Global and Local Identity**

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Research is a very personal matter. On the basis of experiences in different countries with researchers from different cultures over many years some observations will be described. The conceptual frame of this attempt is to look for anthropological universals and cultural specifics. Much can be learned from spatial representations in the arts. Whereas in the West since Renaissance time the central perspective has become dominant in visual art, in Eastern landscape paintings the “floating view” is typical. The claim that the central perspective corresponds to geometric laws and matches how we see the world is misleading for at least two reasons: It violates mechanisms of size constancy, and the visual world is spatially reduced in pictures to the perifoveal region only. Research on spatial attention has disclosed two different attentional systems being responsible either for near-fovea vision or for the far periphery. This fundamental principle as a global characteristics of visual processing is neglected in Western art. In Eastern art with a floating view geometric laws are violated, and different potential perspectives are integrated within a holistic pattern. The semantics of what shall be expressed becomes important irrespective of physical parameters. The latter may also create the unique phenomenon of becoming subjectively part of the picture confirming personal identity. Cultural specifics like in the arts (what one might expect) can surprisingly also be observed in theoretical considerations about visual processing. Whereas in the tradition of Western science visual percepts are built up with local elements like feature detectors, in an important Chinese theory global topological features are analyzed first. An important task of the brain is to create the identity of a percept on the basis of spatially and temporally distributed neural activities. It is, thus, an important theoretical question how to deal with the challenge to create and maintain the identity of a percept for some time. It is suggested that one should leave behind a monocausal reasoning for such explanations but adopt for analytical strategies the concept of complementarity as a generative principle.