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An asymmetry between distance estimates made to and from a target

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Abstract

In three experiments, we demonstrated that the self can act as a cognitive reference point, producing an egocentric asymmetry effect on distance judgments such that targets are judged as closer to the viewer than the viewer is to the target. Egocentric asymmetry was observed even when there was a fixed reference object that people could use to anchor distance estimates across trials (Experiment 2). Further, egocentric asymmetry was greater to a non-human artifact than to a human avatar (Experiment 3). In addition, distances from a mailbox to a human avatar were estimated as shorter than distances from an avatar to a mailbox, suggesting that the special status of the self may extend to other people when compared to non-human objects even in allocentric distance judgments (Experiment 2).