

Personality
What makes us who we are?

Psych 305A: Lecture 19

The Cognitive Approach

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Exam 4

- Wednesday, March 11
- What will be covered:
 - Physiological Approach (lecture & text)
 - Evolutionary Approach (lecture & text)
 - Learning & behaviorism (lecture)
 - Cognitive Approach (lecture and text)
 - Chapters 7, 8, & 12
 - Emotions & personality will NOT be on Exam 4!
- Structure of exam:
 - 15 MC (worth 1.5 points each; 22.5 points total)
 - 2 short answers (worth 22.5 points total)

Social Learning Perspective

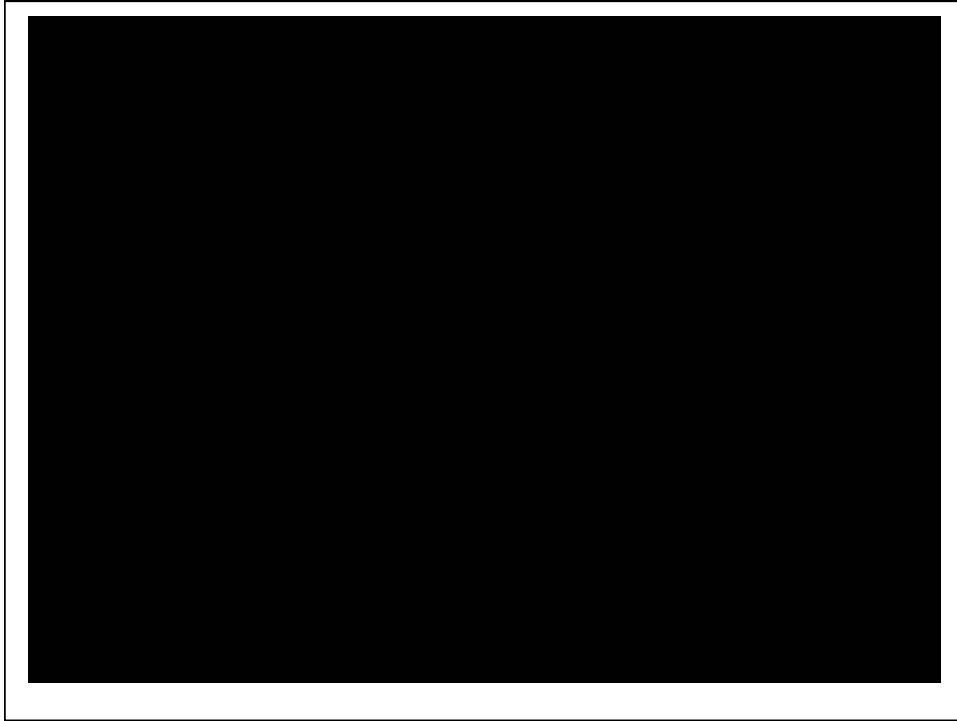
- Observational learning (modeling)
 - Acquire a behavior by watching someone else do it and observing the consequences
- Bandura's "bobo" doll studies
 - 1. Children observed an adult model attack "Bobo", play quietly, or saw no model
 - 2. Children frustrated (toys taken away)
 - 3. Children given opportunity to attack "Bobo"
 - Those who watched model attack were more likely to attack
 - Those who saw no model were more aggressive than those who saw a non-aggressive model

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Social Learning Perspective

- Extension of basic conditioning principles
 - Observational learning (modeling)
 - Observed (vs. experienced) consequences
 - Expectancies / Incentives (vs. deterrents)
 - Anticipated (vs. experienced) consequences
- Examples
 - Altruism in young children
 - Video games and violence
 - Shaming prison sentences

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Is altruism innate, or learned?

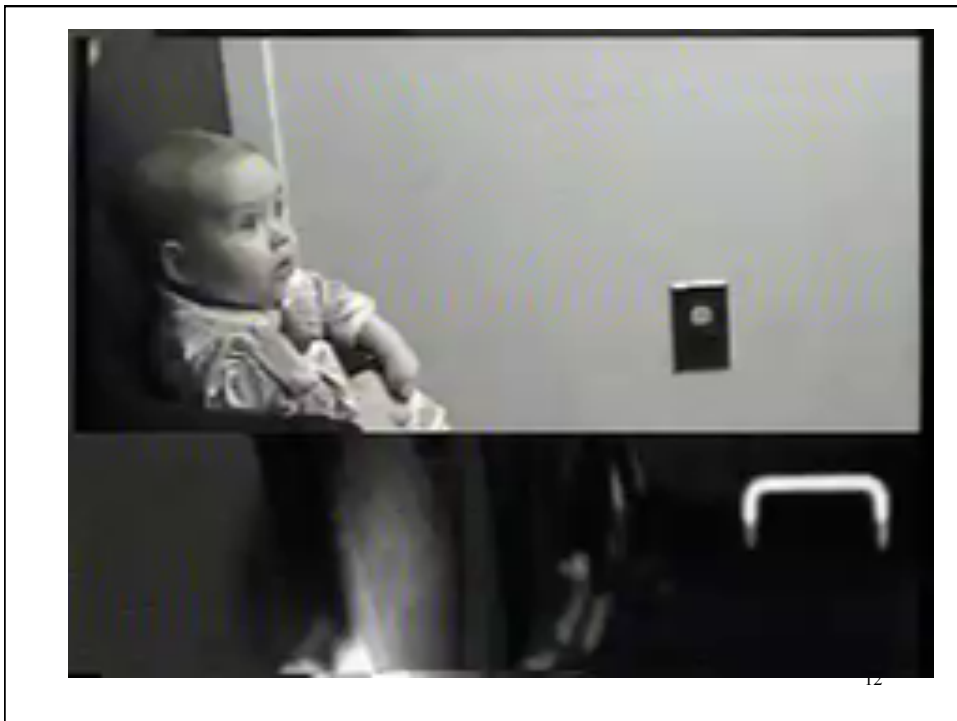
- Evidence for early emergence of pro-social behavior
- Cross-species evidence
 - Warneken & Tomasello, 2006, *Science*
- “Roots of altruism seen in babies: Toddlers eager to help out, even with no prospect of reward”
-MSNBC

Is altruism innate?

- Did the toddlers and chimps expect reward?
- Is this evidence for innate altruism?
- Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom (*Nature*, 2007)
 - At 3 months, babies prefer helpers to hinderers
 - Learn about social helping very early on?

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Roots of altruism?

- **Innate morality or...**
 - **Direct reinforcement**
 - **Play**
 - **Past reinforcement for similar behaviors**
 - **Observational learning (parent)**
 - **Vicarious reinforcement (older sibling)**
 - **No direct reward, but incentives and expectancies**
 - **Anticipated consequences**

Violent Media

- **Exposure to violent TV and video games:**
 - **Increases aggressive behavior, thoughts, and feelings**
 - **Increases physiological arousal**
 - **Decreases pro-social behaviors (e.g., helping)**

Violent Media

- Why does violent media increase aggression?
 - Classical Conditioning
 - Video games are fun to play, pleasurable feelings associated with violence
 - Operant conditioning
 - Video game player is directly rewarded for being violent (e.g., accumulate points)
 - Observational learning
 - “Role models” (e.g., movie stars) rewarded for violence

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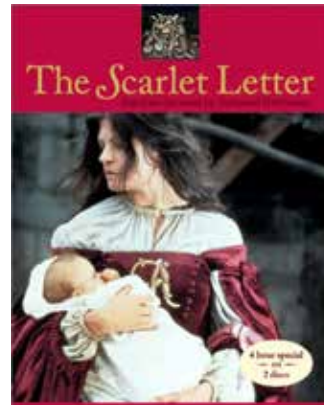
Media Violence

- Which films lead to violence?
 - Gratuitous, realistic violence (Van Damme, Steven Seagal, Jet Li)
 - Old Westerns don't
 - Minimally violent
 - Horror films don't
 - Violence seems fake, observers can discount it

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Date back to the Old Testament
- Common in 17th century Puritanical society (e.g., the scarlet “A”)
- Revival of shame punishments started in the late 1980s



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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Men convicted of soliciting prostitutes are identified in newspapers, radio shows, and billboards
- A man living in Houston was sentenced to stand in front of a store each day for a week carrying a sign that reads: “I stole from this store. Don’t be a thief or this could happen to you.”
- An Ohio judge ordered a man convicted of harassing his ex-wife to let her spit in his face
- In Memphis, Tennessee Judge Joe Brown likes to escort burglary victims to the thieves’ homes and invite them to take whatever they want
- Do you think these sentences deter crime?

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- Shaming sentences may deter crime through:
 - Observational learning: observe someone else punished for antisocial act
 - Expectancies of punishment: imagine self on billboard
- “If humiliation is a punishment for a crime then people will avoid committing crimes. You get deterrence because others see what happens. Why don’t we give shame a chance.”
Judge Williams
- “If you shock ‘em, maybe they’ ll say, ‘Hey, it’s not worth the risk.’ This forces you to face up to what you did.” Judge Poe

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Shaming Prison Sentences

- But, shaming sentences actually may backfire and cause more crime
 - Shaming offenders will only make them feel bad about themselves, which may increase the likelihood that they will commit further crimes
 - -Prof. June Tangney
 - “The goal should be to rehabilitate offenders into society, not embarrass them. Added humiliation may accentuate the very root of their behavior.”
-American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

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The problem with shame

- Motivates escape, hiding, avoidance
- Leads to blaming others, aggression
- More adaptive to feel **guilt** in response to failure
 - Guilt promotes reparation, apology, confession
 - In guilt the focus is on what you **did**, not who you **are**

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What about Public Shaming?

- Internet ‘walls of shame’
 - Pet mistreatment
 - Vancouver Stanley Cup riots
- Is shaming more effective when the shamers are part of your community, or your peers?
- Common Goods dilemma study
 - Shame promoted generosity

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Early Cognitive Perspective

- More complex version of social learning theory
- Led to two fundamental shifts in how we think about personality
 - Our personality reflects how we process information about ourselves, others, and the world
 - How we process information reflects our mental representations of ourselves, other people, and the world
- Mental representations work as filters or lens through which we experience reality
 - Personal constructs, schemas, scripts

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Personal Construct Theory George Kelly



- Overarching perceptions shape interpretation of reality → personality
- If your cognitive take on the world determines your personality, you can change who you are by changing the way you see the world
- Post-Modern before post-modernism

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George Kelly and Personality Change

- “We take the stand that there are always some alternative constructions available to choose among in dealing with the world. No one needs to paint himself into a corner; no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances; no one needs to be the victim of his biography. We call this philosophical position constructive alternativism.”

George Kelly (1955). "A Theory of personality."

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Social Cognition and Personality

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Modern Cognitive Perspective: People have different cognitions, which shape personality



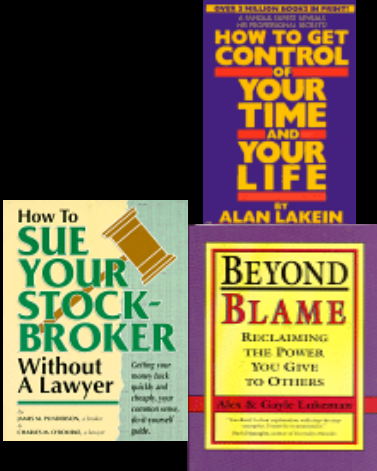
Cognitions (beliefs, attitudes, values, self/other schemas) constitute the *information* that guides people's behavior

Locus of Control Julian Rotter

- **External Locus:** Belief that fate, luck, or outside forces are responsible what happens
- **Internal Locus:** Belief that one's own ability, effort, or actions determine what happens



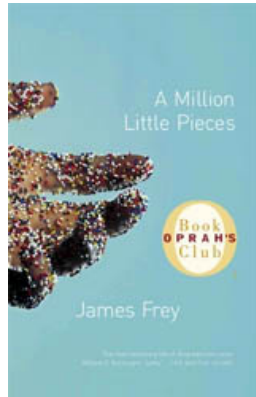
Whose fault?



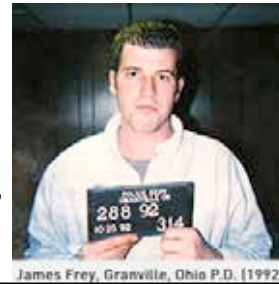
Control, blame, fate, freedom

..... Are we at the mercy of **external forces** or is what happens to us under our **own control**?

Advocating Internal Locus: The appeal of James Frey



“People in here, people everywhere, they all want to take their own problems, usually created by themselves, and try to pass them off on someone or something else. I'm a victim of nothing but myself, just as I believe that most people with this so-called disease aren't victims of anything other than themselves. I call it being responsible. I call it the acceptance of my own problems and my own weaknesses with honor and dignity. I call it getting better.”



Next Class

- Wrap up Cognitive Approach
- Begin Emotions & Personality