Personality
What makes us who we are?
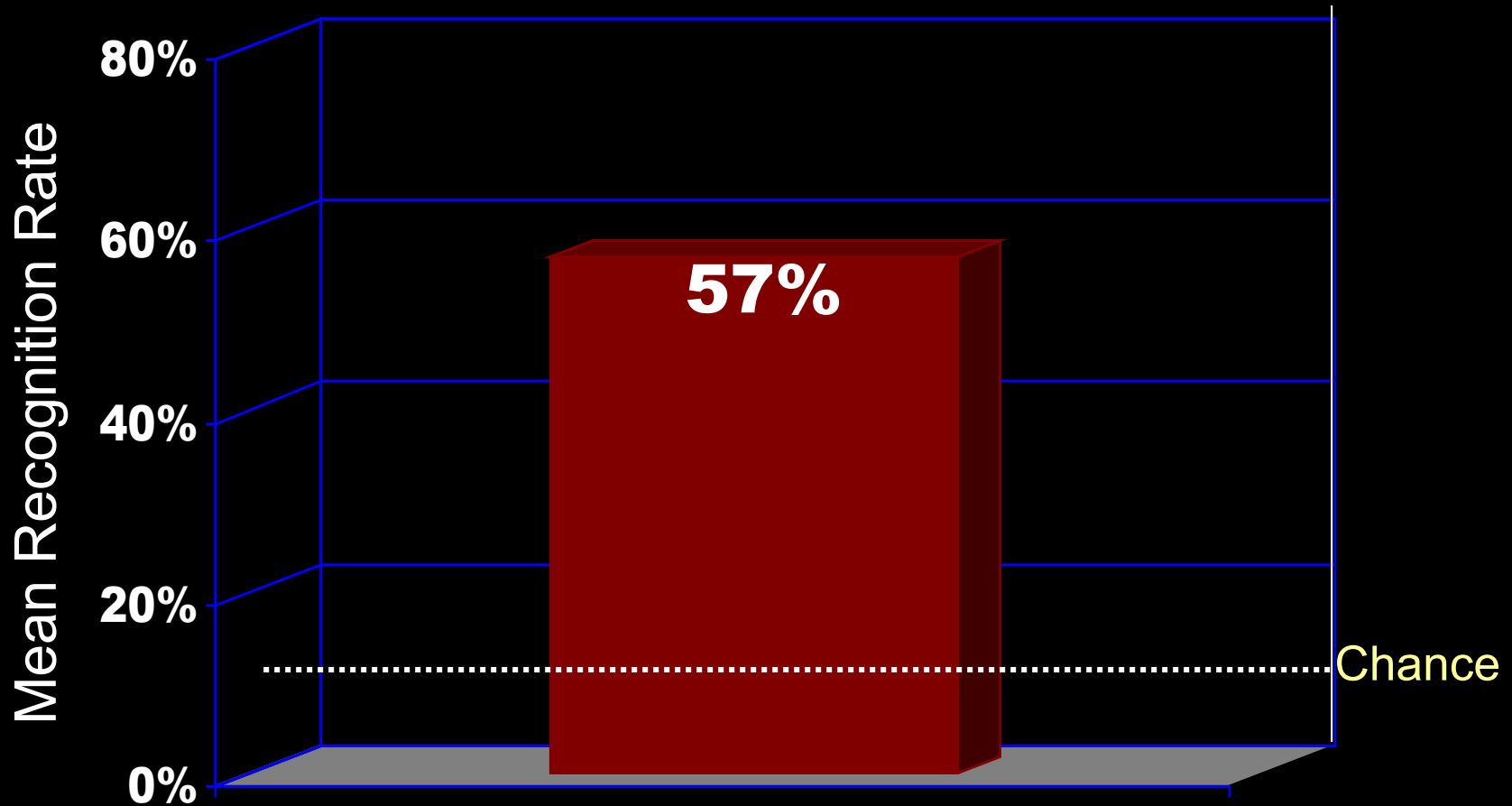
Psychology 305A: Lecture 7

Wrap up Biological Approach
Begin Cognitive Perspective
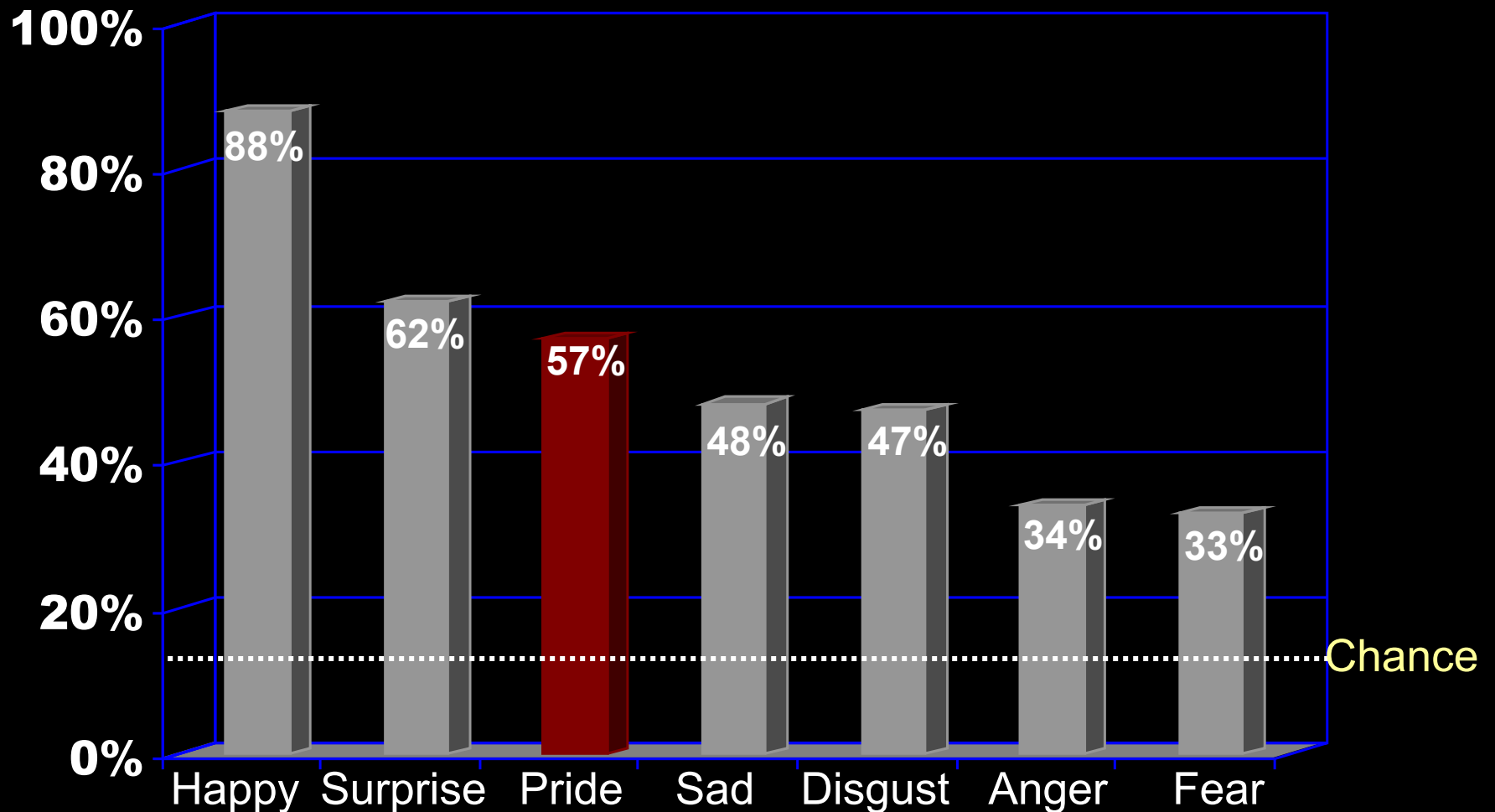
1

Class updates

- Grades and apologies...
- Final Exam: scheduled for Dec. 12 at 7 pm

But, recognition was lower than in Western cultures

- Complicated procedure
  - Difficulty of translation
  - Illiterate participants must <u>remember</u> response options
  - Novelty of task
- Previous research on preliterate cultures
  - Very low recognition rates: 30-50% in some samples

Do people actually show the pride expression after a success?

- Is it just a recognizable stereotype, or is it an actual behavioral display

- If evolved to promote status
  - Must communicate success and increased status to others
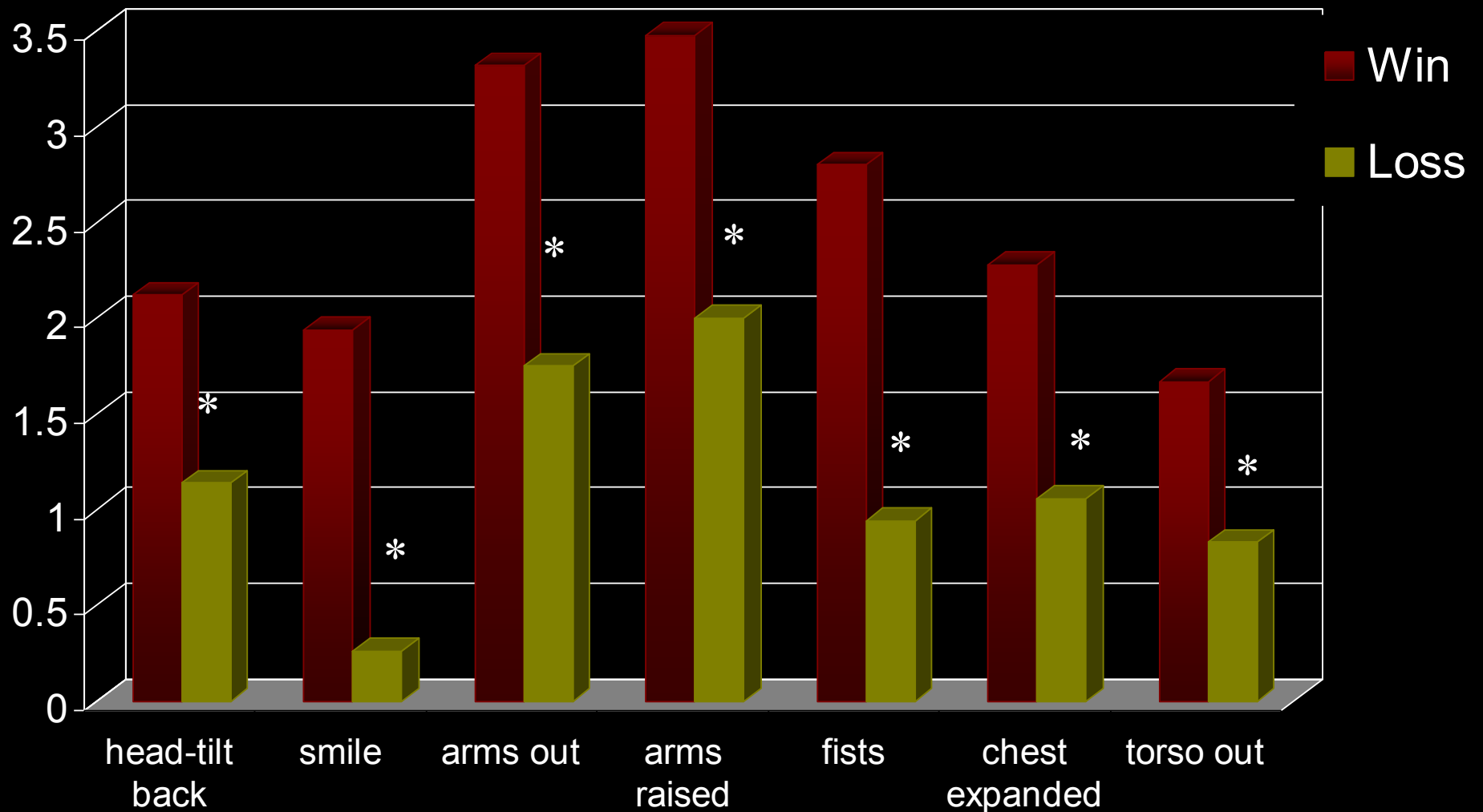 - Should occur after success

2004 Olympics: Judo Competition

Olympic Judo Study

- Official photos by Judo Federation photographer
- 48% winners
- 46% women
- 36 nations
  - North American/Western European
  - East Asian
  - Eastern Europe/ South/Central American, Australian

The Pride Expression

- Cross-cultural behavioral response to success
- Universally recognized
- May be an evolved signal of success
- But, is the pride expression *innate*?
  - Could the expression be a learned display?

Paralympics Judo Study: Blind Athletes

Born-Blind Show Pride Response

*p < .05

Evidence for Evolutionary Perspective: Universal Emotions
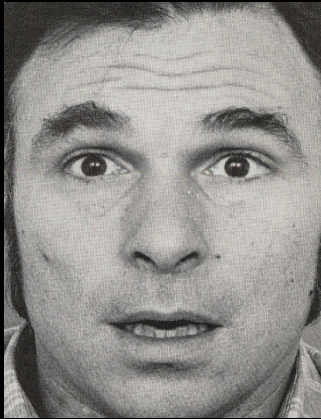
Surprise

Anger
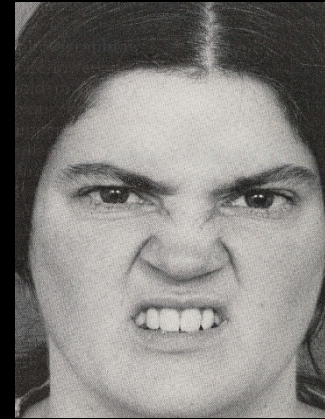
Disgust

Pride
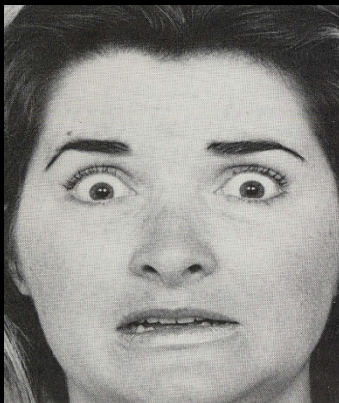
Fear
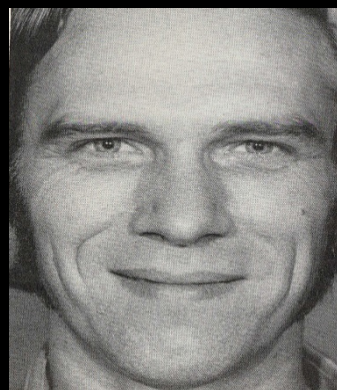
Happiness

Sadness

15
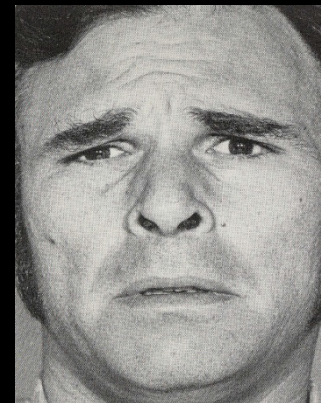
Evolutionary Perspective: Sex Differences

- Throughout evolutionary history, men and women faced different problems in reproduction
  - Men fertilize externally
    - Need to make sure they invest in *their* children
  - Women fertilize internally
    - Need to find a mate who will provide resources during the pregnancy and after
- Result: gender-specific relationship strategies and desires

Hypotheses

- Jealousy is the adaptive solution
  - Motivates people to make sure they're not being cheated on
- Gender differences in mating problem should lead to gender differences in source of jealousy
  - External fertilization→ Sexual jealousy
  - Internal fertilization→ Emotional jealousy

Buss, Larsen, Westen, & Semmelroth (1992)

- Which would distress you more:
  - Imagining your romantic partner forming a deep emotional attachment to someone else
  - Or…
  - Imagining your romantic partner enjoying passionate sex with someone else?
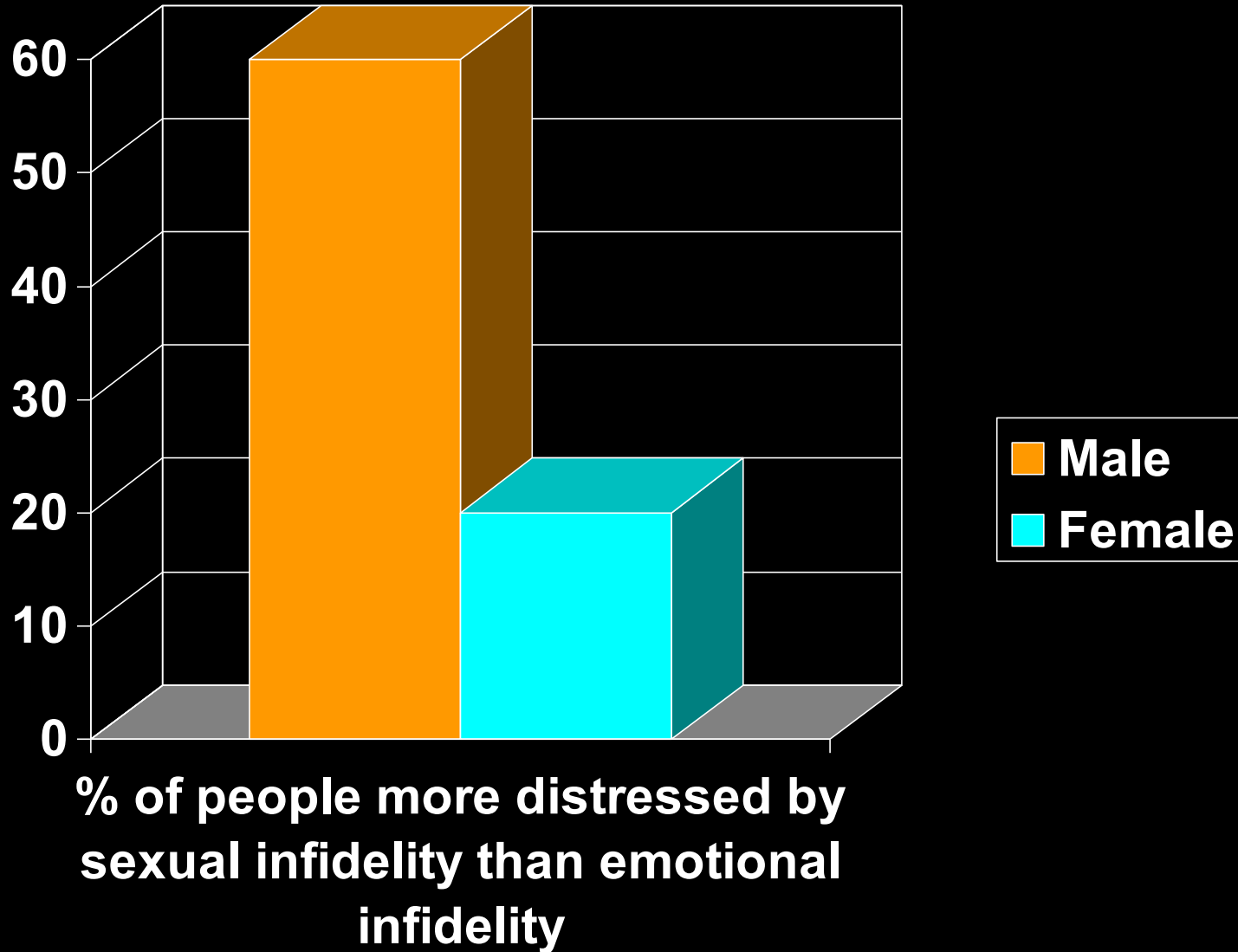
Further Evidence

- Gender difference replicates across several cultures

- Men show higher physiological arousal (heart rate, sweat) during sexual infidelity imagery than emotional infidelity imagery

  – Women show higher physio arousal during emotional infidelity imagery

- Men show better memory for sexual infidelity cues in a story; women better memory for emotional infidelity

20

Do you buy it?

- Why else might we see these gender differences?

What about gender differences in the way we think about sex?

- If your partner has a deep emotional connection with someone else, do you think he/she will ALSO have sex with him/her?

- If your partner has passionate sex with someone else, do you think he/she ALSO loves him/her?

Results

- Women more likely to think that for men, being in love means ALSO having sex

- Men more likely to think that for women, having sex means ALSO being in love

- Jealousy difference may due to a "double-shot" effect

- But… Buss found that the effect holds even when participants are told to assume NO SEX or NO LOVE

How else might we explain the difference?

- Cognitive Load study
  - Found that women became more like men when both are under cognitive load
  - Both genders found sexual infidelity problematic
- But, would we expect an evolved brain mechanism that detects and regulates responses to infidelity to operate automatically?
  - Even if it did, could it work this way in an imagined scenario task?

How else might we account for the sex difference?

- Distinct Emotion findings
  - Sexual infidelity leads to anger
  - Emotional infidelity leads to sadness
- Still gender differences, but the difference is in the negativity of different emotions

Further Evidence for Buss et al.

- Gender difference in:
  - How many sexual partners do you hope to have?
    - 13 vs. 2.5 in next 30 yrs, worldwide
    - 18 vs. 4/5 in lifetime, in the U.S.
  - Would you have sex with an attractive stranger who approached you?
    - 75% vs. 0%
  - What if he/she is a "friend of a friend"?
    - 95% vs. 5%

Importance of "Good Financial Prospect" When Selecting a Mate

Table 10.6 Importance of "Good Financial Prospect" When Selecting a Mate

Sample	Males	Females
Africa		
Nigeria	1.37	2.30
South Africa (Whites)	0.94	1.73
South Africa (Zulus)	0.70	1.14
Zambia	1.46	2.33
Asia		
China	1.10	1.56
India	1.60	2.00
Indonesia	1.42	2.55
Iran	1.25	2.04
Israel (Jewish)	1.31	1.82
Israel (Palestinian)	1.28	1.67
Japan	0.92	2.29
Taiwan	1.25	2.21
Eastern Europe		
Bulgaria	1.16	1.64
Estonia	1.31	1.51
Poland	1.09	1.74
Yugoslavia	1.27	1.66

Table 10.6 (continued)

Sample	Males	Females
North America		
Canada (English)	1.02	1.91
Canada (French)	1.47	1.94
United States (Mainland)	1.08	1.96
United States (Hawaiian)	1.50	2.10
Oceania		
Australia	0.69	1.54
New Zealand	1.35	1.63
South America		
Brazil	1.24	1.91
Colombia	1.72	2.21
Venezuela	1.66	2.26

Note: Participants rated on a scale from 0 (Unimportant) to 3 (Indispensable). From Buss (1989).

Evidence for Evolutionary Perspective: The Big Five

- The Big Five are the most important categories of personality across cultures
- From an evolutionary perspective, why might humans place importance on these 5 traits?

Big Five = innate psychological mechanisms and behavioral strategies that developed to help us solve problems of survival and reproduction.

SURVIVAL PROBLEM

EXTRAVERSION → social rank, cooperation
(social skills, activity, leadership, assertiveness)

EMOTIONAL STABILITY → resilience to stress, adaptability
(anxiety, worry, self-approval, moodiness)

AGREEABLENESS → intimacy/mating, altruism
(empathy, generosity, conformity)

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS →work, trust, dependability
(will, no impulsivity, responsibility, orderliness)

OPENNESS → learning, exploration, versatility
(curiosity, creativity, flexibility)

Being able to PERCEIVE the Big 5 in other people has adaptive value:

Would this person be a good leader?   E
Will he survive hard times?   N
Will she love our family?   A
Can I rely on him?   C
Will her wisdom help me?   O

Evolution of Big Five

- But, high end of each trait cannot be completely adaptive
  - If so, we wouldn't see normal variation on traits in all human populations
  - Heritability of that variation suggests that the *variation* is what is adaptive

- Trade-off perspective (Nettle, 2006)
  - All levels of each trait have costs and benefits

Nettle, 2006

Table 1

Summary of Hypothesized Fitness Benefits and Costs of Increasing Levels of Each of the Big Five Personality Dimensions

Domain	Benefits	Costs
Extraversion	Mating success; social allies; exploration of environment	Physical risks; family stability
Neuroticism	Vigilance to dangers; striving and competitiveness	Stress and depression, with interpersonal and health consequences
Openness	Creativity, with effect on attractiveness	Unusual beliefs; psychosis
Conscientiousness	Attention to long-term fitness benefits; life expectancy and desirable social qualities	Missing of immediate fitness gains; obsessionality; rigidity
Agreeableness	Attention to mental states of others; harmonious interpersonal relationships; valued coalitional partner	Subject to social cheating; failure to maximize selfish advantage

Evolutionary Approach and Individual Differences

- Why are some people introverted, if extraversion is adaptive?
  - Frequency-Dependent Selection
    - Certain traits are adaptive ONLY if there are also people who have the opposite
    - What if everyone was extroverted?
    - What if no one was neurotic?
  - Environmental Triggers
    - We all have the potential to become neurotic, but it is more adaptive in adverse conditions
    - Evidence for environment + gene interaction in depression

The Cognitive Approach to Personality

History

Behaviorism
Classical conditioning (Watson)
Operant conditioning (Skinner)

Social Learning (Bandura)
Personal Construct (George Kelly)

Cognitive

Revolution

Social Cognition /
Information processing

Personality Defined by a Behaviorist

- *"Personality involves the discovery of the unique set of relationships between the behavior of an organism and its reinforcing or punishing consequences"*
  - Skinner, 1974
- Translation: Personality is a set of learned responses to the environment
- Person = rat

Skinner's Approach

- <u>Method</u>: Systematic observation and controlled experimentation
  - No inferences into the "black box" of personality
- <u>Data</u>: Directly observable behavior that can be assessed objectively
- <u>Subjects</u>: mainly lab animals (rats, pigeons), but some humans
- <u>Emphasis</u>: Environmental causes of behavior and personality (i.e., nurture)

Behaviorist Approach

- We can only study <u>observable</u> behavior
- 'Mind" (spirit, motivation, soul) does not explain behavior
- Personality (behavioral tendencies) is shaped by what we learn from the environment
  - Classical Conditioning
  - Operant Conditioning

Classical Conditioning

40
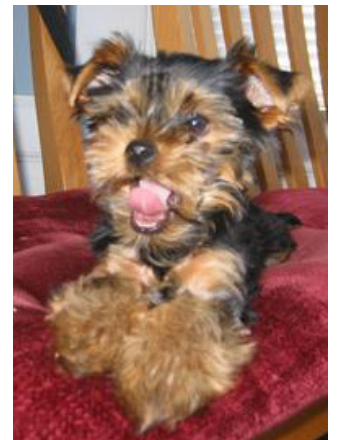
Operant Conditioning

The Essence of Behaviorism

- *"The consequences of behavior determine the probability that the behavior will occur again"*
  – *BF Skinner*

•Anyone's personality can be formed or changed through patterns of reinforcement and punishment

•If you are extraverted, that's because extraverted behaviors were rewarded by the people who raised you

A Clockwork Orange

Classical Conditioning

- Alex injected with nausea drug (*unconditioned stimulus*) while watching violence
  - Alex feels nauseous (*unconditioned response*)
- Alex thinks about violence or acts violent (*conditioned stimulus*)
  - Alex feels sick and avoids acting violent (*conditioned response*)
- Would this approach work for real juvenile delinquents?

Did the conditioning process change Alex's personality?

Message of Movie:
Society Can't Produce Morality

- Satire about societal attempts to make people good/moral

  - Psychological conditioning can't make people good

  - People must choose to be good/moral

  - Anthony Burgess wrote the book (which Kubrick's movie was based on) in response what he saw as a Skinnerian threat to humanity

Anthony Burgess on Skinner

- If humans can be conditioned, what happens to free will?

- "All of us might agree with Professor Skinner that a well-run, conditioned society is an excellent thing for a new race—a breed of [humans] rationally convinced of the need to be condtioned, so long as the conditioning is based on rewards and not punishment. But we are not the new race, and we stubbornly do not want to be anything but what we are—creatures aware of our faults and determined, more or less, to do something about those faults in our own way."

- See *New Yorker* article, June 4, 2012, linked on website

View of Skinner Today

- Not very good
  - If we're interested in HUMANS, it's ok (and even good!) to study mental states
- Yet, behaviorism remains an important part of personality, and psychology more generally
  - Behavioral evidence considered strongest
    - Emotion expression research
  - Subjective reports (e.g., self-report data) often suspect
    - Importance of O, T data

Toward the Acceptance of Mental States: The Cognitive Perspective

- After Skinner, focus shifted from the behavioral output of reward (dog sitting) to what goes on *between* the environmental trigger (bell) and reward (steak)

- Social Learning

  1. Observe behaviors of others being rewarded
  2. Use your MIND to connect the two
 3. Decide to behave similarly

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

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
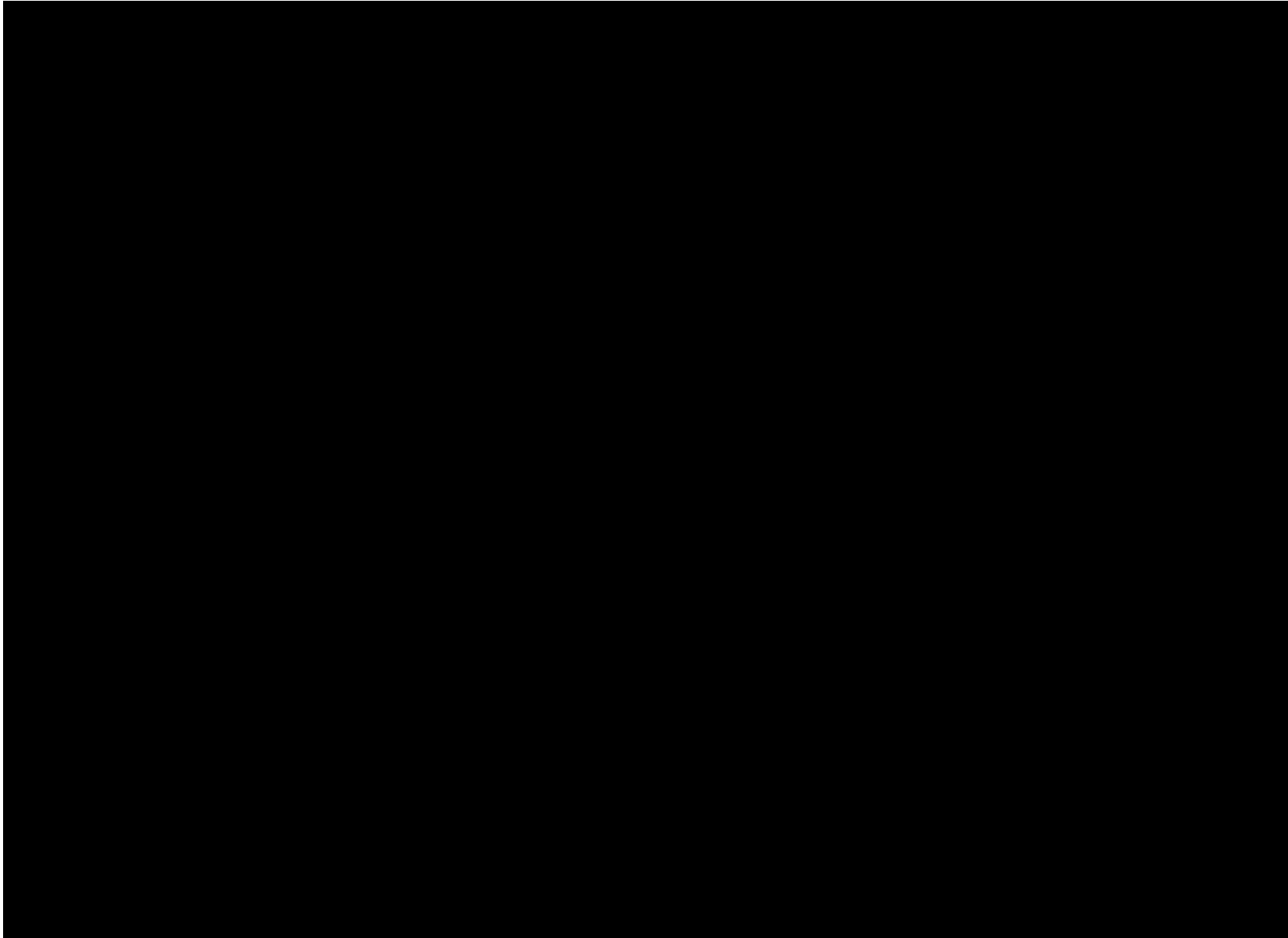
Is altruism innate, or learned?

- 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

But, is there another explanation?

- Maybe the toddlers and chimps expected reward
  - Might social learning have played a role?
- Is this evidence for innate altruism?
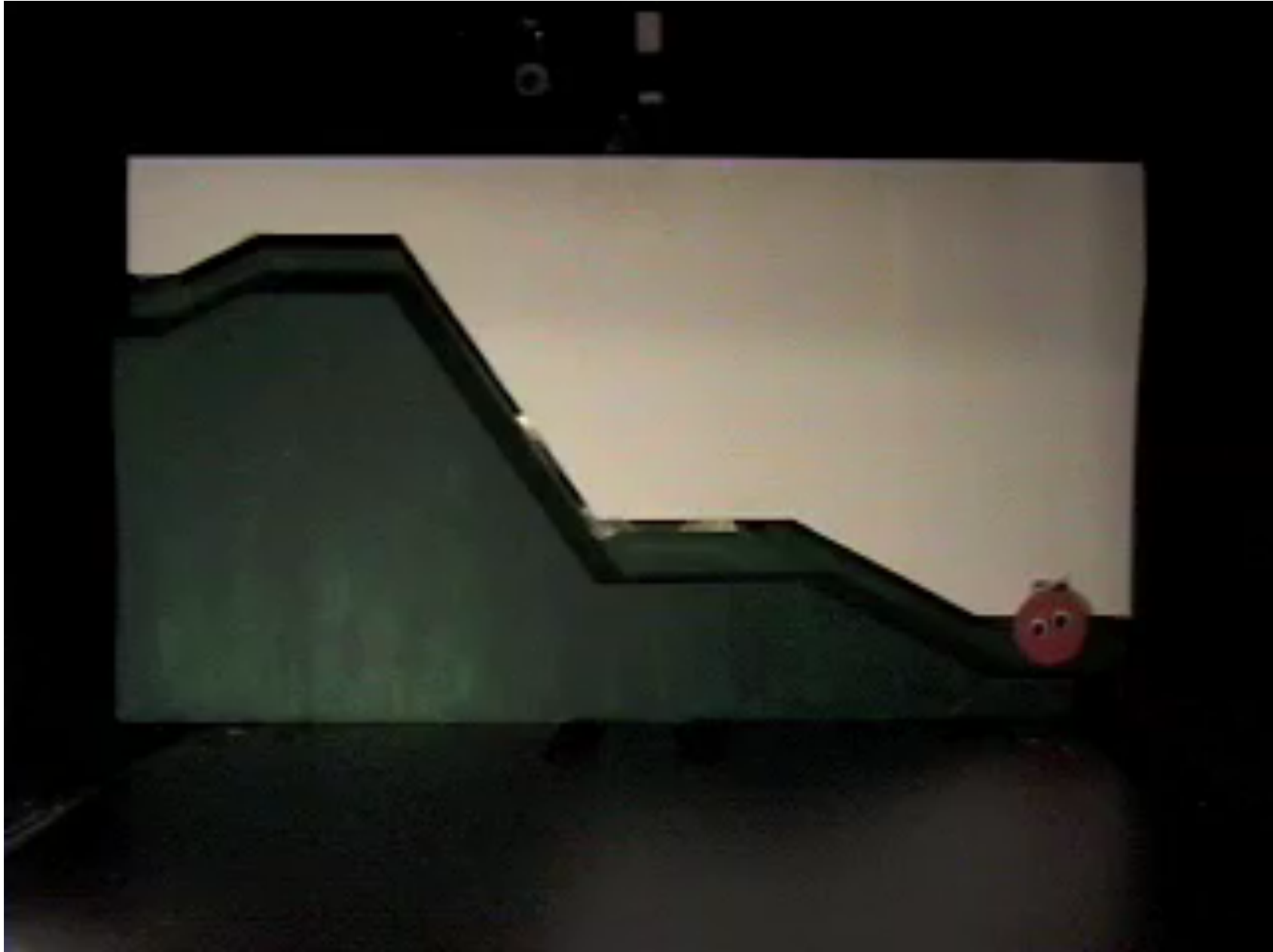
Roots of altruism?

- Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom (*Nature*, 2007)
  - At 3 months, babies prefer helpers to hinderers
  - Learn about social helping very early on?
  - Or is our basic sense of good vs. bad innate?

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

63

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

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

The Scarlet Letter
Based on the novel by Nathaniel Hawthorne

4 hour special on 2 discs
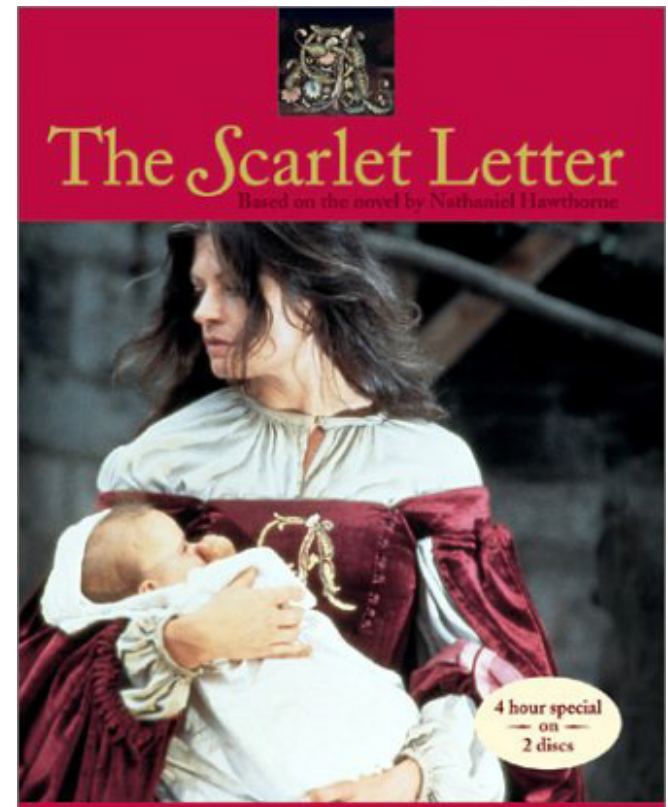
Shaming Prison Sentences

- 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?

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

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)

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**

What about Public Shaming?

- Internet 'walls of shame'
  - Pet mistreatment
  - Vancouver Stanley Cup riots
- It matters who the shamers are
  - Is shaming more effective when the shamers are part of your community, or your peers?
  - Common Goods dilemma study
  - Negligent tax-payers shamed by IRS

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 <u>process</u> information about ourselves, others, and the world
  - How we process information reflects our mental <u>representations</u> of ourselves, other people, and the world
- Mental representations work as filters or lens through which we experience reality
  - Personal constructs, schemas, scripts

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

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; <u>no one needs to be completely hemmed in by circumstances</u>; no one needs to be the victim of his biography. We call this philosophical position constructive alternativism."

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

Social Cognition and Personality

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
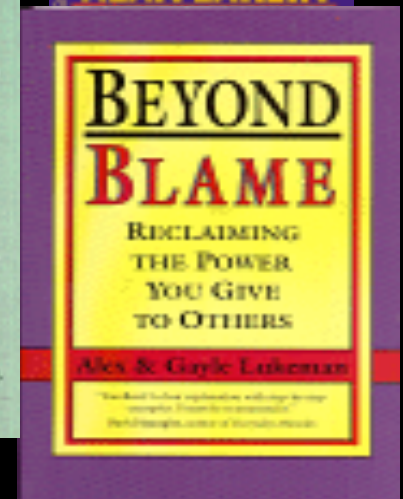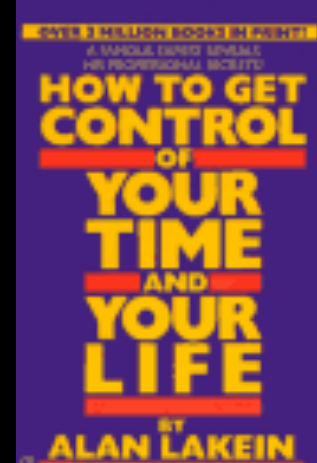
Locus of Control
Julian Rotter

- **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
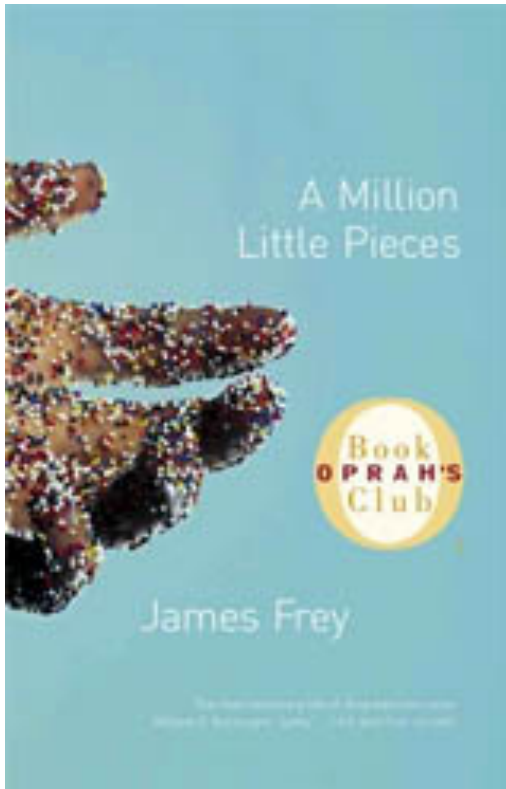
Whose fault?

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

A Million Little Pieces

Book OPRAH'S Club

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."

James Frey, Granville, Ohio P.D. (1992)

Rotter's Locus of Control Scale

1. A. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.

   B. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.

2. A. In the long run, people get the respect they deserve in this world.

   B. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.

3. A. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.

   B. There really is no such thing as luck.

Research Findings on
Locus of Control

- Internal Locus
  - Increased academic performance
  - More effective health-prevention behaviors
  - Social/political activism

External Locus:
Learned Helplessness

- Originated in research on dogs (Seligman)
    - Exposure to unavoidable shocks
    - Outcome not contingent on behavior (external locus)
    - Helpless dogs get depressed, give up
- "Learned helplessness" = belief that outcomes can't be controlled
- Humans, too, show learned helplessness

But, is there a downside to Internal Locus?

- Some things are truly outside our control
  - People who accept this may cope better with death, disease, etc.
  - Survivor guilt
- Why not externalize *negative* events?
  - "It wasn't my fault the team didn't win"

Beyond Locus: Explanatory Style

- Explanatory Style: The ways in which people habitually explain the causes of negative events

- Locus:
  - Internality ("it's me") [SELF-BLAME]
  - Externality ("its something in the environment")

- Stability:
  - Stable ("it's going to last forever") [FATALISM]
  - Unstable ("it's going to go away")

- Globality:
  - Global ("it's going to undermine everything") [CATASTROPHIZING]
  - Specific ("it's effects are limited to this one domain")

Explanatory Style and Relationships

Locus:

Internality: It's my fault [SELF-BLAME]

Externality: It's his/her fault. OR: It's difficult to make a relationship work because of the economic depression.

Stability:

Stable: Relationships just never work out [FATALISM]

Unstable: We just didn't work well together as a couple

Globality:

Global: I am a bad person. My whole life is ruined. [CATASTROPHIZING]

Specific: I can't seem to make things work out in this relationship

Pessimistic Explanatory Style

- Internal, stable, global
  - "I did it, I always do it, and I do it on everything"
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of internal, stable, global causes → more depressed
- People who tend to explain bad events in terms of stable and global causes (internal or external) → more health problems
- Solution: internalize, but don't globalize
  - Internal, unstable, specific attributions
  - It's my fault, but it's because I didn't study hard this time

Evidence for Importance of Explanatory Style

- Terman Longitudinal Study – participants born in 1910

- In 1936-1940, participants described their responses to bad events, such as:

  - "Have any disappointments exerted a prolonged influence on you?"

- Responses were coded by 8 judges for internality, stability, and globalility

Evidence for Explanatory Style

- Participants in Terman sample followed for decades
- Catastrophizing (attributing bad events to global causes) was associated with increased mortality
  - Especially accidental and violent deaths

Cognitive Therapy

- Recognize that thoughts (beliefs, expectations, explanations, thinking style) affect your feelings and behavior

- Try to change negative schemas
  - Convert to positive schemas or compartmentalize

- Try to change explanatory style
  - I didn't get the job because I didn't prepare well
  - He broke up with me because he didn't want to be in a relationship

- Interpret failure as an opportunity to learn

- "Talk" to self differently before, during, and after stressful situations

Next Class

- MOVIE: *Shattered Glass*

The movie will start right at 5 pm, and will run about 2 hours. When the film ends, class is done for the day − Happy Halloween!!