

## Agenda Week 15 Wed only

- Friques
- Final: 2:45-4:45 Wednesday, May 2, WH101 (our class room)
- Help Session: Sunday 6:00pm-8:00pm Sunday, April 29 WH101
- Human Nature

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## Extending Language Innateness

- If the approach for describing language as a system of intricate mental programs (organs) that have universal design has validity
- Then it might be valid to ascribe reasoning, perception, and abilities in many cognitive domains to specialized, genetically constructed, mental programs of universal design

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## Two Views of Human Nature

- Human nature is entirely controlled by culture. "Thought to be the doctrine that every decent human being should hold" --- Pinker
  - > E.g., culture determines moral values
    - Good and bad, right and wrong are defined entirely by one's culture and not by any internal standard
    - Because there is no external standard, what is good or right for one group may be bad or wrong for another.
- There is a universal human nature
  - > A "justice" module determines moral values
    - Good and bad are defined by a human standard
    - No culture differs significantly on core values of justice

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## Pinker's suggestions for modules

<b>Intuitive mechanics</b>	<b>Monitoring of well-being</b>
<b>Intuitive biology</b>	<b>Intuitive psychology</b>
<b>Number</b>	<b>Mental Rolodex</b>
<b>Maps</b>	<b>Self-concept</b>
<b>Habitat selection</b>	<b>Justice</b>
<b>Danger</b>	<b>Kinship</b>
<b>Food</b>	<b>Mating</b>
<b>Contamination</b>	<b>Face recognition</b>

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## Would a Biology Module Provide A Reproductive Advantage

- Present-day cultures with stone-age technology have extensive biological knowledge
  - > Have names for hundreds of plants and animals in their area (folk taxonomy)
  - > Have extensive knowledge of their life cycles.
  - > Have knowledge of the attributes and characteristics of animals
  - > Use this wealth of knowledge to help them survive: eat and avoid danger.

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## Do Children Have Unexpected Knowledge of Biology?

By 1 year, children know the difference between living and non-living : only living things can self-propel

- > Surprise Experiment (surprise measured by looking time): The propagation of rolling when one ball bumps into another versus when the balls don't collide versus when balls are replaced by humans in both scenarios.

By 5 years, children know living things can't change and will distinguish animals by method of birth

- > Change Experiment: Skunk-striped raccoons will still act like raccoons and not stink. However, coffee pots can completely change into birdfeeders.
- > Taxonomy Experiment: children lump bats together with flamingos and blackbirds until told that bats have babies.

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## Universal Human Nature

**Value is placed on articulateness. Gossip. Lying. Misleading. Verbal humor. Humorous insults. Poetic and rhetoric.**

**Recognized facial expressions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear, surprise, disgust, contempt.**

**Childhood fears of loud noises, strangers, and snakes.**

**Face recognition. Adornment of the bodies. Dance. Music. Play. Standard pattern for weaning.**

**Group living. Families built around mother and children and one or more men. Institutionalized marriage.**

**Status and prestige assigned. More child care by women and violence by men. Acknowledgment of differences in male and female natures. Domination by men in public and social spheres.**

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## False Implications of Universal Human Nature

- If the mind has an innate structure, different people could have different innate structures, which can be used to justify discrimination.
- If obnoxious behavior like aggression, war, rape, and clannishness is innate, each is must be natural and good and will resist social reform.
- Individuals cannot be held responsible for their actions.

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