

# Morality (Cont'd)



PSYCH 1101: DAY 25

PROF. DAVID PIZARRO  
[CORNELLPSYCH.NET](http://CORNELLPSYCH.NET)

# Psychopathy As A Breakdown In Empathy



13-year-old mugger, when asked about one of his victims:

*"What do I care? I'm not her."*

Gary Gillmore:

*"I was always capable of murder ... I can become totally devoid of feelings of others, unemotional. I know I'm doing something grossly ... wrong. I can still go ahead and do it."*

Ted Bundy:

*"I mean, there are so many people"*

Without



Conscience

THE DISTURBING WORLD OF  
THE PSYCHOPATHS AMONG US

ROBERT D. HARE, PhD

"Comprehensive and fascinating..." —Fremont Hunter, Cleveland Plain Dealer

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# Hare's Psychopathy Checklist (PCL-R)

Structured, 3 hour interview with trained psychiatrist. Receive a score of 0-2 on each factor (40 = highest possible score)

## Factor 1: "Aggressive narcissism"

- Glibness/superficial charm
- Grandiose sense of self-worth
- Pathological lying
- Conning/manipulative
- Lack of remorse or guilt
- Shallow affect
- Callous/lack of empathy
- Failure to accept responsibility for own actions
- Promiscuous sexual behavior

## Factor 2: "Socially deviant lifestyle"

- Need for stimulation/proneness to boredom
- Parasitic lifestyle
- Poor behavioral control
- Lack of realistic, long-term goals
- Impulsivity
- Irresponsibility
- Juvenile delinquency
- Early behavior problems
- Many short-term marital relationships
- Revocation of conditional release



[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=0AEYWGDRE3G](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0AEYWGDRE3G)

# Precursors In Childhood

- Children with conduct disorder show reliable signs of adult psychopathy
  - Cruelty to animals
  - Impulsiveness
  - Vandalism, theft, truancy
  - Aggression toward peers



On May 22nd, 1997, in New York City, 15-year old Daphne Abdela and her boyfriend, 15-year old Christopher Vasquez, murdered a 44-year-old man by stabbing him thirty times, almost severing his nose. They then gutted him and discarded his lifeless body into a lake, described as “one of the grisliest crimes in recent New York history”.

# Psychopathy Primarily An Emotional Deficit

- Differences in emotional systems compared to “normals”
  - Reduced skin conductance response (SCR) to distress and fear in others
  - Impaired startle response to threatening and distressing (mutilated bodies, victim being harmed) images
  - Abnormal conditioned fear response
  - Behaviorally uninhibited temperament
  - Reduced amygdala volume
- *They do not learn well from their mistakes*



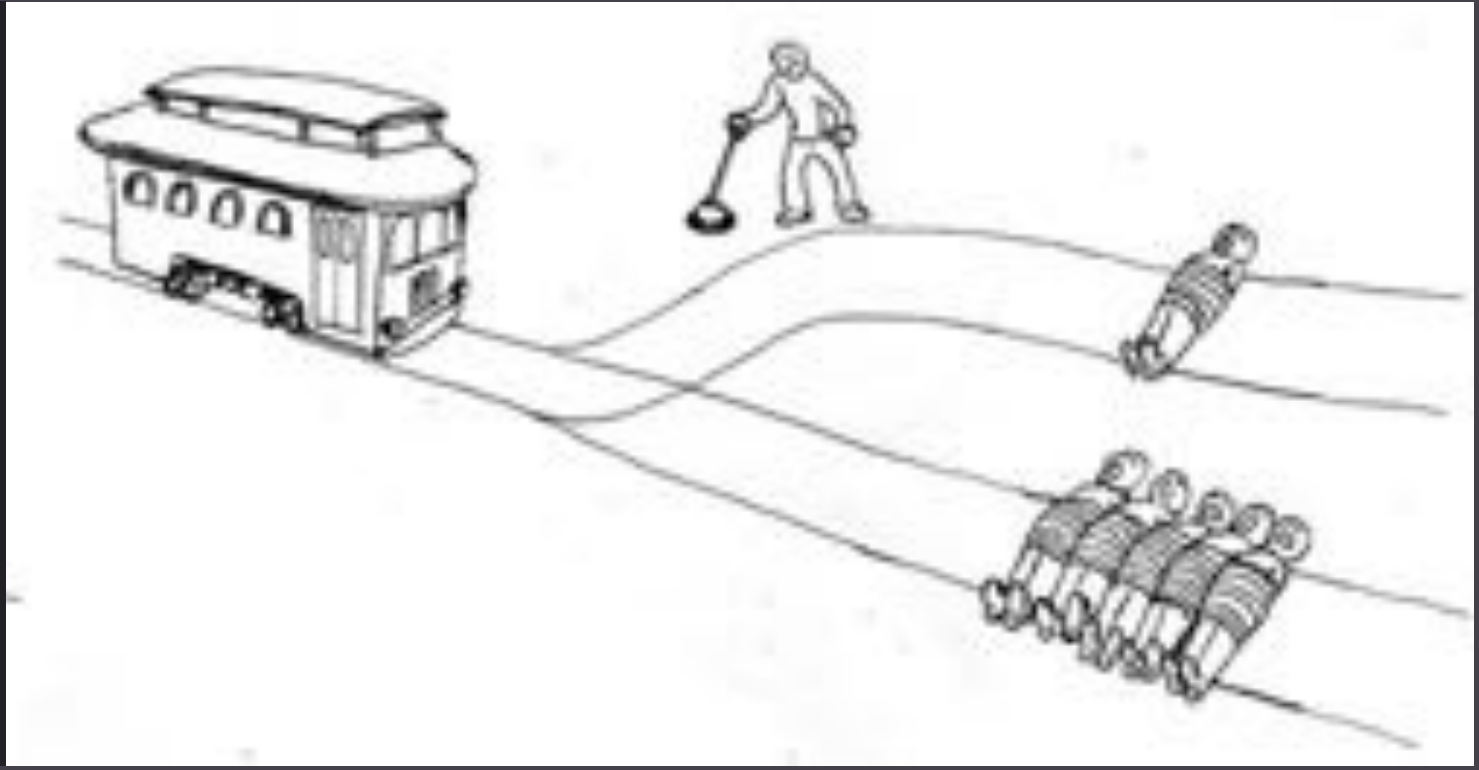
# Emotional “Dot Probe” Task

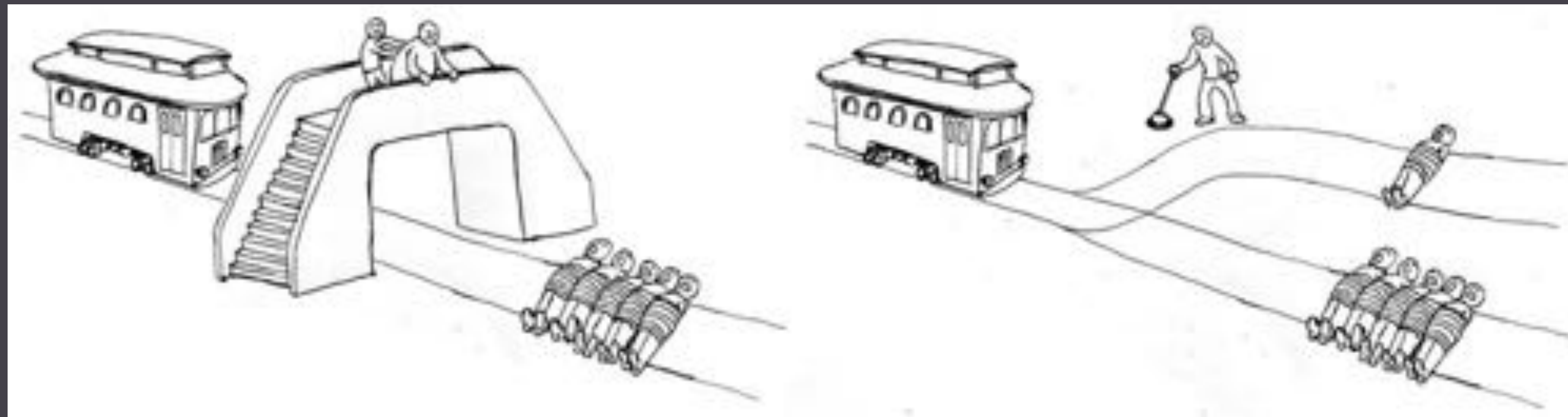


# Emotional Dot Probe Task

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# Reason And Emotion In “Normal” Moral Judgment





# Push The Fat Man?

- Most people in the population find it morally **permissible** to throw the switch (some studies > 90%)
- Most people find it morally **wrong** to push the fat man.
- Small percentage of people who do think that it's morally permissible score high in personality characteristics of psychopathy (Bartels & Pizarro, 2011)