

investigating the automaticity of constructive appraisals

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INPUT



OUTPUT

- stimulus = actual state
- motivational state
- expected state
- coping potential
- agency/accountability

specific
interaction
pattern

specific emotion

Interaction requires a constructive process
= multiple-input process

➤ criticism:

constructive appraisal process is slow, laborious
→ not a plausible candidate cause of (all) emotions

➤ 3 strategies to deal with criticism:

1 appraisal is not a cause but a constituent of
2 experience

supplement constructive appraisal process with fast,

3 automatic retrieval process
alternative

2

2 types of processes: **constructive**

associative
retrieval of past outcomes

nonautomatic

automatic

2 types of conditions: **optimal**
much time
much attentional capacity
conscious input
intention

suboptimal
little time
little attentional capacity
unconscious input
no intention
intention to avoid

under optimal (nonautomatic)
conditions

stimulus
=actual state

goals/concerns
=desired state

match mismatch

positive

negative

coping potential

low

high

negative

less

negative

under optimal (nonautomatic) conditions

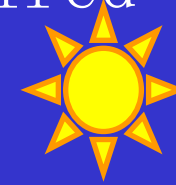
stimulus

=actual state



goal/concern

=desired state



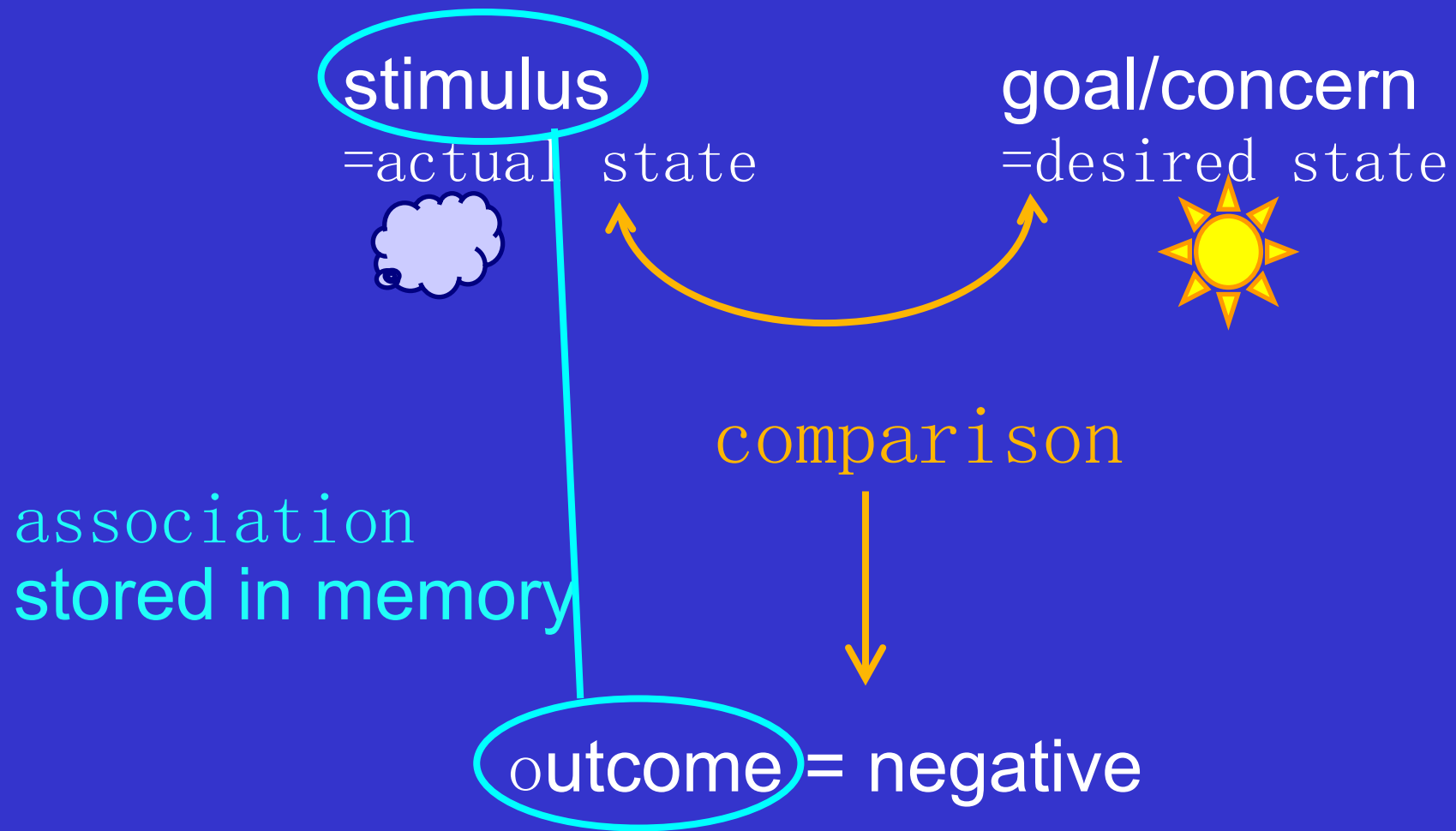
comparison



mismatch

outcome = negative

under optimal (nonautomatic) conditions



under suboptimal (automatic) conditions

stimulus

=actual state



activation
of association

outcome = negative

under suboptimal (automatic) conditions

stimulus

=actual state



goal/concern

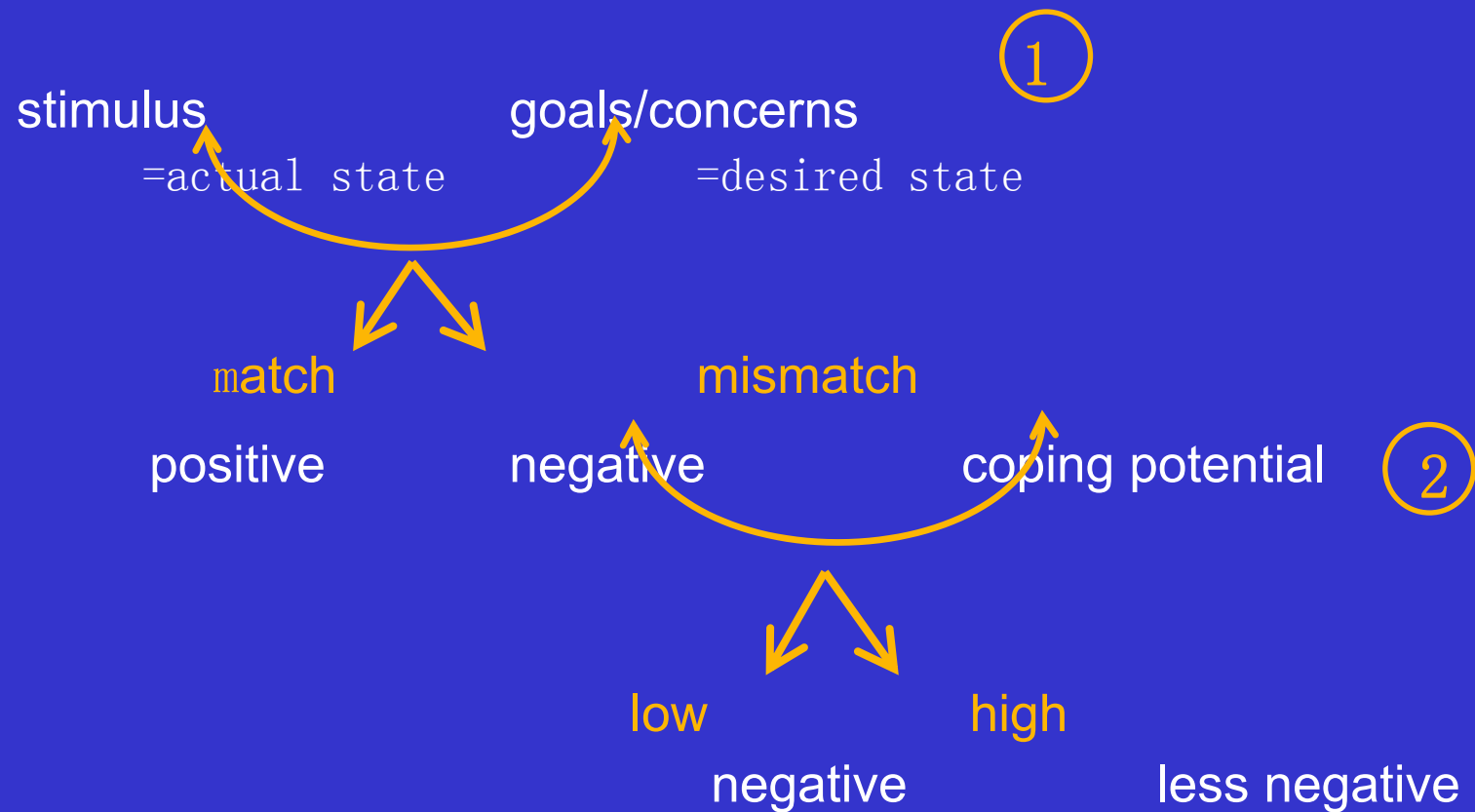
=desired state



activation
of association

outcome = ~~negative~~
positive

3 Investigate empirically whether constructive processes can operate automatically



SOA:300 ms

prime

target

response

flower

party

positive

cancer

war

negative



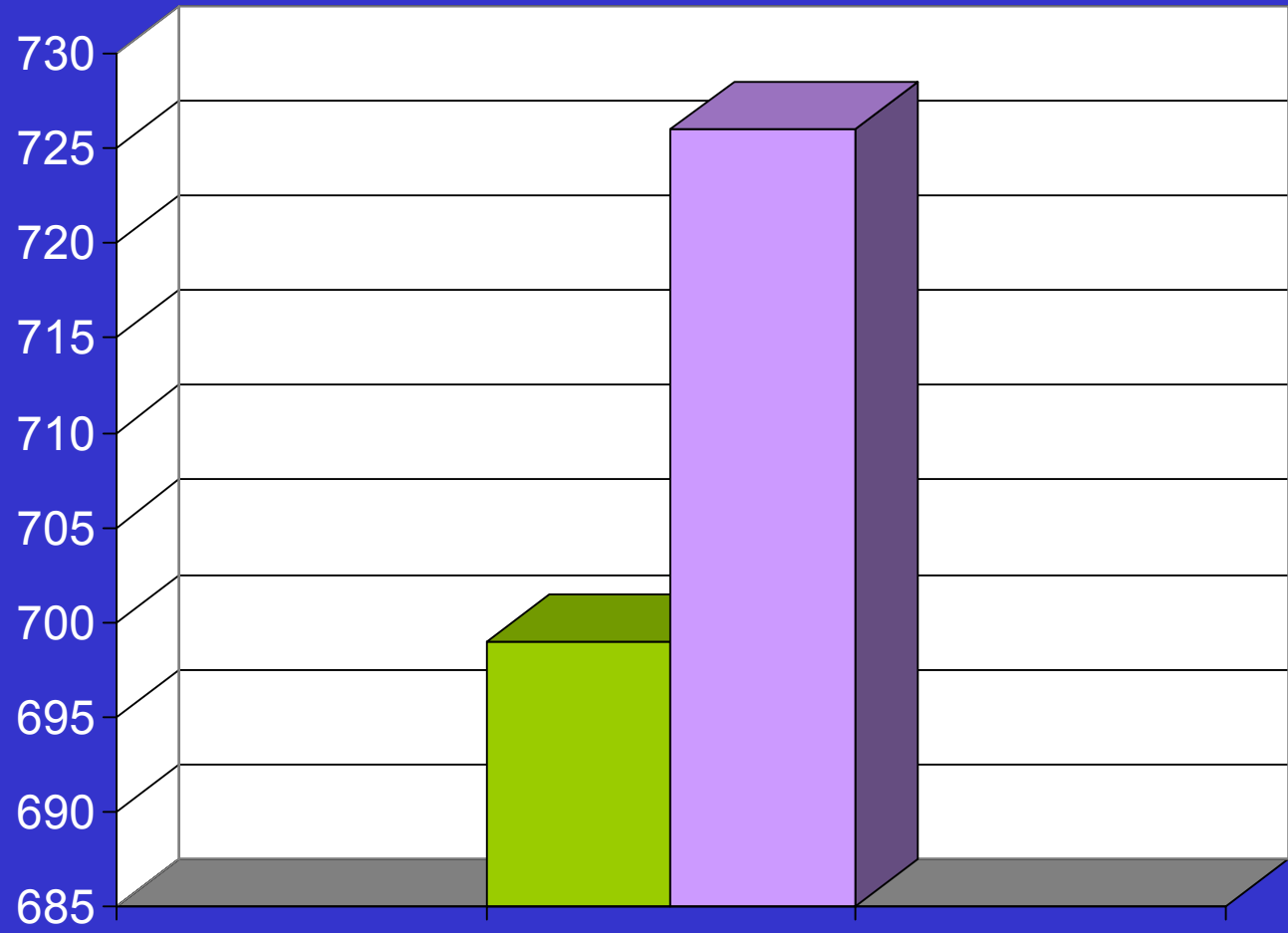
pos
neg

pos
neg



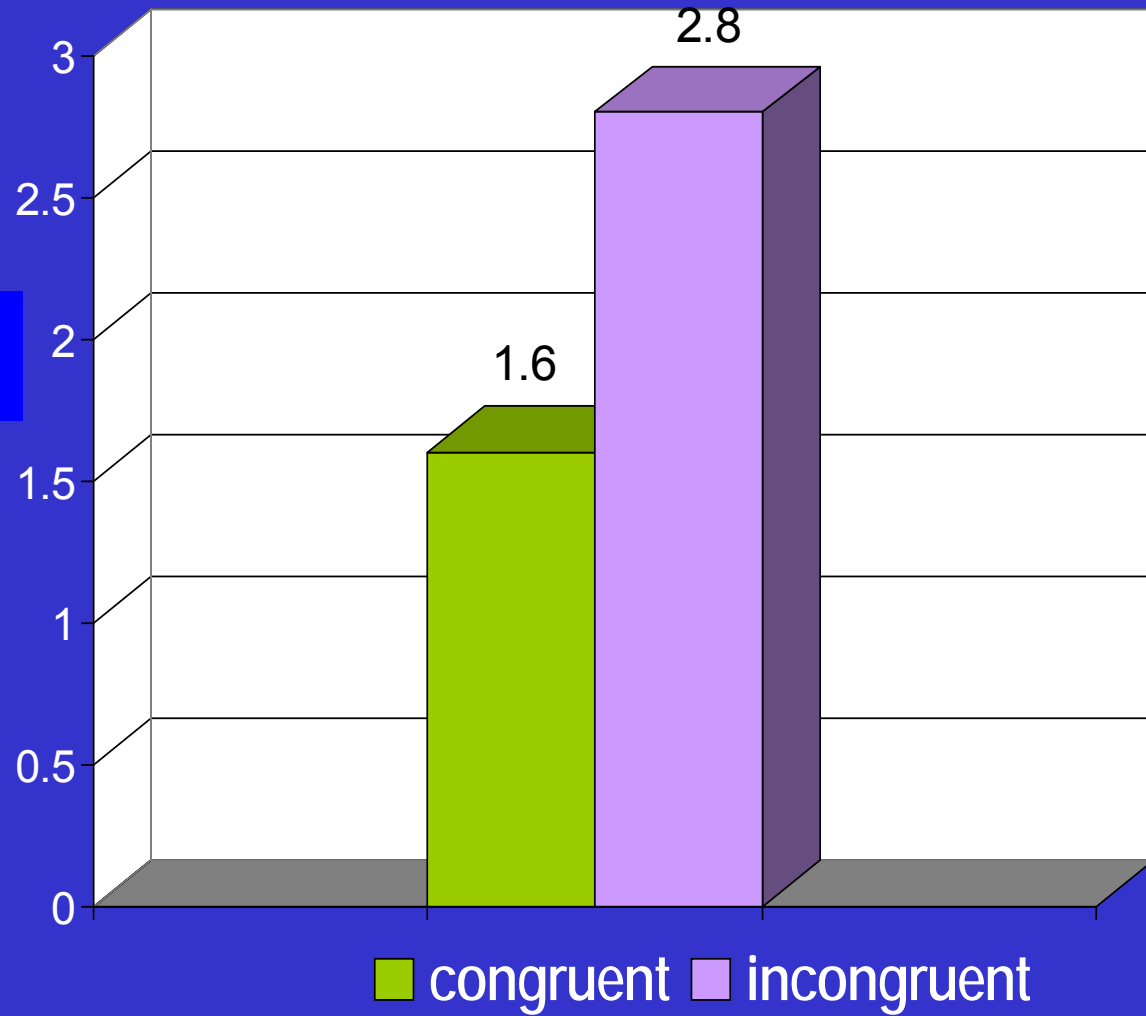
if prime valence = target valence → **congruent** trial
if prime valence ≠ target valence → **incongruent** trial

RT



■ congruent ■ incongruent

% errors



SOA:300 ms

prime

target

response

flower

party

positive

cancer

war

negative



pos
neg

pos
neg



if prime valence = target valence → **congruent** trial
if prime valence ≠ target valence → **incongruent** trial

rewarded
category

SOA:300 ms

game

prime

target

response

animal=10

profession=10

A
P

frog

surgeon

party

war

positive

negative

comparison

match → positive
mismatch → negative



if prime valence = target valence → **congruent** trial
if prime valence ≠ target valence → **incongruent** trial

SOA=300 ms

preprime



prime

boat

water

target

party

war

response

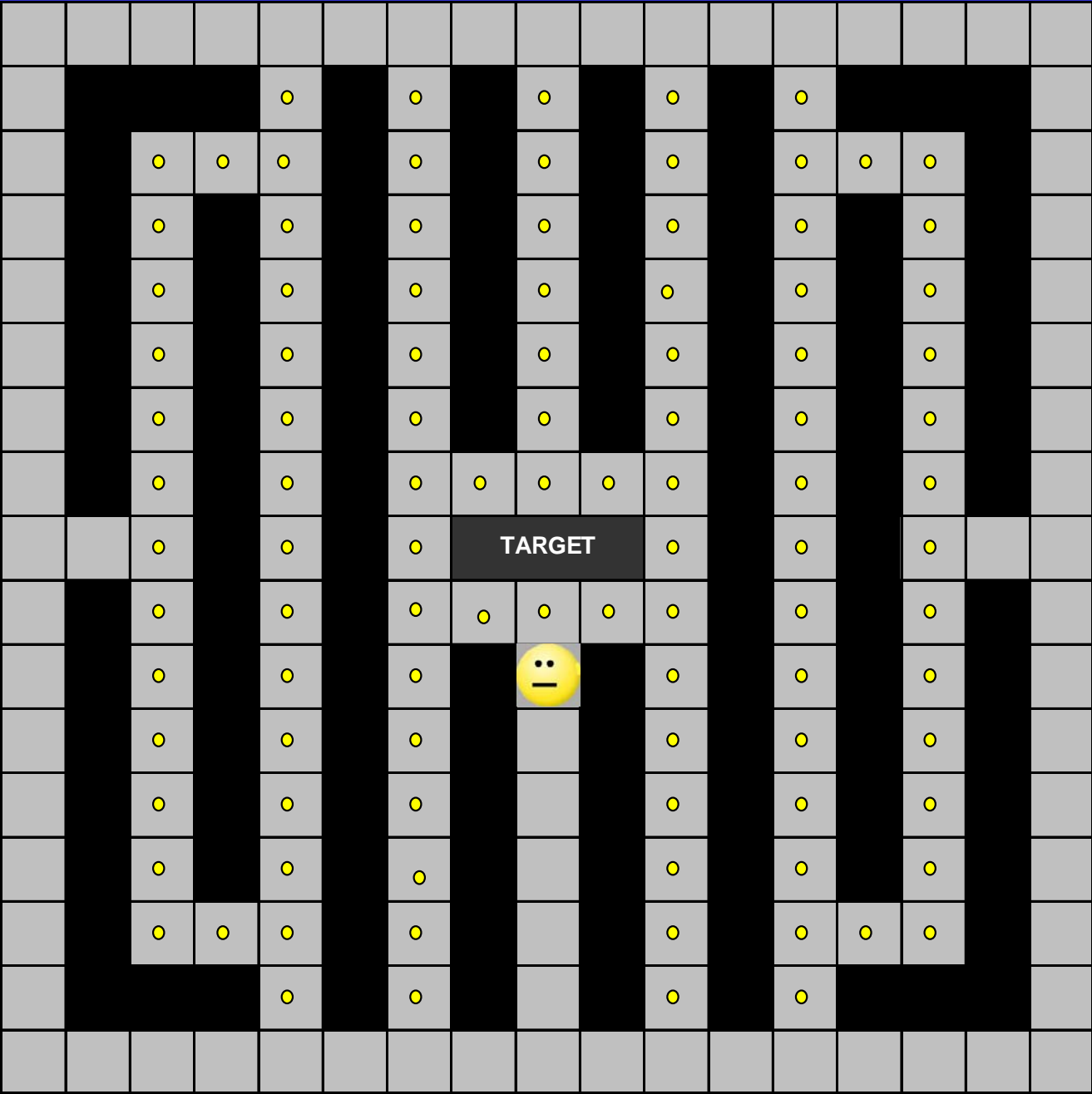
positive

negative

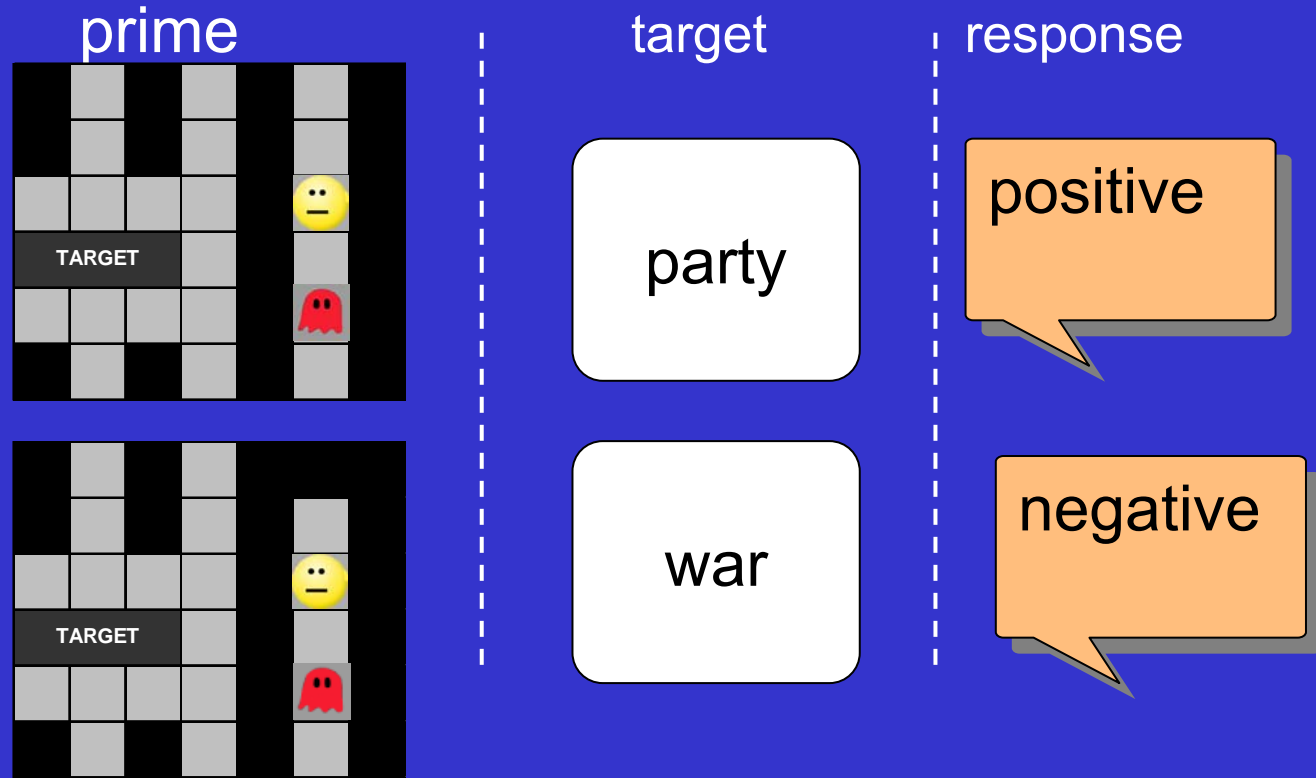
if prime = remedy for preprime
if prime = no remedy for preprime

→ positive ~~positive~~
→ negative ~~negative~~

if prime valence = target valence → congruent trial
if prime valence ≠ target valence → incongruent trial



SOA=300 ms



negative stimulus & coping → positive

negative stimulus & no coping → negative

positive

negative

if prime valence = target valence → congruent trial

if prime valence ≠ target valence → incongruent trial

conclusion