

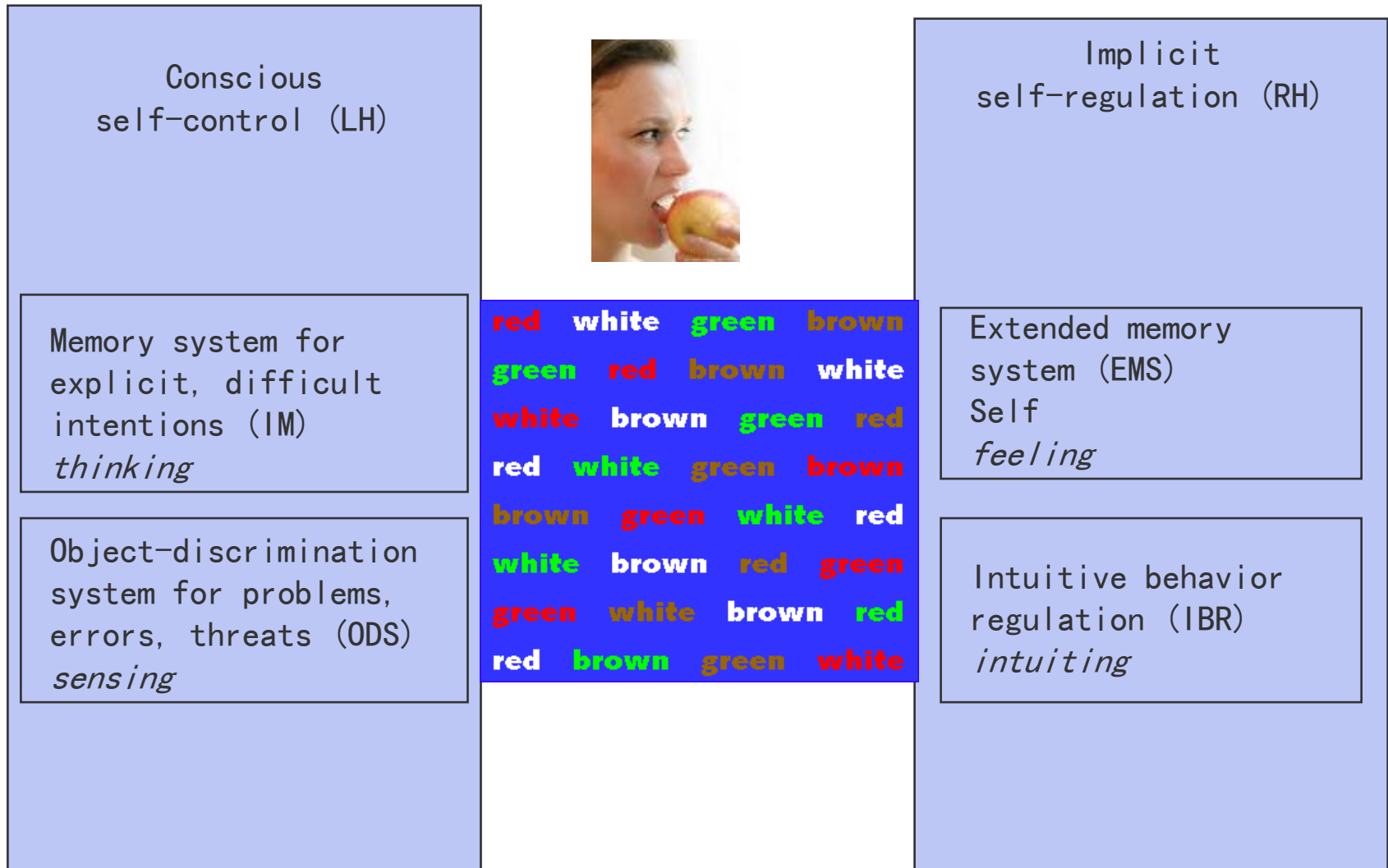
Lecture

# What causes Procrastination? will begin later...

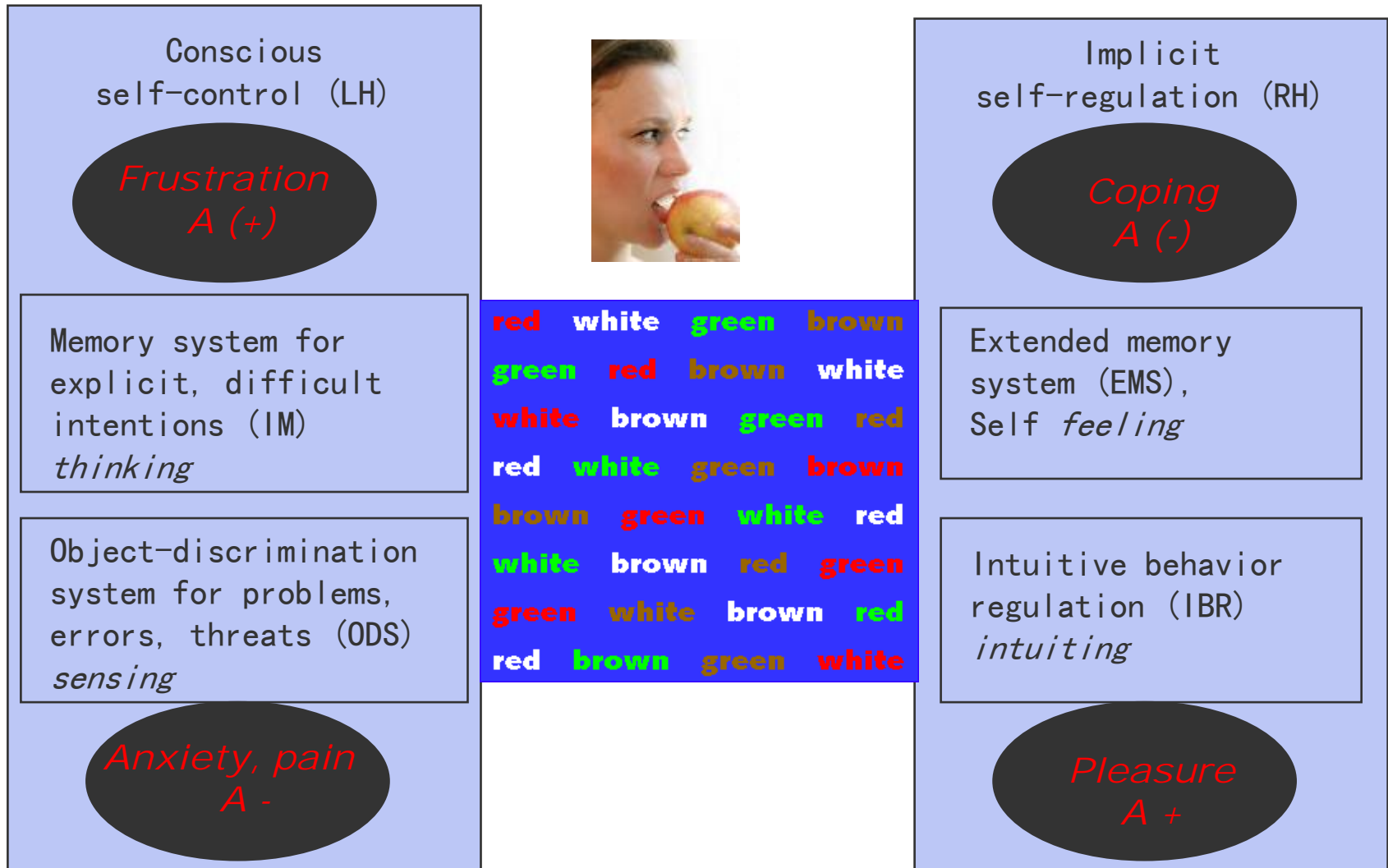
FEDORA Congress Berlin October 06, 2009

Hans-Werner Rückert, Psychologist, Psychoanalyst  
Academic Advisory and Counseling Center, Freie Universität Berlin





Adapted from: Kuhl, J & Kaschel, R 2004, Psychologische Rundschau 55, (2), 61-67



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Inhibition of positive affect activates IM

Supplying positive affect connects IM with IBR

Positive affect can be provided externally (support) or internally (self-motivation)

= Willensbahnung

Negative affect activates ODS

Alleviating negative affect activates the self and allows for integration of negative feelings (ODS) into the wider scope of the self (EMS)

Negative affect can be alleviated externally (consolation) or internally (positive self-instructions)



This web site provides access to information and research related to procrastination. Although our site originates at Carleton University in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, it represents a compilation of information and research on procrastination from all over the world.

## Recent Research & Publications

**Hagbin, M., & Pychyl, T.A. (2008).** *Self-control in relation to parental independence and procrastination.* Paper presented at the Eastern Psychological Association conference, Boston.

### Abstract

In the present study, we proposed and examined two different structural equation models that show how some early developmental processes (e.g., individuation) in males and females are related to academic procrastination. Both hypothesized models demonstrated acceptable goodness of fit for a sample of 196 first- and second-year undergraduate students drawn from a large, research-intensive university. Overall, the results demonstrated that although self-control as a mediating variable has similar effect sizes for male's and female's academic procrastination, there is a gender difference in the relationship of the distal constructs in the models and procrastination. For males, psychological individuation is related to self-control in the prediction of academic procrastination, whereas for females, freedom from emotional conflict with parents, not individuation, was identified as the distal predictor of self-control and academic procrastination.

**Bennett, S., Pychyl, T.A., Wohl, M.J.A., & Kovaltchouk, Z. (2008).** *Self-forgiveness for task-specific procrastination.* Paper presented at the Eastern Psychological Association conference, Boston.

### Abstract

Procrastination is a common problem among university students. The goal of the present study was to examine the beneficial effect of forgiving oneself for a specific instance of procrastination on procrastination on a similar subsequent task. A sample of 138 first-year university students (58 male, 80 female) completed measures of procrastination and self-forgiveness at three time points, immediately before each of two midterm examinations in their introductory psychology course, and after learning their grade on the first exam. Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses predicting procrastination on the second examination revealed significant interactions between gender, procrastination on the first exam, and self-forgiveness for procrastination on that exam. For females, procrastination and self-forgiveness on the first exam interacted to predict procrastination on the second exam, such that at medium and high levels of procrastination on the first exam, self-forgiveness negatively predicted procrastination. For males, only procrastination on the first exam significantly predicted procrastination on the second exam. These gender differences in the effect of self-forgiveness on procrastination are discussed in relation to the impact of procrastination on self-directed negative affect.

The cartoon below captures these results (see more at [Carpe Diem](#))

## What's new and in the news ...

NEW

Blog

Psychology Today

[Psychology Today  
Blog - "Don't Delay"  
Updated Weekly!](#)

NEW



Updated  
April 2008

[Six Steps to help you beat  
procrastination](#)  
and  
[Getting things done](#)  
**Ottawa Citizen**  
by Donna Jacobs

[Stop Procrastinating -  
Right now!](#)  
**GoodHousekeeping**  
Melissa Kirsch

[Just get started!](#)  
**Ottawa Sun**  
Ann Marie McQueen

Procrastination treatments generally are:

- using a group format
- focusing on Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT)
- short
- focusing on students
- mostly look at procrastination as a first-order problem

# Problems

First order problems

Intensify your efforts

Second order problems

Philosophical change

Treatments generally use two main strategies:

First order problem solution through:

- enhanced self-control by improving self-regulation
  - setting goals
  - monitoring progress
  - managing time
  
- enhanced self-efficacy
  - promoting success-experiences
  - disputing irrational beliefs
  - protecting goals from distraction

more of the same of what the procrastinator is already unsuccessfully trying



## Treatment

„...effects shown are not very large and there seems to be little evidence of a long-lasting or stable effect on behavior. Overall this improvement seems to be only partial ... (207)

„Given the **personality structure** involved, and given the more or less **addictive nature of procrastination**, tangible change would require **much longer periods of treatment**“. (205)

Schouwenburg, H.C. (2004), Perspectives on Counseling the Procrastinator. In: H.C. Schouwenburg, C.H. Lay, T.A. Pynchyl & J.R. Ferrari (Eds), Counseling the Procrastinator in Academic Settings, American Psychological Association, Washington

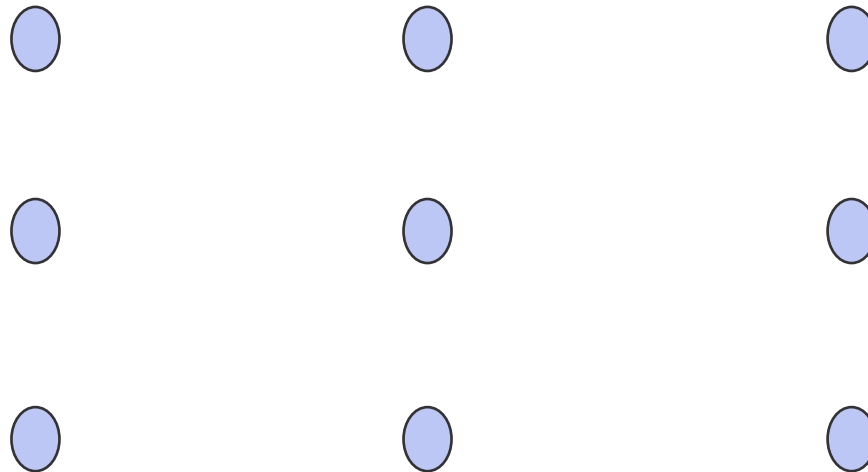
second order problems



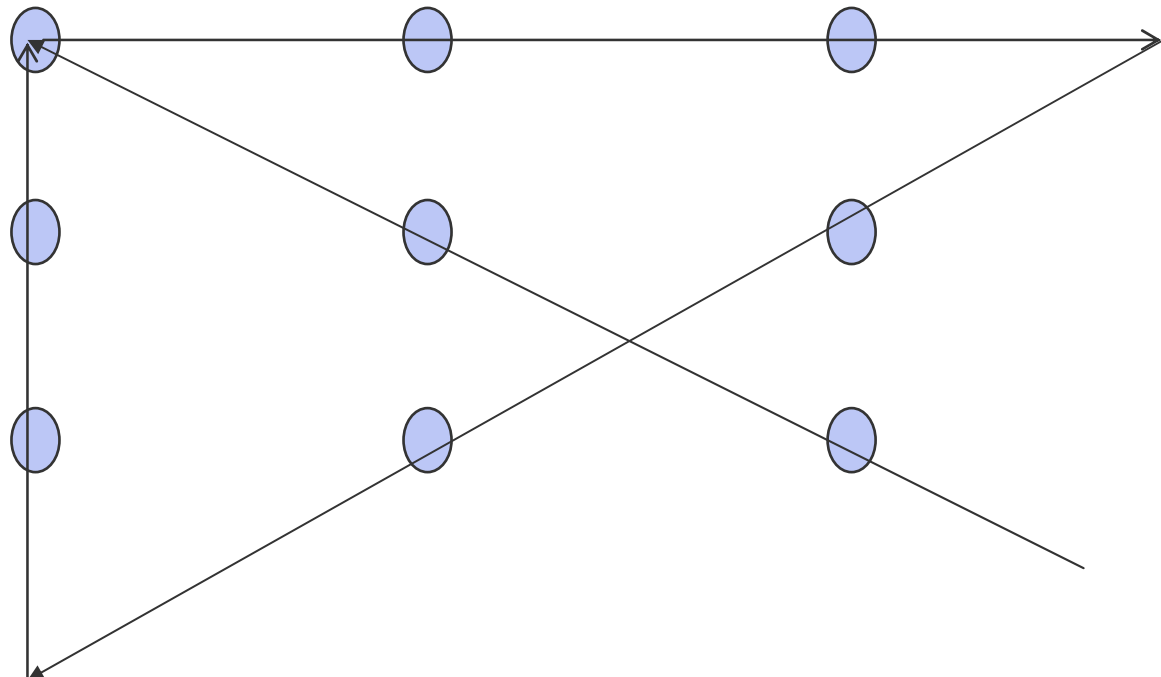
Looking at things with **new eyes** (Proust):

- promote integration of intentions into the self by
  - giving up on tasks that are not compatible with the self
  - making tasks self-compatible by relating them to genuine personal needs and relevant goals
  - generate new perspectives by going beyond the borders

second order problems:



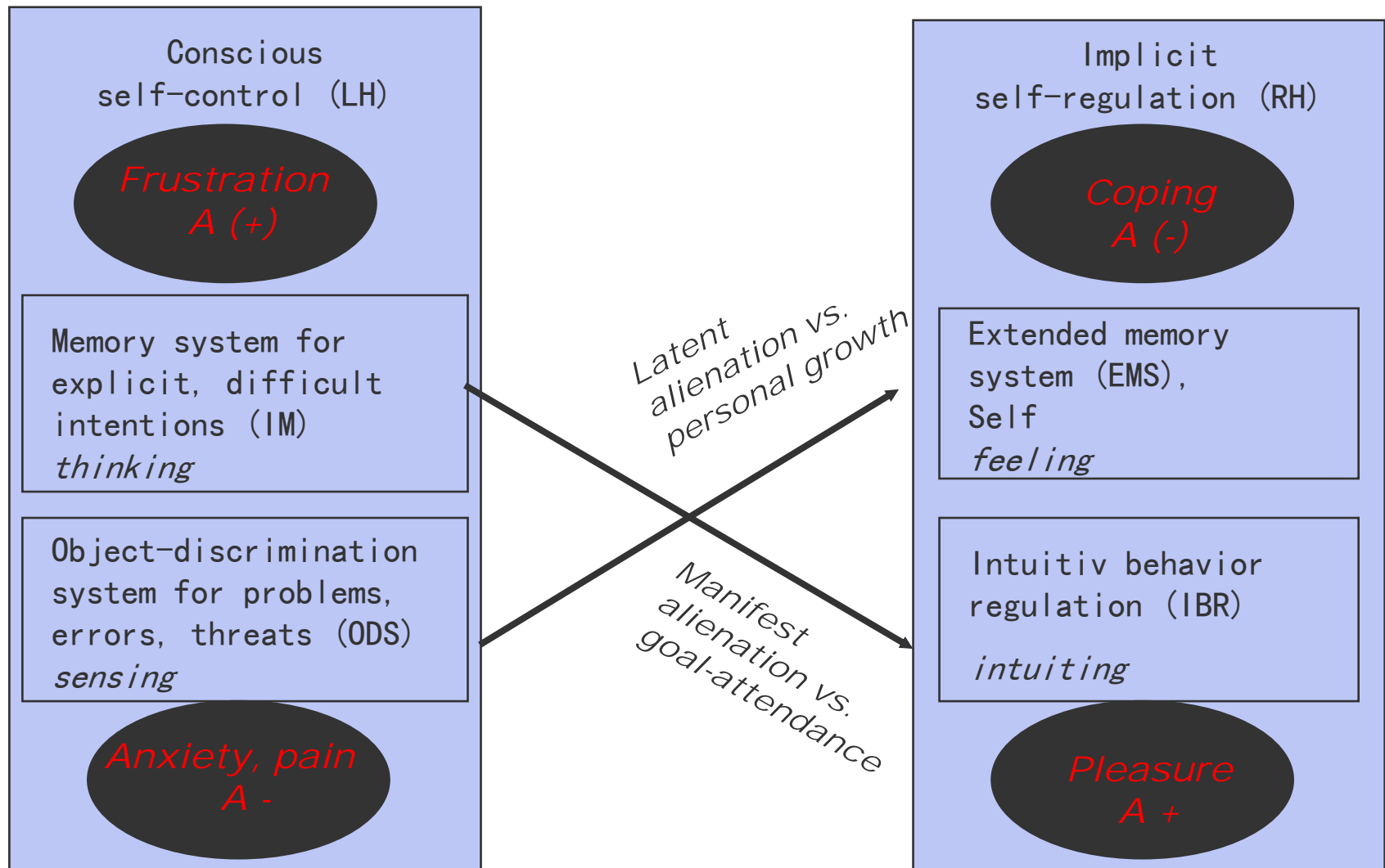
second order problems:



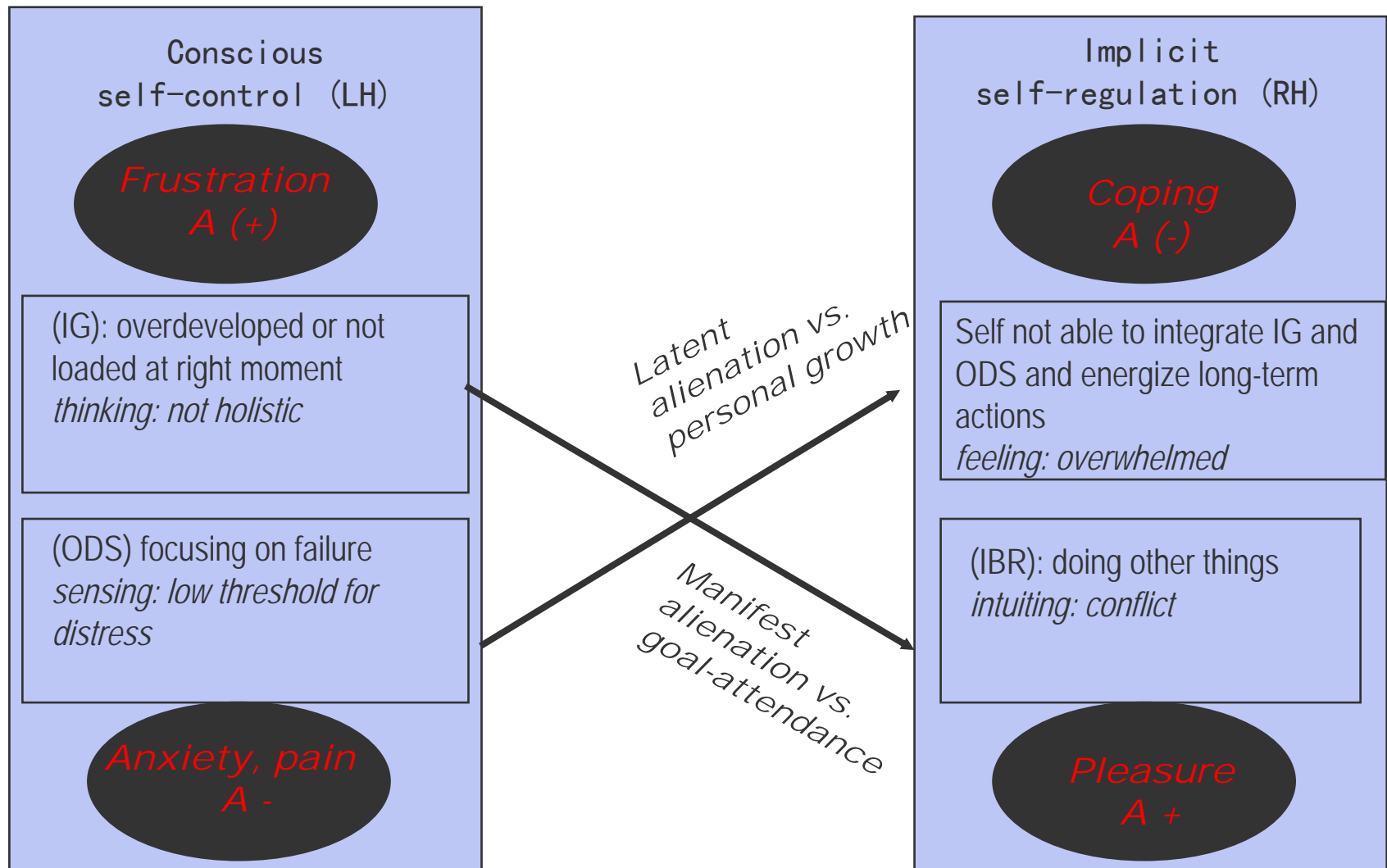
*“Perhaps the **habit** that I had formed **of nursing** in my bosom **several simultaneous desires**...perhaps the **habit of storing up**, without assuaging any of them, all these **desires**, contenting myself with the promise, made to myself, that I would not forget to **satisfy them one day**, perhaps this **habit**, so many years old already, of **perpetual postponement**, of what M. de Charlus used to castigate under the name of **procrastination**...”*

*The Captive, Chapter 1*

# Interaction of psychic systems



# Interaction of psychic systems





*“Having got into the habit, through idleness, of postponing my work from day to day, I doubtless supposed death might deal in the same way with me”.*

*Time regained, Chapter 2*

*“The idea of preliminary suffering is associated with that of work, we dread every fresh undertaking because we are thereby reminded of the pain in store for us before we can conceive it. And, realising that suffering is the best thing life has to offer, we think of death without horror and almost as a deliverance.”*

*Time regained, Chapter 3*

## Thanatotherapy?

No, but:

- accept procrastination as a personality trait (BIG 5 Conscientiousness)
- accept procrastination as an addictive habit (that one can fight)
- develop valid goals and self-obligations (that might change over time)
- look for self-infiltration regarding goals (procrastination as reactance)
- look for overidentification with an idealised self-image (unrealism)
- look for a rigid, aggressive super-ego
- admit that procrastination can be fun



Thank you for your time and attention!

Questions? Comments?  
**SEND EMAIL**

Hans-Werner.Rueckert@fu-berlin.de