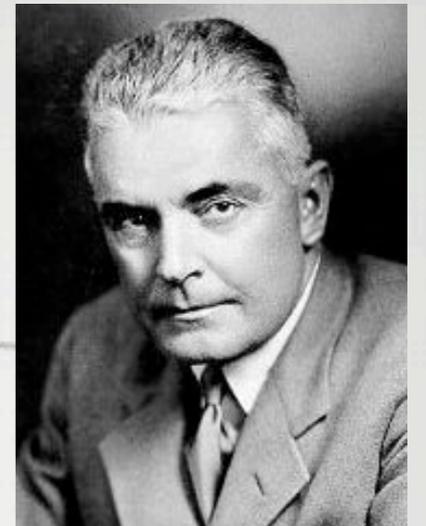


# Behaviourism

Phil 255

# In Psychology: Watson

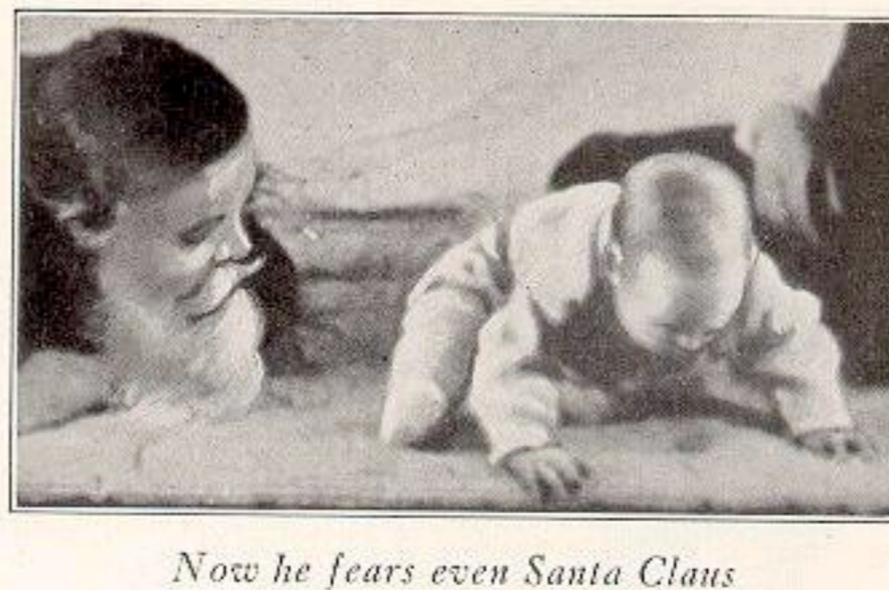
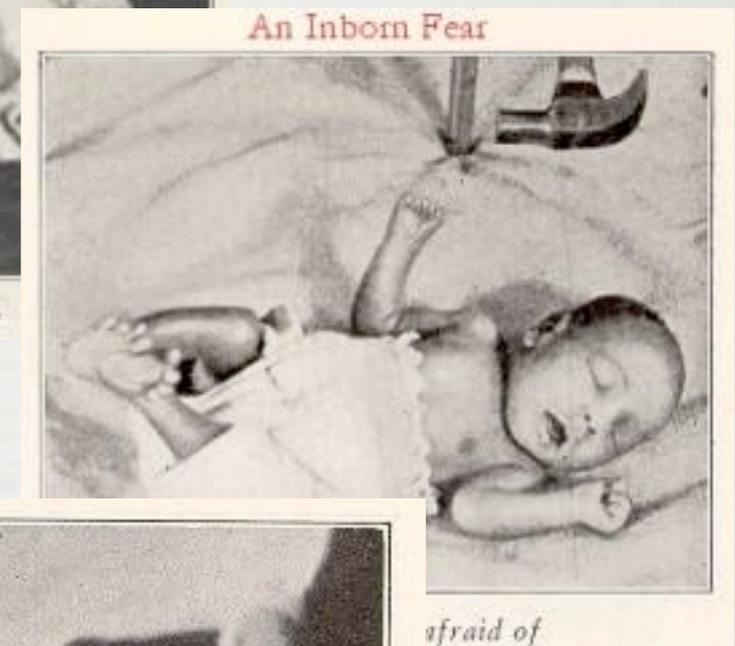
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- When Watson published “Psychology as the behaviourist views it” in 1913, he established his reputation as the father of behaviourist psychology.
- He thought that human psychology should be studied in the same way as animal psychology.
- Watson’s most famous human experiments are those on “Little Albert”.
- Let’s read an example... here

# Psychology as the behaviourist views it

- This paper is often called the behaviourist manifesto.
- It the first example of a clear statement of a new vision for psychology, with two main features.
- Watson felt that there is “no dividing line between man and brute.” How does he mean this?



# Considerations for Behaviourism

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- Scientific method (c.f. introspectionism):
  - “If you fail to reproduce my findings, it is not due to some fault in your apparatus or in the control of your stimulus, but it is due to the fact that your introspection is untrained”
- For behaviourists, ‘internal’ explanations are forbidden:
  - e.g., thought, attitudes, feelings, imagery, etc.
- Only physical properties need to be discussed:
  - e.g., wavelength, stimulus duration, or intensity
- Psychology could be done in terms of S&R, conditioning, habit integration, etc.
  - Guarantees most important of all practical consequences

# Versus Introspectionism

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- Watson clearly disapproves of the introspectionist methodology.
- And he is upset by the fact that behavioural data is not, in and of itself, taken to be useful (only a means to an end).
- “One can assume either the presence or absence of consciousness anywhere in the phylogenetic scale without affecting the problems of behaviour by one jot or one tittle; and without influencing in any way the mode of experimental attack upon them.”
- Like Darwin, need to remove man as the measure of all things
- Suggests consciousness is not a scientifically useful concept
- His discussion of operant conditioning on page 35 demonstrates his alternative

# Versus Functionalism

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- Watson's quarrel is with both with structuralist psychology and functionalist psychology
- Terms like sensation, perception, emotion, and so on are used as much by the functionalist.
- He argues that dividing things in terms of processes instead of in terms of content, doesn't help.
- Why?

# Against Philosophy

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- Watson is no fan of philosophy, but that doesn't stop him from doing it...
- If we think mental states have functions it's easy to think about the relation between mind and body & lapse into interactionism.
- Watson argues it doesn't need to be that way:
  - "behaviourism is the only consistent and logical functionalism."
  - bye bye Philosophy! (why?)

# Limitations

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- Watson but realizes there are difficult cases. E.g.,
- What is Watson's solution to such cases.
- Is it a plausible solution? (Is it even reasonable?)



# Summary



## Methodological

- Psychology is the scientific study of \_\_\_\_\_. (I: Psychology is the scientific study of \_\_\_\_\_).
- Behavior is the externally measurable response to some externally measurable stimuli (I: Yes, but a means to an end).
- The proper method is \_\_\_\_\_. (I: \_\_\_\_\_).
- The methods of \_\_\_\_\_ are appropriate to \_\_\_\_\_ (I: \_\_\_\_\_).
- The terminology: \_\_\_\_\_. (I: \_\_\_\_\_).
- If psychology is practical, \_\_\_\_\_. (I: \_\_\_\_\_).

# Summary (cont.)

## Theoretical

- Metaphysics:

\_\_\_\_\_ (I: \_\_\_\_\_).

- People compared to animals:

\_\_\_\_\_ (I: \_\_\_\_\_).

- All psychologically relevant states are: \_\_\_\_\_

(I: \_\_\_\_\_).



# Philosophical Consequences

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- Despite dismissing philosophy, some held strong philosophical views.
- Other behaviourists (e.g., Skinner), took themselves to have interesting philosophical views about the nature of mind
  - Thought is behaviour
- His view avoids the difficulties of introspectionism, but raises many others (which we'll revisit).

# And Philosophy

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- Carnap (famous for his logical positivism) claimed that psychology should be “degraded into a part of physics.”
- Carnap realized that this may not be practical but thought it should be in principle possible to do so.
- That is, higher sciences like psychology should have to bridge laws that connect them to physics.
- This underspecified claim was made more explicit in the work of Gilbert Ryle, who discusses how to analyze mentalistic terms into behavioural (and hence physical) ones.