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# CONTRIBUTION OF WATSON

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- John Watson was a famous behaviorist born in 1879..He earned a Master's degree at Furman College and a doctorate in Psychology at the University of Chicago. He then taught at John Hopkins University in 1908.
  - John Watson openly opposed the famous Psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud, which assumes the existence of unconsciousness, in his 1913 lecture, Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It.
  - Behaviorism relies on the **observation of overt behaviors** that can be objectively measured and documented, unlike Freudian theories which focus on subjective assessments and evaluation. A good example of behaviorism in action is Pavlov's classical conditioning experiment, which was Watson's inspiration in pursuing the field.

## ■ Behaviorism

Watson believed that psychology should be an objective science focused solely on observable behaviors, excluding introspection and unobservable mental processes.

He argued that all human behavior is learned and influenced by environmental factors, dismissing the role of innate traits or unconscious processes.

### **Classical Conditioning** in Humans:

Watson is most famous for the “**Little Albert experiment**”, where he demonstrated that fear could be conditioned in humans.

In the study, a baby (Little Albert) was conditioned to fear a white rat by pairing the rat with a loud, scary noise. This showed how emotions could be learned through association.

Before Conditioning:



Neutral stimulus  
(white rat)



No fear



UCS  
(Steel bar hit  
with a hammer)



UCR (fear)

Natural reflex



During Conditioning:



Neutral stimulus  
(white rat)

+



UCS



UCR (fear)

Natural reflex



After Conditioning:




Neutral stimulus  
(white rat)



UCR (fear)

Conditioned reflex



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- Behaviorism is primarily concerned with observable behavior, as opposed to internal events like thinking and emotion. Observable (i.e. external) behavior can be objectively and scientifically measured. Internal events, such as thinking should be explained through behavioral terms (or eliminated altogether).
  - Behaviorism was a movement in psychology and philosophy that emphasized the outward behavioral aspects of thought and dismissed the inward experiential, and sometimes the inner procedural, aspects as well. Source

- **Application of Behaviorism:**

Watson's theories influenced areas like advertising, education, and parenting.

He believed that behavior could be shaped and predicted through controlled environments and reinforcement.