Behavioral Psychology

**J.B.Watson and Raynor: Classical conditioning (Little Albert Experiment)**

Little Albert who was a nine month old infant was used in this experiment. He was exposed to various stimuli that he wasn’t afraid of. These included fire, a monkey, a dog, a rabbit and a white rat. It was mentioned that little Albert liked the white rat. After which the next time they exposed him with the rat there was a loud noise, which Watson created by hitting a metal pipe. Albert wasn’t afraid at first but this pairing was repeated a number of times and then whenever they exposed the rat to Albert he was afraid of it and would cry and try to crawl away from it in fear. There after when he was produced with a rabbit, and a white Santa Claus mask and a fur coat he was afraid. Albert feared anything, which had the same characteristics of the white rat. Now the neutral stimulus, which was the white rat, was conditioned with the unconditioned response, which was fear.

The neutral stimulus used in the experiment was the white rat. So little Albert was not afraid of it as there is no response to a neutral stimulus. Then it was paired with an unconditioned stimulus, which was the loud noise made by hitting the metal pipe and the unconditioned response when hearing the loud noise was generating fear. When this pairing was repeated a number of times the neutral stimulus became the conditioned stimulus and was paired with the conditioned response, which was the unconditioned response earlier.

So as a result now whenever the child saw any white or furry object he feared it. He generalized his fear to almost any object, which was white and furry.