

Adaptations: Disquisitions on Psychoanalysis

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PRAGMATISM: WATSON

I am pleased to have this opportunity to present to you our latest researches regarding the behavior of psychoanalysts in water. You will recall that our initial observations led us to describe a circular formation of analysts arms linked, heads to the center, legs thrashing outward like sailors in shark-infested waters or like the agitated petals of a flower. It was a model that emphasized separation and vulnerability to a hostile surround.

In our second model, the polar heads of the analysts migrate to the periphery, where they interact with the charged dipoles of the water molecules. Legs are directed to the center of the micelle, where they mingle like the fatty acid tails of emulsified lipids washed by bile salts in the lumen of the jejunum. This model moves toward integration but falls short of our final model, the disc, in which analysts fall like a drop of oil on a still water pool and spread in a concentric cascade that reaches an improbably large diameter, only limited by achieving a final uniform thickness across the disc of a single molecule.

The disc model combines the deconstruction of hierarchies with maximum outreach, but it has been criticized by those who would worry about the lack of depth in the analytic wafer, and about the relation of the most recent analysts to gambol toward splashdown over the heads of their immediate forbearers to their earliest analytic origins.

These critics would say that in light of what Lewin, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the Boston Psychoanalytic Institute, in the year of Watson's passing, called our "spread," we risk losing contact with what John Murray called, on that same evening, that "unique something" in psychoanalysis and what Menninger called our "compass." These critics would say that, in our pursuit of an open culture of learning, we now make committees rather than contributions. And they would quote Sylvia Pojoli's husband, the well-traveled Roman journalist who, when asked about the difference between Moscow and Rome, said what in Moscow they know nothing about what's going on but understand everything and in Rome, they know everything but understand nothing. So, they say, we, with all our committees, talk with each other. We know everything that's going on everything on the road from Moscow to Rome.

Surely these critics fail to appreciate the complex relationship between science and marketing. Freud was an inspirational leader, but his skills as a market strategist were limited to mitigating the consequences of anti-Semitism. He asked Carl Jung to put a gentile face on the psychoanalytic message. Jung was so enthralled with his role as heir that he enthusiastically shared with Freud his observations both of the poltergeist that he believed to possess Freud's desk and of various matters pertaining to the Aryans, including his discussion of Aryans buried in the bogs around Bremen where Freud, Jung, and Ferenczi waited for the German steamer that

would carry them to the United States.

Regarding the bodies buried in the Bremen bogs, Freud detected a death wish in Jung's remarks and fainted. Regarding the possession of his office furniture, Freud said that he could not hear the sounds but then regretted introducing this note of alienation with his new Crown Prince and assured Jung that he did believe that his telephone number 14362 contained a prognostication of his own death between the ages of 61 and 62, although Rosensweig argues that Freud used this number only as an apotropaic to ward off the evil in an earlier number 2467 that connected Freud both to the now abandoned Fleiss prediction that Freud would die at the age of 51, and to the about-to-retire General E. M., who once punished the 24-year-old Freud, returned, and thereby caused Freud's episode of nervous illness at 30, and served in Freud's idioverse as the precursor to the Cruel Captain that used the story of the Rat Torture to excite and torment the Rat Man, with whom Freud was therefore, at the inframediate level of his idiodynamics, one and the same, minus the rat.

When they got to New York, Jung again broached things Aryan on a walk with Freud in Central Park. Shortly afterward, traveling on Riverside Drive, Freud suffered one of his embarrassing episodes of incontinence that Jung attributed to ambition and that Patrick Mahoney attributes, on this occasion, to Freud's view of the Palisades across the river because the "palus" suggests pole, stake, or poker just as my friend Andy Parker, known, in fact, as Mr. Poker to the campers in his charge, frequently assured them that "enuresis is nothing to be ashamed of."

On a third occasion, with the split a fait accompli, Freud needed to confront Jung about Jung's repeated failure to footnote Freud and fainted again. Jung carried the smaller man to a couch where Freud dreamily spoke of "how sweet it must be to die." So, from a marketing perspective, a mixed result at best.

There are those, however, who intuitively grasp the connections between science and marketing that can prove so elusive to the psychoanalyst. Consider these examples:

At a party in Marin County, north of San Francisco, an attractive young woman awash in Indian cottons and turquoise asked me about the chemical equations she spied on a T-shirt underneath my coat.

"What's that?" she asked.

"The Krebs cycle, the final common pathway to obtain energy from fuel molecules."

"What's a Krebs?"

"Hans Krebs worked out the pathway. He won the Nobel Prize for it. In fact, right now, he's working at Berkeley."

She seemed impressed, but a moment later something occurred to her that impressed her even more.

"Oh!" she said, "and does he make the shirts?"

At the Columbia College of Physicians and Surgeons, a packed auditorium of first-year medical students awaited the arrival of a lecturer who would begin to unlock the mysteries of psychiatry. A man in a long white coat bulled his way to the podium. He ripped from his coat a book with a green cover and held aloft a copy of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual in Psychiatry, 3rd edition. "I want to tell you about a book," he said with some urgency, "that is not only the most important book in the history of psychiatry but an international best seller!"

A recent grand rounds presentation about the use of behavioral flooding to treat phobic avoidance consisted, in large part, of the presentation of two twenty-minute segments of network television news entertainment programs in which an attractive male reporter, in an open-collared shirt, accompanied people suffering from phobias through their treatment program. The people said they were afraid. A woman who had been a beauty contestant stayed in her room at home. A man who had played soccer had to be delivered onto an airplane drunk, in a wheelchair. They were assigned a young, attractive female therapist who told them to face their fears. At first they didn't want to, but then they did. She told the woman who was afraid of enclosed places to go into an elevator, so she did. She told the man who was afraid of open spaces to go into a field, so he did. Then the woman went to a mall, which was an open space, but she seemed happier. And the man jumped out of an airplane while mounted onto the back of a male instructor in a suggestive position. The man was very excited and gave a thumbs up that suggested that he was happier too. The presenter said that they got a lot of calls after the television broadcasts. He said that they thought the treatment would take three weeks but that the news magazine had asked them to cut the treatment to eight days because that was all the time they had to film the segment, so now they offer an eight-day treatment, Sunday to Monday, for \$2500, not including transportation or room and board or extras like buying things at the mall or jumping out of a plane.

The young woman marketer, the professor of the celebrity book, and the grand rounds television presenter all appreciated the close relationship between claims for one's science and merchandizing. But psychoanalysts have been slow to grasp the concept despite continuous reminders to enhance both their research and their outreach. Perhaps the problem has been the tendency of analysts to treat the two concerns of science and the marketplace separately.

Almost a century ago, John Broadus Watson observed from behind the grocery counter at Macy's that the two concerns are really one and the same when he celebrated discovered really the homology of form between the learning curves of his rats and the sales curves of his marketed commodities.

As an undergraduate, I was similarly moved, by the formal similarity between the drive and bob-turn lap-swimming behavior of the Freudian analysts at our university pool and the runway bar-press behavior of my rat Broadus in the experiment that I was completing in the animal laboratory. I was a lifeguard, and I watched them each day as I sat with William Octavius Bowser the custodian from South Carolina who alternately pushed pigs and tobacco as reliable cash crops and helped me to consider the motivations of analysts in terms of their faith and Tony

Melos my behaviorist friend whose insights were facilitated by the government-grade hallucinogens left over in the syringes he used in the lab to induce stereotyped circling behavior in rats.

Melos considered arguments built on homologies of form to represent primitive modes of thought.

I took his point, but how could I account for the fact that, in his later years, Watson liked to stand by the windows of his skyscraper office and stare down at the pedestrians far below who scampered the sidewalks like runways on the way to their rodent labors? Was it merely the "compliance of chance"? Or that Melos's own brisk barefoot walks modeled, as they were, on the zests Granville Hall recommended to Freud as a remedy for intestinal cramps, and punctuated at the terminus by pushups seemed as uncomfortably familiar as Freud's buried spring that suddenly comes to ground?

Melos also objected to observing phenomena like the swimming analysts naively, or "pseudonaively," as he called it. He was, at the time, particularly sensitized to willful misunderstandings by the recently released Frederick Weisman film about the Yerkes primate lab that showed the researchers causing excited male chimps to ejaculate into Plexiglas tubes. He felt that the viewing public was not in a position to evaluate the images and that Weisman's claim to be "just pointing the camera" was disingenuous.

Yerkes had been Watson's Fleiss. At the nodal points of Watson's scandal-pocked career he looked to Yerkes for counsel. After the rat scandal, Watson wrote to Yerkes from his post observing snooty terns in the Dry Tortugas to say that until psychologists were identified with zoologists, they would never receive respect.

As a boy, after Watson's father vanished into the woods for the last time, Watson's mother sold the farm to bring him to Greenville, South Carolina, hoping to make him into a preacher. But he was arrested, instead, for beating up blacks and shooting off rifles, and it wasn't until she died that he made it to the University of Chicago and tried to determine what special senses rats need in order to learn by surgically removing one sense after another in experiments so gruesome that editorials appeared as far away as the New York Observer calling for his arrest as a torturer of rats.

It was a sex scandal, however, that drove him from Chicago to Johns Hopkins, where the chairman who recruited him was also caught in a sex scandal involving the local bordello. And so, at 31, Watson became chair of his department at Johns Hopkins, and at 36, he was elected president of the American Psychological Association and recognized as the undisputed leader of the behaviorist juggernaut in American psychology. His wife, however, refused him sex he felt that she could be helped only by Freud and so he started a new affair with his graduate student. He was very excited. The two of them went into a room and banged pots and pans over the head of a 9-month-old infant boy and a white rat. In this charged primal atmosphere, the infant displaced his anxiety onto the rat and became famous. Watson was not as fortunate. The affair was discovered, and his wife's powerful family had Watson's love letters published in the Baltimore Sun. He was thrown out of Hopkins overnight. He ended up at the advertising firm of

J. Walter Thompson, where, as a new hire, he served a series of clerkships peddling Yuban coffee and rubber boots before his stint behind the grocery counter at Macy's. After he was fired, Yerkes was the first to line up for his old job at Hopkins. Melos says that it always comes back to Darwin.

Watson was philosophical about the sex scandals. He credited Freud with recognizing that what we know as affection is merely a conditioned emotional response derived from a stimulation of the sexual organs, specifically the tumescence and detumescence of the genitals that many believed Watson sought to measure with a box of instruments discovered at Johns Hopkins that has long been rumored to be the true cause of his dismissal although Professor Buckley notes that the instruments were not introduced by his wife's attorney as part of the divorce proceedings and that they resist a clear interpretation of their function.

Melos felt that my interest in Watson was misguided and that rather than looking for homologies of form, we should be looking for the points of disturbance from which an infinite variety of vectors spread in what appear to us to be concentric waves. Darwin, he argued, dropped such a pebble in our pond.

Among the responders, Granville Hall, Inviter of Freud, attacked Darwin to promote the new profession of psychology. He said that the new experimental science would reestablish the Divine line between man and the animals. Freud embraced Darwin to support his attack on religion; he collapsed phylogeny into the unconscious. Watson embraced Darwin to support his attack on humanity; he said human consciousness didn't exist because he could not see or feel it. Asked if mental states thought, perception, cognition, feeling had anything to do with human behavior, he said that the only mental activity of interest to the psychologist is the observable and measurable vibration of the larynx. We talk to ourselves and mistake our soliloquies for internal worlds.

As the ripples spread across the pond, the bobbing of any given point can be plotted over time but no single graph can capture the motion of all the points. With time, the inner rings become still, the disc becomes a doughnut, and the past an extrapolation. We bob as the wave passes through us for a moment; we impose our present on all that memory is.

And so, Tom Willis, of the Creation Science Association for Mid-America, restores a Victorian order for the Kansas State Board of Education by ghostwriting the new laws outlawing the teaching of evolution except in the microsphere. And humans, as described in the Most Important Work in the History of Psychiatry, which is also an International Best Seller, are categorized by the vibrations of their larynxes. And the mental states refined by Freud are left to the animals who won a case last year when the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit gave a zoo visitor at the Long Island Game Farm Park and Zoo the legal standing to sue the government so that Barney, a chimpanzee, could be united with Samantha, also a chimp, in a neighboring cage. The suit is still being fought in federal court, although Barney, as reported by Glaberson, was shot to death in 1996 after escaping, biting someone, uprooting a sign, and throwing it at a merry-go-round. The lawyers argue that animals are sentient beings with perceptions, cognitions, and emotions. Steven M. Wise, champion of chimps and bonobos,

is currently fighting in a Massachusetts appeals court to compensate not just the property loss but also the emotional distress of the owners of seven pet sheep murdered by a neighbor's dog. Wise argues that the relationships were well developed. The sheep owners, a taxidermist and his wife, let the sheep in the house and baked them muffins.

I was proud that my rat's implant was successful enough that he would live out his days in the lab

pressing his bar for all comers. But I cannot say that I am a rat person. Rat people think of rats as house dogs: smart and rather clean under the right circumstances. Rosensweig thought Freud was a Rat Man but he was a dog man. In the Jewish bible, the dogs are symbols of male prostitutes but there is no mention of cats at all because they are identified with the Egyptians, who deified them after importing them from Libya to kill rats. Cats were killed in Druid ceremonies because the static electricity from their fur proved they were Satanic. And they have long been eaten throughout Asia, but Phan Van Khai, the prime minister of Vietnam, recently outlawed serving cat in restaurants and exporting them for food to China because the rat population has exploded during the warm El Nino weather and is eating half the rice crop, and, although the central province farmers claim to kill as many as three and a half million rats per week, their numbers continue to grow. And so the rats and cats continue to chase each other around the world in what might be considered one of the microevolutionary struggles still acceptable in Kansas.

My wife is allergic to cats. In fact she is an ailurophobe, a cat phobic. She believes that she knows if cats have ever been present in a given environment or whether they ever will be. Cat antigen number one, a protein secreted in cat saliva that dries on their fur when they clean themselves and is released as dander, is, in fact, the most potent antigenic stimulus we know. I told my wife that Stekel concluded that ailurophobes, typically women, suffer from homosexual fears when faced with this symbol of female sexuality, but she was unmoved. I told her that S. Weir Mitchell had convincingly argued against the racial memory hypothesis that attributed the phobia to trace traumas with saber-toothed tigers; he said it was asthma. But she had stopped listening.

When I presented my wife's case and those of my atopic children at the pet store they offered me a hypoallergenic rat. I pitched the rat as a house dog that giggled. Of course you could not hear the giggle, but Jaak Panksepp and Jeffrey Burgdorf of Bowling Green State University in Ohio had determined that rats possess a high-pitched, chirping whistle-giggle outside the range of human hearing by which they communicate their discrimination between playful and threatening physical behavior. My wife, however, was caught up in one of her many attempts to explain evolution to our alarmed 6-year-old.

"You were a monkey?" my child asked.

I had no better luck with our 10-year-old. I was telling her how the salt content in our extracellular fluid echoes the seas from which the first unicellular life emerged, and she, fresh from the planetarium, says, "I thought we were 'star stuff'!" I give her the primordial sea and she comes back with the Big Bang. I give her homologies; she comes back with the wave.

Freud's ripple ended in 1939. Chased from his own country by killers, he had to contemplate once again the lengths to which people would go to maintain their illusions of control. The psychoanalytic wave rolls on, threatened only by its own success and the endless temptation to become sensible.

Watson's ripple ended in 1958. He built his success as an advertising executive on the insight that doubt can be cultivated and new behaviors reaped through the testimony of professed experts. He went on radio to convince people that the way to have sex appeal is to smoke and the way to smoke without bad breath is Pebecco toothpaste, and from this pyramid of suggestion he reached for a society of social engineers armed with behaviorist technologies who would replace teachers, government officials, clinicians, and mothers. And, in the end, while living out his days

as a recluse in a shack simulation of his Carolinian origins tucked heimlich into the Connecticut woods, with only alcohol and his outdoor rats to keep him company, he speculated on who would have to die what deviants, recalcitrants, and nonresponders to maintain the order of his more

perfect world. The behaviorist wave rolls on, fueled by our endless thirst for prediction, control, and efficiency.

I carefully lifted Broadus into the starting box and fitted a fine wire socket to the electrode that passed through his wax skull cap into his lateral hypothalamus. The wire rose to a ceiling pulley so that Broadus could run unencumbered from the starting gate to the bar. I controlled the separate currents that primed the speed of his run at one end and rewarded the frequency of his bar press at the other. In this way, I had my hand on the throttle of both his drive and his gratification.

But once, in this triangle of wire and pulley that defined his world and firmament, after I pushed the button to prime his charge, he paused just a moment and glanced in my direction for a rat, too, may look at a king and as he scampered down the runway toward his ultimate reward, an inaudible, invisible cackle whistled and chirped through the lab like a spreading pool of oil, searching for someone with enough larynx to appreciate the joke.