Test of time: What if little albert had escaped?

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Abstract: Watson and Rayner's (1920) 'Little Albert' experiment has become one of the most famous studies in psychology. It is a staple of many general psychology textbooks and is part of the very fabric of the discipline's folklore. Despite this fame, the study has been widely criticized in the nearly 90 years since it was published for its lack of methodological rigour. This article attempts to evaluate the contribution of the 'little Albert' study to modern clinical psychology by speculating on what theories and treatments of child anxiety would look like in a parallel universe in which the study never took place because 'little Albert' escaped from the hospital in which Watson tested him.

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