

# Emergence of Behaviourism

## .....Psychology before Behaviourism.....

- Introspection
- USA - Functionalism (William James)– purpose of behaviour – no rigid methods though
- Austria - Psychodynamic Perspective (Sigmund Freud) – woolly and speculative – pessimistic
- UK - Experimental psychology
  - Focused on observation and measurement
  - Nativist: mentalistic events

## ..... Influences on Behaviourism.....

### Philosophy

- John Locke – *tabula rasa*
- Descartes – emphasis on thought
- Parsimony & Occam's razor
  - Simple explanation is best
  - "Mind doesn't matter"
- Associationism – Aristotle
- Pragmatism – purpose of behaviour

### Hard Sciences

- Darwin's survival of the fittest
- Evolution – we are similar to animals
- Reductionism in Bio & Chem
- Methods (scientific)

### Zeitgeist

- Industrial capitalism
- Utopian debate
- Social unrest
- Russia – challenge feudalism
- West looking to new society

## ..... Early Studies in Animal Behaviour that Influenced Behaviourism.....

- Animal Psychology – Edward Thorndike (USA)
  - "The instinctual and intelligent behaviour of chickens"
    - Chicks running about a maze
    - Stumble upon the right way to food & companionship
    - Pleasure "stamps in" the successful act
  - Puzzle boxes - cats
    - Escape by trial and error
    - Observation doesn't work
    - Cats make association b/n action and satisfying outcome
    - *Law of Effect* <-- very important!
    - Law of Exercise
  - Used empirical research to validate philosophical underpinnings of Behaviourism
- Animal "Physiology" – Ivan Pavlov (Russia)
  - [shhhh...it's really animal PSYCHOLOGY, but don't tell Ivan that!]
  - Digestion studies on dogs
  - Classical (Pavlovian) Conditioning
    - Basic procedure
      - UCS --> UCR
      - CS + UCS --> UCR
      - CS --> CR
    - Higher order conditioning
    - Generalisation
    - Extinction
    - Spontaneous recovery
    - Experimental neurosis
  - "Conditioned reflex"

## .....The Appeal of Behaviourism.....

- Challenged the rigid assumptions of Nativists
- Challenged the negative images of the Psychodynamic theorists
- Challenged subjective analysis of Functionalists and Structuralists
- Stressed malleability of behaviour
- Provided optimistic view of human ability to change
- Promised new social order could be developed
- Said we are not limited by heredity
- Behaviourism would gain the most popularity in the US and less in Europe, although its influence would be felt throughout most of psychology