**Ethology** is where we learn about human psychology from studying other animals.

• Conrad Lorenz believed that aggression was an innate adaptive response – something which had evolved in humans and animals to help them survive.

• To see off predators: For example a group of hissing geese can drive off a fox, even though the fox would probably win a straight fight. If the geese survive, then the gene which led to that aggressive response will be passed on.

To get resources: Lorenz also suggested that much aggression was aimed at members of the same species, when competing for territory or sexual partners, but some animals are so fierce they could easily damage each other when fighting for dominance; Eg. Wolves, Stags, Lions.

This would be maladaptive – bad for the species. Therefore they fight until one backs down, not to the death, just to establish who is stronger and who is weaker.

This creates a society in which each individual knows their place. They have evolved ways of warning others to back off: Dogs bark and snarl, cats hiss, apes beat their chest or wave sticks about. Niko Tinbergen called these **Fixed Action Patterns [FAP]**

Lea [1984] analysed **FAPs** and identified 5 features:

1.Stereotyped – behavior follows a certain pattern each time.

2.Universal all the animals in that species use the same type of threat.

3.Innate: all the animals in that species seem to be born with it and don’t have to learn it.

4.Ballistic: Once it starts it cannot simply be stopped.

5.Specific triggers seem to set it off.

**Evaluation of FAP** - Breland and Breland found that animals tend to revert to instinctive behavior regardless of training. This would support the FAP theory.

It could be argued that some behaviors are learned in the environment – but maybe not all. Dogs can been trained by hunters, army and police to act in particular ways.

Eibesfeldt (1972) tried to identify human FAPS such as smiling to show non-aggression, however he found that our culture changes so quickly that cultural differences in signs can change more quickly than evolutionary patterns. Rude words and hand signs can change, so not evolutionary. Humans are certainly capable of developing new ways of expressing aggression – such as cyber bullying!

**Innate releasing mechanism** - Creatures have evolved an instinctive response to certain signs. [Like a red rag to a bull!]

Eg. Male sticklebacks will respond aggressively to the red underbelly of a rival male – but not to a female who does not have the red underbelly.