

Ethology, Sociobiology and Evolutionary Psychology

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Abstract

In the years leading up to the Second World War the ethologists Konrad Lorenz and Nikolaas Tinbergen, created the tradition of rigorous, Darwinian research on animal behavior that developed into modern behavioral ecology. At first glance, research on specifically human behavior seems to exhibit greater discontinuity than research on animal behavior in general. The 'human ethology' of the 1960s appears to have been replaced in the early 1970s by a new approach called 'sociobiology'. Sociobiology in its turn appears to have been replaced by an approach calling itself Evolutionary Psychology. Closer examination, however, reveals a great deal of continuity between these schools. At present, whilst Evolutionary Psychology is the most visible form of evolutionary psychology, empirical and theoretical research on the evolution of mind and behavior is marked by a diversity of ideas and approaches and it is far from clear which direction(s) the field will take in future.

Keywords: evolutionary psychology ethology sociobiology human behavioral ecology Darwinian anthropology instinct innateness

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