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## **Ethology, Ethos, Art, and Architecture**

In *The Iliad* Homer uses the Greek word “ethos” three times, and in all three instances it refers to animals and, more specifically, to “animal haunts” or, more prosaically, “the places where animals are usually found.” This relationship to dwelling and animals is never completely subsumed in later accounts, such as Aristotle’s emphasis on “ethos” as ethics, habit, and character. In the twentieth century, Heidegger elaborated on “ethos” in ways that echo all its dimensions in regards to habit, dwelling, world-formation, and the animal. In doing so he was able to draw upon the nascent discipline of scientific “ethology,” which can be translated as the study of the habits and territories of animals. Its first practitioners and theorists, such as Konrad Lorenz, Nikolaas Tinbergen, Karl Von Frisch, Irenaus Eibl-Eibesfeldt, and Jacob Von Uexkull, tended to emphasize the functional aspects of animal behavior, and began exploring their “patterns” of behavior, in order to produce a comprehensive inventory of such patterns, which they called an “ethogram.” In order to do so, they mobilized a rich array of visual materials, including photography, film, video, drawing, diagrams, dummies, models, and lures.

Most pertinent in the context of this seminar, is that ethology contained a more or less explicit philosophy of art, which emphasized its origins in biological, evolutionary, and instinctual behavioral. In stunning images and prose, ethologists described how “art” begins to emerge from ritualized display activities in mating and aggression, with their exaggerations and repetitions, ultimately entering into a realm of “pure art” (references to dance, music, ornament, brightly colored posters, and “art for art sake” are ubiquitous in classical ethology). Drawing on the work of Konrad Lorenz and Von Uexkull, Deleuze radicalized many of the insights of ethology, and developed his own “Spinozist ethology,” in which emphasis is shifted away from functionalist explanations where aggression produces territories to a claim that it is in fact art that produces territories, with a concomitant emphasis on issues of rhythm, expression, affect, intensity, and assemblages. In a different vein, Adorno drew on ethology in his *Aesthetic Theory*, in order to formulate an account of how art and beauty are never able to secure their autonomy from the “capacity to shudder, as if goose bumps were the first aesthetic image.” Even though expressive form had set itself off from the by-now distant residues of its mimetic origins in the biological and ethological realms, he knew that it never completely severed its ties to violence, terror, and suffering. And the influence of ethology colored the work of many other twentieth and twenty-first century thinkers such as Max Scheler, Jacques Lacan, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Giorgio Agamben, Michel Serres, Catherine Malabou, Alphonso Lingis, and Elizabeth Grosz.

This seminar will introduce the complexities of ethology, and its relationships to art, architecture, and contemporary theory. At issue throughout will be how these relationships might help us think about the intersections between ethics, aesthetics, territory, habitation, and social/political formations.