

Etymology^[edit]

The term *ethology* derives from the [Greek language](#): ἦθος, *ethos* meaning "character" and -λογία, -*logia* meaning "the study of". The term was first popularized by American [myrmecologist](#) (a person who studies ants) [William Morton Wheeler](#) in 1902.^[5] An earlier, slightly different sense of the term was proposed by [John Stuart Mill](#) in his 1843 *System of Logic*.^[6] He recommended the development of a new science, "ethology", the purpose of which would be explanation of individual and national differences in character, on the basis of [associationistic psychology](#). This use of the word was never adopted.

Relationship with comparative psychology^[edit]

[Comparative psychology](#) also studies animal behaviour, but, as opposed to ethology, is construed as a sub-topic of [psychology](#) rather than as one of [biology](#). Historically, where comparative psychology has included research on animal behaviour in the context of what is known about human psychology, ethology involves research on animal behaviour in the context of what is known about animal [anatomy](#), [physiology](#), [neurobiology](#), and [phylogenetic](#) history. Furthermore, early comparative psychologists concentrated on the study of learning and tended to research behaviour in artificial situations, whereas early ethologists concentrated on behaviour in natural situations, tending to describe it as instinctive.

The two approaches are complementary rather than competitive, but they do result in different perspectives, and occasionally conflicts of opinion about matters of substance. In addition, for most of the twentieth century, comparative psychology developed most strongly in [North America](#), while ethology was stronger in [Europe](#). From a practical standpoint, early comparative psychologists concentrated on gaining extensive knowledge of the behaviour of very few [species](#). Ethologists were more interested in understanding behaviour across a wide range of species to facilitate principled comparisons across [taxonomic](#) groups. Ethologists have made much more use of such cross-species comparisons than comparative psychologists have.

History^[edit]

Scala naturae and Lamarck's theories^[edit]

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