

**ANIMAL PHILOSOPHY:**

**ESSENTIAL READINGS IN CONTINENTAL THOUGHT**

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## THE ANIMAL IS POOR IN WORLD

Martin Heidegger

Man is not merely a *part of the world* but is also master and servant of the world in the sense of "*having*" world. Man has world. But then what about the other beings which, like man, are also part of the world: the animals and plants, the material things like the stone, for example? Are they merely parts of the world, as distinct from man who in addition *has* world? Or does the animal too have world, and if so, in what way? In the same way as man, or in some other way? And how would we grasp this otherness? And what about the stone? However crudely, certain distinctions immediately manifest themselves here. We can formulate these distinctions in the following three theses: [1.] the stone (material object) is *worldless*; [2.] the animal is *poor in world*; [3.] man is *world-forming*. . .

The lizard basking in the sun on its warm stone does not merely crop up in the world. It has sought out this stone and is accustomed to doing so. If we now remove the lizard from its stone, it does not simply lie wherever we have put it but starts looking for its stone again, irrespective of whether or not it actually finds it. The lizard basks in the sun. At least this is how we describe what it is doing, although it is doubtful whether it really comports itself in the same way as we do when we lie out in the sun, i.e., whether the sun is accessible to it *as* sun, whether the lizard is capable of experiencing the rock *as* rock. Yet the lizard's relation to the sun and to warmth is different from that of the warm stone simply lying present at hand in the sun. . . . It is true that the rock on which the lizard lies is not given for the lizard *as* rock, in such a way that it could inquire into its mineralogical constitution for example. It is true that the sun in which it is basking is not given for the lizard *as* sun, in such a way that it could ask questions of astrophysics about it and expect to find the answers. But it is not true to say that the lizard merely crops up as present at hand *beside* the rock, *among* other things such as the sun for example, in the same way as the stone lying nearby is simply present at hand among other things. On the contrary, the lizard has its *own relation* to the rock, to the sun, and to a host of other things. . . . The animal's *way of being*, which we call "*life*," is *not without access* to what is around it and about it, to that among which it appears as a living being.<sup>1</sup>

## HEIDEGGER'S ZOONTOLOGY

Matthew Calarco

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Readers familiar with Heidegger's writings will be aware that the question of the relation between human *Dasein* and non-human animals is one that haunts nearly all of his work. Although he rarely elaborates this question at length, a careful reading of Heidegger's texts leaves no doubt that he is highly interested in rethinking the distinction between human beings and animals in a way that challenges traditional metaphysical characterizations. Yet, at first glance, this project of critically rethinking the human/animal distinction seems to offer little more than a new determination of what is essential to *human* existence, thereby leaving the question of *animal* life unexamined; indeed, it is precisely this focus on the human that has led some critics to argue that Heidegger's thought represents simply another instance (albeit a highly sophisticated one) of the dogmatic anthropocentrism that has characterized much of the Western philosophical tradition.<sup>1</sup> There is certainly considerable textual evidence to support this kind of critical reading. Not only are the overwhelming majority of Heidegger's remarks on non-human animals intended to highlight the comparative uniqueness of the human, but they also tend to portray animals in purely negative and oppositional terms in relation to human *Dasein*. The following passages might be taken as representative examples of such anthropocentric tendencies:

The leap from living animals to humans that speak is as large if not larger than that from the lifeless stone to the living being.<sup>2</sup>

Mortals are they who can experience death as death. Animals cannot do so. But animals cannot speak either. The essential relation between death and language flashes up before us, but remains still unthought.<sup>3</sup>

Because captivity belongs to the essence of the animal, the animal cannot die in the sense in which dying is ascribed to human beings but can only come to an end.<sup>4</sup>

Ek-sistence can be said only of the essence of the human being, that is, only of the human way "to be." For as far as our experience shows, only the human being is admitted to the destiny of ek-sistence. Therefore ek-sistence can also never be thought of as a specific kind of living creature among others. . . . Thus even what we attribute to the human being as *animalitas* on the basis of the comparison with "beasts" is itself grounded in the essence of ek-sistence. The human body is something essentially other than an animal organism.<sup>5</sup>

Of all the beings that are, presumably the most difficult to think about are living creatures, because on the one hand they are in a certain way most closely akin to us, and on the other they are at the same time separated from our ek-sistent essence by an abyss.<sup>6</sup>

The [human] hand is a peculiar thing. In the common view, the hand is part of our bodily organism. But the hand's essence can never be determined, or explained, by its being an organ which can grasp. Apes, too, have organs that can grasp, but they do not have hands. The hand is infinitely different from all grasping organs – paws, claws, or fangs – different by an abyss of essence.<sup>7</sup>

For Rilke, human "consciousness," reason, *logos*, is precisely the limitation that makes man less potent than the animal. Are we then supposed to turn into "animals"?<sup>8</sup>

Of course, in order to be able to give these remarks a charitable reading they would have to be reinserted into their original context, and then given careful consideration in relation to the text itself as well as to the larger question of the place of animals and "life" within Heidegger's work. I do not have the space to undertake such a massive task here.<sup>9</sup> I have cited these passages simply to give the reader a sense of the tenor of Heidegger's treatment of animal life, and also to give some idea as to why his work has sometimes been charged with being dogmatically and naïvely anthropocentric. I will offer my own brief assessment of whether Heidegger's thinking remains anthropocentric in the closing section of the chapter.

So, rather than developing an interpretation of the passages cited above, I propose in this chapter to examine the issue that is perhaps most recurrent for Heidegger with regard to the human/animal distinction: trying to determine the difference between the human relation to world and the animal relation to world. Heidegger addressed this particular question on several occasions, in both his early and late writings. In one of the most widely read essays from his later period, "Letter on 'Humanism'" (1946), Heidegger offers the following oft-cited statement concerning the animal's relation to world in the context of a reflection on language and the animal's environment:

Because plants and animals are lodged in their respective environments but are never placed freely into the clearing of being which alone is "world,"

they lack language. But in being denied language, they are not thereby suspended worldlessly in their environment. Still, in this word "environment" converges all that is puzzling about living creatures.<sup>10</sup>

Eleven years prior, in a series of lectures at Freiburg (which were eventually published under the title *An Introduction to Metaphysics*), Heidegger offers a somewhat different account of the animal world in a discussion of the phenomenon of the darkening of the world and the emasculation of spirit (which Heidegger associates with the flight of the gods, the destruction of the earth, the standardization of human beings, and the preeminence of mediocrity). Heidegger asks:

What do we mean by world when we speak of a darkening of the world? World is always world of the spirit. The animal has no world nor any environment.<sup>11</sup>

And in his well-known essay from the same year, "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger makes a similarly ambiguous statement about the animal's lack of world in contrast to the world-relation of the peasant woman.

A stone is worldless. Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked. The peasant woman, on the other hand, has a world because she dwells in the overtness of beings, of the things that are.<sup>12</sup>

In order to gain some insight into the significance of the status of animality in these passages, and to see why Heidegger's seemingly contradictory statements may not be contradictory once properly understood, it will be helpful to turn to the 1929–30 Freiburg lecture course *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*.<sup>13</sup> This lecture course is Heidegger's most sustained attempt by far to come to grips with both the question of the animal's relation to world in particular, and with determining the ontology of animal life in general. What we will discover in our reading of this lecture course is that Heidegger's statement concerning the world-poverty of animals is meant to indicate a simultaneous having and not-having of world, something which appears to be a blatant contradiction from the perspective of formal logic and common sense. By penetrating into and disclosing the ambiguous world-relation of animals, we will also track Heidegger's efforts to establish the foundations for a new ontology of animal life that contests the continuism of Darwinism as well as classically mechanistic and vitalistic interpretations of animal life.

Before examining the lecture course in more detail, it is important to bear in mind that the tacit orientation of Heidegger's entire analysis of animality lies in the direction of understanding what he takes to be the uniquely *human* relation to world. (We will have occasion to call this orientation into question below.) Heidegger states that he addresses the issue of the animal's relation to world only in order to highlight, by way of contrast and comparison, what is essential to the human capacity for world-formation. At the same time, however, Heidegger

does make a genuine effort to understand the animal's relation to world on the animal's own terms. It is this latter aspect of the text that at least partially justifies reading this portion of the lecture course in isolation from the rest of Heidegger's argument.

## 2. ESSENTIAL POVERTY

Heidegger's examination of the theme of "world" in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* emerges in an attempt to answer one of the three questions deriving from the discussion of boredom that occupies the first half of the lecture course (1–167). Of the three questions – What is world? What is finitude? What is individuation? – Heidegger begins with the first: What is world? Prior to this text, he had allotted considerable space to discussions of the concept of "world," both in *Being and Time* and in his essay "On the Essence of Ground" (1929).<sup>14</sup> In contrast with these previous attempts to determine the meaning of "world," Heidegger here seeks to uncover the specifically human relation to world by way of a *comparative* examination with the world relations of the animal and stone. Heidegger begins with the assumption that human beings are not simply a part of the world but also, in some sense which is to be further clarified, *have* world. But what about the animal and stone? Do they have world in a way that parallels the human being's having? Or are they denied access to world *a priori*? Concerning these questions, Heidegger suggests that certain distinctions, however crude they might at first appear, immediately manifest themselves in the form of three theses: "[1.] the stone (material object) is *worldless* [weltlos]; [2.] the animal is *poor in world* [weltarm]; [3.] man is *world-forming* [weltbildend]" (177).

These theses clearly have an ambivalent status for Heidegger. He does indeed intend to show that they are fundamentally correct in a certain respect, but they trouble him insofar as they presuppose essential distinctions between entities that are difficult to establish with any clarity. Heidegger himself admits that the distinction between human and animal "is difficult to determine" (179). This difficulty raises the need for a more exacting determination of the essence of animality so that human and animal (as well as animal, *qua* living being, and stone, *qua* non-living material object) can be clearly distinguished. The question that immediately arises for the skeptical reader is: How can the essence of animality be determined if one doesn't already have essential knowledge of what constitutes inclusion in the category "animal"? This skeptical question has little purchase for Heidegger, however, as the kind of metaphysical questioning he is undertaking proceeds and moves about in a pre-logical space, unfettered by the charge of circular reasoning that would force common sense and logic to seek a different approach.

Of greater importance to Heidegger than answering the skeptical question concerning circularity is to ensure that his thesis – "the animal is poor in world" – not be understood in terms of a hierarchical value judgment. He insists repeatedly throughout the lecture course that the thesis "the animal is poor in world" does not mean to say that the animal is "poor" in comparison with, and by the measure of, man who is "rich" in having world. Such a difference of

degree, which implies a continuist and hierarchical scale of evaluation, is firmly rejected by Heidegger (194) in the name of a different understanding of poverty. According to Heidegger, the animal is poor in world *on its own terms*, poor in the sense of being deprived: "[B]eing poor means *being deprived* [Entbehren]" (195). Hence, what poverty and deprivation ultimately mean here can only be understood "by taking a look at animality itself" (195), rather than evaluating the animal using the measure of the human.<sup>15</sup>

In order to explain the animal's deprivation of world, Heidegger begins by comparing the animal's world-relation with that of the stone. He suggests that the animal's being deprived of world is quite different from the stone's lack of world, for the stone is "essentially *without access* [Zugangslosigkeit]" (197) to those things that surround it; consequently, the stone does not even have the possibility, as the animal does, of being deprived of world. Unlike stones, animals are not merely present-at-hand (*vorhanden*) material objects. A lizard (Heidegger's primary example of a living being in the opening pages of his discussion) that is warming itself in the sun by basking on a warm stone does not merely "crop up [kommt . . . vor]" in the world like the stone does; rather, it actively seeks out the stone upon which it lies. And if the lizard is removed from the stone and placed in another, cooler area, it will not stay put as the stone does, but will in all likelihood try once again to seek out a warm stone or another place to bask in the sun. This strongly suggests that the lizard is a being that has a responsive and interactive relation with the environment that surrounds it. Heidegger can thus maintain that, unlike the stone, the lizard has world inasmuch as it has some form of access to other beings. The real question for Heidegger, though, is whether the behavior exhibited by the lizard is comparable to "same" act when it is carried out by a human being. When a human being basks in the sun, is it any different than the lizard lying on the warm stone? Is the human being's mode of access to other beings in such acts substantially different from the lizard's?

According to Heidegger, these two acts, and the modes of access that they presuppose, are in fact radically different. The lizard, it seems, is incapable of relating to the stone and the sun in the same way that we do. That is to say, Heidegger doubts "whether [the lizard] really comports itself in the same way as we [presumably the "we" here denotes only human *Daseins*] do when we lie out in the sun" (197). When we lie out in the sun, Heidegger goes on to argue, the sun is accessible to us *as* sun, and rocks are accessible to us *as* rocks in a way that is simply not possible for the animal. Thus, even though an animal might have access to the beings that surround it inasmuch as it has "a specific set of relationships to its sources of nourishment, its prey, its enemies, its sexual mates, and so on" (198), Heidegger believes that animals can never gain access to the other entities it encounters in its environment *as* entities. The animal<sup>16</sup> is incapable of grasping the ontological difference – which is to say, it has access to other beings, but not to other beings *as such* (*als solche*).

The conclusion Heidegger has arrived at in his initial analysis of the animal's relation to world, then, is as follows: if by "world" is meant accessibility to other beings, we can say that the animal has world; but if "world" is in some way related to having access to the being of beings, to beings *as such*, then the animal does not have world.

### 3. LIFE HELD CAPTIVE

This ambiguous and seemingly contradictory conclusion – the animal has and does not have world – suggests that the concepts of "world" and "world-poverty" have not yet been properly clarified. In order to move past this limitation, and to keep to his original goal of understanding the animal's relation to world on its own terms, Heidegger considers the possibility of transposing himself into the animal's world in order to describe it from within. Heidegger does not ultimately pursue this option, however, because animals have a radically different mode of being-in-the-world than do human beings. Heidegger suggests that a more promising means of achieving insight into the animal's world-poverty would be to determine first what the essence of the animal is, and then deduce the animal's specific world-relation beginning from this determination.

With this task in mind Heidegger launches into a rather lengthy and dense discussion of what he takes to be the essentially "organismic" character of life, with a specific emphasis on animal life. In addition to preparing the ground for the analysis of the animal's world relation, these sections (§§51–61) are used to develop an understanding of life's essence in such a manner that the twin pitfalls of mechanism and vitalism are avoided. A living being *qua* organism on Heidegger's account is not a mere machine any more than it is an entity guided by an underlying, subject-based vital process or entelechy; rather it consists of a group of organs that function in order to further and maintain the life processes of the organism. Organs, though, are not to be understood as mere instruments or tools (e.g., the eye as an instrument for sight); they should be seen as secondary to, and in the service of, potentialities inherent to specific animals. As Heidegger explains, it is "the *potentiality for seeing* which first makes the possession of eyes possible, makes the possession of eyes necessary in a specific way" (218). This rather peculiar account of the function of organs helps to explain in part Heidegger's constant references to the human body and its parts (e.g., the hand) as being something "essentially other" than an animal organism. The animal potentialities that give rise to such organs as paws, claws, or fangs are seen as essentially different from the human potentialities that give rise to human hands. Although such organs may appear physiologically similar (and in some cases indistinguishable), for Heidegger, they have their conditions of possibility in two wholly different modes of potentiality, and thus their being is likewise essentially different.

Consideration of the living being's capacity for governing its own reproduction, nourishment, and other such processes might lead us to believe that there is an underlying agent that controls these vital processes. As I just mentioned, Heidegger firmly rejects any form of vitalism that would attribute conscious subjectivity to animal life. He argues that the self-governing activities of animals happen purely at an instinctual level, and that there is no gap between an animal's activities and itself. Thus, even though the animal is thrust toward the world and deals with its external environment in a responsive and interactive way, it brings itself along so closely and so immediately in the process that no gap for reflection or self-awareness can arise. In the animal's instinctual behavior toward itself and the world, its specific capacity for being thus "becomes and remains *proper to itself* – and does so *without* any so-called *self-consciousness* or

any *reflection* at all, without any relating back to itself" (233). Not surprisingly, in this context Heidegger reserves the terms "self" and "selfhood" for human beings, and defines the animal's self-relation as simply "proper being": "The way and manner in which the animal is proper to itself is not that of personality, not reflection or consciousness, but simply its *proper being* [Eigentum]" (233).

But this denial of full subjectivity to the animal should not be taken to imply that Heidegger maintains an uncritically Cartesian stance on animal life. Although he is clearly anxious about any attempt to attribute language, consciousness, or selfhood to animals (as was Descartes), Heidegger does not want to suggest that an animal's reactions to stimuli are ontologically indistinguishable from, say, the inner mechanistic workings of a clock (as Descartes seems to).<sup>17</sup> He is willing to grant the animal a certain amount of responsivity to external stimuli, but wants to limit such responsivity to the level of instinct. Animals on this account would be open to other beings, but their openness would be conditioned, and made possible, by species-specific instincts. The image that Heidegger uses to convey this double relation is an instinctual "ring." This ring both (1) *encircles* the animal, and thereby strictly limits its access to specific types of other beings, and, at the same time, (2) *disinhibits* and opens the animal up beyond itself to the surrounding environment. In this sense, we can say that animal life literally holds itself captive: captive to its own instincts, but also captive to other beings in such a way that no gap is able to be inserted between the animal and its other. Phrased differently, living beings open themselves to other beings, but in such a way that the other is not recognized as an other being, that is, *as such*.

#### 4. THE BODY WITHOUT ORGANS

We have arrived at the moment of the "example" in Heidegger's text (241), the moment in which the ontological and metaphysical analysis of animality is supplemented with empirical examples meant to illustrate, clarify, and bolster the thesis that the animal lacks access to other beings as such. Here Heidegger offers an interpretation of experiments done with bees and other insects (the results of which were presented in the works of Emanuel Radl and Jakob von Uexküll) that helps to clarify the difference between the animal's instinctual, driven behavior (*Benehmen*) and human comportment (*Verhaltung*).

Heidegger's initial example concerns the bee's act of collecting nourishment. What is revealed in carefully analyzing this act is that the worker bee is not indifferent to the scent or color of the flower with which it is engaged. Such distinctions are important to the bee if it is to complete its task. Its task, of course, is to collect honey, and, when it sucks up all of the honey, it flies away. Now, if we ask *why* the bee flies away, the simplest answer is: because the honey is gone, it is no longer present. While this might seem to explain clearly why the bee flies away, it does not answer the question that most interests Heidegger: Does the bee fly away because it recognizes the honey *as no longer present*? Is there any evidence that would conclusively prove that the bee recognizes the presence or absence of the honey *as such*? "Not at all," answers Heidegger, "especially if we can and indeed must interpret" the comings and goings of the

bee in terms of a "driven performing and as drivenness, as behavior – as behavior rather than comportment" (241).

Now the skeptical reader might raise some questions about Heidegger's interpretation of this example or not be fully convinced of the bee's inability to recognize the presence or absence of the honey as such. In support of his own interpretation, Heidegger has recourse to an experiment with bees that is quite convincing but, at the same time, quite disturbing. In this experiment:

A bee was placed before a little bowl filled with so much honey that the bee was unable to suck up the honey all at once. It begins to suck and then after a while breaks off this driven activity of sucking [*dieses Treiben des Saugens*] and flies off, leaving the rest of the honey still present in the bowl. If we wanted to explain this activity, we would have to say that the bee recognizes [*stellt fest*] that it cannot cope with all the honey present [*vorhandenen*]. It breaks off its driven activity because it recognizes the presence of too much honey for it. Yet, it has been observed that if its abdomen is carefully cut away while it is sucking, a bee will simply carry on regardless even while the honey runs out of the bee from behind. This shows conclusively that the bee by no means recognizes the presence of too much honey. It recognizes neither this nor even – though this would be expected to touch it more closely – the absence of its abdomen. There is no question of it recognizing any of this ... [because] the bee is simply taken by its food. This *being taken* is only possible where there is an *instinctual* "toward ..." Yet such a driven being taken also excludes the possibility of any recognition of presence. It is precisely being taken by its food that prevents the animal from taking up a position over and against this food. (242)

After reading Heidegger's analysis of the experiment, most readers would probably be convinced of the bee's inability to recognize the presence or absence of food as such. Perhaps bees as such, or at least this particular bee, are unable to recognize the presence of too much honey and only depart from the bowl based on a kind of driven behavior.<sup>18</sup> Heidegger uses two further examples – (1) an experiment designed to demonstrate that the bee's flight to and from the hive is based not on cognition but on instinct, and (2) instances where moths, in their instinctual search for light, often fly directly into a flame and kill themselves in the process – to drive home the point that "the animal" lacks access to other beings in their being, to beings *as such*. With these theses established to his satisfaction, and with a provisional ontology of the essence of animal life (as the capacity for captivated, driven behavior) established, Heidegger is then able to return to his original question of what being "poor in world" means from the animal's own perspective.

But before examining Heidegger's closing remarks on the animal's world poverty, I want to pause for a moment and raise some questions about the analysis of animality given thus far.

First, it is highly revealing in the context that Heidegger has nothing to say about the domination of life in these experiments, particularly the experiment where a bee's abdomen is cut away, and this despite his railings against the

techno-scientific domination of nature which is prevalent throughout several of his texts. One perhaps wonders why the double sacrifice of this bee – sacrificed once (literally) in the name of scientific knowledge and a second time (symbolically) in the name of the ontological difference – even if it does not touch the bee at a cognitive level, does not “touch” *thought* more closely.

Second, Heidegger makes two rather hasty and questionable generalizations concerning the essence of animal life. The first generalization we might want to question concerns the particular behaviors (gathering honey, the movement toward light, etc.) from which Heidegger draws his generalization about the animal’s captivation. It should be said that simply because a particular behavior on the part of an animal or insect demonstrates an inability to access beings as such does not mean that careful examination of other behaviors might not produce different results. It also seems reasonable to be suspicious of the claim that the capacities for *Dasein* and world are strictly coextensive with the human species. For his part, Heidegger insists repeatedly that there is “no indication that the animal does or ever could comport itself toward beings as such” (253); but such a claim cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed unless we are given a list of certain signs (e.g., culture, history, advanced linguistic capacities, tool use, a relation to finitude, etc.) that *would* indicate the capacity for comportment. One gets the sense, however, that any animal act that might indicate such a capacity would be quickly thrust aside by Heidegger and labeled as “essentially different” from similar human acts, much as the ape’s “grasping organ” is deemed to be essentially different from the human hand. The second generalization raises an even more difficult question. Heidegger’s analysis of animal life tends to move quickly, and with very little justification, from generalizations about one species of animal to broader claims about the essence of animality. While such gestures are perhaps inevitable in the construction of any “productive logic” of animal life, the choice of examples from which the generalizations are drawn is nevertheless suspect. Not only are Heidegger’s primary examples drawn solely from the realm of insects, but he deliberately avoids examining the behavior of what he calls “higher animals” inasmuch as their behavior seems to “correspond so closely to our own comportment” (241). What kinds of conclusions about the essence of animal life might have been drawn if his analysis had sought to account for behaviors from, say, chimpanzees or elephants?

Third, Heidegger’s entire text is strongly anti-Darwinian in its refusal of any form of human/animal continuum, but the reasons for this opposition, and the alternative offered in its place, are far from unproblematic. As I suggested above, Heidegger opposes all mechanist and vitalist accounts of life; yet Darwinism, which seems to offer a promising means of overcoming the limits of these two theories, also receives a summary dismissal from Heidegger. Toward the end of the sections on the essence of the organism, he argues that the Darwinian interpretation of the animal’s relation to its environment is

based upon the fundamentally misconceived idea that the animal is present at hand, that it then subsequently adapts itself to a world that is present at hand, that it then comports itself accordingly and that the fittest individual gets selected. Yet the task is not simply to identify the specific conditions

of life materially speaking, but rather to acquire insight into the *relational structure between the animal and its environment*. (263)

Heidegger then goes on to show how this supposed misunderstanding of the animal’s relationality allows for a mistaken conflation of the different manners in which human beings and animals encounter other beings.

We ... think that the particular animals and species of animal adapt themselves in different ways to these beings that are intrinsically present at hand, present in exactly the same way for all beings and thus for all human beings. (277)

What interests me in these passages is less Heidegger’s specific reading of Darwin (which in itself is inadequate inasmuch as it fails to take into account the complex interplay of genetic, environmental, and hereditary factors that determine an animal’s or a human being’s relation to its environmental niche), and more his underlying reasons for rejecting the continuist implications of Darwinian evolutionary theory. Beyond the rejection of the idea that beings are fundamentally present at hand for us, Heidegger primarily wants to avoid flattening out differences in relational structures among various life forms. If, as Heidegger seems to imply, Darwinian evolutionary theory resulted in a homogenization of the various world relations among human and animal life (and it is not at all clear that it does), then one could perhaps go along with this critique. But what Heidegger offers in place of a continuist thought of relation – the reduction of all forms of world relation among living beings to three distinct and essential kinds (plant, animal, and human) – presents its own difficulties. If, as Aristotle reminds us, “life is said in many ways [*pleonachōs de tou zēn legomenou*]” (*De Anima* 413a 23), then perhaps the world relations characteristic of life are themselves to be said in many ways. And perhaps the project of elaborating a productive logic of these world relations has to begin with a resolute refusal to diminish the radical multiplicity and singularity of relations characteristic of life, whether in its so-called “plant,” “animal,” or “human” form.

##### 5. DEAD END

Let us leave these questions aside and return to Heidegger’s text in order to examine his final remarks on the thesis with which we began: “the animal is poor in world.” The seeming contradiction concerning the animal’s relation to world (the animal has and does not have world) that led us into the discussion of the essence of animal life can now be resolved. If the essence of animal life can be said to reside in being captivated, then, strictly speaking, the animal’s specific mode of relationality cannot be assimilated to a having of world. Inasmuch as the animal is open to, and has access to other beings, it has “world” in a way that the stone does not. But this way of speaking about world is misleading. The concept of “world,” while not identical with the “as such” relation to the being of beings, is nevertheless inextricably intertwined with it such that any being which is deprived access to other beings *as such* is deprived of world altogether.

In comparison with the human, then, the animal is not poor in world but is completely deprived of world:

in distinction from what we said earlier we must now say that it is precisely because the animal in its captivation has a relation to everything encountered within its disinhibiting ring that it precisely does *not* stand alongside man and precisely has *no* world. (269)

What the animal *has*, positively, is a certain openness toward beings; what it *lacks*, negatively, is the capacity to encounter beings in their manifestness, in their being, a capacity that is, for Heidegger at least, unique to human *Dasein*.

We seem, however, to have gotten off track somewhere. Wasn't Heidegger's express intention to understand the animal's mode of relationality on the animal's own terms? How can we say *from the perspective of animal life itself* that the animal's being is characterized by being deprived of world? If it knows nothing of world, how could it be deprived of world? Heidegger recognizes the importance of this objection when he notes that it is "only from the human perspective that the animal is poor with respect to world, yet animal being in itself is not a deprivation of world" (270–1). Heidegger also acknowledges that the entire discussion of the essence of animal life in terms of captivation is not only incomplete (265), but is, like the analysis of world, shot through with anthropocentric comparative analyses, where the human functions as the measure of animal life. When Heidegger speaks of captivation, he is concerned not only with disclosing the essence of animal life, but also with trying to distinguish human comportment from animal behavior. Thus, any thesis about the animal's relation to world that is grounded in the animal's captivation is also questionable inasmuch as the notion of captivation only takes on meaning by way of comparative considerations with human *Dasein's* comportment toward beings as such. In the final analysis, Heidegger is forced to reduce radically the scope and significance of his original thesis:

Captivation as the essence of animality is the condition of the possibility of a merely comparative definition of animality in terms of poverty in world, insofar as the animal is viewed from the perspective of man to whom world-formation belongs. Our thesis that the animal is poor in world is accordingly far from being a, let alone *the*, fundamental metaphysical principle of the essence of animality. At best it is a proposition that follows from the essential determinations of animality, and moreover one which follows only if the animal is regarded in comparison with humanity. (271)

For all intents and purposes, then, the discussion of animality in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, despite its extreme prudence, patience, and sophistication, results in a dead end – at least with respect to a non-anthropocentric understanding of the animal's mode of being and relationality. The upshot of the analysis of animal world, though, is that it sheds light on human *Dasein* and the specifically human mode of world-formation. As I noted at the outset of our reading of this portion of Heidegger's lecture course, the tacit

orientation of the discussion of animality is directed toward uncovering the essence of the human and its relation to world. To cite Heidegger on this point, in the analysis of the animal's relation to world, "we ourselves have also been in view all the time" (272).

This kind of narrow orientation toward human *Dasein* is the source of much of the criticism that has been directed at Heidegger's lecture course. The critical position is summed up nicely by Michel Haar's complaint that "the phenomenology of animality teaches us more about man than about animals!"<sup>19</sup> But as William McNeill points out, isolating the analysis of animality from the larger project of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* tends to make the reader overlook the fact that what is primarily at stake for Heidegger is an attempt to recover another thought of human relationality, not for the sake of the human alone, but in the name of recalling us to our radical finitude and proto-ethical responsiveness toward all others: human, animal, and other others.<sup>20</sup> While one can only agree with the basic thrust of this rejoinder, it seems to miss the larger point of the kinds of criticisms Heidegger has received from figures such as Jacques Derrida, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Giorgio Agamben.<sup>21</sup> The problem with Heidegger's discussions of animality, both in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* and elsewhere, it seems to me, does not lie with the task of rethinking a specifically human finitude in terms of ek-sistence, relation, and responsiveness, but rather with the fact that this project is inseparable from Heidegger's insistence on *essential and oppositional determinations* of the difference between human beings and animals. From this perspective, what Heidegger's reflections on the human/animal distinction present is an effective challenge to metaphysical *humanism* on the one hand (where the human is defined in terms of animality plus "X," where X is figured as *logos*, *ratio*, *freedom*, *selfhood*, etc.), but an extremely problematic reinforcement of metaphysical *anthropocentrism* on the other. By "anthropocentrism" I mean simply the dominant tendency within the Western metaphysical tradition to determine the essence of animal life by the measure of, and in opposition to, the human. Heidegger, as we know, contests the classically Christian anthropocentric view that human beings are the center of all creation,<sup>22</sup> but generally he has little problem reinforcing the idea that the animal's being can be explained in negative and oppositional terms in comparison with the human, an idea that forms one of the central dogmas of philosophical anthropocentrism from Aristotle to Descartes to Kant.<sup>23</sup>

I do not mean to suggest, however, that Heidegger's discussions of animality are anthropocentric in any simple sense, and ought therefore to be dismissed.<sup>24</sup> On the contrary, it is precisely the tension between Heidegger's non-anthropocentric commitment to approach the animal's relationality on its own terms and his inability ultimately to carry through on this project that makes his text so rich and interesting. Perhaps the most fruitful way to read Heidegger's remarks on animal life is to see them as a resource for working through the two dominant approaches to animal issues within the Continental tradition. On the one hand, Heidegger's work prefigures the writings of a number of philosophers who seek, after the "death of God" and the closure of metaphysical humanism, to recover a definition and meaning for "the human" in opposition to its animal



other. On the other hand, his work resonates with and creates the conditions for other figures who are trying to think through relation, ethics, politics, and ontology in radically non-anthropocentric and trans- or post-humanist terms. Which of these two approaches will prevail remains to be seen, but it is clear that any effort to work through the question of the animal from a Continental philosophical perspective must begin with, and will benefit greatly from, a *thinking* confrontation with Heidegger's analysis of animal life.<sup>25</sup>

### CHAPTER THREE: BATAILLE

- 8 Ibid., para. 55.
- 9 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, III, "On Old and New Tablets," 19.
- 10 *The Gay Science*, para. 10.
- 11 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, IV, "On the Higher Man," 4.
- 12 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, IV, "On Science."
- 13 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Prologue," 10.
- 14 *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, III, "The Convalescent," 2.

#### NIETZSCHE AND ANIMALS (ALPHONSO LINGIS)

- 1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1980), IV, "The Drunken Song," 9.
- 2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), I, "Animals and Morality," 26.
- 3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1969), III, 14.
- 4 Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (New York: Norton, 1999).
- 5 Barbara Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997).
- 6 Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, II, 1.

#### CHAPTER TWO: HEIDEGGER

##### THE ANIMAL IS POOR IN WORLD (MARTIN HEIDEGGER)

- 1 Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), pp. 177, 197, 198.

##### HEIDEGGER'S ZOONTOLOGY (MATTHEW CALARCO)

- 1 This charge has been made most notably and most forcefully by Jacques Derrida, in, for example, *Of Spirit: Heidegger and the Question*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989). See also Jean-Luc Nancy's interview with Derrida, "Eating Well," or the Calculation of the Subject," in *Who Comes after the Subject?*, ed. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 96-119.
- 2 Martin Heidegger, *Hölderlins "Germanien" und "Der Rhein"*, ed. S. Ziegler (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1980), p. 75, quoted in Michel Haar, *The Song of the Earth: Heidegger and the Grounds of the History of Being*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), p. 29.
- 3 Martin Heidegger, "The Nature of Language," in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (San Francisco: Harper, 1971), p. 107. For two contrasting readings of this enigmatic passage, see Giorgio Agamben, *Language and Death: The Place of Negativity*, trans. Karen E. Pinkus with Michael Hardt (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), and Jacques Derrida, *Aporias: Dying—Awaiting (One Another at) the "Limits of Truth"*, trans. Thomas Dutoit (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
- 4 Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics: World, Finitude, Solitude*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 267. All parenthetical citations in the text refer to this volume.
- 5 Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 247.
- 6 Ibid., p. 248.
- 7 Martin Heidegger, *What Is Called Thinking?*, trans. J. Glenn Gray (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 16.

- 8 Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), p. 154.
- 9 The outlines of this project have been sketched by David Farrell Krell in his impressive volume *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).
- 10 Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism,'" p. 248.
- 11 Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), p. 45.
- 12 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), p. 45.
- 13 See note 4 for full bibliographical information. The secondary literature on this lecture course is quite massive. Some of the more important scholarly and critical commentaries can be found in the following works: Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit*; David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life*; William McNeill, "Life beyond the Organism: Animal Being in Heidegger's Freiburg Lectures, 1929-30," in *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, ed. H. Peter Steeves (Albany: SUNY, 1999), pp. 197-248; Didier Franck, "Being and the Living," in *Who Comes after the Subject?*, pp. 135-47; Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997); and Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, forthcoming).
- 14 See *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 91-168, and "On the Essence of Ground," in *Pathmarks*, pp. 97-135.
- 15 As we will see, however, despite his efforts to examine the animal's relation to world on its own terms, Heidegger will in the final analysis be forced partially to retract his thesis on the world poverty of the animal inasmuch as the notions of "poverty" and "deprivation" have a meaning only in relation to something else that has a comparative plenitude in relation to world, namely, the human.
- 16 The reader might have noticed the slippage from talking about a particular lizard to a generalization about "the animal" in the general singular. The slippage is not mine but Heidegger's, and I will discuss this type of hasty generalization later in the paper.
- 17 For a useful discussion of Descartes's remarks on animals and awareness, see Tom Regan's *The Case for Animal Rights* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), chapter 1.
- 18 Recent work on bee cognition (stemming from the seminal investigations of Karl von Frisch) suggests that Heidegger's conclusions might be mistaken. Bees may in fact have cognitive skills that cannot be explained simply in terms of instinctual or "driven" behavior. For a helpful overview of the literature on these debates, see James L. Gould "Can Honey Bees Create Cognitive Maps?" *The Cognitive Animal: Empirical and Theoretical Perspectives on Animal Cognition*, ed. Marc Bekoff, Colin Allen, and Gordon M. Burghardt (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002).
- 19 Haar, *Song of the Earth*, p. 29.
- 20 McNeill, "Life Beyond the Organism," p. 245.
- 21 See note 13 above.
- 22 See Martin Heidegger, "Plato's Doctrine of Truth," in *Pathmarks*, pp. 181-2.
- 23 Although the reader can consult the passages I cited in the opening section of the essay for confirmation of this tendency, the following remark from *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* serves as further evidence that Heidegger's thinking remains uncritical with regard to traditional oppositional human/animal distinctions: "There belongs to man a being open for . . . of such a kind that this being open for . . . has the character of apprehending something as something. This kind of relating to beings we call comportment, as distinct from the behavior of the animal. Thus man is *zōon logon echon*, whereas the animal is *alogon*. Despite the fact that our interpretation and way of questioning is altogether different from that of antiquity, it is not saying anything substantially new, but -- as always and everywhere in philosophy -- purely the same" (306).
- 24 Although I do not have the space to develop this reading here, one might suggest that Heidegger's work is radically non-anthropocentric inasmuch as, for Heidegger, the essence of man is "nothing human," and that every determination of human essence is a "question"

rather than an "answer." On this reading, what is at issue in Heidegger's work is not a recovery of the human but rather an opening onto *Dasein*, which would render Heidegger's texts *Dasein*-centric, if anything. While such a reading is no doubt correct as far as it goes, it is also necessary to counter-balance this aspect of Heidegger's thought with Derrida's critical remarks about *Dasein* being proper to man, and *man alone*: "We can see then that *Dasein*, though *not* man, is nevertheless *nothing other than man*" (Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man," in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982], p. 127).

- 25 I thank Steven Vogel for helpful discussions of several of the issues raised in this paper, especially the question of Heidegger's anthropocentrism. I also wish to thank Will McNeill and Lawrence Hatab for their insightful questions and comments on the issue of animals in Heidegger's work at the Heidegger panel at the Central Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association, April 2003.

### CHAPTER THREE: BATAILLE

#### BATAILLE AND THE POETIC FALLACY OF ANIMALITY (JILL MARSDEN)

- 1 Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p. 20. Henceforth *TR*.
- 2 Georges Bataille, *Madame Edwarda*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Marion Boyars, 1989), p. 140. Henceforth *ME*.
- 3 Georges Bataille, *The Tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor (San Francisco: City Lights, 1989), p. 41.
- 4 Georges Bataille, *Inner Experience*, trans. Leslie Anne Boldt (Albany: SUNY, 1988), p. 114.
- 5 Georges Bataille, *Eroticism*, trans. Mary Dalwood (New York: Marion Boyars, 1987), p. 198.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

### CHAPTER FOUR: LEVINAS

#### THE NAME OF A DOG, OR NATURAL RIGHTS (EMMANUEL LEVINAS)

- 1 Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas" (conducted by Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, Alison Ainley), trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 168-80, p. 169.
- 2 *Ibid.*, pp. 171-2.

#### ETHICAL CYNICISM (PETER ATTERTON)

- 1 Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, trans. Sean Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), pp. 151-3. Henceforth *DF*. It has been necessary to modify Hand's translation on occasion.
- 2 Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas" (interview conducted by Tamra Wright, Peter Hughes, Alison Ainley), trans. Andrew Benjamin and Tamra Wright, in *The Provocation of Levinas: Rethinking the Other*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood (London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 168-80, p. 169. Henceforth *PM*.
- 3 The first work to appear in English on the subject of Levinas and animals was John Llewelyn, "Am I Obsessed by Bobby (Humanism of the Other Animal?)," in *Re-Reading Levinas*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and Simon Critchley (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), pp. 234-45, an expanded version of which appears in John Llewelyn, *The Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience: A Chiasmatic Reading of Responsibility in the Neighborhood of*

*Levinas, Heidegger and Others* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), pp. 49-67. It still remains one of the best essays on the topic, and I have learned from it enormously. Llewelyn set up many of the terms of the debate that is being conducted here. This essay is dedicated to him.

- For a more recent interrogation of Levinas regarding the animal question, see David Clark, "On Being 'The Last Kantian in Nazi Germany': Dwelling with Animals after Levinas," in *Animal Acts: Configuring the Human in Western History*, eds. Jennifer Ham and Matthew Senior (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 165-98.
- 4 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969). Henceforth *TI*.
  - 5 See Emmanuel Levinas, *Humanisme de l'autre homme* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1972).
  - 6 See Jacques Derrida, "The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow)," trans. David Wills, *Critical Inquiry*, 28 (Winter 2002), pp. 369-418. Derrida makes a similar observation concerning the status of his "little cat" (374).
  - 7 Emmanuel Levinas, *Collected Philosophical Writings*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), p. 122. Henceforth *CPP*.
  - 8 *Ibid.*
  - 9 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Basic Political Writings*, trans. Donald A. Cress (Indianapolis: Hacker, 1987), p. 151.
  - 10 Count Leo Tolstoy, *The Kreutzer Sonata*, trans. Benjamin R. Tucker (New York: J. S. Ogilvie, 1890), p. 89.
  - 11 Martin Heidegger, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. William McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1995), p. 194.
  - 12 *Ibid.*, part 2, chaps. 3 and 4.
  - 13 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Lewis White Beck (New York: Macmillan, 1993), p. 91.
  - 14 Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 201.
  - 15 See also Hegel, for whom animals have an immediate existence that leaves no time beyond the present moment of "sense-certainty" for consciousness to differentiate "between the 'I' and object." G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 62.
  - 16 I do not know if this is true. Indeed, I doubt very much that it is when we consider the total wealth of the world's 298 billionaires (2002, Forbes) equals more than the combined incomes of the poorest one-third of the world's population - over 1.7 billion people. Some deprivation. But leaving aside the issue of Levinas's shocking and politically debilitating rhetoric, the question is this: If desert is proportional to penury, would that not imply that the millions on millions of animals that are currently being farmed for food or experimented on or exploited for entertainment purposes are entitled to more consideration than many humans are at present?
  - 17 For some discussions of Levinas and ecology, see Llewelyn, *Middle Voice of Ecological Conscience*; Roger Gottlieb, "Levinas, Feminism, Holocaust, Ecocide," in *Artifacts, Representations and Social Practices*, ed. Carol C. Gould (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994), pp. 222-40; and Danne Polke, "Good Infinity/Bad Infinity: *If y a, Apeiron*, and Environmental Ethics in the Philosophy of Levinas," *Philosophy and the Contemporary World*, 7 (Spring 2000), pp. 35-40.
  - 18 See Peter Singer, *Animal Liberation* (New York: Ecco, 2002); also Jeremy Bentham, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. 17 (quoted Singer, p. 7).
  - 19 Immanuel Kant, "Duties to Animals and Spirits," in *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Louis Infield (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 239-41.
  - 20 Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 48.
  - 21 Emmanuel Levinas, *Of God Who Comes to Mind*, trans. Bettina Bergo (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 171.
  - 22 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1968), p. 45.