

# Animal Dasein

The Genesis of Existentials in the Early Heidegger's Interpretations of Aristotle

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SOCIETY FOR PHENOMENOLOGY  
AND EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

# Do Animals Have a World?



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(1889-1976)

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**1925** « We miss **the essential thing if we don't see that the animal has a world** [*das Tier eine Welt hat*]. [...] Every living thing has its environing world [*Umwelt*] not as something extant next to it but as something that is there [*da ist*] for it as disclosed, uncovered. For a primitive animal, the world can be very simple. But life and its world are never two things side by side; rather **life « has » its world** [*das Leben « hat » seine Welt*]. »

(Heidegger, *Kassel's Lectures on Dilthey*)

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The animal not *Dasein*, but « mere-aliveness » (*Nur-noch-leben*)

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« The animal is poor in world »

« Being poor means being deprived »



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« The animal has  
no world (*Welt*),  
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# The Existential Constitution of *Da-sein*

## V. *Being-in as Such*

- 28. The Task of a Thematic Analysis of Being-in
  - A. The Existential Constitution of the There
- 29. Da-sein as **Attunement**
- 30. Fear as a Mode of Attunement
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- 34. Da-sein and **Discourse: Language**

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### § 28. Die Aufgabe einer thematischen Analyse des In-Seins ... 130

#### A. Die existenziale Konstitution des Da

- § 29. Das Da-sein als **Befindlichkeit** ... 134
- § 30. Die Furcht als ein Modus der Befindlichkeit ... 140
- § 31. Das Da-sein als **Verstehen** ... 142
- § 32. Verstehen und Auslegung ... 148
- § 33. Die Aussage als abkünftiger Modus der Auslegung ... 154
- § 34. Da-sein und **Rede. Die Sprache** ... 160

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# 1<sup>st</sup> existential structure : *Befindlichkeit*





**1<sup>st</sup> existential structure : *Befindlichkeit***  
**Greek : *diathesis***



# Befindlichkeit : gr. *diathesis*

“The affects (*pathe*) are not mental states, but refer to the disposition of the living in his world [*Befindlichkeit des Lebenden in seiner Welt*], how he stands to something, how he lets something affect or concern [*angehen*] him.”

(Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian philosophy*, SS 1924, GA 18, 122)



“By the very fact that a living being discloses a world, the Being of this being is also disclosed to it. It knows about itself even if only in the dullest way and the broadest sense. Along with the disclosure of the world, it is disclosed to itself.”

Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*, SS GA 22, 208



**Perception is not  
only openness  
to the world,  
but to oneself.**



# The Animal's *Befindlichkeit*

« An affective disposition or attunement [*Befindlichkeit*], namely ἡδονή [enjoyment], is always constitutive of the Being of man. It is in general **constitutive of the Being of a living being to be disposed in this or that way** [*So-und-so Gestimmtsein*] in relation to that with which and for which the living being exists. »

(Heidegger, Plato's Sophist, WS 1924-25, GA 19)



**Aristotle's distinction between living beings (*zōia*) and  
merely living beings (*oū zēn monon*)**

## Aristotle's distinction between living beings (*zōia*) and merely living beings (*oū zēn monon*)

« It is the possession of **perception** [*aisthesis*] that leads us for the first time to speak of living things as animals [*zōia*]: for even those beings which possess no power of local movement but do possess the power of perception we call animals [*zōia*] and not **merely living beings** [*oū zēn monon*] »

(**Aristote**, De Anima, II, 413b 1-4)

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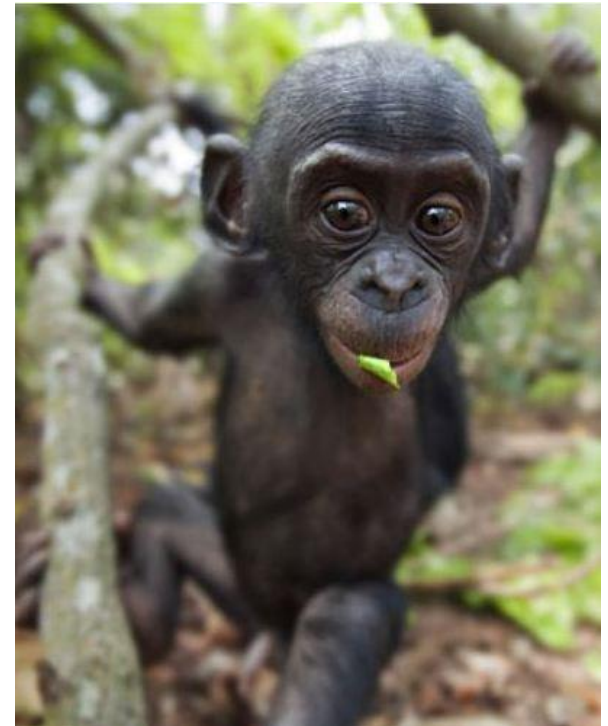
« What differentiates the **zen monon** « the merely living or vegetating [*das Nur-dahinleben*, "Vegetieren"] » from the *zoon* - the living being in the sense of animals - is the fact that what is **"merely living"** [*nur lebenden*] is deprived of that which qualifies the *zoon*: *aisthesis*, perception [*das Wahrnehmen*]. »

(**Heidegger**, GA 33, 124)

# Perception (*aisthesis*) and desire (*orexis*) as equiprimordial powers

“Where there is perception of something, self-orientation in a world, there is *lupe te kai hedone* [pain and pleasure], feeling oneself attuned in such and such a way, feeling well or ill, and thus also being open to, being on the lookout for: *orexis* [desire] (DA, 413b23)”

Heidegger, GA 22, 185-6



“Where there are feelings of pleasure and pain, there must be desire.”

(Aristotle, *De Anima*, 434a1)

**Translating « orexis » (desire) as « Sorge » (care)**





# Translating « orexis » (desire) as « Sorge » (care)

Intentionality : a “volitional being-out-for-something and going toward it: *orexis* (desire)”

(*Hermeneutics. Ontology of Facticity*, GA 63, 70)





# Translating « orexis » (desire) as « Sorge » (care)

Intentionality = a “volitional being-out-for-something and going toward it: *orexis* (desire)”

(*Hermeneutics. Ontology of Facticity*, GA 63, 70)

Life's mobility is always a concerned mobility.  
(*Lebensbewegtheit* is always a *Besorgensbewegtheit*)  
(*Natorp Bericht*, 44)



## The snail's being-in-the-world [1925]

“The snail is not in its shell like water in the glass, for it has the inside of its shell as a world which it pushes against and touches, in which it warms itself, and the like. None of this applies to the relationship of being of the water in the glass or, if it did, we would have to say even of the water that **it has the mode of being of *Dasein*, that it is such that it has a world.**”

*(History of the Concept of Time, GA 20, 223)*



*History of the Concept of Time, Summer Semester 1925*

## **“Animals are in the world in the sense of having it.”**

This “having” is “a pale expression for being-aware-of”

Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, (GA 18, 244)

“The world, in the character of *hedu* and *luperon* [pleasing and unpleasing], is nonobjective; animals do not have the world there as objects. Rather, the world is encountered in the mode of the uplifting and the upsetting.”

Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, (GA 18, 244)

“The affective as such already has the character of having-itself”

(GA 18, 247)



## 2<sup>nd</sup> existential structure: Understanding (*Verstehen*)



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**Understanding** must be taken « not in a theoretical sense, but in a **practical** one: to understand doesn't mean to know something, but **to know your way around something**, to **know how** to do something »

(Heidegger, GA 22, 207)



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***Umgang*** (Dealings) =  
***kinesis kata topon***,  
Movement from place to place



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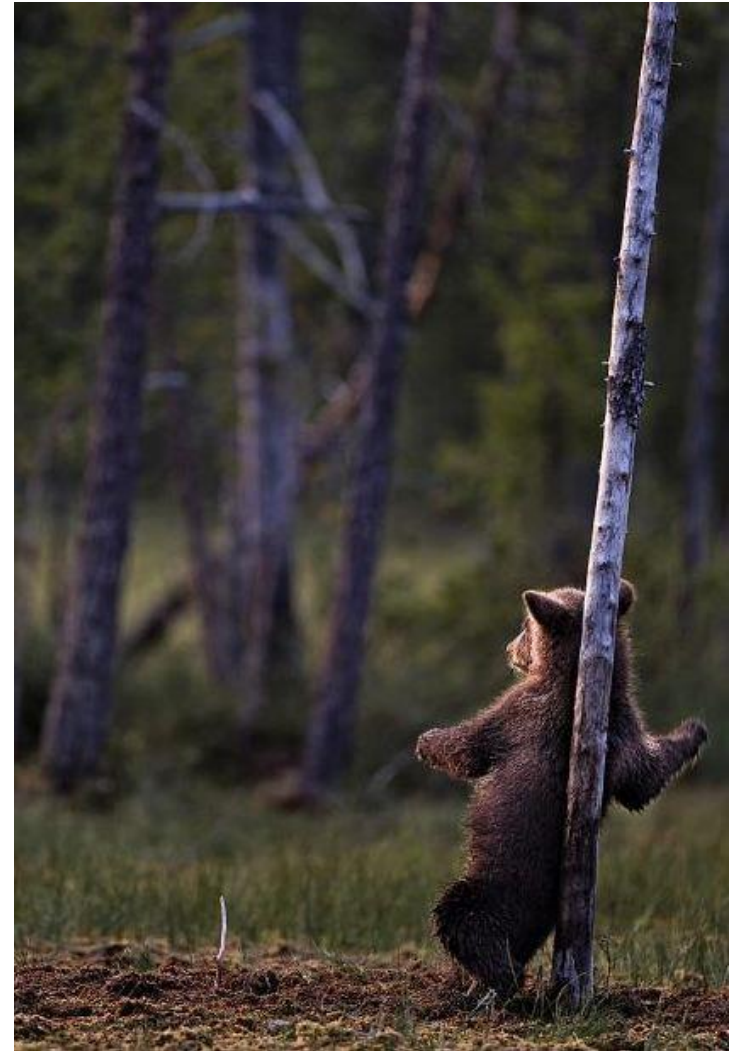
**“Understanding [Verstehen]  
belongs to the mode of  
Being of animals”**

(Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Ancient  
Philosophy*, GA 22, 207)

# Modalities of Understanding in Aristotle's *Metaphysics*:

<b>Perception</b>	( <i>aisthesis</i> )
Memory	( <i>mneme</i> )
Experience	( <i>emperia</i> )
Art	( <i>techne</i> )
Science	( <i>episteme</i> )
Wisdom	( <i>sophia</i> )

(Cf. Heidegger GA 22, 23-25)



*Aisthesis* is the most primitive form of *aletheuien*, “because **it discloses the world, though indeed not in speech and assertion (*logos*)**” (GA 22, 186), it is a form of uncovering that lets something be “known” in a certain sense.

# *The Genesis of the As-Structure*

“The *aisthesis* of the animal already has the character of *krisis*, even in *aisthesis*, in normal perception, **something is highlighted in relation to something else**”

(Heidegger, GA 19, 39)

“We always see the world in an **as**. If I see something in the distance then I do not see something indeterminate. Instead we take it initially and mostly **as something**. This basic character of the world is possible through a definite manner of perceiving: *krinein*.”

(Heidegger, WS 1923-34, GA 17, 294)

Synthetic nature of perception : **something as something** (a as b)

The « As of Significance »

[*die “Als” der Bedeutsamkeit*] (GA 58)

The « Critical As »

[*Das kritische “Als”*] (GA 17)

= **The Hermeneutical As**

The “indicative as »

The “demonstrative As »

= **The Apophantic As**



# Memory, Learning, and Anticipation



« Animals also possess *phronesis* in a certain way » (GA 18, 235)

## « Animals also possess *phronesis* in a certain way »

(Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*, GA 18, 235)

“If the living being were determined by *aisthesis* alone, then its world would extend only insofar as it sees, smells, etc. at any given moment. The living thing would be restricted to the sphere of what is immediately present-at-hand. Once it has *μνήμη*, however, the living thing becomes, in certain sense, free, no longer bound to the beings currently given in perception. [...] The living being dominates a broader scope of the world, which becomes and stays available to it. **Its being-in-the-world no longer requires ever new perceptions; on the contrary, when it finds itself within the same position in a world-nexus, it already knows how matters are arranged.** The living beings that have *μνήμη* are *φρονιμώτερα*, “more prudent,” they are “more able to see around [*Umsichtiger*]”: they do not live in the moment anymore, but in **a whole which they dominate.**”

Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy*, GA 22, 209[170]

**3<sup>rd</sup> existential structure :**  
**Discourse (*Rede*) or Language (*Sprache*)**



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« Discourse [*Die Rede*] is existentially equiprimordial with attunement/disposition [*Befindlichkeit*] and understanding [*Verstehen*]. »

Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 161



« The Greeks do not have a word for language [*die Sprache*], they initially understood this phenomena as discourse, talking [*Rede*]. »

Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 165



***Talking as talking with one another***  
***[Rede als Miteinanderreden] (SZ, 165)***



## ***Dasein as Mitdasein***

“The phenomenon of **communication** [*Mitteilung* : litt. *sharing, dividing-with*] must be understood in an ontologically broad sense.”

“Here the articulation of being-with-one-another understandingly is constituted. It brings about **co-affection** [*Mitbefindlichkeit*] and **co-understanding** [*Mitverstehen*].

Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 162

# Animals' Voice (*phone*)

Sounds produced by animals are **signs (*semeion*)** of their pleasure and pain and they use their **voice (*phone*)** to communicate these affections to each other.

(Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a8-14)

Birds use their voice **to communicate among themselves** (*pro hermeneian alloesis*) and to teach something to another.

(The Parts of Animals, 660a17-b2)



“Animal voice (*phone*) gives no report about the being-at-hand of what is pleasing: but rather this indication and crying out is in itself an enticing or warning. Enticing and warning have the character of addressing itself to...”

Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy*

# Animals' being-with-one-another

## Genesis of the structure of being-with (*Mitsein*)



“**Enticing** and **warning** as *repelling* and *attracting* have in their ground **being-with-one-another** [*Miteinandersein*].



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Enticing and warning already show that **animals are with one another**. Being-with-one-another becomes manifest precisely in the specific being-character of animals as *phone*. It is neither exhibited nor manifested that something as such is there [...] they only indicate it within the orbit of their animalistic having-to-do.



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Since animals indicate the threatening, alarming and so on, **they signal in this indicating of the being-there of the world, their own being in the world”**.

What about human *Dasein*?



# ***Human Dasein* : Decision and Resoluteness**

Human excellence rests not in theoretical, contemplative life, but in a certain kind of practical life endowed with logos : **deliberated action** (*praxis meta logou*).



**Man the only living being “able-to-resolve-itself”**

*(Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy, GA 18, 254-6)*

**“Humans because they possess an *aisthesis chronou* [‘sense of time’], can presentify *to mellon* [‘the future’] (433b7) as the possible and as that for the sake of which they act.”**

*(Heidegger, Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy, GA 22, 311)*



# A Primitive and Inauthentic *Dasein*?

Animals would have *Dasein*'s mode of being, but would be deprived of :

(1) PRIMITIVE DASEIN : the possibility of considering the meaningful things with which they deal in their everyday lives as simply-being-there, as objective things existing independently of them (*vorhandene*). They would live in an *Umwelt* made out of meaning carriers with no place for a neutral object (Uexküll, Bergson, Scheler).

(2) INAUTHENTIC DASEIN : the possibility of taking a step back from their everyday world of concerns to realize their own lapsing and their own finitude and appropriate their possibilities accordingly



# *Toward the Animal's Deprivation of World*

« **Life** is the mode of being  
of **animals and plants**. »

*Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics : World,  
Finitude, Solitude, (GA 29/30)*



Aristotle's threefold distinction of the soul :

**Vegetative**

**Animal**

**Human**

Heidegger's twofold distinction :

**Mere life**

**Existence**



# « Privative Interpretation » as Biological Reduction

## Functionnal Equivalences :

- The animal has no **affection**, its senses are subject to **excitation** (*Reiz*) and **stimulation** (*Rührung*) (SZ, 346)
- The animal doesn't move toward (*hin zu*), but away from something (*weg von*)
- The animals see, but cannot look (GA 54);
- The animal has prehensible organs, but no hands (GA 8);
- The animal does not really « eat », but he feeds (GA 29/30)
- The sounds made by animals are « meaningless noises » (GA 29/30)
- **The animal doesn't die, but only perishes**

The death of an animal is only a **physio-biological end** without any existential meaning.

Animals cannot really die because they are **not really living**, they have **no lived experience**.



« The animal is a being for whom living,  
being-there [*Da-sein*] matters to it in some way. »



An animal is “a being to which we must attribute, in a formal way, the kind of being which belongs to Dasein”

Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time* (1925)  
GA 20, 223