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The Sheep of the Shepherd of Being:
Heidegger's Attunement to Animal Otherness

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by

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ABSTRACT

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The centrality of Martin Heidegger to contemporary discussions of the animal is notable for the lack of debate: despite the explosion of commentary on Heidegger's thinking of the animal, most scholarship adheres closely to the criticisms first made by Derrida. On this reading, Heidegger anthropocentrically construes the animal according to a lack relative to the human and founds the human/animal distinction—in continuity with the metaphysical tradition—by privileging the human capacity for language, itself construed as a sovereign power. In this paper, an alternative reading of Heidegger's thinking of the animal is proposed on the basis of a close textual analysis of Heidegger's changing understanding of the animal throughout the 1920s, as well as the broader methodological context of his most extended treatment of the animal, *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*. Against the current critical consensus, Heidegger is not offering a theory of the animal—let alone a metaphysical and anthropocentric one—but is raising the animal as a question in order to provoke a philosophical transformation in his audience. Although this transformative function is, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, Heidegger's primary reason for considering the animal, he also develops an explicitly *anti*-theoretical understanding of the animal. For Heidegger, animal life is a fundamentally mysterious realm by which we are always already attuned, and he calls for us to let the animal be what it is, rather than to approach it in terms of instrumental use or scientific inquiry.

The Sheep of the Shepherd of Being:
Heidegger's Attunement to Animal Otherness

In the *Heraclitus Seminars*, Eugen Fink remarks to Heidegger, “You have, one time when you came to Freiburg, said in a lecture that the animal is world-poor. At that time, you were underway toward the affinity of the human with nature.”¹ In light of contemporary readings of *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*,² the Freiburg lectures referred to here, Fink’s reference to Heidegger’s description of the animal as world-poor is unsurprising. But Fink’s characterization of those lectures’ larger context should be striking, for today Heidegger’s treatment of the animal is roundly decried as dogmatic—and what Heidegger is dogmatic *about*, on this reading, is the absoluteness of the human/animal divide. Fink, however, appears to be suggesting a rather different state of affairs. Rather than upholding dogma, Heidegger was *underway*; rather than separating the human and the animal, Heidegger was working toward an understanding of the *affinity* of the human and nature.³

Of course, Fink’s relationship with Heidegger and with the lectures in question—Heidegger dedicated *FCM* to Fink and the two conducted a seminar together—does not render his interpretation decisive, especially given that the contemporary critical consensus follows major interpreters of Heidegger. Although environmental philosophers have drawn upon Heidegger’s work since at least the mid-1970s,⁴ it was Derrida’s late “zoological turn” that brought *FCM* to the center of contemporary discussions of the animal,⁵ especially in the

¹ Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar 1966/67* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979)146.

² Martin Heidegger, *Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, trans. Williams McNeill and Nicholas Walker (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995) 177 [hereinafter cited “*FCM*”].

³ Affinity translates *Verwandschaft*, which might also be translated kinship, relatedness, relation, or alliance.

⁴ For an excellent review of the influence that Heidegger has had upon environmental philosophy, see Trish Glazebrook, “Heidegger and Environmental Philosophy” in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*, ed. Francis Raffoul and Eric Nelson (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) 433-440.

⁵ For the notion of a “zoological turn” in Derrida, see Nathan Van Camp, “Negotiating the Anthropological Limit: Derrida, Stiegler, and the Question of the ‘Animal,’” *Between the Species* 15, No. 4 (2011) 57. Derrida first explicitly treats the animal at length in 1986; see “On Reading Heidegger: An Outline of Remarks to the

burgeoning sub-field of animal studies.⁶ Despite the proliferation of secondary texts, most of the commentary closely follows the line of thought first laid out by Derrida. Seizing upon the apparent anthropocentrism of the theses guiding Heidegger's treatment of animality—"the stone (material object) is *worldless*; the animal is *poor in world*; man is *world-forming*"⁷—Derrida argues that Heidegger anthropocentrically construes the animal according to a lack relative to the human and founds the human/animal distinction—in continuity with the metaphysical tradition—by privileging the human capacity for language, itself construed as a sovereign power.⁸ On this reading, Heidegger's continuation of the metaphysical tradition's anthropocentrism is closely tied to his failure to establish the ethical relation to the animal with which Derrida and the activist-minded scholars of animal studies are concerned.⁹ In the wake of this Derridean critique, Heidegger's treatment of the animal is widely decried as anthropocentric.¹⁰

Essex Colloquium, *Research in Phenomenology*, 17 (1987), 171-188. Important later texts include *Of Spirit, The Animal that Therefore I Am*, "Awaiting (at) the Arrival," "Eating Well," "Heidegger's Hand," and the two volumes of *The Beast and the Sovereign*.

⁶ See, for just a few examples, Brett Buchanan, "Being with Animals: Reconsidering Heidegger's Animal Ontology," in *Animals and the Human Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press) 265-288; Matthew Calarco, "Metaphysical Anthropocentrism: Heidegger" in *Zoographies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008) 15-54; Leonard Lawler, *This Is Not Sufficient* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); William McNeill, "Life Beyond the Organism: Animal Being in Heidegger's Freiburg Lectures, 1929-1930," in *Animal Others: On Ethics, Ontology, and Animal Life*, ed. H. Peter Steeves (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999) 197-248; Cary Wolfe, "In the Shadow of Wittgenstein's Lion" in *Animal Rites* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 44-96.

⁷ FCM 177.

⁸ See Derrida, *Of Spirit*, 49-51, *The Animal that Therefore I Am* [hereinafter *TATTIA*] 32. For similar arguments, see Calarco 50-51; Stuart Elden, "Heidegger's Animals," *Continental Philosophy Review* 39 (2006), 282; Rafael Winkler, "Heidegger and the Question of Man's Poverty in World," *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 15, no. 4 (2007), 527; David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 129. There is another strand of Derrida's analysis, according to which human superiority is founded upon an originary lack or fault (*TATTIA* 45)

⁹ 'Activist,' here, is not used in a pejorative sense. Serious scholars of animal studies are clear about their political projects. Aaron Gross, for example—a chair of the steering committee for the "Animals and Religion Group" of the American Academy of Religion and author of *The Question of the Animal and Religion* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014)—has a long history of animal rights activism and founded the nonprofit group Farm Forward.

¹⁰ There are a small number of exceptions to this rule. Scattered sympathetic voices like Michel Haar *The Song of the Earth*, trans. Reginald Lilly (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), an early interpreter of

But Fink's comments suggest that Heidegger's analysis of the animal has perhaps been settled too soon. In keeping with Fink's understanding of Heidegger's thinking in 1929 as being *underway*, Heidegger's thinking of the animal is not a dogmatic theorizing, but an attempt to raise the animal itself as a question in order to awaken a philosophical transformation in us. I show this provisional, transformative character of Heidegger's thinking of the animal by considering, first, the development of his understanding of the animal throughout the 1920s and, second, the wider methodological context of the animal in *FCM*. Although the animal does serve a methodological function in *FCM*, the animal is not *only* a means to an end. For Heidegger, animal life is a fundamentally mysterious realm by which we are always already attuned, and he calls for us to let the animal be what it is, rather than to approach it in terms of instrumental use or scientific inquiry.

I. The Animal's World-Poverty in Context

Between 1924 and 1935, Heidegger's thinking of the animal changes dramatically. The shift in Heidegger's thinking, from the animal that has world to the animal that has no world, pivots around Heidegger's 1929-1930 exploration of the thesis: the animal is world-

Heidegger's engagement with the question of nature, arose prior to the post-Derridean critical consensus or, like William McNeill, do not address the ethical issues that the current conversation, for good reason, raises. McNeill makes his critical position vis-à-vis most contemporary debate clear: "Only if one isolates the analyses of animal Being from their proper context, as tends to happen in contemporary debate, does the thesis that the animal is 'poor in world' appear to merely reinscribe a fundamentally traditional, metaphysical 'theory' distinguishing the animal from the human." William McNeill, *The Time of Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 50. Giorgio Agamben argues that—for Heidegger—the animal is not radically distinct from the human, but is, rather, "the jewel set at the center of the human world." Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004) 68. This is a problematic reading giving Heidegger's explicit insistences that the animal and the human are separated by an abyss. The reading most in tune with my own is Frank Schalow's; see "Of Earth and Animals," in *The Incarnality of Being* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006) 91-116. He does a particular good job of relating Heidegger's thinking of the animals to his treatment of the dynamic between earth and world—there is little specific discussion of *FCM*.

poor. However, this shift—as the relevant texts attest—does not indicate an increasingly asymmetrical or dogmatic assertion of the human/animal distinction. The animal is not worldless because it *lacks* something, but because it *has something else entirely*.

Heidegger developed his understanding of Being-in-the-world throughout the 1920s, but his engagement with Aristotle is of particular importance, for it is in this context that Heidegger makes enormous leaps in his formulation of Being-in-the-world in terms of state-of-mind, understanding, and discourse—with the crucial difference that, as they are being formed, the concepts apply to both human and animal life.¹¹ In this period, Heidegger understands both humans and animals as life. The animal not only has world, but its way of Being is, like that of the human, characterized as being-in-the-world: “‘Life’ refers to a *mode of being*, indeed a mode of *being-in-a-world*. A living thing is not simply at hand (*vorhanden*)... An animal is not simply moving down the road, pushed along by some mechanism. It is in the world in the sense of having it.”¹² This identification between the way of Being-in-the-world of the animal and the human is more striking given the fact that Heidegger is, at this point, not operating with an unrefined understanding of Being-in-the-world, but developing the idea in the specific terms of understanding, state-of-mind, and discourse.

First, it is in the context of discussing Aristotle’s understanding of πάθος that Heidegger develops the concept of state-of-mind, not as a specifically human phenomenon but one that characterizes living beings: “These πάθη, ‘affects,’ are not states pertaining to ensouled things, but are concerned with a *disposition of living things in their world*, in the

¹¹ For an excellent account of the importance of Heidegger’s engagement with Aristotle on his way to *Being and Time*, See Theodore Kisiel, “Part II, Confronting the Ontological Tradition,” in *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 221-301.

mode of being positioned toward something, allowing a matter to matter to it.”¹³ State-of-mind is understood moreover as an intrinsically *corporeal* openness shared by animals and humans by virtue of—and through which they discover—their bodiliness.¹⁴ Second, anticipating his later definitions of Dasein, Heidegger suggests that animal understanding both discloses world and reveals the Being of the being that understands: “Understanding belongs to the mode of Being of human Dasein, and in a certain way it also belongs to the mode of Being of animals. By the very fact that a living being discloses a world, the Being of this being is also disclosed to it;”¹⁵ “Beings, as living, are the sort of beings in whose being Being-there matters to them.”¹⁶ Finally, both human and animal Being-in-the-world is expressed through discourse—animal φωνή and human λογος—which constitutes a kind of being-with-one-another.¹⁷

Because Heidegger is developing his own interpretation of Dasein *through* his reading of Aristotle, it can be difficult to determine when he is presenting his own position and when he is paraphrasing Aristotle’s. But the close identification of the Being of the animal and of the human is consistent during this period, suggesting that Heidegger’s statements on animal being-in-the-world do represent his own position. Thus, for example, in a 1925 lecture, Heidegger writes:

Life is the kind of reality that is in a world and in fact in such a way that it has a world... People are now pondering on the basic structure and sense of the animal. But we overlook the essential element here if we do not see that the animal has a world. *In the same way*, we too are always in a world in such a way that it is disclosed to and

¹² Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009) 14.

¹³ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* 83.

¹⁴ Ibid. 132-6. Heidegger’s understanding of state of mind’s corporeality is important to keep in mind in light of critiques of the apparent disembodiment of Dasein.

¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Ancient Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008) 169.

¹⁶ Heidegger, *Basic Concepts of Aristotelian Philosophy* 163.

¹⁷ Ibid. 34, 36.

for us.¹⁸

However, as Heidegger nears *Being and Time*, this close identification (“*In the same way...*”) yields to a suggestion of slightly more difference between humans and animals. Later in 1925, Heidegger explains the sense in which Dasein is “in” the world by *analogy* with the sense in which a snail is ‘in’ its shell,” Heidegger notes that “this analogy is concerned with an entity to which we must likewise attribute, *in a formal way*, the kind of being which belongs to Dasein—‘life.’”¹⁹ Once we understand “our relationship of being toward the world,” then “we can perhaps also determine the worldhood of the animal by certain *modified* ways of considering it.”²⁰ Similarly, in 1926, Heidegger writes, “Even a jellyfish already has, when it is, its world. Something *like* a world, a being that it itself is not, is revealed to it, uncovered.”²¹ From a close identification of animal and human worlds, Heidegger transitions to a subtle distinction: analogy, *formally* like Dasein, a *modification* of the being of Dasein, something *like* world.

Finally, this shift is radicalized in *Being and Time*. No longer do animals and Dasein share life. Dasein “may be considered as life,” but only if improperly seen “from the viewpoint of biology and physiology.”²² Life is *not* Dasein.²³ No longer are the worlds of Dasein and the animal conceived of as analogous; rather, the animal now has an

¹⁸ “Wilhelm Dilthey’s Research and the Current Struggle for a Historical Worldview” in *Becoming Heidegger*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007) 259. Emphasis mine.

¹⁹ Martin Heidegger, *History of the Concept of Time*, trans. Theodore Kisiel (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 165-166. Emphasis mine.

²⁰ *History of the Concept of Time* 223. “The reverse procedure does not work...” Emphasis is mine. Also see *Logic: The Question of Truth*, trans. Thomas Sheehan (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010) 181.

²¹ Martin Heidegger, “On The Essence of Truth (Pentecost Monday, 1926)” in *Becoming Heidegger*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and Thomas Sheehan (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2007) 285. Emphasis mine.

²² BT 290.

²³ BT 75.

“environment [Umwelt].”²⁴ Even the possibility of understanding the animal via a *modification* of or *analogy* to Dasein receives a less neutral expression in *Being and Time*’s brief discussions: “The basic ontological state of ‘living’ ... can be tackled only *reductively* and *privatively* in terms of the ontology of Dasein;”²⁵ “The ontology of life is accomplished by way of a privative interpretation; it determines what must be the case if there can be anything like mere-aliveness.”²⁶ In other words, since life shows up as such only within Dasein’s world, one would have to first fully work out the way of being of Dasein, and then abstract from those elements specific to Dasein until what is left is reduced to its “mere-aliveness.” It is difficult to see how one could attribute Being-in-the-world, as Heidegger once did, to an animal characterized by such “mere-aliveness.”

After 1930, Heidegger’s take on the animal’s world is remarkably consistent: “the animal has no world [Welt], nor any environment [Umwelt]” (1935);²⁷ “The darkening and *worldlessness* [of the animal]. (Earlier as *world-poor!* Liable to be misunderstood...)” (1936-1938);²⁸ “Plant and animal likewise have no world; but they belong to the covert throng of a surrounding into which they are linked” (from a text written between 1935-1937, then reworked in 1950 and 1960);²⁹ “Because plants and animals are lodged in their respective environments [Umgebung] but are never placed freely into the clearing of being

²⁴ BT 84. It should, however, be noted that Heidegger also uses “Umwelt” to refer to “the world of everyday Dasein which is closest to it.” See BT 94.

²⁵ BT 238. Emphasis mine.

²⁶ BT 75. See also: “Only in terms of an orientation towards the ontological structure thus conceived can ‘life’ as a state of Being be defined a priori and this must be done in a *privative* manner” (BT 85).

²⁷ *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000) 47.

²⁸ *Contributions to Philosophy*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Daniela Vallega-Neu (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012) 218.

²⁹ “The Origin of the Word of Art,” in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper Perennial, 1971) 43.

which alone is ‘world,’ they lack language” (1946),³⁰ Animal behavior relates to “an ‘environment’ [Umgebungsbezug]” while Dasein relates to a “world [Weltbezug]”(1952).³¹

How should this shift be interpreted?³² Does it represent a more anthropocentric, asymmetrical approach to the animal? *FCM* stands as the turning point, the last time that the animal seems to have anything like world. What happens here? *Einleitung in die Philosophie*, a lecture course given in 1928-1929, just prior to *FCM*, provides a clue. Here, Heidegger expands his well-known triune categorization of ways of Being:

This does not mean that other beings would not really be, but only that the way of Being of other beings is fundamentally different. Animals and plants live; material things, “Nature” in an entirely determined sense, are present-at-hand, things of use are ready-to-hand. Terminologically, this results in the paradox that man does not live, but only exists, while a closer interpretation indicates that man precisely does not live “in addition,” but that what constitutes the modes of animal and plant Being receives a completely different and distinct meaning from life inside of human existence, provided the human has life.³³

Notable, here, is Heidegger’s abandonment of the ‘reductive’ and ‘privative’ interpretation of *Being and Time*, the preceding analogical approach, and the still-earlier identification of human and animal life. Now, Heidegger suggests, life—that way of Being of animals and plants—“receives a *completely different and distinct meaning*.” Heidegger’s expansion of his conceptual apparatus to include the Being of the animal suggests that the animal is neither ready-to-hand nor present-at-hand. It also suggests a certain turn *away* from a privileging of the human, although what that turn entails will need to be elucidated. Although the animal

³⁰ “Letter on ‘Humanism,’” in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 248.

³¹ *Zollikon Seminars*, ed. Medard Boss (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2001) 244.

³² In the secondary literature, where this shift is noticed, it is glossed in negative terms, as if Heidegger once granted something, then took it *away*: for Buchanan, this represents a “retraction;” (Buchanan 93) on Calarco’s account, “Heidegger’s discussions of animality after *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* become increasingly questionable and dogmatic” (Calarco 28) and Derrida is highly critical of the ethical implication of this later shift, describing Heidegger’s description of the animal’s having “no world” as a “brutal formulation” (*Of Spirit* 49).

can be *treated* by Dasein as ready-to-hand (beef- and leather-to-be, not grazing cows), or present-at-hand (not my loyal dog, but *Canis lupus familiaris* of the order Carnivora)—just as Dasein can be, and is, inauthentically treated as ready-to-hand or present-at-hand in everyday life³⁴—with the animal Heidegger opens his thought to a way of Being with a far more ambiguous relationship with Dasein.³⁵ How this entirely other way of Being of life is to be understood, however, remains a problem. Heidegger writes, “The question as to the nature of ‘life,’ animality, of plant beings, remains completely closed off. If we are entirely honest, we do not even know today how we should even pose this question, let alone answer it.”³⁶ This statement clearly anticipates the following year’s *FCM*, but suggests a different context than that with which contemporary interpreters of *FCM* are operating.

The context afforded by this summary of the shift in Heidegger’s approach suggests several important points. *First*, the dramatic shifts in Heidegger’s approach to the animal suggest, at the very least, that Heidegger is quite *undogmatically* developing his understanding of the animal by continually returning to the animal as a question. *Second*, by the time of *FCM*, the animal has its own autonomous way of Being: life. Thus in *FCM* Heidegger does not seek to understand the animal’s so-called “poverty in world” by first “examining the essence of man and the world-forming character we have claimed for him,”

³³ Martin Heidegger. *Einleitung in die Philosophie* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1996) 71-72. Translation mine.

³⁴ BT 156, 158, 168.

³⁵ This opening of an ontological niche for the animal is missed by Derrida in his interpretation of *FCM*, who suggests that, since “the animal is not a *Dasein*, nor is it *Vorhandensein* or *Zuhandensein* for us, ...one cannot think it or talk of it in terms of *existential* or of *categorical*, to go back to the pair of concepts which structure the existential analytic of *Sein und Zeit*. Can one not say, then, that the whole deconstruction of ontology, as it is begun in *Sein und Zeit* and insofar as it unseats, as it were, the Cartesian-Hegelian *spiritus* in the existential analytic, is here threatened in its order, its implementation, its conceptual apparatus, by what is called, so obscurely still, the animal?” (Derrida, *Of Spirit* 57). Of course, *Einleitung* of 1928-1929 was not yet published when Derrida published *Of Spirit*. Still, as I will suggest, this care toward the Being of the animal as distinct from Dasein, tools, and theoretical objects is evident in *FCM*.

³⁶ *Einleitung in die Philosophie* 148. Translation mine.

but by “clarifying animality itself.”³⁷ Any interpretation of Heidegger’s treatment of the animal must account for this ontological singularity of the animal. *Third*, Heidegger’s refusal to accept the animal as merely a tool for the use of humans or as an object before the scientific gaze suggests both that his thinking of the animal should be differentiated from that of the Cartesian tradition and that his thinking of the animal might be allied with that of contemporary thinkers addressing the question of animal ethics. *Fourth*, the fact that, as of this 1928-1929 lecture, Heidegger claims that we do not even know how to *ask* the question of life, let alone how to answer it, suggests that what we are looking for in *FCM* is not an *answer* to the question of life, but an attempt to *ask* the question.

II. Philosophizing as Questioning

Heidegger provides an explicit framework for understanding this prioritization of questioning in *FCM* by offering therein a rare account of his methodology of formal indication. After neglect usually attributed to inconsistent translation, the scarcity of Heidegger’s explanations, and student complaints about Heidegger’s extended treatments of methodology in his lectures,³⁸ formal indication has now been recognized as critical to

³⁷ FCM 211.

³⁸ Most notably, *Being and Time* contains no explanation of the approach, although it makes use of it. Kisiel offers the best account of the development of formal indication. See Theodor Kisiel, *The Genesis of Heidegger’s Being and Time* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993). Other works that have been helpful on the question of formal indication are: John Van Buren, *The Young Heidegger: Rumor of the Hidden King* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994); Matthew Burch, “The Existential Sources of Phenomenology: Heidegger on Formal Indication,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 21, No. 2 (2011); R. Matthew Shockey, “What’s Formal About Formal Indication? Heidegger’s Method in *Sein und Zeit*,” *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* 53, No. 6 (2010); Daniel Dahlstrom, “Heidegger’s Method: Philosophical Concepts as Formal Indications,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 47, No. 4 (1994); Ryan Streeter, “Heidegger’s Formal Indication: A Question of Method in *Being and Time*,” *Man and World* 39 (1997); S.J. McGrath, *The Early Heidegger and Medieval Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006)

Heidegger's work.³⁹ Yet the impact of this scholarship has been narrow—discussion of formal indication is still largely confined to analyses of the development of Heidegger's early thinking, of method, and of *Being and Time*—and the implications that an understanding of formal indication might have for Heidegger's treatment of the animal has not been considered. For example, neither David Farrell Krell nor Derrida, who offer the most extensive commentaries on *FCM*, even mention formal indication—let alone how it might relate to the animal—despite the fact that *FCM* contains one of Heidegger's few significant discussions of it.⁴⁰

In his 1920s lectures, Heidegger generally emphasizes three aspects of formal indication. First, the function of formal indication is negative. The “formal” refers to the relational-sense, or *how* one approaches the phenomenon. The formal indication, as formal, “should indicate beforehand the relation of the phenomenon—in the negative sense, however, the same as if to warn! A phenomenon must be so stipulated such that its relational meaning is held in abeyance.”⁴¹ Because we access phenomena from within a particular historical context, how they show up to us has been “restricted and fixed through *tradition*”⁴²—e.g. Western philosophy tends to be biased toward the *theoretical* relational-sense, viewing phenomena as *objects*. The formal indication suspends the *how* of relating such that how to approach the phenomenon becomes a question. The “indication,” on the

³⁹ Gadamer, for example, declares, “All of us should ever be relearning that when Heidegger spoke in his early works of ‘formal indication,’ he already formulated something that holds for the whole of his thought. At issue here is something decisive for the entire enterprise of his thinking.” Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Martin Heidegger's One Path” in *Reading Heidegger from the Start*, ed. Theodore Kisiel and John van Buren (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) 33. This kind of statement is no longer uncommon in the secondary literature on formal indication.

⁴⁰ See, in addition to the Derrida texts already cited, David Farrell Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); *Derrida and Our Animal Others* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

⁴¹ *Religious Life* 44.

other hand, refers to the content-sense, which is likewise held in suspension: “It is characteristic of an indicative definition that it precisely does not present fully and properly the object which is to be determined.”⁴³ Like *how* to analyze it, *what* is being analyzed is initially not at all clear.

Second, however, formal indication cannot be *entirely* negative: the formal indication says *something* capable of pointing out a way. “Everything depends,” Heidegger writes, “upon our understanding being guided from out of the indefinite and vague but still intelligible content of the indication onto the right *path of looking*.”⁴⁴ This something that serves as the starting point for the investigation is “incomplete” and “improper,” being adapted from what “lies closest at hand,”⁴⁵ but this does not mean that the starting-point is arbitrary. This original indication “must be drawn out of the mode *in which the object is originally accessible*.”⁴⁶ The formal indication indicates an improper content, drawn from “a presentation of today’s situation”⁴⁷—that is, the situation in which the content being indicated has already been experienced—“such that the claim [about the content] is now made explicit for the first time.”⁴⁸ This provisional starting-point, then, is derived from the way in which the phenomenon is experienced in the everyday situation, in such a way as to render clear the presuppositions implicit in that experience.

Third, formal indication does not *build upon* this starting-point, but works *through* it, not towards a final understanding of the phenomenon, but towards an authentic relation with

⁴² Martin Heidegger, *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999) 59.

⁴³ PIA 26.

⁴⁴ *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 62.

⁴⁵ PIA 54.

⁴⁶ PIA 17.

⁴⁷ *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 59.

⁴⁸ PIA 17.

one's own historical situation in which one finds oneself. This situation, as the living and interpreting of life itself, is the genuine object of the investigation. To work through the improper *what* without a predetermined *how* requires that one

...work one's way toward the situation... The understanding of the formally indicative definition, in actualizing the process of working one's way toward the concrete situation, passes by way of the approach that lies closest at hand. This approach is thrust aside as the understanding progresses, and it is then canceled in the appropriation of the genuine situation.⁴⁹

This process is *historical*. I appropriate my initial mode of access to phenomena—shaped by an inherited tradition that I do not question in my everyday life—by working through that tradition and thereby “disclos[ing] the history of the covering up of the subject matter.”⁵⁰ By critically working through the tradition that has shaped my access to phenomena, I never arrive at an ‘objective’ origin of that tradition or an ‘original’ experience of that subject matter, but must reinterpret both “in a manner appropriate to the changed historical situation” in which I find myself.⁵¹ The goal of formal indication is not to grasp phenomena ‘objectively,’ but to establish “an explicit *appropriation of our position of looking*. This position is itself something historical.”⁵² I reclaim as my own—given the demands and possibilities of the present—the tradition that has determined my situation and continues to do so as long as I exist. This reclaiming is not a singular event, but an inheritance enacted through the questioning of one's self and one's world that one travels again and again. As Heidegger puts it, “The authentic foundation of philosophy is a radical, existentiell grasp of and maturation of questionableness.”⁵³ It is within this context that Heidegger's assertion, immediately prior to *FCM*, of the task of posing the question of the animal, should be read.

⁴⁹ *PIA* 54. Translation slightly altered.

⁵⁰ *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 59.

⁵¹ *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 60.

In *FCM*, Heidegger further clarifies his understanding of formal indication, in a manner that directly pertains to the question of the animal, on three points. First, in the early explorations of formal indication, Heidegger’s examples are few and narrowly focused. The “I am” and “Being”,⁵⁴ “*the being-there of Dasein (factual life) is being in a world;*”⁵⁵ and the “I” (as in “Dasein is an entity which in each case I myself am;”⁵⁶) are all designated formal indications.⁵⁷ This has led some commentators to argue that formal indication is intrinsically self-reflexive: it provides the means to non-objectively analyze the Being of that being for whom Being is an issue, only addressing one’s self.⁵⁸ In *FCM*, however, Heidegger suggests a broader range of applicability for formal indication, pointing to “death, resolute disclosedness, history, existence,” freedom,⁵⁹ the ‘as,’⁶⁰ and “world” as formally indicative concepts; all “philosophical concepts,” on this account, are “formally indicative concepts.”⁶¹ And although all such philosophical concepts thus call upon us to transform our Dasein, this—notably, in a work in which Heidegger attempts to treat animality ‘itself’⁶²—“does not imply that every philosophical concept is one that can be related to Dasein.”⁶³ Heidegger thus suggests that formal indication is relevant to a far broader range of issues in his work than is generally supposed.

⁵² *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 64.

⁵³ *PIA* 28.

⁵⁴ *PIA* 46

⁵⁵ *Ontology—The Hermeneutics of Facticity* 62.

⁵⁶ *BT* 78.

⁵⁷ *BT* 152. In addition, Heidegger points to Augustine’s *beata vita* and Paul’s proclamation as formal indications, but he neither emphasizes this nor draws extensively upon his theoretical discussion of formal indication in explaining them. See *The Phenomenology of Religious Life*, trans. Matthias Fritsch and Jennifer Anna Gosetti-Ferencei (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

⁵⁸ See Shockey.

⁵⁹ *FCM* 296.

⁶⁰ *FCM* 305.

⁶¹ *FCM* 297.

⁶² *FCM* 211.

⁶³ *FCM* 300.

Second, in *FCM*, the specifically transformative aspect of formally indication is explicitly brought to the forefront, where before the negative aspect received the greatest emphasis. The meaning of the “indicative” quality is subtly shifted: “indicative implies the following: the meaning-content of these concepts does not directly intend or express what they refer to, but only gives an indication, a pointer to the fact that anyone who seeks to understand is called upon by this conceptual context to undertake a transformation of themselves into their Dasein.”⁶⁴ The “indicative” does not point primarily to the suspended *content-sense*, as it did in 1920-1922, but to the necessity of self-transformation. Thus the non-propositional results of philosophy are explicitly specified in *FCM*: “Metaphysical questions remain without an answer... because the kind of answer that consists in communicating some established fact is quite inadequate for such questions.”⁶⁵ Though this is implied in the earlier work, the new explicitness of this idea further emphasizes the primarily transformative intentions of formal indication.⁶⁶

Third, formal indication is now taken to have decisive implications for interpreting the interconnections between concepts. Rejecting the artificiality of a system, Heidegger argues that “since all formally indicative concepts and contexts of interpretation address whoever is trying to understand... a properly *unique* interconnection of these concepts is also given... *the one and only originary interconnection of concepts* is already *established through Dasein itself*.”⁶⁷ Formally indicative concepts cannot be understood as isolated *things*, but rather are enacted as *occurrences* in Dasein that are, as occurrences within a

⁶⁴ *FCM* 297.

⁶⁵ *FCM* 185.

⁶⁶ *Being and Time*, it seems, is unsure on this. Heidegger sometimes suggests that he is simply trying to revive the question of the meaning of Being as a question, and sometimes that he is preparing an actual answer (though, depending on how one interprets that “answer,” these two suggestions might not be contradictory). For just a few examples of the latter, see pg. 38, 40; and of the former, pg. 19, 487.

particular situation, intrinsically connected to other phenomena.

Given the understanding of formal indication outlined above, we should expect the following in his treatment of the animal: *First*, in considering the animal, there will first occur a negative moment—the warning function of formal indication. *Second*, the thesis’ indication of the content-sense will be drawn from the way in which the animal is accessed in the contemporary situation. *Third*, this initial indication of the content-sense of the animal will represent a *starting-point* that will be abandoned as the process of exploring it reveals a more original relationship. *Fourth*, the thesis will represent less a definition than the opening of a *question* and the conclusion will render the thesis regarding the animal questionable. *Fifth*, the questioning will suggest a *task*, not fulfilled by the text, demanding a transformation of the listener in relation to his or her situation. *Sixth*, the thesis will not stand in isolation, but will be intimately interconnected with a larger context crucial to its interpretation. What follows is a close reading demonstrating the fulfillment of these predictions—the first four in section III, and the last two in section IV.

III. The Animal as Question

To begin, it is important to note that, for Heidegger, *world* is a formally indicative concept “in an exemplary sense.”⁶⁷ Heidegger introduces the second part of *FCM*, which treats the animal, by asking: “What is world?” He then turns to the “comparative examination” of man, animal, and stone in the ways that they have world, in order to find an “initial understanding” of world.⁶⁹ Heidegger’s theses—— “[1] the stone (material object) is

⁶⁷ *FCM* 298.

⁶⁸ *FCM* 297.

⁶⁹ *FCM* 185.

worldless; [2] the animal is *poor in world*; [3] man is *world-forming*”⁷⁰—should thus be read not as definitions of the human, the animal, or the stone, but as formally indicative definitions of world.⁷¹ As such, what *world* is remains a question—and thus the meaning of the thesis concerning the animal’s world-poverty likewise remains uncertain.

Heidegger begins his exploration of his three theses by problematizing them, thus fulfilling the negative function of formal indication. To clarify his three theses, Heidegger suggests, it is necessary first to discover “what constitutes the *essence of the animality* of the animal and the *essence of the humanity of man*,” as well as what constitutes the “*living character of a living being*, as distinct from the non-living being” of the stone.⁷² But in order to analyze man, animal, and stone, we must *already* have some idea of what they are. This is the problem of content. Equally troublesome is the problem of the relational-sense. *How* do “we gain access to the living character of the living being in its essence?”⁷³ Describing physiology and behavior is not enough, for this would already assume that *what* we are analyzing is a living being—one that can, moreover, be legitimately subjected to theoretical observation—when the very meaning of “living” is the very thing under discussion. The problem is thus posed by problematizing the content-sense—what is it we are analyzing here?—and the relational-sense—how are we to relate to that content? Thus in keeping with formal indicative method, Heidegger begins his investigation with a suspension of the *what* and the *how* of the analysis.

Formal indication demands that, in the absence of any stable definition, we must rely

⁷⁰ FCM 177.

⁷¹ Derrida notes this, but this does not prevent him from also reading the second thesis as Heidegger’s definition of the animal. “These three theses are theses on world. They are not theses on the stone, on the animal, or on man, but theses on the world” (*The Animal that Therefore I Am* 151); “Compromised, rather, by a *thesis* on animality...” (Of Spirit 57).

⁷² FCM 179.

upon a provisional understanding taken by the everyday situation. In order to move forward, Heidegger writes, “both of these questions must be left open, but that also means that we must always have some answer ready, however provisional and tentative, in order to guide us.”⁷⁴ Noting that world is a *problem*, Heidegger suggests that this problem initially arises in a Christian context: world is all that is created and the human, as created, is thus also a part of the world.⁷⁵ Heidegger is clear about this definition’s provisionality: “However crude this distinction may be... [i]nitially and for some time to come we shall employ the word ‘world’ in this ambivalent sense.”⁷⁶ Thus when Heidegger first introduces the thesis of the animal’s world-poverty, it would appear to define the animal as that which “has” less world—that is, “the sum total of beings accessible to man or animals alike.”⁷⁷ In this case, the distinction between human and animal would represent a difference of degree: the bird would know the sky and the tops of trees, but not the depths of the oceans explored by submarines; the human world would be “greater in range, far more extensive in its penetrability, constantly extendable.”⁷⁸ Stressing that such an approach to the animal is derived from the everyday perspective, Heidegger writes, “This is all so obvious that there is no need to discuss it any further. We have long been familiar with such self-evident observations.”⁷⁹ This beginning point would seem to give credence to Derrida’s critique: “whether one wishes to avoid this or

⁷³ *FCM* 179

⁷⁴ *FCM* 179.

⁷⁵ *FCM* 176.

⁷⁶ *FCM* 177.

⁷⁷ *FCM* 193.

⁷⁸ *FCM* 193.

⁷⁹ *FCM* 193. As a source of Heidegger’s three theses, one might point to Max Scheler’s “conception of life in terms of its intermediate position between material nature and human existence,” to which Heidegger refers (*FCM* 192). or to Husserl’s *Ideas II*, which draws upon the same schematization, and which Heidegger references with regard to such a schema, in *Being and Time* (BT 489), or to Aristotle, who provides the context for Heidegger’s earliest comparisons between human, animal, and stone..

not, the words ‘poverty’ and ‘privation’ imply hierarchization and evaluation.”⁸⁰ However, Heidegger’s theses, as formally indicative, should not be read as *his* theses at all, but rather as a formulation of the presuppositions undergirding the everyday situation in which we come across animals.

Unsurprisingly, then, Heidegger quickly alters his initial interpretation. Thus the initial stage of questioning yields a non-quantitative reevaluation of the terms under discussion, one that “allows no evaluative ranking or assessment.”⁸¹ For if we simply “compare the discriminatory capacity of a falcon’s eyes with that of the human eye or the canine sense of smell with our own,” this ranking becomes problematic.⁸² Further, it becomes “questionable even as a question,” whether we can speak of ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ animals. Rather, Heidegger argues, “Every animal and every species of animal as such is just as perfect and complete as any other.”⁸³ Thus the initial theses, which Derrida accurately describes as hierarchical, have given way to something else. The poverty referred to in the thesis on animality is not quantitative—and the ‘world’ referred to in “world building” and “poverty in world” likewise “cannot express quantity, sum total, or degree with respect to the accessibility of beings.”⁸⁴ Heidegger attempts a new definition: “Let us provisionally define world as those beings which are... accessible in such a way that dealing with such beings is possible or necessary for the kind of Being pertaining to a particular being.”⁸⁵ Turning to the animal, it is clear that it has some kind of access to beings. Thus “the animal’s *way of being*, which we call ‘*life*,’ is *not without access*,” since *world* is defined as “the *accessibility of*

⁸⁰ Derrida *Of Spirit* 56.

⁸¹ *FCM* 194.

⁸² *FCM* 194.

⁸³ *FCM* 194.

⁸⁴ *FCM* 195.

⁸⁵ *FCM* 196.

beings,” it thus follows that the animal *does* have world after all.⁸⁶

Heidegger thus finds himself in a conundrum: “Our perplexity about what we should understand by world and the relationship to world has increased.”⁸⁷ If world means the accessibility of beings, then both man and animal have world; if the thesis of the animal’s world-poverty is true, however, then both the animal and the stone would not have world: “The animal thus reveals itself as a being which *both has and does not have world*.”⁸⁸ In this context, it is worth considering Derrida’s protest against Heidegger’s thesis as dogmatically presupposing “that there is one thing, one domain, one homogenous type of entity, which is called animality in general.”⁸⁹ As should be evident from the provisional character of the investigations, Heidegger is not presupposing anything about animals, but rather raising as a question the fact of our presupposition: irrefutably, we *do* approach particular animals *as* animals on the basis of some prior understanding.⁹⁰ In order to approach, say a frog, *as* an animal, we must already have some idea of what an animal *is* in mind. Heidegger thus calls to attention the automatic way in which we draw upon these presuppositions, treating them for the first time as questionable. As the defining characteristic of Heidegger’s investigation into the animal, this circling is dizzying, but certainly not dogmatic. Heidegger develops

⁸⁶ *FCM* 198-199.

⁸⁷ *FCM* 199.

⁸⁸ *FCM* 199.

⁸⁹ *Of Spirit* 57.

⁹⁰ Even Derrida does this. All of those who criticize Heidegger’s distinction between *Dasein* and the animal do this. Derrida, for example, suggests that the space separating “man” and “animal” is just as significant as that separating, for example, the chimpanzee and the ant, and thus that the term “animal” fails to do justice to the infinite diversity of that which falls under its purview. Yet, in defending this suggestion, Derrida necessarily makes use of precisely such a presupposed understanding of what constitutes the realm of the animal. In other words, pointing, as he does, to lizards, dogs, protozoa, dolphins, sharks, lambs, parrots, chimpanzees, camels, eagles, squirrels, tigers, elephants, cats, ants, silkworms, hedgehogs, and echidnas—but not mentioning, say, shoes, electromagnetic radiation, or water—necessarily implies that Derrida is in fact operating with a background understanding of what an “animal” is, even if he objects to explicitly thematizing that presupposition. See *TATTIA* 34. It should also be noted that Heidegger explicitly notes—at the conclusion and thus, given the character of formal indication, at the most authentic moment of his analysis most properly

several other provisional understandings of the animal, but each is in turn rendered questionable. Even Heidegger's extensive engagement with zoology, which yields a robust understanding of the animal in terms of captivity, concludes with a series of decisive ambiguities.

Heidegger's engagement with zoology should be framed by an understanding of formal indication. Formally indicative definitions purport to lay bare that which is presupposed by those who, in the everyday situation, relate to that with which the formal indication is concerned. This understanding of formal indication has major implications for Heidegger's thesis on the animal and for its relationship to zoology. As a philosophical proposition, Heidegger's thesis on the animal "is a *statement of essence*." As the *presupposition* guiding our understanding ahead of time of what animals are, "it is not a statement of essence simply because it holds true of all animals" but, rather, "it holds true for all animals because it is a statement of essence."⁹¹ In other words, the thesis—if it is actually a statement of essence—is the presupposition upon which particular beings show up to us as animals at all. If animals show up to us in a manner contradictory to this thesis, or upon the basis of another projection of the essence of the animality, then the thesis is not an accurate statement of the essence of animals. Heidegger's thesis is thus falsifiable. Is the way of Being of the animal as zoology understands it "the condition of the possibility of the animal's poverty in world," or is it "the animal's poverty in world which enables us to comprehend" the animal as zoology understands it? "If the latter," he continues, "then we will also have shown the thesis that the animal is poor in world to be a statement of essence concerning

Heidegger's—the infinite incomparable multiplicity of the ways of Being of animals. See *FCM* 277-278. The passage is cited below, p. 37.

⁹¹ *FCM* 186.

animality in general, rather than an arbitrary assertion.”⁹² What does he find?

Ultimately, Heidegger determines that contemporary zoology understands the way of Being of the animal as captivity. Heidegger provides a summary of animal captivity according to six points: [1] Withholding; [2] Being taken; [3] Absorption; [4] Openness for something else; [5] the structure of encirclement; [6] Captivation as behavior’s condition of possibility.⁹³ In this absorbed openness, the animal is “*taken*” by things.⁹⁴ The animal thus has access to things, but not *as* things; the manifestness of beings is *withheld*. The animal, as captivity, does not have beings *as beings*; the manifestness of beings as beings is *withheld*: the animal does not have something to which it nevertheless has access—and thus would seem to be deprived. This withholding, this poverty, however, is not the condition of possibility of understanding the Being of the animal, but rather is only one “moment” of the Being of the animal understood as captivity.⁹⁵ Heidegger’s thesis thus appears to have been falsified, since captivity underlies poverty-in-world, rather than the other way around.

Heidegger does not shrink back from this result—although it yields, in his ostensible conclusions to his engagement with the animal⁹⁶ to decisive ambiguities. *First*, the biological understanding of the animal as captivity forces Heidegger to reject his own thesis of the animal’s world-poverty:

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... If these considerations are unassailable, however, then in the end we must not only substantially reduce the significance of our thesis, but must repudiate it altogether.

⁹² *FCM* 227.

⁹³ *FCM* 260.

⁹⁴ *FCM* 247.

⁹⁵ “Captivity is the condition of the possibility of poverty in world... The withholding of world belongs as one essential moment to captivity.” *FCM* 271.

⁹⁶ *FCM* 257-267.

For the thesis is misleading... it encourages the mistaken view that the being of the animal in itself is intrinsically deprivation and poverty.⁹⁷

Second, Heidegger notes that, despite the apparent falsity of the thesis, nevertheless “it has brought us closer to an elucidation of the concept of world.”⁹⁸ Since the function of the investigation was to yield a concept of world, and the thesis appears to have accomplished this, then the thesis functioned properly and should not be dismissed. *Third*, since Heidegger has still said little about what “world” actually means, “then we have no right *now* or at least *as yet no right to alter our thesis*.”⁹⁹ *Fourth*, Heidegger turns to a poetic understanding of animals, citing St. Paul on the suffering of all creation. *Fifth*, Heidegger notes that zoology’s understanding of the animal is incomplete insofar as it fails to address the question of the animal’s death.¹⁰⁰ *Sixth*, Heidegger concludes, “The thesis that ‘the animal is poor in world’

⁹⁷ FCM 271.

⁹⁸ FCM 272.

⁹⁹ FCM 272.

¹⁰⁰ FCM 273. Both Derrida and Krell emphasize that Heidegger denies death to the animal and understand this as an assertion of human superiority (Derrida, *Beast and the Sovereign*, Vol. II 122; TATTIA 154-51; Krell, *Daimon Life* 297). Heidegger does deny death, in the sense that it has for Dasein, to the animal, but the implications of this are more complicated than Derrida or Krell recognize. For Heidegger, animal captivation represents is neither a “static condition” nor a “a rigid framework,” but is, instead, “an intrinsically determinate motility” (FCM 265). Motility—meaning for Heidegger the animal’s “birth, growth, maturing, aging, and death,” as well as “genetic inheritance”—thus suggests a historicity of the animal still to be thought (FCM 266). Although Heidegger answers the question, “is the death of the animal a *dying* or a way of *coming to an end* [Verenden]?” by pointing to the latter (FCM 267), what this means is not immediately self-evident.

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger similarly argues that, while Dasein dies, the animal comes to an end [verenden] (BT 291; translation modified). In that context, Heidegger was committed to approaching the animal only privatively and reductively, such that it does perhaps make sense to speak of a refusal. In FCM, and afterwards, however, Heidegger is not engaging in a privative analysis of the animal. This difference is attested by Heidegger’s later revision of *Being and Time*. Whereas, in the original edition, Heidegger writes, “It remains a problem in itself to define ontologically the way in which the senses can be stimulated or touched in something that merely has life, and how and whether [wie und ob] the Being of animals, for instance, is constituted by some kind of ‘time’” (BT 396), Heidegger later substitutes “how and whether [wie und ob]” with “how and where [wie und wo],” suggesting that it is no longer a question *whether* the animal has a kind of time, but only *how* it has that time. Derrida, although citing the later version, glosses this passage without noting the shift:

One of the rare times, perhaps the only time (that needs checking) that Heidegger names the animal in *Being and Time*... it is in order to admit to and put off until later a difficulty (my hypothesis is this: whatever remains to be dealt with later will probably remain so forever; later here signifies never). What is that difficulty? That of knowing if the animal has time, if it is ‘constituted by some kind of time.’ According to Heidegger, that ‘remains a problem’ (TATTIA 22).

must remain as a problem, and one which we cannot broach now but *which guides*” the continued analysis of world.¹⁰¹

There are a number of ways that one might respond to these conclusions. One might critique Heidegger for being incoherent—it is not clear why Heidegger makes the leaps that he does, he does not attempt to justify them, and at least some of the claims seem incompatible. One might note that Heidegger seems to have rejected the results of more than sixty pages of dense engagement with zoology on grounds—that is, the turn to poetry and St. Paul—that are, at best, underexplained and, at worst, simply not pertinent. But the claim, defended by nearly every contemporary interpreter of Heidegger’s *FCM*, that Heidegger dogmatically claims that the animal is world-poor, is not only unsupported in the text, but explicitly rejected: the thesis of the animal’s world-poverty, while not outright rejected here, is explicitly retained only *as a problem*, and the thesis’s considerable weaknesses are explicitly acknowledged.

This passage is notable not just because Derrida—although citing the “*wie und wo*”—mistakenly suggests that, for Heidegger, the question is if the animal has time, but also because Derrida claims that Heidegger never returns seriously to this question—while citing a passage whose editing testifies to the fact Heidegger does return to the question, and has revised his thinking as a result.

Although Heidegger in *FCM* still does not attribute Dasein’s kind of dying to the animal, he is not thereby depriving the animal of something, but attempting to raise as a question the otherness of the animal’s way of having time and coming to an end; that the animal does not die suggests not that the animal lacks something, but that it has its own distinct manner of coming to an end that remains mysterious to us. Heidegger’s refusal to simply identify the death of Dasein with that of the animal, although seeming to close one question, really opens the issue as a question: the animal “cannot die in the sense in which dying is ascribed to human beings... Consequently the question concerning the essence of the natural physiological death with which the particular living individual comes to die... represents a central problem” (*FCM* 267). Moreover, this consideration of animal coming to an end raises a series of other questions that remain to be thought: “Birth, maturing, aging, and death all too obviously remind us of the being of man, which we recognize as being historical... What kind of history do we find in the life process of the individual animal? What kind of history does the animal kind, the species, possess?... Can we and should we speak of history at all where the being of the animal is concerned? If not, then how are we to determine this motility? You see that one question gives rise to others, that one question is more essential than another, that each question is poorer with respect to its answer than the next” (*FCM* 265-6). To suggest, then, as the secondary literature does, that Heidegger refuses the animal death, or closes a question, misses not only the primary point of his formally indicative engagement with the animal, but also the host of questions that are the primary point and that could significantly enrich contemporary discussions of animality.

But none of the above does justice to Heidegger's conclusions. Formal indication provides a framework for understanding *why* Heidegger might wish to leave us with this set of problems or questions rather than a firm answer. The path that Heidegger's thinking of the animal follows is a meandering one—we seem to find ourselves arriving again and again only at same questions. It is critical, however, to note that the question with which we concluded is not the same with which we began. Heidegger writes,

The only thing that ordinary understanding can see in this circling motion is the movement around the periphery which always returns to its original point of departure... Thus it misses the decisive issue here, which is an insight into the *center* of the circle as such.¹⁰²

In the face of formal indication's semantically-empty content-sense and a suspended relational-sense, we are forced simply upon the fact *that* we have posited these theses and *that* they seem to make a certain kind of sense—but we cannot say *why*. This motivates a process of the questioning that both transforms our relationship to the situation from which our initial understandings are derived and clarifies what the genuine questions are. Thus Heidegger writes, early in his treatment of the thesis concerning the animal:

The question we are confronting concerns the essence of the animality of the animal. The task in this connection is to develop this question as a question. For us the development of the question itself is far more essential and important than finding some quick and ready answer to it. For any answer, if it is a true one, is conditional and thus changing and changeable. But what remains as a permanent and recurrent task of philosophy is precisely to develop the fundamental difficulty of this question properly, to grasp the question concerning *the essence of animality* and thus *the essence of life in general* in all its questionableness.¹⁰³

Although Heidegger does arrive at a well-developed theory of the animal, in the form of captivity, this answer does not claim to be a universal statement of essence; further, as Heidegger's sudden moves toward poetry, the methodological usefulness of the thesis of

¹⁰¹ *FCM* 273.

¹⁰² *FCM* 180.

world-poverty, and the reassertion of the question of the animal show, Heidegger does not mean his zoology-derived understanding of the animal to be the final word on the matter, but merely to clarify what, today, the question of the animal might entail.

IV. Animal Attunement

The two remaining considerations regarding the formally indicated animal—that is, the transformation of the situation and the larger interconnection of concepts—are closely related. In transitioning to the thesis “man is world-forming,”¹⁰⁴ Heidegger treats the transformed situation that his investigation into the animal has yielded. Leaving behind his apparently final conclusion that “the thesis that ‘the animal is poor in world’ *must remain as a problem*,”¹⁰⁵ Heidegger writes, in a passage that has gone virtually unremarked in the secondary literature:¹⁰⁶

The task is to reveal the significance of what we acquired there [in the consideration of the animal] in its entire import for the question concerning the manifestness of beings as such.... In this connection we should remember this: animality no longer stands in view with respect to poverty in world as such, but rather *as a realm of beings* which are *manifest* and thus call for a *specific fundamental relationship* toward them on our part, one in which at least initially we do not move.¹⁰⁷

The initial situation of access to the animal, such that the animal shows up as world-poor, has given way to a situation in which the failing is ours: animals call for a relationship that we do not, in the everyday situation, sustain. Importantly, this decision, that the animal is no longer

¹⁰³ FCM 207.

¹⁰⁴ FCM 275.

¹⁰⁵ FCM 273.

¹⁰⁶ The exception is found in Buchanan 278-9. He describes it as “a passage that has not received much attention.” He does not, however, elaborate on what this “fundamental relationship” specifically entails for Heidegger.

¹⁰⁷ FCM 276.

to be considered as poor in world, proves final.¹⁰⁸ This passage, rather than standing alongside the previous concluding moments of his discussion of the animal, provides a framework for understanding why he made those sudden moves. *First*, Heidegger declares that his engagement with the question of the animal yields an insight into the differentiation of modes of being. In the situation of everydayness, we consider everything that shows up to us as mere objects that all are in the same way: “We board the tram, talk to other people, call the dog, loop up at the stars, all in the same way... everything in the same uniformity of what is present at hand.”¹⁰⁹ Heidegger’s consideration of the animal serves to draw us away from this everyday perspective, awakening us to the differentiatedness of beings. *Second*, Heidegger, in concluding that animals “call for a *specific fundamental relationship* toward them on our part”¹¹⁰ opens a path for thinking not only how the formally indicated animal is intrinsically interconnected with other aspects of his investigation, but also how it calls the listener to a transformation. Two questions result from this discussion: what characterizes the animal’s distinctive way of Being? What fundamental relationship ought we to have with the animal?

Heidegger explicitly treats these questions in the context of his attempt to consider

¹⁰⁸ Never again does Heidegger refer to the animal as world-poor. At times, he will reference the fact *that* he once ventured such a thesis (See, for example, Martin Heidegger, *Heraclitus Seminar 1966/67* (Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1979) seminar 146; *FCM* 335, 350), but he does not again commit to it. This fact, entirely unnoticed by commentators, who cite Heidegger’s initial thesis on regarding the animal’s world-poverty as if it represented his own stable and final position, would support my contention that *FCM*’s interpreters have largely failed to consider Heidegger’s thinking in this work *as a way* that, as formally indicative, begins with the everyday situation in which we think the animal only to leave it behind. This leads to statements like Krell’s: “Throughout the final hours of the lecture course [i.e. after the thesis of world-poverty is explicitly dropped] Heidegger appeals to the animal’s ...lack of logos, as the secret of its benumbed behavior in an impoverished world” (*Daimon Life* 129). On the fixation of the secondary literature with Heidegger’s thesis of animal world-poverty, see Elden’s statement: “Poor animals. So poor in world. This is where most readings of Heidegger’s animals begin. And it is also where most readings end.” The force of this statement is diminished, however, by the fact that Elden himself doesn’t venture far beyond it either; on his reading, in Heidegger, “animals are always figured as lacking” (274, 273).

¹⁰⁹ *FCM* 275.

the animal in itself. How are we to accomplish this? He asks, “*Can we transpose ourselves into an animal at all?*”¹¹¹ This implies another question: “What is the kind of being which belongs to these beings insofar as they permit, resist, or possibly forbid as entirely inappropriate any such self-transposition...?”¹¹² For Heidegger, transposition does *not* mean acting “*as if*” we were animals, “the factual transference of one existing human being into the interior of another being,” or “the factual substitution of oneself for another being so as to take its place.”¹¹³ Nor does transposition mean that we are to *empathize* with the animal, for the same reason that he rejects it in *Being and Time* as a solution to the problem of the ‘isolated individual’: it presupposes that “we are ‘outside’ in the first place.”¹¹⁴

The question of transposition into the animal is, on Heidegger’s account, unique: the question of transposition into the stone is self-evidently nonsensical, and that of transposition into the other human is also “meaningless, indeed a nonsensical question,” because, as Dasein, we are always already transposed into the Being of other Dasein.¹¹⁵ The animal is thus distinctive because the question of transposition appears a meaningful one—“it is somehow self-evident that the animal for its part bears with it a peculiar sphere of its own that makes possible a transposition into it”¹¹⁶—yet this transposition is also somehow refused. Heidegger’s *initial* claim regarding the animal’s world poverty, which turned into the claim that the animal does and does not have world is revealed, more originarily, as an expression of the animal’s “potentiality for granting transposedness, connected in turn with

¹¹⁰ *FCM* 276.

¹¹¹ *FCM* 201.

¹¹² *FCM* 201.

¹¹³ *FCM* 202.

¹¹⁴ *FCM* 203. See also *BT* 162.

¹¹⁵ *FCM* 205.

¹¹⁶ *FCM* 206.

the necessary refusal of any going along with.”¹¹⁷ Thus the investigation of the animal shifts from considering solely what the animal is, to considering also our mode of access to the animal—we become implicated by the question.

To transpose ourselves into the animal means “going along with” the animal in such a way that the animal “remain *what* it is and *how* it is”¹¹⁸—but also in such a way that we remain *what* we are: transposition “consists precisely in we ourselves being precisely ourselves, and only in this way first bringing about the possibility of ourselves being able to go along with the other being while remaining *other* with respect to it.”¹¹⁹ If, as his rejection of empathy suggests, we are not *outside* animals, then in what way are we *already* going along with the animal in this way? This relationship does *not* entail simply ignoring the animal, but rather demands something of us—for as we have seen, we do not sustain this relationship in the everyday situation. Neither does it entail acting for or on behalf of the animal. As Heidegger puts it in another essay from the same period, “To let be—that is, to let beings be as the beings they are”—does not mean “the management, preservation, tending, and planning of the beings,” but “to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand... such engagement withdraws in the face of beings in order that they might reveal themselves with respect to what and how they are.”¹²⁰ Transposing ourselves into the animal requires a withdrawal in which the animals are revealed as they are—a description that resonates closely with the attunements that are key to the larger project of *FCM*. The animal, in our attempt to appropriate the newly disclosed situation in which we find ourselves, thus proves to be closely interrelated to a larger set of

¹¹⁷ *FCM* 210.

¹¹⁸ *FCM* 202.

¹¹⁹ *FCM* 202-203.

concerns—precisely what we should expect from formally indicative concepts.

It is important to remember that Heidegger's *FCM* concerns not animals, but metaphysics. Heidegger takes as his first clue to the question of metaphysics a line from Novalis: "Philosophy is really homesickness, an urge to be at home everywhere." As an urge to be at *home* everywhere, philosophy is precisely uncanny [*unheimlich*], "not at home everywhere;" this "everywhere" means to be "within the whole," which Heidegger names "the *world*."¹²¹ Awake to our not being at home in the world, we can then be *underway* toward that whole. This becoming aware of our homesickness arises only in an attunement: "*Philosophy in each case happens in a fundamental attunement.*"¹²² For Heidegger, the goal of the course is to awaken this attunement.

The first portion of the course, preceding his comparative investigation of world, concerns a particular attunement: boredom. But for Heidegger, "what is decisive" is "*the boredom that today perhaps determines our boredom here and now.*"¹²³ The fundamental attunement of contemporary man, "the ape of civilization," who has "long since eradicated homesickness,"¹²⁴ is a distinct form of boredom, one in which "the Dasein in contemporary man as such" is bored.¹²⁵ Heidegger understands boredom in terms of a telling refusal and a being held in limbo. In this particular form of boredom, what is refused, and what oppresses us in that refusal, "is the very *absence of any essential oppressiveness in our Dasein as a whole.*"¹²⁶ We feel at home in the world and, as such, are not driven towards the 'as a whole' of the world. We flee our being-there by occupying ourselves with things and falling into the

¹²⁰ "On the Essence of Truth" 144.

¹²¹ *FCM* 5. Note that "Trieb" is the term Heidegger uses to describe the captivated animal's drivenness.

¹²² *FCM* 7.

¹²³ *FCM* 157.

¹²⁴ *FCM* 5.

¹²⁵ *FCM* 162.

‘they.’¹²⁷ Nothing seems to speak to us any longer, and there is no mystery; we fail to shoulder our Dasein as a “burden.”¹²⁸ *Profound* boredom, by contrast, is precisely the kind of fundamental attunement that, for Heidegger, philosophizing requires. In profound boredom Dasein is “*delivered over to beings’ telling refusal of themselves as a whole.*”¹²⁹ Beings as such and as a whole withdraw, but Dasein, bound to the horizon of time, cannot escape “the time which in each case *Dasein itself as a whole is.*”¹³⁰ Profound boredom—which the contemporary human flees—thus entails a refusal of beings as a whole that discloses that ‘as a whole,’ opening Dasein to the burden of its being there. Thus the being held in limbo here refers to the demand that man “shoulder once more his very Dasein.”¹³¹

Here, Heidegger arrives at a slightly different formulation of the fundamental attunement of philosophizing. He writes, “As a creative and essential activity of human Dasein, philosophy stands in the *fundamental attunement of melancholy* [Schwermut].”¹³² Playing with the literal meaning of “Schwermut” as heavy-mood—a mood in which the burden of the uncanny [unheimlich] homesickness of Dasein is shouldered—Heidegger thus poses melancholy, as another fundamental attunement of philosophy, in opposition to contemporary boredom.

It is in this context of an attempt to awaken an attunement that Heidegger’s investigation of the animal should be understood. Before turning to his comparative investigation of man and animal, Heidegger notes, “We are not now leaving this fundamental attunement behind us... On the contrary, the *elaboration of these questions* is nothing other

¹²⁶ FCM 163.

¹²⁷ FCM 156.

¹²⁸ FCM 172.

¹²⁹ FCM 139.

¹³⁰ FCM 147.

¹³¹ FCM 171.

than an *accentuation of the possibility of that fundamental attunement*.”¹³³ Immediately after his consideration of the animal, Heidegger asks, “Have we already forgotten this fundamental attunement in the meantime?... Or does this fundamental attunement still attune us so that... we looked into this fundamental attunement as we developed our question?”¹³⁴ How does the investigation of the animal relate to the philosophical attunement of melancholy homesickness? We do not simply *find* ourselves in a particular attunement, in the light of which certain things show up as they do, but attunement relates in some sense to the things themselves: “Thus, although it is inside, *the attunement plays around* the thing outside at the same time, and indeed without transferring any induced attunement from within us outside onto the thing.”¹³⁵ For Heidegger, attunement is not an inner state we project onto things *or* the result of a causal quality in things; rather, attunement occurs in the ‘between’ in which we find ourselves suspended in our being in the world. Attunement is a “way of *being borne out* into the specific manifestness of beings as a whole.”¹³⁶ If Heidegger, in *FCM*, wishes to awaken a fundamental attunement of philosophizing, then this cannot be done by “deliberating *about* attunements.”¹³⁷ The fact that certain beings awaken us to particular attunements suggests, however, that Heidegger can awaken an attunement by directing us toward a being: not, via assertion, towards its presence-at-hand, but, via formal indication, to an authentic experience of the thing itself. How, then, might the animal attune us?

To answer that question, I want to turn to the course’s one explicit discussion of a particular animal attunement. Heidegger’s final dismissal of his zoology-derived

¹³² *FCM* 183.

¹³³ *FCM* 171

¹³⁴ *FCM* 372.

¹³⁵ *FCM* 88.

¹³⁶ *FCM* 283. Also see 290.

¹³⁷ *FCM* 68.

understanding of the animal, and his reinstatement of the animal's world poverty as a question, was justified by reference to Paul's poetic understanding of the suffering of the animal. If the animal is, in its Being, poor [armut], then "a kind of pain [Leiden] and suffering [Leid] would have to permeate the whole animal realm and the realm of life in general."¹³⁸ Zoology cannot speak of this: for this reason, the zoology-derived understanding of the animal falsified the thesis of animal-poverty. The poets, however, do speak of such suffering:

In the end we do not first require the Christian faith in order to understand something of the saying of St. Paul (Romans VIII, 19) concerning... the yearning expectation of creatures and the creation, the paths of which, as the Book of Ezra IV, 7, 12 says, have become narrow, doleful [traurig], and weary in this aeon.¹³⁹

It is passages like this that make *FCM*, and Heidegger's treatment of the animal, so much more enigmatic than the secondary literature lets on.¹⁴⁰ Is Heidegger saying that animals yearn or are doleful *in themselves*, separate from the issue of whether or not we are projecting such an attunement onto them?¹⁴¹ This would imply the kind of subject/object dualism that Heidegger is concerned to keep at bay, presupposing that we can unproblematically transpose ourselves into animals.

¹³⁸ *FCM* 271.

¹³⁹ *FCM* 272-273.

¹⁴⁰ Krell is one of the few authors who analyze this passage closely, and recognize its deeply Schellingian resonances. For Krell, this passage suggests that "the melancholy which Heidegger proclaims the fundamental mood of the thinker is arguably common to both Heidegger and those very creatures he is forever trying to isolate in an 'animal-friendly' zoo" (*Derrida and Our Animal Others* 118). According to Krell, this topples "the monolithic barrier between humans and other living beings"—which we find only in Heidegger's "best moments"—but ultimately Heidegger pulls back "anxiously" from this insight (Ibid. 118). Krell proceeds too quickly in this interpretation, however, attributing to Heidegger an understanding of attunement foreign to him and failing to account for Heidegger's gesture towards poetry in introducing this passage.

¹⁴¹ In the secondary literature, Heidegger's attempt in *FCM* to consider the animal "in itself" is often glossed erroneously. What does it mean to let the animal be what it is? Does it mean an "attempt to work through the question of animal relation and world *from the animal's perspective*" (Calarco 28). Does it mean, as Derrida writes, "To relate to the thing such as it is in itself... such as it would be even if I weren't there" (TATTIA 160)? Heidegger's discussion of transposition and letting be suggests that Calarco and Derrida's suggestions are not what is under discussion.

That Heidegger turns to poetry from science suggests that the truth of the animal primordially comes to expression in a form other than that of propositional $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$.¹⁴² The possibilities of attunements like the melancholy of animal life come to expression poetically. But what does this poetic grief of the animal name? We have seen that homesickness, melancholy, and poverty all suggest a kind of inaccessibility and accessibility: a withdrawal that discloses. Heidegger's treatment of grief [Traurigkeit] suggests the same:

... The person overcome by grief closes himself off, becomes inaccessible, yet without showing any animosity toward us... The manner and way in which we can be with him, and in which he is with us, has changed. It is the grief that constitutes this way (the way in which we are together)... It [i.e. attunement] is *not* at all 'inside' in some interiority, only to appear in the flash of an eye; but for this reason it is *not at all outside either*.¹⁴³

¹⁴²It is important to note, against the major interpreters of *FCM*, that it is *not* the 'as' of the propositional $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ that distinguishes the animal from the human. Krell for example, argues that Heidegger counterpoises the animal to human beings, not as Dasein, but as "those logical, logistical living beings who have the word." (*Daimon Life* 129). Critics tend to point either to the logos or the 'as' as decisive. Of course, these two positions are only subtly distinct, since, as Heidegger writes, "the 'as'-structure for its part is in general the condition of the possibility of this logos" (*FCM* 325). Elden takes the logos argument (282); Derrida and Winkler the "as" argument. See "Awaiting (at) the Arrival" 75, *Of Spirit* 51 and Winkler 527.

Heidegger's own position is, unambiguously, not that the $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ marks the distinction between human and animal. Indeed, in a lecture course in the year following *FCM*, he suggests that it is not even clear whether or not the animal has $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$:

For the matter surely demands that we do not deny $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ to the animal as it now stands—or else leave the question open. And this is the just position that Aristotle unambiguously takes...: 'No one may easily settle, with regard to the ability [of the animal] to perceive, whether this is a capability without conversance or a conversant capability [i.e. $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$].' This caution with regard to deciding and questioning must even today remain for us exemplary, irrespective of the further question of where the essential boundary runs between animal and human (*Aristotle's Metaphysics* 107).

Heidegger's turn to the 'as' and the $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is formally indicative, and he works through these issues towards what, for him, is more fundamental: "the philosophical tradition unknowingly treats—under the title of $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, of ratio, of reason—what we are seeking to unfold as the problem of world" (*FCM* 350); "The logos is not the radical approach to unfolding the problem of world. This problem must therefore be set aside," replaced by "the effort to transform man, and thereby traditional metaphysics, into a more originary Dasein" (*FCM* 350). The 'as' and the $\lambda\omicron\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ presuppose the manifestness of the world, that is, "a pre-logical being open for beings" that "has the character of 'as a whole'" (*FCM* 353). World-formation, which first opens the world, is that "fundamental occurrence in the Dasein of man" (*FCM* 348). Importantly, and against those critics suggesting that what distinguishes man from the animal is some capacity or power, this is not a capacity that we possess and over which we have power, but rather something that happens to us: "It is not *we* who make it, rather *it* happens *to us*" (*FCM* 357); we can prepare and wait for this occurrence, but "only whoever honors a mystery gains the strength to wait" (*FCM* 351).

¹⁴³ *FCM* 66.

Unsurprisingly, then, given the context, grief similarly implies a kind of inaccessibility of the other. Grief, here, does not describe something the other *feels*, but the specific “way in which we are together,” when the other is somehow inaccessible, closed off. That, poetically, the animal grieves does not mean that the animal has a mood called grief, but that *the way in which we are together* is characterized by grief, in which the animal is somehow inaccessible, but that inaccessibility itself discloses a relationship. Grief is not a mood that we ‘project’ onto the animal,¹⁴⁴ nor a mood that the animal in itself can be said to have, but rather ‘plays around’ the animal in the between into which the attunement ecstatically bears us.¹⁴⁵

Heidegger believes that Dasein, as Dasein, is already alongside the animal in such a way that going along with is refused. This Being-with is not theoretical, practical, or sustained everyday. Rather, for Heidegger, the fundamental Being-with-the-animal of Dasein is a feeling-with, an affective relationship in which Dasein is called to its own uncanniness by being attuned to the animal, which is somehow both open and closed to us. Though Heidegger, turning to poetry, suggests that perhaps the animal is indeed characterized by poverty, Heidegger also suggests two different interpretations of poverty [Armut]. The first refers to “a lack or insufficiency” with which most of his zoological

¹⁴⁴ Heidegger’s rejection of Aristotle’s understanding of poetical metaphor is telling. On Heidegger’s gloss of Aristotle’s account, poets discussing a “melancholy landscape” simply “transfer” the attunement ‘melancholy’ “out of [themselves] and onto things” (FCM 285). Heidegger, rejecting this, does not then suggest that the landscape *feels* melancholy. That, according to the *poets*, nature *yearns* and life *feels melancholy*, does not mean that animals *feel*, inside of themselves, these *feelings*, but that animal life in itself, approached genuinely, *attunes* us in this way, causes the attunement of melancholy to arise in us. *This* being attuned to *and by things*—which means neither that the things themselves are attuned in themselves, or that we transfer our feelings to things—is what poetic metaphor expresses in a manner that science never could.

¹⁴⁵ On the one hand, this notion of attunement to animal grief would seem to complement well Derrida’s insistence that “the *first* and *decisive* question would... be to know whether animals *can suffer*” (TATTIA 27). On the other hand, however, Heidegger’s understanding of the suffering of the animal is far more complicated than Derrida’s. Given the extensive commentary on the problem of whether or how we are to know the pain of

investigation was concerned. This first understanding of poverty is, as we have seen, rejected when Heidegger turns, instead, to an understanding of the animal as a realm of beings that demands a relationship that, on our part, we fail to sustain. The second understanding of poverty, however, refers to “to *the way* in which it is deprived, namely the *way* in which it is *in a mood*—*poverty in mood* [Ar-mut]:”

Poverty in this proper sense of human existence is also a kind of deprivation and necessarily so. Yet from such deprivation we can also draw our own peculiar power of procuring transparency and inner freedom for Dasein. Poverty in the sense of *being in a mood of poverty* [Armmütigkeit] does not simply imply indifference with respect to what we possess. On the contrary it represents that preeminent kind of having in which we seem not to have.¹⁴⁶

When Heidegger reasserts the poetic poverty of the animal over and against zoology, he is not saying, with his original thesis, that the animal is poor in the quantitative sense, but rather that, if we tune in properly to the Being of the animal, we are attuned by the animal to having without having, to letting be, to yearning for this other beyond expressibility.¹⁴⁷

This *poetic* poverty of the animal, in the context of a course attempting to awaken the

another *person* (See, for example, Stanley Cavell, *The Claim of Reason* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), Derrida’s gesture seems severely underdeveloped to me.

¹⁴⁶ FCM 195.

¹⁴⁷ Heidegger is clear on the inexpressibility of the animal, presenting as a task for poetry that has not yet been accomplished: “What the lark ‘sees,’ and how it sees, and what it is we here call ‘seeing’ on the basis of our observation that the lark has eyes, these questions remain to be asked... In fact, an original poetizing capacity would be needed to surmise what is concealed to the living being, a poetic capacity to which more and higher things are charged, and more essential things (since they are genuinely essential) versus a mere hominization of plants and animals” (Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*, trans. André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992) 160. It is notable that his most extensive later engagements with the question of the animal arrive in poetic contexts: Rilke, Trakl, Hölderlin. His discussion of yearning [Sehnsucht] also supports this reading of the inexpressibility of the animal:

The nature of the ground in God is longing [Sehnsucht]? Here the objection can hardly be made any longer that a human state is transferred to God in this statement. Yes! But it could be otherwise. Who has ever shown that longing is something merely human? Who has ever completely dismissed the possibility with adequate reasons that what we call ‘longing’ and live within might ultimately be something other than we ourselves? Is there not contained in longing something which we have no reason to limit to man, something which rather gives us occasion to understand it as that in which we humans are freed beyond ourselves? Is not longing precisely the proof for the fact that man is something other than only a man?... As the will of the ground, longing is... a will without understanding as such, which, however, foresees precisely being a self in its striving... it is unable to

philosophical attunements of melancholy, homesickness, profound boredom, should be striking. Heidegger is developing a cluster of intertwined attunements, all of which imply a withdrawal that simultaneously gives. It is not coincidental, then, that it is in this context that Heidegger turns to the animal. The uncanny [unheimlich] circling of Heidegger's engagement with the animal, which Heidegger explicitly points out,¹⁴⁸ was not just methodological dithering, but represents, rather, Heidegger's performative enactment of our most proper relation to the animal, in which we have without having. This speaks to the animal itself: that the animal permits and does not permit transposition, testifies to the animal's opacity of essence. But it also explains why Heidegger, wishing to awaken a philosophical attunement, would investigate the animal, whose very inaccessibility attunes us to the uncanniness of questioning our own being-there.

This understanding of the attunement that grips us when we open ourselves authentically to the animal suggests a way of handling more concretely the question of transposition. Heidegger writes,

Human Dasein is intrinsically a peculiar transposedness in to the encompassing contextual ring of living beings... It is not as if we were now on the same level as the animals... as though the animals amongst themselves and we amongst them simply saw the same wall of beings in different ways... No, the encircling rings amongst themselves are not remotely comparable, and the totality of the manifest enmeshing of encircling rings in each case is not simply part of the beings that are otherwise manifest for us, but rather holds us captive in a quite specific way. That is why we say that man exists in a peculiar way *in the midst of beings*. In the midst of beings means: living nature holds us ourselves captive... from out of our essence, whether we experience that essence in an originary relationship or not.¹⁴⁹

. Attunement is how we find ourselves in the midst of animals as they actually are—not as a

name what it is striving for. It is lacking the possibility of words (*Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1985) 124-5.

¹⁴⁸ *FCM* 180, 187,

¹⁴⁹ *FCM* 278. Note that various rings are “not remotely comparable”—thus Derrida's frequent charge that Heidegger fails to acknowledge the infinite diversity of life is already addressed. See p. 21 of this essay.

matter of sovereign choice, for we held *captive* by this relationship that always already exists. Heidegger's formally indicative investigation of the animal, by opening the animal as a question without settling it, awakens this attunement: not by causing it to exist, but by allowing us to open ourselves to the uncanniness of the animal that we have and do not have.

This interpretation of nature as that which holds us captive in attuning us to those beings in the midst of which we are is borne out by other texts from the same period. First, in a footnote to "On the Essence of Ground" of 1929, Heidegger writes on *Being and Time*:

Yet if nature is apparently missing [in *Being and Time*]...then there are reasons for this. The decisive reason lies in the fact that nature does not let itself be encountered either within the sphere of the environing world, nor in general primarily as something *toward which we comport* ourselves. Nature is originally manifest in Dasein through Dasein's existing as finding itself attuned [Befindlichkeit-gestimmtes] *in the midst of* beings. But insofar as finding oneself [Befindlichkeit] (thrownness) belongs to the essence of Dasein, and comes to be expressed in the unity of the full concept of *care*, it is only here that the *basis* for the *problem* of nature can first be attained.¹⁵⁰

Here, Heidegger suggests that nature is inaccessible within the everyday world in which Dasein—in *FCM*, out of boredom—busies itself with things and with the 'they'. Nature is accessible only in a fundamental attunement. *FCM*, then, by tearing us away from our everyday situation, and awakening such an attunement in us, opens this original relationship to nature into which we are thrown. As in an authentic relationship to our thrownness, this does not, however, entail that nature becomes *accessible* or that we *master* it, but only that its inaccessibility and our being-subject to it is acknowledged and accepted by us. Second, in 1931, shortly after *FCM*, Heidegger writes,

The human body is pure nature neither in its mode of immediate givenness nor in its way of being. It is suspended, as it were, between its height and its abyss, as a *passage-way* from the one to the other and as an open dwelling-place for both, but it

¹⁵⁰ On the Essence of Ground," in *Pathmarks*, 370. This is important to note, given how often commentators cite the lack of animals in *Being in Time* as if it reflected an oversight on Heidegger's thought.

is never shut up to itself... The body belongs to the Dasein of man. Being-there, Dasein, in the sense of existence, is a fundamentally different way of being to that of nature... And *what* is it [nature] experienced *as*? ‘Natural power’ first manifests itself when it intervenes in the region of human powers, as that totality over which man is power-*less* but to which he is bound and by which he is borne along.... Nature is primordially present in attunedness. As soon as man exists he is exposed to the sensations received through his body. This means that he corporeally participates, although in *his own way*, *as* nature within the totality of nature. The overarching power of nature first reveals itself when man tests his own power and fails. The narrowness, helplessness and powerlessness of the proximate but open environment of man is the primordial scene of the appearance of the breadth, supreme power, and closedness of nature; the latter cannot exist without the former and vice versa... The corporeality of man, however, is *not* nature, not even when it torments man, rendering him powerless and groundless.¹⁵¹

If Heidegger’s investigations of the animal in *FCM* seem constantly to fail to reach conclusions, this only serves to highlight the fundamentally mysterious fact of our being bound to the realm of animal life—a fact that we encounter only “when man tests his own power and fails,” showing us that we must let it be what it is. For Heidegger, we *cannot* come to a comprehensive objective understanding of nature. This passage also expands considerably upon what Heidegger means in *FCM* when he states that nature holds us captive. Although Heidegger, in his first development of state-of-mind in 1924, is explicit that mood, attunement, state-of-mind are *bodily* states, this is rarely emphasized after that point.¹⁵² We are, as thrown into corporeality, always already attuned by and to nature as that which exceeds us. Our bodies are a medium over which we have no power through which we relate to a nature over which we are powerless. As world-forming, we are thrown into a world that is—although it is easy to forget in post-industrial modernity—radically dependent

¹⁵¹ Martin Heidegger, *The Essence of Truth* (New York: Continuum, 2004) 169-170. This passage also helps in interpreting Heidegger’s much-cited reference, in his “Letter on Humanism,” to our “scarcely conceivable, abyssal bodily relationship with the animal” (“Letter on Humanism,” in *Pathmarks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) 248). Commentators tend to focus on the “abyssal” rather than the “kinship,” but Heidegger does not mean that Dasein and the animal are separated by an abyss, but that our kinship with the animal is constituted by the uncanny abyss that we are, as Dasein—the abyss separates, but also, in opening difference between two sides, establishes them as next to one another.

upon a nature that exceeds our capacity to calculate or master it. The opacity of nature, its otherness, Dasein's powerlessness over it and being-bound to it, and relating to it only by means of attunement—all of which are first explored in *FCM*—receive explicit expression in this passage. These perspectives will remain fundamentally stable for the remainder of Heidegger's life.¹⁵³

V. Conclusions

As late as 1952, Heidegger is clear that he does not and did not seek to resolve the question of “animal and man:” “Once again, the task of this work is not to clarify this question. After long consideration, I found a way out which is not an escape but rather corresponds only to what is worth questioning in a sufficiently adequate determination of the unfolding essence of the human being, animal, plant, and rock.”¹⁵⁴ Whether or not

¹⁵² Note p. 9 in this essay.

¹⁵³ In a letter written in the 1950s, for example, Heidegger offers a gloss on *FCM*: “...it is already sufficient to notice that an animal merely *is* insofar as it moves within an environment [Umwelt] open to it in some way and is guided by this environment which itself remains circumscribed by the nature of the animal. The animal's relationship to this environment, which is never addressed [by the animal itself], shows a certain correspondence to the human being's ex-sistent relationship toward the world. Thus, in a certain way the human being in his ek-sistent Da-sein can immediately participate in and live-with the animal's environmental relationship without ever coming to a congruence between the human being's being-with and the animal, let alone the other way around. Linguistic useage, according to which one speaks of human and animal ‘behavior’ indiscriminately, does not take into account the unfathomable, essential difference between the relationship to a ‘world’ [Weltbezug] and to an ‘environment’ [Umgebungszug]. According to its own proper and essential relationship to the environment, the animal's situation makes it possible for us to enter into this relationship, to go along with it, and, as it were, to tarry with it. But it is not enough to consider only that. It remains far more essential to see that an animal (as opposed to a rock) shows itself to us only then *as* an animal insofar as we humans as ek-sistent have *engaged in advance in* [eingelassen] the relationship to the environment proper to the animal. It does not matter thereby that the immediate apprehension of the environment proper to the animal and, thus, also the genuine apprehension of the animal's relationship to the environment remain inaccessible to our knowledge. The strangeness of the unfolding essence of animals is concealed in this inaccessibility” (*Zollikon Seminar* 243-244).

In the Heraclitus Seminars of the late 1960s, Heidegger writes, “One can understand organism in the sense of Uexküll or also as the functioning of a living system. In my lecture, which you mentioned, I have said that the stone is worldless, the animal world-poor, and the human world-forming... The bodily in the human is not something animalistic. The manner of understanding that accompanies it is something that metaphysics up till now has not touched on” (Heraclitus 146).

¹⁵⁴ *Zollikon Seminars* 243.

Heidegger's attempt to think the animal represents "a splendid failure"¹⁵⁵—as Krell presents it, "none of the aporias and perplexities...concerning the 1929-1930 lectures ever resolve"¹⁵⁶—hinges on whether one thinks that the question of life can, or *should*, be answered definitively.

Heidegger's answer to this question, first developed in *FCM*, is clear, and will remain fundamentally stable in his later texts—though he is often considerably more explicit in the latter. Heidegger, as in *FCM*, later critiques the modern consideration of the animal only as an object of scientific calculation or instrumental use—"Not only are living things technically objectivated in stock-breeding and exploitation...The essence of life is supposed to yield itself to technical production"¹⁵⁷—and instead endorses an understanding of animal life that respects its opacity:

In metaphysics and in its scientific repercussions, the mystery of the living being goes unheeded, for living things are either exposed to the assault of chemistry or are transferred to the field of 'psychology.' Both presume to seek the riddle of life. They will never find it: not only because every science adheres only to the penultimate and must presuppose the penultimate as the first, but also because the riddle of life will never be found where the mystery of the living being has already been abandoned.¹⁵⁸

Far from denying that Dasein bears no responsibility to living nature, Heidegger suggests that this responsibility is central to the occurrence of Dasein, who exists in the midst of beings to which it is held captive in attunement. Man, that "ape of civilization,"¹⁵⁹ flees the mystery of its being-there, distracts himself from his being held-captive by that earth into which he has been thrown, by refusing the melancholy and the uncanniness by which he is thus attuned. In doing so, the human denies being-tuned to animal life, and thus fails to bear the uncanny

¹⁵⁵ Krell, *Daimon Life* 8.

¹⁵⁶ Krell, *Daimon Life* 297. Krell, like Derrida focuses in particular on the question of the death of the animal. On that, see p. 23fn of this paper.

¹⁵⁷ *Poetry, Language, Thought* 109.

¹⁵⁸ *Parmenides* 160.

weight of that which distinguishes him from the animal. In the animal's captivity [Benommenheit,] its drivenness [Getriebenheit], its instinctual drive [Trieb], its driven activity [Umtrieb], the animal is not open to anything beyond a specific range of possibilities. In Dasein's ceaseless "urge [Triebe] to be at-home everywhere," its "restlessness [Getriebenheit]," its "busy activities [Umtriebe],"¹⁶⁰ in Dasein's captivity [Benommenheit] by things and by publicness,¹⁶¹ Dasein represents the entire world to itself only in terms of things, allowing beings to show up only if it has calculated them in advance. The alternative—which Heidegger not only describes, but enacts in his formally indicative investigation—is, on Heidegger's account, a poetic releasement that lets the animal be what is, that is, a question attuning us to its mystery.

¹⁵⁹ *FCM* 5.

¹⁶⁰ See *FCM* 5-6; for Dasein's "Umtriebe," see *FCM* 157, 259, 164.

¹⁶¹ For the captivity of Dasein by things, see *BT* 88, 107, 149, 220 and *FCM* 101; for the captivity of Dasein in its everyday absorption into publicness, see *BT* 316, 220 and *FCM* 111-112. Krell notes this use of "captivity" in *BT*, but not in *FCM*, and thus argues that the use of "benommen" in the latter represents a shift in Heidegger's understanding: "by 1939-30, Dasein has found its feet. It adopts a braver stance toward beings" than in *Being and Time* (Krell *Daimon Life* 207). As these passages suggest, however, Heidegger continues to use terminology that appear specific to animal to describe Dasein—at least everyday, inauthentic Dasein—as well.