

# BEING TOWARDS ARISTOTLE? HEIDEGGER'S IMPLICIT PRESUPPOSITION OF ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTS OF THE HUMAN BEING IN BEING AND TIME

---

THOMAS BENSTEAD

Richard Rorty hails Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* as "powerful and original": the author of this paper seeks to scrutinize the latter claim. Heidegger starts his chef-d'oeuvre by aiming to distance himself from the ontology of prior philosophers, and so he investigates the Question of Being through "Dasein." The author argues that Heidegger's concept of "Dasein" presupposes within itself the concept of Aristotle's "Rational Animal," which accordingly prevents Heidegger from actually separating his ontology from prior ontologies. The author's assertion of a presupposition of "Rational Animal" within "Dasein" is supported not only by Heidegger's familiarity with Aristotelian thought, but also that the key feature of "Dasein" (i.e. inquiry) necessitates a sort of rational capacity. Moreover, the author seeks to demonstrate that the presupposition of "Rational Animal" within "Dasein" results in a sustained Aristotelian influence within Heidegger's work, such that Heidegger's concept of the "They" resembles Aristotle's "Political Animal."

**Key Words:** Heidegger, Aristotle, Dasein, rational animal, political animal, inquiry

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In Heidegger's *Being and Time*, he aims to create an ontology separate from the ontologies of Plato and Aristotle in order to answer the question of Being: he examines the nature of Being from the perspective of "Dasein" (i.e. the human being). I will demonstrate that in doing so, Heidegger implicitly presupposes the Aristotelian concepts of the human being within his work, meaning

that he does not actually establish an ontology separate from prior ontologies as he aims to do. Specifically, I seek first to demonstrate that Heidegger's conception of "Dasein" presupposes within itself the concept of Aristotle's "Rational Animal"; I then seek to further demonstrate how this initial Aristotelian concept, within the lens with which Heidegger understands Being, influences Heidegger's concept of the "They" to resemble Aristotle's "Political Animal."

My paper is organized as follows. First, I will explain Heidegger's philosophy regarding his formulation of a new ontology, the respective concepts of "Dasein" and the "They," and his explicit rejection of prior concepts of the human being. Second, I will briefly summarize Aristotle's concepts of the human being as "Rational Animal" and "Political Animal." Third, I will demonstrate how Heidegger's "Dasein" presupposes Aristotle's "Rational Animal," and how this initial Aristotelian presupposition leads Heidegger's "They" to resemble Aristotle's "Political Animal," thereby demonstrating a sustained Aristotelian influence within Heidegger in opposition to what Heidegger claims. Fourth, I will acknowledge and respond to potential objections that other people could raise against my argument.

## 2 HEIDEGGER'S "DASEIN" AS PART OF HIS "FUNDAMENTAL ONTOLOGY"

I will structure my exegesis of Heidegger in four parts: first, Heidegger's stated goal for *Being and Time*; second, "Dasein" as the key to Heidegger's "Fundamental Ontology"; third, how "Dasein" interacts with the "They"; fourth, Heidegger on prior concepts of the human being.

### 2.1 Heidegger's "Fundamental Ontology"

In *Being and Time*, Heidegger entitles his project "fundamental ontology"; he aims to explore ontology—i.e. "the [study] of being as such"(van Inwagen and Sullivan, 2017)—because he asserts that "[The Question of Being] has been forgotten" (Heidegger, 1927, p.21). He argues that, based on Plato and Aristotle's "initial contributions towards [ontology], a dogma has developed which not only declares the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect" (Heidegger, 1927, p.21), thus discouraging any further study of Being. Taylor Carman, in his foreword to a 2008 publication of *Being and Time*, elaborates on what exactly Heidegger means by the "dogma" in ontology from Plato onwards:

Since Plato, however, philosophers have systematically neglected the question of being—the question of what it means *to be*—in favour of inquiries into the kinds of entities there are: their basic character, their distinguishing features, their essential properties... These various inventories of the 'furniture of the world'

[as opposed to the Question of Being] are the stuff of traditional ontology, from Plato to Hegel (Carman, 2008, p.xiv)

The prejudices that make up said “dogma,” according to Heidegger, “are rooted in ancient [Greek] ontology itself, and it will not be possible to interpret that ontology adequately until the question of Being has been clarified and answered” (Heidegger, 1927, p.22). Carman explains that the reason for this is that “traditional ontology presupposes a more ‘fundamental ontology’” (Carman, 2008, p.xv)—hence the name Heidegger gives to his project. As a result, Heidegger’s “Fundamental Ontology” cannot and will not involve any prior ontology (such as Aristotle’s ontology) until after Heidegger has answered the Question of Being. As a result, Heidegger thus aims for his ontology to be distinct and separate from prior ontologies such as Aristotle’s. I will argue in section 3 that regardless of Heidegger’s aims, he actually relies on Aristotle’s philosophy for significant ontological concepts; instead of traditional ontology relying on “Fundamental Ontology” (Carman, 2008, p.xv), I argue that the reverse is true. Heidegger then sets his sights on returning to ontology, yet he claims that “if [the question of Being] is to be revived... we must first work out an adequate way of formulating it” (Heidegger, 1927, p.24).

## 2.2 Heidegger on “Dasein”

In order to investigate Being, Heidegger asserts that “to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being” (Heidegger, 1927, p.27). What Heidegger means is that a particular entity must first be aware that it exists before it can question Being. More importantly, he posits that this entity must first be able to inquire: “[t]his entity which *each of us is himself* and which *includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being*, we shall denote by the term ‘Dasein’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.27, emphasis mine). So, “Dasein” is the label that Heidegger gives to the human being. Hubert L. Dreyfus, in his book *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary of Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I*, says the following about “Dasein”: “The best way to understand what Heidegger means by Dasein is to think of our term ‘human being,’ which can refer to a way of being that is characteristic of all people or to a specific person—a human being... Heidegger is interested in the human way of being, which he calls being-there or Dasein” (Dreyfus, 1991, p.14). Not only must Dasein be able to inquire, according to Heidegger, but it must be able to understand: “Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being” (Dreyfus, 1991, p.32). Accordingly, Dasein is an entity that can inquire into and come to understand Being. Heidegger affirms the importance of Dasein to his ontology: “Therefore, fundamental ontology, from which alone all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the [analysis of the necessary structures of Dasein’s existence]” (Heidegger, 1927, p.34).

### 2.3 Heidegger on the “They”

One of the necessary structures of Dasein’s existence is the “They,” which stems from the prior necessary structures of “Being-in-the-world” and “Being-with”. First, Heidegger notes that “Being-in-the-World in general [is] the basic state of Dasein” (Heidegger, 1927, p.78). In other words, Heidegger posits that Dasein exists within the world by necessity. Next, he asserts that “Being-in-the-world is *Being-with Others*”(Heidegger, 1927, p.155), meaning that every Dasein’s existence in the world is defined in terms of its relationship with other Dasein. Additionally, Heidegger explains that, “By ‘Others’ we do not mean everybody else but me... They are rather those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself those among whom one is too” (Heidegger, 1927, p.154), suggesting that a Dasein tends to associate itself with other Dasein more than it disassociates itself with other Dasein. Dasein’s standard interaction with Others culminates in what Heidegger calls the “They”:

Dasein, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection...* to Others. It itself *is* not; its Being has been taken away by the Others... These Others, moreover, are not *definite* Others. On the contrary, any Other can represent them. What is decisive is just that inconspicuous domination by Others which has already been taken over unawares from Dasein as Being-with. One belongs to the Others oneself and enhances their power... The ‘who’ is the neuter, *the ‘they’* (Heidegger, 1927, p.164).

As shown above, there are three central characteristics of Heidegger’s concept of the “They”: first, that Dasein’s general way of relating to others is through the “They”; second, that for Dasein to be part of the “They,” it must subject itself to the “They” so as to diminish its own individual existence; third, that the “They” is not a particular individual or group, but rather an indefinite cohesion of many Dasein—Dasein does not submit itself necessarily to a particular individual (e.g. Mike) or group (e.g. the Athenian citizens), but to other people generally.

### 2.4 Heidegger on Prior Concepts of the Human Being

When starting his analysis of the Being of Dasein, Heidegger first distinguishes the scope of Dasein from prior ideas about the nature of the human being. When contrasting the two, he asserts that “those investigations and formulations of the question which have been aimed at Dasein heretofore, have missed the real *philosophical* problem... and that as long as they persist in missing it, they have no right to assert that they *can* accomplish that for which they are basically striving” (Heidegger, 1927, p.71). In distinguishing Dasein from prior conceptions of the human being, he claims that all prior conceptions (including, presumably, Aristotle’s “Rational Animal”) would be insufficient

to successfully inquire into the Question of Being. Hence Heidegger wants Dasein to be distinct from prior concepts of the human being.

After Heidegger explains his ontology in relation to Dasein, he eventually comes to the conclusion that his fundamental ontology is sufficient to discuss “man” (i.e. the human being), as distinct from Dasein:

In our foregoing Interpretations... everything depended on our arriving at the right *ontological* foundations for that entity which in each case we ourselves are, and which we call “man”. To do this it was necessary from the outset to change the direction of our analysis from the approach presented by the traditional definition of “man”—an approach which has not been clarified ontologically and is in principle questionable (Heidegger, 1927, p.241).

This passage clearly demonstrates that, in his ontological theorizing up until this point in *Being and Time*, Heidegger claims to have purposefully avoided what he refers to as “the traditional definition of ‘man’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.241) due to concerns over sufficient ontological justification. In conjunction with his earlier assertion that it “will not be possible to interpret [Platonic or Aristotelian] ontology adequately until the question of Being has been clarified and answered” (Heidegger, 1927, p.22), it follows that Heidegger claims to avoid “traditional definitions of ‘man’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.241) from prior philosophers, such as Aristotle.

### **3 ARISTOTLE’S CONCEPTS OF THE HUMAN BEING: “RATIONAL ANIMAL” AND “POLITICAL ANIMAL”**

#### **3.1 Heidegger’s Awareness of Aristotle’s Concepts of the Human Being as Canonical**

Speaking of “traditional definitions of ‘man’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.241), Aristotle provides two such definitions that, due to Aristotle’s generally acknowledged canonical status in Western philosophy, are almost certainly the very “traditional definitions” that Heidegger aims to avoid. Additionally, Heidegger likely knew the concept of “Rational Animal” well. According to the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, “Heidegger’s philosophical development began when he read Brentano and Aristotle, plus the latter’s medieval scholastic interpreters” (Wheeler, 2017). Given that Aristotle’s conception of the human being as a “Rational Animal” (Aristotle I.2.1253a10) continues in medieval Aristotelians such as Thomas Aquinas (Aquinas *ST I. Q.79. A.8*), it is probable that Heidegger would have encountered the conception of the human being as “Rational Animal” when studying Aristotle and the Scholastics. Accordingly, Aristotle’s canonical status and Heidegger’s familiarity with Aristotle and medieval Aristotelians suggests that the “traditional definitio[n] of ‘man’” (Heidegger, 1927, p.241) that Heidegger aims to avoid is none other than Aristotle’s “Rational Animal.”

### 3.2 Aristotle's "Rational Animal" and "Political Animal"

In Aristotle's *Politics*, he establishes two interconnected concepts of the human being: The "Rational Animal" and "The Political Animal." The first stems from Aristotle's observations about humans as unique: "a human being is the only animal with rational discourse" (Aristotle I.2.1253a10). Since he claims that only humans have the ability to reason, humans are therefore termed as Rational Animals. The second stems from the first: given that humans are rational, but also social with one another, Aristotle concludes that it "is evident, then that... a human being is by nature a political animal" (I.2.1253a2). In addition to the Political Animal being rational and social, he also claims that for political animals, "the city-state is prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually" (I.2.1253a19). Hence Aristotle provides two concepts of humans, as both Rational and Political Animals, wherein the first concept leads to the second.

## 4 HEIDEGGER'S ARISTOTELIAN INFLUENCE

In this section, I will argue Heidegger's *Dasein* presupposes within itself Aristotle's Rational Animal. Moreover, I will argue that since Heidegger's *Dasein* leads into the "They," the resemblance between the "They" and Aristotle's Political Animal is not coincidental but rather evidence of a sustained Aristotelian influence. In doing so, I will ultimately demonstrate that Heidegger sustains key Aristotelian ontological concepts within his own ontology, in spite of his aim to do otherwise.

### 4.1 Heidegger's Noted Reliance on Aristotle

My subsequent reading of Heidegger as deeply reliant on Aristotle is far from unique. To the contrary, much of the secondary literature on Heidegger centres on demonstrating some sort of connection between Heidegger and Aristotle. Thomas J. Sheenan, in his essay "Heidegger, Aristotle, and Phenomenology" asserts that "Aristotle appears directly or indirectly on virtually every page" (Sheenan, 1975, p.87) of *Being and Time*. The entry on Heidegger in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* calls his fundamental ontology "a neo-Aristotelian search for what it is that unites and makes possible our varied and diverse senses of what it is to be" (Wheeler, 2017). William J. Richardson affirms that "Aristotle has influenced [Heidegger] more profoundly than any other thinker" (Richardson, 1964, p.58). While each of these thinkers (myself included) has a different understanding of how exactly Heidegger is influenced by Aristotle, we all share the idea that Heidegger was influenced by Aristotle.

## 4.2 Heidegger's Dasein as Presupposing Aristotle's Rational Animal

I argue that Heidegger's definition of Dasein essentially presupposes within itself Aristotle's Rational Animal. In other words, I argue that one cannot conceive of Heidegger's Dasein without also presupposing that it is also Aristotle's Rational Animal. Recall that Dasein (i.e. the human being) is initially defined in terms of its potential to inquire: "This entity [Dasein] which each of us is himself... includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being" (Heidegger, 1927, p.27). In order to inquire competently, I argue that the inquirer must be capable of rational thought. The general goal of inquiry is to endeavour to find something specific. For example, I can inquire into who ate the bag of chips that I kept on the top shelf. Before I can arrive at an answer to my inquiry, I must be able to discern between a sufficient and an insufficient answer to my inquiry. For example, a sufficient answer to my inquiry would be my father, since he eats chips and can reach the chips on the top shelf; an insufficient answer to my inquiry would be my dog, since he cannot reach the top shelf in order to reach my chips. This sort of pre-discernment requires the use of rational faculties in order to justify why one possible answer is sufficient while another is not. Therefore, inquiry requires the ability to think rationally. Since inquiry requires rational thought, an inquirer must have the potential to think rationally. Dasein is defined by Heidegger as an entity that inquires (Heidegger, 1927, p.27); Aristotle's Rational Animal is "animal with rational discourse" (I.2.1253a10). Thus, in order for a Dasein to inquire, it must also be a Rational Animal. Hence Dasein presupposes within itself Aristotle's Rational Animal.

## 4.3 Heidegger's the "They" as Resembling Aristotle's Political Animal

I will argue that Heidegger's definition of the "They" essentially resembles Aristotle's Political Animal. Recall that the "They" has three key characteristics—for the purposes of this argument, I will focus on the first two, which are encapsulated in the statement that "Dasein, as everyday Being-with-one-another, stands in *subjection*... to Others" (Heidegger, 1927, p.164): first, that the "They" is Dasein's general way of relating to others, thus relating to Being-with; second, that Dasein subjects itself to the "They". These two traits are contained within Aristotle's definition of the Political Animal.

The first trait of the "They," which concerns Dasein's Being-with-others, mirrors Aristotle's declaration that it "is evident, then... that a human being is by nature a political animal" (I.2.1253a2) because humans are both social animals and rational animals. Here, Aristotle's position is similar to Heidegger's conception of "Dasein [as] Being-with-one-another" (Heidegger, 1927, p.164): the latter statement affirms that a part of Dasein's state of existence is that it interacts with others, and the continued use of the word "Dasein"

invokes Heidegger's definition of Dasein as an entity that "includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being" (Heidegger, 1927, p.27), thereby implying rationality (see 3.b.). Both statements emphasize that individual humans/Dasein are entities that are essentially both social and rational. Accordingly, the "They" relies on the first trait of Aristotle's Political Animal.

Moreover, the second trait of the "They," which concerns Dasein's submission to the "They," corresponds to Aristotle's declaration that "the city-state is prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually" (I.2.1253a19). Here, Aristotle's assertion aligns with Heidegger's assertion that Dasein... stands in *subjection*... to Others (Heidegger, 1927, p.164). In both statements, the individual human/Dasein naturally submits to the larger group. Thus, the "They" relies on the second trait of Aristotle's Political Animal. Hence the "They" resembles Aristotle's Political Animal.

Furthermore, I argue that the initial presupposition of the Rational Animal within Heidegger's concept of Dasein is what leads the "They" to resemble the Political Animal. As mentioned in 2, the concept of the Rational Animal must be established prior to the concept of the Political Animal because the former is marked by the power of reason and the latter is marked by the combination of the powers of reason and sociability: the former is an essential part of the latter. Likewise, the concept of Dasein must be established prior to the concept of the "They" because the "They" is primarily a way for Dasein to relate to other Dasein: the former is an essential part of the latter. Thus, there exists a parallel between how Aristotle's concepts connect and how Heidegger's concepts connect. Having already demonstrated how Dasein presupposes within itself the Rational Animal, I contend that both the above parallel and the resemblance between the Political Animal and the "They" are consequences of the initial presupposition of the Rational Animal in the concept of Dasein. If the Rational Animal precedes the Political Animal, and Dasein presupposes within itself the Rational Animal, it follows that Dasein will in turn precede something that resembles the Political Animal, in this case the "They". Hence the initial presupposition of the Rational Animal in Dasein leads the "They" to resemble the Political Animal, and so Heidegger's ontology maintains a sustained Aristotelian influence.

#### **4.4 Effect on Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology**

Overall, the effect of Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology having a sustained Aristotelian influence is that he does not accomplish what he aims to do. In other words, I argue Heidegger does not separate his ontology from prior ontologies or metaphysics. Recall that Heidegger claims to have purposefully avoided the traditional definition of 'man'" (Heidegger, 1927, p.241) due to concerns over sufficient ontological justification. Moreover, he asserts that it "will not be possible to interpret [Platonic or Aristotelian] ontology adequately until the question of Being has been clarified and answered" (Heidegger, 1927, p.22). Thus, Heidegger aims to create an ontology that is separate from prior



ontology or metaphysics, especially regarding the human being. Yet I have demonstrated that Heidegger actually maintains a sustained Aristotelian influence through his presupposition of the Rational Animal within the concept of Dasein, and the following resemblance between the “They” and the Political Animal. In doing so, Heidegger is not separating his ontology from prior ontologies or metaphysics. Accordingly, there is a discrepancy between what Heidegger aims to accomplish, and what he actually accomplishes: although he aims to create an ontology separate from prior ontologies or metaphysics, he is actually maintaining a sustained Aristotelian influence throughout his work by implicitly incorporating the concepts of Rational Animal and Political Animal.

## 5 MY RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL OBJECTIONS

In response to what I have outlined above, someone may bring up various objections or counter-arguments against my argument that despite Heidegger’s assertions, he implicitly relies on Aristotle’s concepts of the human being. Below, I will explain and respond to some potential objections in turn.

### 5.1 Potential Objection to my Characterization of Heidegger in regards to Prior Ontology

One could potentially object to my characterization of Heidegger’s attitude towards prior ontology in my exegesis of Heidegger’s *Fundamental Ontology*, asserting that Heidegger actually acknowledges that he borrows largely from prior ontology. One may substantiate their claim by referencing 7 of *Being and Time*, wherein Heidegger draws ontological significance from particular Greek words, such as “*phenomenon*” (Heidegger, 1927, p.51) and “*logos*” (Heidegger, 1927, p.55).

In response to this objection, I do not deny that Heidegger indeed uses hermeneutics to discern meaning from particular Greek words for the purpose of adding to his own ontology. However, I point out that the specific words that Heidegger analyses are not related directly to Aristotle’s philosophical understanding about human nature. Instead, the words that Heidegger analyses are to do with “*phenomenon*” (Heidegger, 1927, p.51) and “*logos*”. Although Heidegger explicitly declares his use of the concepts of *phenomenon* and *logos*, he does not state that he uses Aristotle’s Rational Animal or Political Animal. Moreover, he acknowledges that the conception of *logos* (as he understands it) is distinct from “the later history of the word” (Heidegger, 1927, p.55). Thus, Heidegger’s hermeneutics do not concern Aristotle in the way that I have argued that he is presupposing in his ontology.

Moreover, the way that Heidegger describes his task of hermeneutics applied to ancient Greek words does not imply a reliance on any particular ancient ontology per se. To the contrary, Heidegger justifies his method of hermeneutics as follows:

If the question of Being is to have its own history made transparent, then this hardened [ontological] tradition must be loosened up, and the concealments which it has brought about must be dissolved... by taking *the question of Being as our clue*, we are to *destroy* the traditional context of ancient ontology until we arrive at those primordial experiences in which we achieved our first ways of determining the nature of Being—the ways which have guided us ever since. (Heidegger, 1927, p.44).

Here, Heidegger wants to get to the root of ontological meaning without relying on prior systems of interpretation, i.e. ontologies and metaphysics. Recall that while he acknowledges that the Greeks may have made “initial contributions towards [ontology], [he argues that] a dogma has developed which not only declares the meaning of Being to be superfluous, but sanctions its complete neglect” (Heidegger, 1927, p.21). Consequently, he decides to return to the original Greek words themselves in order to determine meaning in relation to the question of Being without relying on prior ontologies or metaphysics. Therefore, Heidegger’s hermeneutics do not contradict my assessment of Heidegger in regards to his claim to separate his ontology from prior ontologies and metaphysics.

## **5.2 Potential Objection to my Analysis of the “They” in Regards to The Political Animal**

Another potential objection that could be raised is that when I argue how Aristotle’s Political Animal resembles Heidegger’s the “They,” I ignore an important characteristic of the “They,” namely how the “They” is indeterminate, and does not refer to a particular individual or group. The indeterminacy of the “They” is different from the Political Animal because the Political Animal is allied to a particular city-state. Thus, an objector may disagree with my claim that the Political Animal sufficiently resembles the “They”.

In response to this objection, I admit that the indeterminacy of the “They” is indeed not present in Aristotle’s Political Animal. However, I argue that such an omission on my part does not undermine my point when I argued about the similarities between the “They” and the Political Animal. Of the three characteristics of the “They” that I note in my exegesis of Heidegger, two of them appear within Aristotle’s Political Animal. I am content to ignore the indeterminacy of the “They” because its indeterminacy is the least impactful of its three central characteristics in terms of how Dasein relates to the “They.” Although such an objection correctly observes that I cannot truthfully say that the “They” and the Political Animal are identical, I say that the two concepts are sufficiently similar to say that Heidegger is (at least in this instance) borrowing from Aristotle, despite aiming to do otherwise.

### 5.3 Potential Objection to my Conception of Inquiry

A third potential objection that one could raise against my argument is that my conception of inquiry does not, in fact, require rational thought. One could cite examples of animals—specifically, animals who are not capable of rational thought in the same sense as humans—as counterexamples that demonstrate inquiry without rational thought. For example, a robin searches for worms to eat. Another example would be a search and rescue dog that is used by police or rescue forces to find people. In both of these examples, one could say that since these animals are able to search and find what they are looking for, then they are therefore inquiring without the use of reason. As a result, if this objection holds, then it is not the case that Heidegger’s Dasein presupposes within itself Aristotle’s Rational Animal.

In response, I argue that the above counterexamples do not demonstrate inquiry, but merely the ability to search. In regards to the distinction between searching and inquiry, I understand searching to be the genus, and inquiry to be a species therein. While both the robin and the dog search (and often find what they search for), it does not follow that they inquire. Returning to my example from 3.b, the robin and the dog cannot inquire who ate the bag full of chips from the top shelf as I can. Recall that I posited 3.b that for one to inquire, one must be able to discern between a sufficient and an insufficient answer to one’s inquiry—the key word here is *discern*, which I take to be a rational process, hence my example of discerning who ate the chips based not on sensory or instinctual clues, but through a rational determination of who fit the sufficient criteria. Accordingly, I understand inquiry to be searching according to a rational discernment. The robin and the dog (as far as I know) do not search via rational discernment, but rather through instinct or senses. Therefore, my conception of inquiry does, in fact, require the capacity for rational thought.

### 5.4 Potential Objection to my Interpretation of the Connection Between Heidegger and Aristotle

A fourth potential objection to my argument is that I am incorrectly interpreting the connection that I have above demonstrated between Aristotle and Heidegger. Perhaps Heidegger does not actually presuppose Aristotle’s conception implicitly, but coincidentally arrived at similar conclusions to Aristotle. Heidegger does not assert that he will necessarily reach different conclusions than Aristotle, but merely that he will not rely on previous ontologies (such as Aristotle’s). That Heidegger develops conceptions similar to Aristotle does not necessarily mean that he implicitly relies on them, but could suggest that the already mentioned similarities between the two demonstrate that such conceptions are fundamental within ontology. Using an analogy, if both Bob and Kevin look at strawberries through a microscope and they report similar findings, it does not follow that Bob copied Kevin’s conclusions; rather, it could

suggest that Bob's conclusions confirm that Kevin's conclusions are accurate. Thus, as this objector may conclude, it is possible that Heidegger's ontology cannot help but reach similar conceptions as Aristotle if both are observing ontological truths.

In response, I argue that Heidegger's implicit presumption of Aristotelian concepts cannot be due to finding similar conclusions as Aristotle because Heidegger's Dasein—which presumes Aristotle's Rational Animal—is not a conclusion of Heidegger, but is his means of arriving at conclusions. In his introduction to *Being and Time*, Heidegger asserts that “to work out the question of Being adequately, we must make an entity—the inquirer—transparent in his own Being” (Heidegger, 1927, p.27) i.e. Dasein. Accordingly, Dasein is not one of Heidegger's conclusions per se, but is the entity that he claims is able to arrive at conclusions. By presuming Aristotelian concepts early in his work, Heidegger cannot avoid Aristotelian conclusions, meaning that he cannot create an ontology separate from prior ontologies.

## 6 CONCLUSION

I have shown that, contrary to Martin Heidegger's assertions in *Being and Time*, he is reliant on Aristotelian conceptions of the human being. I have done this by demonstrating how Heidegger's concept of Dasein presupposes Aristotle's concept of Rational Animal, and how this initial presupposition leads Heidegger's concept of the “They” to resemble Aristotle's concept of the Political Animal. This leads to the conclusion that Heidegger may be saying one thing, but actually doing another. Moreover, I have defended my arguments against objections that one could use to disagree with my assessment of Heidegger's Fundamental Ontology and its connection to Aristotle's *Politics*.

## REFERENCES

- Aquinas, Thomas. 2016. *Summa Theologica*. Translators: Fathers of the English Dominican Province. New Advent, 2nd edition.
- Aristotle. 2011. “Politics, I.2.” In Patricia Curd S. Marc Cohen and C.D.C. Reeve (eds.), *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*, 931–933. Translators: Terrence Irwin and Gail Fine. Hackett Publishing, 4th edition.
- Carman, Taylor. 2008. “Foreward.” In *Being and Time*, xiii–xxi. Translators: John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. Harper & Row.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L. 1991. *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary of Heidegger's Being and Time, Division*. MIT Press.
- Heidegger, Martin. 1927. *Being and Time*. Blackwell Publishing; published 2001.

- Richardson, William J. 1964. "Heidegger and Aristotle." *The Heythrop Journal* 5.1:58–64.
- Sheenan, Thomas J. 1975. "Heidegger, Aristotle, and Phenomenology." *Philosophy Today* 19.2:87–94.
- van Inwagen, Peter and Sullivan, Meghan. 2017. "Metaphysics." In Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, fall 2017 edition.
- Wheeler, Michael. 2017. "Martin Heidegger." In Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, fall 2017 edition.