Eric T. Olson examines the theory of personal identity in his article, "An Argument for Animalism." Olson's article is a response to John Locke's work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, and to various neo-Lockean philosophers. Locke and Neo-Lockean philosophers were attempting to answer the main question surrounding diachronic identity. That is, why do we consider a person at Time 1 to be the same person at Time 2. With this in mind, I will be examining personal identity theory under the lens of Locke and Parfit, a Neo-Lockean, and how, according to Animalism, personal identity theory has been pushed into an erroneous direction. I will also investigate what Olson, a proponent of Animalism, recommends personal identity theorists should commit to in order to correct this mistaken direction. I will then discuss a few criticisms of Animalism as a means of determining whether this view is successful in its purpose.

Given the fact that Olson is responding to Locke and Neo-Lockean philosophers, it is crucial to give an overview of these opposing views. Locke suggests a person is the same person over time so long as that person can remember life events through self-consciousness (Locke, sec. 9). Moreover, the conditions for personal identity do not depend on identity conditions for substance, since the substance is the vessel in which consciousness inheres (Locke, sec. 12). Given this understanding, consciousness can maintain its identity conditions even when jumping from substance to substance (Locke, sec. 13). Locke suggests a separation exists between person and man (or animal) illustrated through the prince and cobbler example (Locke, sec. 8). In this story, the prince's consciousness is transferred into the cobbler, and the cobbler becomes the prince because of the consciousness transfer (Locke, sec. 8). Therefore, consciousness is separable from the body, since there are no material conditions for personal identity, so the substance in which consciousness inheres does not matter for personal identity. Since one can

conceive of situations where consciousness comes apart from the animal, such as Locke's prince and cobbler example, this separation seems logically possible.

In a similar vein, Neo-Lockeans suggest personal identity can also be separated from animal identity (Behrendt, Lecture). Parfit posited this view when writing about mind transfer experiments. Since the separation of mind and animal seems logically possible, whereby consciousness is distinct from the animal body, one must ultimately choose whether to privilege psychology over the body. According to Parfit, we are persons so long as our psychology persists with a certain degree of strength, but we are distinct from our animal body (293-298). Parfit broadened the conception of personal identity from Locke's initial idea of consciousness, so that personal identity is grounded in psychological continuity (297). Parfit suggests persons are constituted by a living body, but their identity is not tied to a particular body since the psychology could migrate to a different body via a brain zap (Behrendt, Lecture).

Olson responds to Locke and Neo-Lockeans by suggesting that treating persons as distinct from the bodies that constitute them is a mistake because persons are not distinct from animals (Olson,320-321). Furthermore, Neo-Lockean philosophers are answering the wrong question (Olson, 331). Questions about personal identity are metaphysical questions, but before one attempts to answer these, one must first answer an ontological question. That is, what kind of thing are we? (Olson, 320). According to Olson, only after answering this fundamental question, can we then attempt to answer metaphysical questions about identity (323-324, 331).

Before summarizing Olson's Animalism argument, it is important to lay the groundwork for his view. Olson suggests human beings are biological entities of the species homo-sapiens (319). Human animals can be persons, but not all human animals are persons. Olson suggests embryos or human coma victims may be human animals that are not persons, but all humans that

are persons are also animals (320). It is important to note Olson is not defining personal identity in terms of animal identity, so he is not suggesting persons are animals. Moreover, Olson is not answering questions about diachronic personal identity, rather, he is asking about the kind of thing we are (Behrendt, Lecture). Olson's answer to this question is that we are human animals, but this does not mean we are not also persons, since we can be both (319-320).

When Olson says human animals are persons, he is not talking about a kind of thing. Rather, he is specifying how a thing is for a phase of its existence. For example, a substance can undergo numerous changes in properties, but none of these phases affect the identity of the animal (Behrendt, Lecture). Personhood is also a phase, since it is not a thing or a substance. This view is opposed to Locke and Neo-Lockean philosophers who suggest personhood is not a phase, since personhood is distinct from the body (Behrendt, Lecture). According to the Animalist, it is a mistake to think of persons as distinct from animals, so an animal can go through a person phase, but you do not become a different animal, and the animal that you are does not become a person (Behrendt, Lecture). Furthermore, you do not cease to exist if you cease to be a person so long as your biological entity endures. In other words, your identity is tied to the animal that you are. Nothing you can say about human-animals, including the fact that they are persons can violate the fundamental claim that they are animals (Behrendt, Lecture). Locke violated this claim by suggesting persons and animal bodies are distinct (Olson, 322).

Olson's argument for Animalism is as follows: Premise 1) There is a human animal sitting in your chair. Premise 2) The human animal is thinking. Premise 3) You are the thinking being sitting in your chair. Conclusion) You are an animal (325-326). In order to oppose Animalism, a person must reject at least one of these premises (Olson, 326). Consequently, some philosophers reject Premise 2 by positing the Constitutive view.

On this view, persons are not identical with animals, but the person, which is the thinking thing, shares its matter with the animal, the non-thinking thing (Behrendt, Lecture). As an analogy, a statue made out of bronze shares its matter with the block of bronze, but the statue is not identical to the block of bronze. They are not identical because the statue and the lump of bronze have different identity conditions (Behrendt, Lecture). Consequently, the bronze could survive being melted in a pot, but the statue would not survive (Behrendt, Lecture). Similarly, a person might survive while the animal-body does not, or the animal might survive while the person does not, like in the case of brain death. Even though the person is built out of the same material that constitutes the animal, the person and the animal have different truth conditions, akin to the statue and lump of bronze that have different truth conditions (Behrendt, Lecture). In order to reject Premise 2, those who hold the Constitutive view suggest that the animal is not thinking. Although the person is constituted by the animal, personal identity is distinct from the animal, so it is the person who does the thinking, and not the animal (Olson, 322).

While Locke is not an Animalist because he thinks persons and animals can come apart, he is certain, at least early in his essay, that consciousness inheres in substance, yet he is unsure about the kind of substance that might be (Locke, sec. 12-13). Locke admits animals exist and being a human animal does not require the existence of intelligence or rationality, but he does not outright suggest anything that happens has to happen inside of an animal body (Locke, sec. 3-4). Interestingly, in the final section of Locke's essay, it seems as if Locke is suggesting if we knew what kind of thing does the thinking, or if we knew more about the substance in which consciousness inheres, we might come to understand that consciousness is not separable from substance after all (Locke, sec. 27). If Locke came to understand more about the body, such that psychology does not depend on the body, this suggests Locke might have agreed with a variation

of Animalism, where the human animal thinks, but the existence of the human animal does not require it to think (Locke, sec. 27). Olson suggests Locke should have answered the substance question first. Had Locke been able to answer what kind of substance we are, that may have stopped Locke from suggesting consciousness is the kind of thing that can leave one body and go into a different body (Olson, 321-322).

The hybrid view aims to find the balance between Animalism and Neo-Lockean philosophers. This view suggests we are animals, but the animal can be stripped down to the most essential part, specifically the brain that sustains psychological life and cognitive functions (Behrendt, Lecture). Most Animalists would disagree with this view by suggesting that the brain is not the most important body part, but in doing so, it is difficult to explain certain brains in vats thought experiments (Behrendt, Lecture). A person would have to say the brain in the vat is a non-animal thing, since the brain can still function, but there would be an empty headed animal (Behrendt, Lecture). Perhaps the more difficult issue is what would happen if one were to put the functioning brain, which is the non-animal thing, back into an animal body. Does the non-animal thing simply vanish from existence? Interestingly, this compromise may not be viable for Neo-Lockeans, either. For example, Parfit suggests only psychological continuity is important for personal identity, which means the brain serves little importance (Parfit, 128). The hybrid view suggests the brain is important for satisfying the matter aspect for Animalism, but this compromise goes against what matters to the Neo-Lockeans.

In terms of my critique of Animalism, I have a couple of concerns. It seems as if Olson is suggesting a person could survive a complete loss of his or her psychology, since the animal body determines identity. Olson suggests there was a time when you were not conscious but your animal-body still existed, such as being in a coma or as an embryo (319). I am concerned that by

endorsing the Animalist view, one faces the unfortunate consequence that psychological continuity does not really matter (323-324). Olson states "at any rate mental continuity is unnecessary for us to persist" (324). It goes against my intuitions to suggest this possibility.

While it is true we may treat people who laps into comas, and thereby have lost their psychological continuity, as if they mean something to us, I am uncomfortable with the suggestion that psychological continuity is unnecessary for us to persist. Could it be possible that we do not treat a coma patient like a coffee table because we hope his or her psychological life will return to us in exactly the same way it was prior to the coma occurring? In other words, I may think the person lying in the hospital bed is my mother, but the fact that it is her body lying in that bed is not the reason I think of her as my mother. I think of her as my mother precisely in the hopes that her psychological life will one day return, since I know once I bury her body she is dead and will never return. Her body is important for informing me on whether or not she is alive or dead, because when she has died, I know for a fact that her psychological life is gone forever. I propose that psychological continuity is the most important aspect for personal identity, which is precisely the reason we bury bodies once we realize their psychological life will never return. Certainly, we maintain coma victims on ventilators precisely because of the fact that we hope their psychological life will return. Do we not hope for miracles, such that a loved one recovers from a vegetative state, simply because we desire that his or her psychological life will return to us? Is not this the reason that dissociative identity disorder is so jarring to us? When someone switches personalities, yet exists within the same animal-body, we do not always consider that person to be the person we once knew. I suppose Olson could suggest that each change in personality is a new person-phase, but this seems rather incoherent to me. While I accept that

Olson allows us to privilege certain psychological states over others, and I appreciate the ability to do so, I still cannot accept his claim that mental continuity is unnecessary.

The Animalists difficulty with the hybrid view brings up a further contention. Olson admits he would permit an animal to lose some body parts, like the loss of a thumb, but he is unwilling to allow the animal to be shrunk down to a brain (Behrendt, Lecture). Yet at the same time, Olson is not clear about the limits of the identity conditions for the animal body (320). While he admits the occasional limb may be removed without harming the animal identity, he refuses to reduce the animal to a basic component (Behrendt, Lecture). I find it difficult to agree to these terms, since I am not being fully informed of the potential consequences of this view. For example, would the animal identity be maintained if only 50% of the organic material was replaced with technological components? What if 80% was replaced? Would I still be considered a human-animal if 99% of my organic material was replaced so I was basically a robot? It seems unreasonable to suggest such a radical view without clarifying many of these important details, especially since Animalism is attempting to change long-standing philosophical opinions. The onus should be on Olson to provide a thorough account of Animalism in order to be persuasive, but at this point he has not done so, and he even states quite clearly that he has no good answers for these types of questions (321).

Certainly, the largest issue is whether the transplant intuition, which is the descendant to Locke's prince and cobbler story, is a legitimate intuition. Many philosophers from Locke to Parfit believed this was a compelling intuition. Olson thinks it is a mistake to believe this intuition, and we have been misguided because philosophers sided with Locke's view of personal identity. If a person is going to accept this basic transplant intuition, he or she must reject at least one of Olson's 3 premises. If this is not possible, then the transplant intuition must be incorrect.

Therefore, I agree with the constitutive view, which attacks Olson's second premise. I agree with the Neo-Lockeans that persons are not identical with animals, and the person is the thinking thing. Many object to the constitutive view because it suggests we must sanction all thinking and cognitive activity to the person and not the animal. However, I posit that animals are simply not capable of such cognitive activity. Some have suggested that apes have higher cognitive functions because apes are capable of communicating with humans via sign language, so they must also be able to think. Yet, even if one assumes such apes are not simply repeating learned behaviors, various researchers suggest the cognitive function of these apes is at the level of a human toddler. If one assumes that animals simply obey habitual learned behaviors, I do not think it is a stretch to suggest the person is indeed the thinking thing distinct from the animal.

In summary, Olson was writing in response to Locke and Neo-Lockean philosophers who suggested that persons and animals are distinct from each other. Olson contends this is a mistake because persons are not distinct from animals. Instead, a human-animal simply goes through a person phase, but the human is fundamentally an animal. Given my criticisms of the Animalism view, I do not think Olson is successful in his approach. If Olson is correct, it is difficult to reconcile the fact that philosophers have been misguided for at least three hundred years. Additionally, I find it rather aggravating that Olson does not realize the onus is on him to demonstrate why he is correct and the non-Animalist philosophers are incorrect. In order to prove that a particular view, in this case Animalism, is better than an opposing view, it is paramount that all the important details are worked out, only then can you reasonably expect a person to be willing to commit to such a new view. If important details are unknowable or hidden from plain sight, like the identity conditions for the animal body, then the view itself seems suspect and possibly insidious, even if that is not the author's intention.

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