

Persons

Lecture 2: Animalism

1. What animalism is, basically Paul Snowdon: 'Each of us is identical with, is one and the same thing as, an animal.' Is an animalist committed to defend this as a necessary truth?

2. What animalism is not Animalism is inconsistent with a number of different views, each of which can accept that *in some sense* we are animals. We can map the terrain using the following three distinctions:

- I am identical to an animal (A), or I am not identical to an animal
- If I am not identical to an animal, then I am either (B) wholly distinct from any animal or not.
- If I am not identical to an animal and not wholly distinct from any animal, then either (C) an animal is a part of me or (D) I am part of an animal

What is the closest rival position?

3. Too many thinkers The most familiar argument for animalism is the 'Thinking Animal' argument. Has been defended by Paul Snowdon and Eric Olson.

1. There is a human animal sitting in your chair
2. The human animal sitting in your chair is thinking
3. You are the thinking being sitting in your chair
4. You are a human animal

4. Animality argument The 'Animality Argument' is defended by Andrew Bailey in an attempt to improve on the 'Too many thinkers' argument ('You are an animal', *Res Philosophica* 93(1), 2016).

1. I am, in some sense or other, an animal
2. If I am, in some sense or other, an animal, then either I am an animal in the derivative and secondary sense or I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense
3. If I am an animal in the secondary and derivative sense, then there are two human animals in my immediate vicinity

4. But there are not two human animals in my immediate vicinity
5. Therefore, I am not an animal in the secondary and derivative sense
6. Therefore, if I am, in some sense or other, an animal, then I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense
7. Therefore, I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense

5. Animal ancestors argument An entirely different strategy is taken by Stephen Blatti, who exploits the idea that our being animals is entailed by evolutionary theory ('A new argument for animalism', *Analysis* 72:4, 2012)

1. I am not an animal (for *reductio*)
2. If I am not an animal, then my parents are not animals
3. If my parents are not animals because I am not an animal, then neither are their parents, etc.
4. If my parents' parents etc. are not animals, then evolutionary theory is not applicable to us
5. Evolutionary theory is not applicable to us
6. Evolutionary theory is applicable to us
7. Contradiction

6. Varieties of Animalism Does animalism in its basic form say too little? Must animalism say something about (a) the persistence conditions of animals; (b) what animals are made of?

Persons

Lecture 2: Animalism

1. What animalism is, basically Animalism is the theory that we are animals. People agree that this is best understood as a claim about numerical identity. Distinguish ‘Hesperus is Phosphorus’ from ‘Hesperus is a planet’. Animalism identifies each of us with some entity that is an animal. This view is different from *corporealism*, which claims that *you* are identical to some (animal) body. Strictly speaking, the animalist thesis doesn’t commit one to a specific view on the metaphysics of animals (what animals are). Is an animalist committed to defend this as a necessary truth? (Blatti: “on the plausible assumption that human animals are essentially and most fundamentally animals, it follows that each of us is essentially and most fundamentally an animal.”)

2. What animalism is not Let us place animalism on a map of views. We can distinguish between positions that claim that (A) we are identical to animals, (B) that we are parts of animals, (C) that animals are parts of us, (D) and that we are wholly distinct from animals.

- A1. Animalism (strict identity)
- A2. ? (non-strict identity)
- B1. Union Dualism (equal footing)
- B2. ? (unequal footing)
- C1. Brainism (natural kind)
- C2. Partism (non-natural kind)
- D1. Pure Dualism (No influence)
- D2. Moderate Dualism (Influence)

One very close and prominent alternative theory maintains that we are not animals but that each of us is constituted by an animal (C2). Where should we place that view? What is the precise difference between identity and constitution, and why does this difference matters to an understanding of what we are? Animals are individuals, persons are, so the idea would be that the latter would be constituted by the former. Statue and the stone. Bailey puts it in terms of the derivative or non-derivative having of a property. Statue is made of stone, hard, etc. But it is so derivatively, because the material it is made of is hard non-derivatively. What is the closest rival position? And why is the difference here significant for our self-understanding as persons?

3. Too many thinkers argument The most familiar argument for animalism is the ‘too many thinkers’ argument.

1. There is a human animal sitting in your chair.
2. The human animal sitting in your chair is thinking.
3. You are the thinking being sitting in your chair.
4. You are a human animal.

The argument is valid, and so the opponent needs to reject one of the premises. The argument has frustrated some people because it seems to prove too much.

4. Animality argument

1. I am, in some sense or other, an animal.
2. If I am, in some sense or other, an animal, then either I am an animal in the derivative and secondary sense or I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense.
3. If I am an animal in the secondary and derivative sense, then there are two human animals in my immediate vicinity.
4. But there are not two human animals in my immediate vicinity.
5. Therefore, I am not an animal in the secondary and derivative sense (from 3 and 4).
6. Therefore, if I am, in some sense or other, an animal, then I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense (from 2 and 5).
7. Therefore, I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense (from 1 and 6).

5. Animal ancestors argument In a short *Analysis* paper in 2012, Stephen Blatti has presented a different argument for animalism. He writes:

Assume for *reductio* that animalism is false. If you are not an animal, then nor are your parents animals. But then, nor are your parents' parents, nor your parents' grandparents and so on, as far back as your ancestry extends. In this case, the falsity of animalism entails the rejection of evolutionary theory (or at least that theory's applicability to us), since it means denying that your distant ancestry includes beings who were animals. But, since the rejection of evolutionary theory is too high a price to pay, we should reject the assumption that animalism is false. (Blatti 2012:686)

1. I am not an animal (assumption, for reductio)
2. If I am not an animal, then my parents are not animals
3. If my parents are not animals because I am not an animal, then neither are their parents, etc.
4. If my parents' parents etc. are not animals, then evolutionary theory is not applicable to us

5. Evolutionary theory is not applicable to us (1,2,3,4)
6. Evolutionary theory is applicable to us (assumption)
7. Contradiction (5,6)

6. Varieties of Animalism

1. In recent work, Paul Snowdon has offered a lengthy defence of animalism. He conceives of the position as claiming that: 'Each of us is identical with, is one and the same thing as, an animal.' The core of the view is an identity claim. (See also Bailey 2015) Here walks an animal in the room. I am that animal. What is an animal? Most straightforward answer: a living body with capacities for sensation/perception and (perhaps) locomotion. Take this body away, and you take me away. This view is endorsed by other authors such as Olson, and. What does the view come down to? And is it true?
2. Are we essentially animals? See Olson discussion of this point.
3. And if we are essentially animals, are we essentially some animal or other, or are we essentially some particular animal? Relative identity. (Or here look at the fundamental kind point: animal or human animal.)
4. The case for animalism *as such* rests on two pillars. The first is its proximity to common sense. Is it the common sense view? Perhaps only in its non-essentialist version. But the essentialist version at least seems to capture common sense. But if it just is common sense or very close to it, then why is this claim philosophically interesting? A common sense view is interesting to consider if it is in tension with other common sense views (or well-established theoretical principles). We typically take to be not essential to animals: consciousness, reason, or perhaps even memory. We agree that some beings lacking these capacities are nonetheless animals. Hence, if we are animals, then it might be that we only have these capacities contingently. Yet on the face of it *my* existence becomes, at least for me, entirely inaccessible without these capacities [Cartesian point]. Let's call having these capacities 'having a psychology'. Having a psychology may not be necessary if the animalist is right.
5. The second argument is the too many thinkers argument.
6. Defending animalism is one way of defending the claim that 'having a psychology' is not necessary for being a person, and hence 'having a psychology' is not part of the conditions necessary for persistence of persons. This is because of the core identity claim: I am an animal, and our knowledge of how animality can be preserved. The persistence conditions of persons instead may be purely biological.

7. How strong is the opposition here? Rory Madden has brought out that there is a tendency to suppose that the distinction between biological and psychological capacities is an exclusive one. Either one or the other. But aren't many psychological capacities we have biological capacities?
8. But even if they are distinct, then it is still a fallacy to infer from this that psychology is not sufficient. We might preserve an animal's psychology in some sophisticated way (Madden discusses these cases), thereby preserving the person (and the animal!).
9. This shows that animalism should not be understood as the thesis that you are your body, or some hunk of living meat. There can be versions of animalism that instead identify the animal with the [...?].
10. What are the persistence conditions of an animal life. They cannot just consist in psychological continuity, for many animals that lack a psychology are able to continue to live for long stretches of time.

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3. But if we are animals, then we are animals of a specific kind. Just as you cannot be red without being a specific shade of red, you cannot be an animal without being a specific sort of animal. So could it be that human animals are differentiated from other animals by having a psychology? In that case, a human animal would have a psychology essentially, it seems. (See Bailey 2015?)
 4. what?
 5. You are a person, and you are a person because you lead a specific sort of life. The life you lead is the life of an animal. Madden's cases show (do they?) that the lives of animals may be able to continue after their bodies are destroyed.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 8. Why have certain animals failed to realize that they are animals? (Why have some of these animals even denied that they are animals?)
 - 9.
 - 10.