

Q14
35
E53
2007
v 2

■ Encyclopedia of Human-Animal Relationships

A Global Exploration of Our Connections
with Animals

Volume 2: Con-Eth

Edited by
Marc Bekoff



GREENWOOD PRESS
Westport, Connecticut • London

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Encyclopedia of human-animal relationships : a global exploration of our connections with animals / edited by Marc Bekoff

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33487-0 (set : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33488-7 (vol 1 : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33489-4 (vol 2 : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33490-0 (vol 3 : alk. paper)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33491-7 (vol 4 : alk. paper)

1. Human-animal relationships—Encyclopedias. I. Bekoff, Marc.

QL85.E53 2007

590—dc22 2007016552

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data is available.

Copyright © 2007 by Marc Bekoff

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, by any process or technique, without the express written consent of the publisher.

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2007016552

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33487-0 (Set)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33488-7 (vol. I)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33489-4 (vol. II)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33490-0 (vol. III)

ISBN-13: 978-0-313-33491-7 (vol. IV)

First published in 2007

Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881

An imprint of Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc.

www.greenwood.com

Printed in the United States of America



The paper used in this book complies with the Permanent Paper Standard issued by the National Information Standards Organization (Z39.48-1984).

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Every reasonable effort has been made to trace the owners of copyrighted materials in this book, but in some instances this has proven impossible. The author and publisher will be glad to receive information leading to more complete acknowledgments in subsequent printings of the book and in the meantime extend their apologies for any omissions.

Another important animal for the Native people is the eagle. The eagle represents many of the best human traits, including bravery, foresight, and strength. Moreover, because the eagle flies close to the sun, it is seen as a facilitator between the physical and spiritual worlds. The eagle feather has medicinal properties; its touch is known to heal.

Animal symbolism plays an important role in creation stories. One such story is told by the Makah of Washington, to account for how animals and birds were placed on Earth: In order to get the planet ready for the first people, two brothers, known as "Two-Men-Who-Changed-Things," summoned all entities. Some of these, the brothers changed into animals; others, they changed into birds. One entity was fond of stealing from those who could hunt and fish. The brothers shortened its arms and bound its legs so that only its feet could move. Once bound, the brothers threw the entity into the sea, and it became a seal that had to catch its own food.

A Creek story relates how fire was brought to the people. In the beginning, only weasels possessed fire, and they were not about to share it. The people summoned a council to discuss how to get fire from the weasels. The problem was complicated, because the weasels lived on an island and could only be reached by skilled swimmers. After consideration, the rabbit volunteered to go because of his dancing and swimming skills. In preparation, he covered the top of his head with pine tar. Rabbit swam to the island, joined the weasels in dance, and, at the appropriate moment, put his head near to the fire and ignited the pine tar. Rabbit swam back to the people, and the people had fire.

Animal symbolism is woven into the fabric of Native life. Animals are not seen as distinct from humans; they serve to teach us about the most important aspects of life and to inspire us to be greater than we are.

Further Resources

Caduto, M., & Bruchac, J. (1991). *Keepers of the animals*. Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing.

Kopper, P. (1986). *North American Indians*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.

Olson, D. L. (1995). *Shared spirits: Wildlife and Native Americans*. Minnetonka, MN: North Word Press.

Wilma Bold Warrior and Charles I. Abramson

■ Culture, Religion, and Belief Systems

Animalism and Personal Identity

The problem of personal identity is one of the oldest and most bewitching in all of philosophy. The challenge, in short, is to persuasively articulate the conditions under which beings like you and me persist through time and change. In answer to this challenge, the view known as "animalism" maintains that, since we are essentially and most fundamentally human animals, our persistence conditions are no different from those of other biological organisms.

The Problem of Personal Identity

In order to appreciate the significance and implications of the animalist answer to the problem of personal identity, a better sense of the problem is required. We begin with the uncontroversial observation that you existed ten years ago—that something that

existed ten years ago is identical to you today. This observation is true despite the fact that today's you and yesteryear's you bear little resemblance to one another. Today's you is made up of different physical constituents, possesses different capacities and tendencies, holds different beliefs and desires, and so on. Yet, despite these differences, an uninterrupted line of continuity binds yesteryear's you with today's you, and it is this continuity that grounds the fact that yesteryear's you and today's you are one and the same thing. To characterize and explain the nature of this continuity is to answer the problem of personal identity.

The complexity of this task emerges from two related sources. First, any adequate account of personal identity must accommodate not only the standard and uncontroversial cases (like yours), but various nonstandard cases as well. Any account that fails to attend to these more unusual cases risks charges of parochialism, of failing to limn the boundaries of the concepts in play, for our aim is not only to describe the criteria wherein satisfaction is *sufficient* for persons to persist through time and change, but also to isolate those criteria wherein satisfaction is *necessary* for such persistence—to pinpoint the conditions which a person who exists at one point in time *must* satisfy in order to be identical to a person who exists at another time. To isolate these necessary conditions would enable us to differentiate those changes that persons can survive from those that they cannot.

Not for want of trying, philosophers have found this to be a difficult task. Indeed—and here is the second complicating factor—several of the most prominent proposals are both independently plausible and mutually inconsistent. (In addition to the three discussed below, these views include the so-called “brain criterion of personal identity,” as well as various dualist theories. Also, Derek Parfit has challenged the evaluative significance of facts about personal identity on the grounds that, rather than strict identity, one's survival in *all important respects* is what matters.) Consequently, although no consensus has yet been reached, the debate concerning the problem of personal identity remains vigorous, with philosophers developing ever-more-nuanced views—views that bring to bear not only our pre-philosophical intuitions about fantastical thought experiments, but also (increasingly) empirical data.

Three Criteria of Personal Identity

According to the “bodily criterion of personal identity,” the persistence conditions for persons are bodily in character. On this view, a person (*P*) existing at one time (*t*) is identical to something (*S*) existing at another time (*t'*), just in case *P*'s body at *t* is physically continuous with *S*'s body at *t'*. (Those who have advocated some version of the bodily criterion include A. J. Ayer, Judith Jarvis Thomson, and Bernard Williams.) The appeal of this view is not difficult to appreciate. After all, one need not be a philosopher to observe that wherever you are, your body is there too. Likewise, notwithstanding religious commitments to the afterlife, who would deny that you would cease to exist if your body were obliterated?

But the bodily criterion faces a host of objections, perhaps the most compelling of which derives from the strong intuition that a person could come apart from the particular body (or the particular animal) with which she happens to be associated. Thus, in a famous passage from his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, John Locke invites his reader to agree that

should the Soul of a Prince, carrying with it the consciousness of the Prince's past Life, enter and inform the Body of a Cobler as soon as deserted by his own Soul, every one sees, he would be the same Person with the Prince, accountable only for the Prince's Actions: For who would say it was the same Man? (1975)

Suitably generalized and updated, Locke's body-transfer thought experiment seems to recommend two important conclusions. The first is that it is one thing to be the same person over time, and quite another to be the same body (or the same animal). Today's you could be identical to yesteryear's you, even if the body (or the animal) associated with today's you was once associated with a completely different person. There seems to be nothing incoherent in the thought that you could wake up in your neighbor's body. (Indeed, many a science-fiction narrative has relied on the coherence of just this intuition!)

The second conclusion suggested by Locke's thought experiment is that one's identity over time necessarily involves the identity of one's consciousness. This suggestion provides the basis for a family of views generally labeled the "psychological criterion of personal identity." The basic idea here is that a person (P) existing at one time (t) is identical to something (S) existing at another time (t'), just in case P at t is psychologically continuous with S at t' . (A common, though not uncontroversial, way of characterizing this continuity is to say that P at t is psychologically continuous with S at t' just in case P and S are connected by a series of non-branching, intermediary person-stages, $PS_1 \dots PS_n$, such that each PS_{i+1} contains apparent memories of events which occurred to PS_i .) And while substantial debates concerning the nature, strength, and relevance (e.g., for warranted accountability) of this psychological continuity have led to various refinements of the psychological criterion, in one form or another, this view has been the dominant account of personal identity for the last three centuries. Any representative sample of the many philosophers who have advocated some version of the psychological criterion would include (in addition to Locke) Mark Johnston, Carol Rovane, and Sydney Shoemaker.

A relative newcomer to the personal identity debate, the "animalist criterion of personal identity" opposes the psychological criterion by denying the Lockean distinction between the persistence of persons and the persons of human animals. According to the animalist, each of us is essentially—and most fundamentally—a human animal; we could not exist except as human animals, and the conditions of our persistence derive from our status as human animals. That is, a human person (P) existing at one time (t) is identical to something (S) existing at another time (t'), just in case P at t is biologically continuous with S at t' . (As it is with psychological continuity, the characterization of biological continuity is problematic. One way of spelling it out would be to say that that P at t is biologically continuous with S at t' just in case P and S are connected by a series of non-branching, intermediary person-stages, $PS_1 \dots PS_n$, such that each PS_{i+1} is animated by life processes that naturally continue those life processes which animated PS_i .) Among those credited with developing this view are Michael Ayers, William Carter, Eric Olson, Paul Snowdon, Peter van Inwagen, and David Wiggins.

Debating Animalism Positive arguments for animalism are typically presented hand in hand with critical arguments against the psychological criterion and its associated person-animal distinction.

First, consider an animalist objection to the psychological criterion. In order for today's you to be psychologically continuous with yesteryear's you, both today's you and yesteryear's you must possess various psychological capacities (e.g., the capacity to remember, the capacity for self-consciousness). Yet these capacities are notably absent in two entities to which, intuitively, we take ourselves to be actually or possibly identical, *viz.* an unborn fetus and a patient in a persistent vegetative state. If each of us was once an unborn fetus, and if each of us might one day end up in a persistent vegetative state, then that strongly suggests that our persistence conditions need not be psychological, but rather are biological.

Second, by arguing as follows, the animalist may rely on empirical considerations to validate the proposed rejection of the person-animal distinction: If you are not an animal,

then presumably nor are your parents animals. But then, nor are your parents' parents, nor their parents' parents, and so on, as far back as your ancestry extends. Taking the phrase "as far back as your ancestry extends" seriously, this suggests that denying your identity to an animal entails the rejection of evolutionary theory, because denying your identity to an animal is tantamount to denying that your distant ancestry includes entities that were animals. But the rejection of evolutionary theory is too high of a price to pay. Therefore, we should reject the assumption that you are not an animal.

Lastly, anyone who denies that each of us is identical to a particular human animal must face what has come to be known as the "too many minds argument" (or the "thinking animal argument") for animalism. According to this argument, even one who denies that the animal presently sitting in your chair is you must grant that there is an animal presently sitting in your chair. Yet it is increasingly implausible to deny that animals of many types think and perceive; and if any do, surely the type of animal sitting in your chair does. Moreover, you are sitting in your chair, and clearly you are thinking and perceiving. But if you were not identical to this animal, then there would be two mental lives simultaneously running in parallel: the thoughts and perceptions had by you and the qualitatively identical thoughts and perceptions had by the animal. But this is absurd. Therefore, the animal presently sitting in your chair is you.

In reply to the preceding arguments, critics of the animalist criterion have attempted to maintain the distinction between the persistence conditions of persons and the persistence conditions of human animals by deploying a fine distinction between the "is" of identity and the "is" of constitution. On their view, although we are animals in the sense of being non-identically constituted by animals, it is not the case that we are identical to animals.

While the debate between advocates of the animalist and the psychological criteria of personal identity continues to thrive, little consensus has been reached. Both the animalist position and objections to it remain under active development, with avenues of inquiry into such fields as the philosophy of biology, animal cognition, and bioethics only just beginning to open.

See also

Sentience and Cognition

Further Resources

- Baker, L. R. (2000). *Persons and bodies: A constitution view*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Locke, J. (1975). *An essay concerning human understanding*. P. Nidditch (Ed.). Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Noonan, H. (2003). *Personal identity*. London: Routledge.
- Olson, E. (1997). *The human animal: Personal identity without psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . (2002, Fall). *Personal identity*. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2002/entries/identity-personal/>
- Parfit, D. (1984). *Reasons and persons*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shoemaker, S., & Swinburne, R. (1984). *Personal identity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Snowdon, P. (1990). Persons, animals, and ourselves. In C. Gill (Ed.), *The person and the human mind* (pp. 83–107). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wiggins, D. (2001). *Sameness and substance renewed*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, B. (1973). *Problems of the self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.