

# YOU ARE AN ANIMAL

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**Abstract:** According to the doctrine of animalism, we are animals in the primary and non-derivative sense. In this article, I introduce and defend a novel argument for the view.

“We may be human, but we’re still animals.”

Steve Vai

## 1 Introduction

When you look in the mirror, you see a certain human animal—a living, breathing organism. You and this animal are intimates. It is hard for you to go anywhere without it. You bear an important relation to this creature. But which relation is that? Animalism says that this relation is nothing short of numerical identity. According to animalists, you do not merely coincide with or constitute or inhabit or otherwise hang out with your close associate, your animal: you *are* it. And the same is true of other human persons too; we are animals.

The central aim of this article is to introduce and defend a novel argument for animalism. I begin with a few remarks on animalism and its consequences. I then introduce the ‘Animality Argument,’ commenting on and motivating its premises. Finally, I show that the Animality Argument has dialectical advantages not enjoyed by one leading and widely discussed argument for animalism. Animalism is, after all, pretty well off.

## 2 Animalism Clarified

### 2.1 What Animalism Is

One sometimes hears of a distinction between derivative and non-derivative property having. Certain items have properties in a primary or non-derivative sense, we’re told, while other things enjoy those properties only derivatively or by proxy. Smokey’s toe is over the line in the primary or non-derivative sense, and so Smokey himself is over the line in a derivative or secondary sense. Smokey enjoys this distinction by proxy and only because he is related to his toe in some special way (parthood, in this case).

I have no general and satisfactory account of the distinction between derivative and non-derivative property having, but it involves at least this much: if  $x$  has  $F$  in the secondary and derivative sense, then there is some  $y$  numerically distinct from  $x$  such that  $x$  has  $F$  solely by virtue of  $x$ 's being appropriately related to  $y$  and by virtue of  $y$ 's being  $F$ .<sup>1</sup> Philosophers disagree about what the 'appropriate relation' might be, but candidates include *being constituted by* and *being embodied by*.

It is easy enough to find philosophers who deploy talk of 'inheriting' this property or having that property 'derivatively' or having some property only because something else has the property in the first instance.<sup>2</sup> Few explain what this comes to.<sup>3</sup> This obscurity need not pose decisive trouble for the animalist, however. For the animalist does *not* think that we are animals in the secondary or derivative sense. Instead, she denies this.

I shall, then, think of animalism as the thesis that we human persons are animals in the non-derivative and primary sense. The 'are' here expresses numerical identity, and we may make this explicit as follows: we human persons are each identical to things that are animals in the non-derivative and primary sense. Animalism is one answer to the question of what we are. It is a theory (at least in part) of human nature.<sup>4</sup>

## 2.2 What Animalism Is Not

Animalism is of interest in part because of what it rules out. Here are six views of human nature with which animalism is inconsistent:

- (1) Pure dualism: we are wholly immaterial souls, distinct from any animal.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Baker introduces the idea this way: "Suppose that  $x$  has  $H$ , and we ask, in virtue of what does  $x$  have  $H$ ? Sometimes the answer will be that  $x$  has  $H$  in virtue of constituting something that has  $H$  or of being constituted by something that has  $H$ . This important feature of constitution requires a distinction between properties that are (as I'll say) borrowed and properties that are not borrowed." (1999, 151–152).

<sup>2</sup> For example, Swinburne writes, "the whole man has the properties he does because his constituent parts have the properties they do. I weigh ten stone because my body does" (1997, 145). So also Baker: "The idea of having properties derivatively explains how, say, I can have the property of being overweight. It is not just that my body is overweight; I am. Being overweight is a property that I—the person constituted by this particular body—have. True, being overweight is a property that I have because my body has it, but my body constitutes me. So, I have the property of being overweight derivatively" (2000, 99).

<sup>3</sup> One admirable exception is Baker: "Roughly, (omitting reference to times),  $x$  has  $F$  non-derivatively iff  $x$ 's having  $F$  does not depend on  $x$ 's constitution relations, and  $x$  has  $F$  derivatively iff  $x$ 's having  $F$  depends on  $x$ 's having constitution relations with something that has  $F$  nonderivatively" (2008, 43).

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed characterization of animalism, its rivals, and citations to recent attacks on and defenses of animalism, see [Bailey 2015a](#) and all the essays in [Blatti and Snowdon Forthcoming](#).

<sup>5</sup> Many philosophers endorse either moderate or pure dualism. Which disjunct they opt for is not always clear. See [Barnett 2010](#), [Hart 1988](#), [Hasker 2010](#), [Meixner 2010](#), [Nida-Rümelin 2010](#), [Plantinga 2006](#), [Unger 2004; 2006](#), and [Zimmerman 2010; 2011](#).

- (2) Moderate dualism: we are wholly immaterial souls, but we inherit certain properties from our animals, and are only in a secondary and derivative sense animals (Lowe 2010 and Meixner 2010, 436–437).<sup>6</sup>
- (3) Union dualism: we are amalgams: part material animal, part immaterial soul (Swinburne 1997, 145).
- (4) Constitutionalism: we are constituted by but distinct from human animals (Baker 2000, Corcoran 1998, 1999; 2006, Johnston 1987; 2007, Shoemaker 2007).
- (5) Brainism: we are brains, each of us a proper (spatial) part of some human animal.<sup>7</sup>
- (6) Partism: we are maximal sums of thought-supporting spatial and temporal parts, each of us a proper spatial and temporal part of some human animal (Hudson 2001, 2007).<sup>8</sup>

Animalism, then, is not without rivals, and its truth would tell against a great many theories in the metaphysics of human nature.

### 3 The Animality Argument

I shall now argue that animalism is no less than the sober truth. My argument proceeds from the modest assumption that we are, *in some sense or other*, animals. The assumption is minimal indeed, for it is compatible with a wide range of non-animalist views. And yet it shall prove to be an important step in the direction of a more full-blooded animalism. I'll put the *Animality Argument*, as I'll call it, in the first person singular. I invite readers to read from their own perspectives; the point generalizes.<sup>9</sup>

- (1) ANIMALITY. I am, in *some sense or other*, an animal.
- (2) TWO WAYS. 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) PLURALITY. If I am an animal in the secondary and derivative sense, then there are two human animals in my immediate vicinity.
- (4) ONE ANIMAL. But there are not two human animals in my immediate vicinity.

<sup>6</sup> I call this version of dualism 'moderate' because it allows that we in fact have physical properties like extension in at least some sense. For helpful discussion of Lowe's moderate dualism, see Olson 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Brainists include McMahan (2003, 88–94), Parfit (2012), Searle (1983, 230), and Tye (2003, 142). Cagney endorsements of brainism may be found in Nagel 1986, 40–41 and Persson 1999, 521–533. Puccetti (1973) says we are each cerebral hemispheres.

<sup>8</sup> For a similar view according to which we are sums of psychologically continuous temporal parts of organisms (but distinct from those organisms), see Lewis 1976, Perry 1976, and the essays in Perry 2002.

<sup>9</sup> The Animality Argument structurally parallels the "Priority Argument" defended in Bailey 2015b, but is here deployed in service of a distinct and more radical conclusion.

- (5) Therefore, I am not an animal in the secondary and derivative sense (from PLURALITY and ONE ANIMAL).
- (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 TWO WAYS and 5).
- (7) Therefore, I am an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense (from ANIMALITY and 6).

The argument is valid; let us consider its premises in turn.

### 3.1 On Our Animality

We are, in at least *some* sense or other, members of the species *Homo sapiens*; and if that's right, ANIMALITY certainly *seems* true. This is what we learned in high school science, at least (doubters may consult a competent zoologist for reassurance). Our animality is also a consequence of evolutionary theory.<sup>10</sup> So ANIMALITY is true, or at least reasonable to believe. One might object that the ANIMALITY Argument here begs the question; surely an argument deriving animalism from animalism is less than impressive. This is a mistake. I have not assumed animalism in ANIMALITY; I have only assumed that we are, in *some* sense or other, animals. This is an assumption that even moderate dualists might grant. For they have stories to tell.<sup>11</sup> For example:

There are two ways to be an animal. One can be an animal in the primary sense (by, perhaps, being identical to some organism), or one can be an animal in a derivative or secondary sense (by having as a body something that is an animal in the primary sense, a *primary animal*). One has something as a body, perhaps, by being appropriately related to it in various epistemic and causal ways. So moderate dualism does not have the obviously false consequence that we are not animals. Rather, it has the consequence that we *are* animals, but only in a derivative or secondary sense. Moderate dualism allows that we are derivatively animals, and thus animals.

It is not only moderate dualists who deliver speeches like this. Union dualists, constitutionalists, brainists, and others (though not pure dualists) may deploy the move as well.<sup>12</sup> All agree that we *are in some sense*, animals. The union dualist will say you are an animal derivatively and by virtue of having a primary animal as a part. The constitutionalist will say you are an animal derivatively and by virtue of being constituted by an animal. The

<sup>10</sup> For an intriguing argument along these lines, see Blatti 2012.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Meixner 2010, 436–437, who insists that the ‘empirical dualist’ can correctly attribute to us various physical properties in an “analogical and secondary way.”

<sup>12</sup> Shoemaker (2007), e.g., valiantly attempts to reconcile our animality with constitutionalism.

brainist will say you are an animal derivatively and by virtue of being a part of a primary animal. Each of us is, in *some* sense, an animal.

### 3.2 Two Ways To Be an Animal

TWO WAYS, taking its cue from the moderate dualist speech above, adds this ingredient: there are two ways to be an animal. One can be an animal in the primary sense, or in the secondary sense and by proxy (that is, by being appropriately related to something that is an animal in the primary sense). Like ANIMALITY, TWO WAYS is a premise that even my moderate dualist opponent might grant.<sup>13</sup>

### 3.3 Derivative Animality Requires a Plurality of Animals

PLURALITY follows from this plausible thought: for a situation to involve something having a property *F* derivatively, two conditions must be met. There must be one item that has *F* in the primary and non-derivatively sense. And there must be another item (numerically distinct from but appropriately related to the first) that has *F* in the derivative sense. Applied to the case of the property *being a human animal*, the thought goes, I am a human animal derivatively only if there is something distinct from me (to which I'm appropriately related) that is a human animal non-derivatively. And where would this human animal (distinct from me) be, except somewhere in my immediate vicinity?

Secondary animals are indeed animals, though their animality is derived.<sup>14</sup> They will appear, then, in an enumeration of animals within a given place; and when one animal in a given place is a secondary animal, a primary animal must be close at hand.

### 3.4 One Animal

ONE ANIMAL adds: there is no 'extra' human animal in my immediate vicinity. Whether I am an animal derivatively or not, the animal that is me is the only human animal in my chair. There just *isn't* more than one human animal sitting in my chair (or thinking my thoughts, or digesting my food). It doesn't matter whether one of those beings is an animal derivatively and the other is an animal non-derivatively or that one is material and the other immaterial; even *that* suggestion does not do justice to the obvious fact that there just aren't that many animals in the neighborhood. Any view denying as much is committed to an objectionable *ontological overpopulation*.

<sup>13</sup> Baker explicitly endorses a generalization of Two ways: "*x* has *F* iff *x* has *F* nonderivatively or *x* has *F* derivatively" (2008, 43).

<sup>14</sup> Baker agrees: "I take it that '*a* is a statue' is true if *a* has the property of being a statue, where *a* has that property either nonderivatively (without borrowing) or derivatively (by borrowing)" (1999, 165).

One may think that I have inappropriately motivated ONE ANIMAL by appeal to simplicity. My objector speaks:

ONE ANIMAL operates on a principle of simplicity, urging us not to include extra human animals in our ontology. All other things being equal, this is right. Things are not equal. For we need these extra human animals to do work for us; they earn their keep by playing a theoretical role—some by being primary animals and others by being secondary animals.

The speech is mistaken. I have not motivated ONE ANIMAL by appeal to simplicity. I am not claiming that the view that there are two human animals in my nearby vicinity is to be rejected because it fails a parsimony test. It is not as though there is a ‘many animal’ theory which is worse off than a ‘one animal theory’ when it comes to how many things of a given kind the theory says there is. Rather, we can tell that a many animal view is false in a more direct way. There just aren’t that many human animals in my immediate vicinity.

Parody arguments lurk in nearby alleys. Let’s drag one into the light for inspection:

I am a digesting thing; I digest. And if I am, in some sense or other, a digesting thing, then I am a digesting thing in the derivative and secondary sense or in the non-derivative and primary sense. Now, either digesting in the derivative and secondary sense is a way to digest or it is not. If the former, then there are two digesting things in my immediate vicinity—me, and the thing associated with me that digests in the non-derivative and primary sense (my stomach, perhaps). But there aren’t two digesters in my immediate vicinity, and so it must be that I am a digester in the non-derivative and primary sense.

Just as the Animality Argument exploits the ‘problem of too many human animals,’ the Parody Argument exploits the problem of too many digesters. But there is a problem with the problem of too many digesters, my objector continues: it is not a problem at all. There is nothing absurd or ontologically promiscuous in saying that both my stomach and I digest. Of *course* we are both digesters; and no one should blink an eye at the suggestion.<sup>15</sup> Reflection on this flaw in the Parody Argument shows what is wrong with the Animality Argument. Just as there is no problem of too

<sup>15</sup> Sutton (2014) offers a convincing explanation: some features are *non-summative* and thus one cannot add the digestion of the stomach to the digestion of the organism and rightly conclude that there is too much digestion happening. The considerations I offer on behalf of ONE ANIMAL are not subject to Sutton’s critique, since ONE ANIMAL does not, as it were, impose a ban on ‘too much living’ going on in a region. The ban ONE ANIMAL imposes is directed, rather, at there being a *multiplicity of human animals* in a region.

many digesters, so too there is no problem of too many human animals. ONE ANIMAL is false (or at least unmotivated).

I reply with a distinction. It is easy to believe that two things digest my food (whether or not one does so in a more primary or non-derivative way than the other). It is less easy to believe that there are two human organisms sitting in my chair. The former does not conflict with much of what I take to be common sense; the latter does. The cost of thinking that I am not the only human animal sitting in my chair, then, seems higher than that of thinking that I am not the only digester. We can put the point another way. If there is a human animal in my immediate vicinity, it is more than five feet tall, has brown hair, and has parts that together engage in elaborate chemical processes by which the life of the whole is sustained. And on reflection it seems clear that there are not *two* such human animals in my immediate vicinity. I can see *one*, for sure. Where would the other one be? Where is the other animal that is more than five feet tall and has brown hair? Compare:

[I]magine I am in my room alone. According to Lewis, there were two persons in the room. Was one of them hiding under the bed? Since each weighs 150 pounds, why don't the two of them together weigh 300 pounds? These are traditional rhetorical questions asked of those who defend the possibility of two things being in one place at a time. I think they have force. (Sider 1996, 439)

It would be one thing (perhaps in the course of learning some medical science) to discover that I digest food and that my stomach does too. It would be another to come to believe that I am not the only human animal in my chair. Although the former might come at little cost, the price of the latter is high indeed.

### 3.5 Against Reconciliation

I have motivated ONE ANIMAL by something like an appeal to ordinary thought and speech. One way of resisting this case for ONE ANIMAL invokes a *reconciliation strategy*. Though our ordinary thought and speech *seem* to presuppose the truth of ONE ANIMAL, the thought goes, such thought and speech can on reflection be reconciled with its denial. In particular, our ordinary thought and speech can be reconciled with the thesis that there are two numerically distinct items in my immediate vicinity, one of which is an animal in the primary and non-derivative sense, the other an animal in the secondary and derivative sense.

I will develop the objection at some length and then propose a reply. The reply will show that the objection fails and just how resilient the case for ONE ANIMAL is.

Reconciliation strategies recommend a dilemma for ONE ANIMAL. ONE ANIMAL can be interpreted in two ways—one involving numerical distinctness ('ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup>' below), the other involving what I'll call a *substantive distinctness* relation stronger than numerical distinctness ('ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup>' below). Consider, then, this proposed disambiguation of ONE ANIMAL:

- (1) ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup>. It is not the case that there is an  $x$  and a  $y$  such that  $x$  is numerically distinct from  $y$  and such that  $x$  is an animal and  $y$  is an animal and both  $x$  and  $y$  are in my immediate vicinity.
- (2) ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup>. It is not the case that there is an  $x$  and a  $y$  such that  $x$  is substantively distinct from  $y$  and such that  $x$  is an animal and  $y$  is an animal and both  $x$  and  $y$  are in my immediate vicinity.

The dilemma is this: ONE ANIMAL must mean either ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup> or ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup>. If ONE ANIMAL means ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup>, then the Animality Argument is valid but ONE ANIMAL is false (and its falsity is not in conflict with ordinary thought and speech). If ONE ANIMAL means ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup>, then the Animality Argument is invalid.

I agree that if ONE ANIMAL means ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup> then the Animality Argument is invalid. PLURALITY and ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup> do not jointly imply (5), since PLURALITY clearly involves *numerical* distinctness (as my above comments on that premise indicate). In particular, the consequent of PLURALITY says that there is in my immediate vicinity a primary animal that is *numerically* distinct from something that is a secondary animal. I intend the Animality Argument to be valid. My intended reading of ONE ANIMAL, then, is ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup>. On first glance, ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup> certainly seems consonant with (and supported by) ordinary thought and speech. Why would the anti-animalist think otherwise? Answering this question will require some comments on *counting*.

The difference between ONE ANIMAL<sup>=</sup> and ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup> involves a distinction between numerical and substantive distinctness, where the latter is something of a placeholder. Here is my best shot at expanding the placeholder. Some items are numerically distinct; one is not numerically identical to the other. Others are more than numerically distinct; they are distinct in a deeper sense too—their distinctness is no philosophers' trick, nor is it something only recondite metaphysical theories have reason to recognize. Mereological disjointness is a good example: since they are wholly disjoint, the rock on my desk is both numerically and substantively distinct from the rock on yours. But not all numerically distinct things are like this, the thought goes. Here are a few examples of things that are allegedly numerically distinct without being substantively distinct:

- (1) The statue is numerically distinct from the lump of clay that constitutes it. But it is not substantively distinct from that lump.
- (2) The event of me raising my hand is numerically distinct from the event of me raising my hand quickly. But the two are not substantively distinct.

- (3) The house is properly composed of the bricks and so is numerically distinct from the bricks (composition as identity is, let us agree, false). But the house is not substantively distinct from the bricks.

Notice that these examples (especially the first two) have connections to ordinary thought and speech about how many objects there are (and thus, to counting in general). It would be odd to think or to say that there are two objects on the pedestal (the statue and the clay). It would be odd to think or say that two things happened, that two distinct events occurred when I raised my hand quickly. Why is this? If the statue and clay are numerically distinct, why does it sound so odd to say there are two objects on the pedestal? The proponent of the reconciliation strategy has an answer: our ordinary thought and speech about how many objects there are typically deploys substantive, rather than numerical distinctness.<sup>16</sup> We ordinarily count by the former, not the latter.

With this in mind, the anti-animalist may accuse me of a bait-and-switch in my motivation of ONE ANIMAL. I have appealed to ordinary thought and speech about how many objects there are (and in particular, about how many human animals there are in my immediate vicinity). Such considerations do support ONE ANIMAL<sup>S</sup>; that's the bait. Here's the switch: the Animality Argument requires ONE ANIMAL<sup>≠</sup>. And the considerations I've adduced lend no support at all to ONE ANIMAL<sup>≠</sup>. Indeed, just as ordinary thought and speech are compatible with the thesis that a statue is numerically distinct from the clay that constitutes it, so also, they are compatible with the *denial* of ONE ANIMAL<sup>≠</sup>. There is no cost (with respect to considerations about ordinary thought and speech) to denying ONE ANIMAL<sup>≠</sup>.

I have two replies. First, it is not clear that appeal to our *actual* counting practices supports the anti-animalist reply. Suppose we do not, in fact, ordinarily count a statue and the lump constituting it as two material objects. This alone does not show that the statue and lump are one; for we might be counting incorrectly. Or we might be counting correctly but for reasons quite unfriendly to the anti-animalist's suggestion (there might be no such thing as the lump constituting but numerically distinct from the statue, e.g., or no such thing as a statue constituted by but numerically distinct from the lump). The upshot is this: what the anti-animalist needs here is a reason to think that we *should* count by something other than numerical identity and diversity. It is not clear that such a reason has been given.

More importantly, counting by something other than numerical identity and diversity (in this case, counting by substantive identity and diversity) conflicts with a very plausible constraint on counting.<sup>17</sup> There are many pugs. Some are ugly; some are not. Some are ugly in an adorable way,

<sup>16</sup> In this connection, see Baker 2000, 197–204.

<sup>17</sup> Kearns (2009) independently offers an equivalent objection.

and some (arguably) are not. How many ugly pugs are there? I think the answer is clear. The number of ugly pugs is equal to the number of pugs that are ugly in an adorable way plus the number of pugs that are ugly in a non-adorable way. And the point seems to be wholly general. This suggests the following:

**Counting:** The number of *F*s equals the number of *F*s that are (*F* in a *G* way) plus the number of *F*s that are not (*F* in a *G* way)

Which further suggests:

**Animal Counting:** The number of animals in my immediate vicinity equals the number of animals in my immediate vicinity that are animals in the derivative way plus the number of animals in my immediate vicinity that are animals in the non-derivative way.

Counting (and, in particular, Animal Counting) are in conflict with the anti-animalist strategy I have been considering. The anti-animalist who denies ONE ANIMAL<sup>18</sup> says that there are two numerically distinct things in my chair, each of which is an animal, even though there is exactly one animal in my chair. But if Animal Counting is right, that's just not so. The anti-animalist may here, of course, dig in her heels and deny Counting and Animal Counting. To do so is certainly an option; but I submit that it is a costly one.<sup>18</sup>

Since the Animality Argument is valid, those who deny its conclusion must deny one of its premises. But it certainly seems that denying any of ANIMALITY, TWO WAYS, PLURALITY, or ONE ANIMAL is costly. Even if the Animality Argument is unsound, then, it does this much: it raises the price of denying animalism.

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<sup>18</sup> Comparison to a familiar debate may help. David Lewis claimed that there are many people sitting in your chair. Even so, we can truthfully *say* that there is just one person there when we count by relations other than identity (perhaps overlap—emphpartial identity, as he calls it—will do the trick). See Lewis 1999, 177–178. Hud Hudson nicely expresses one cost of this move:

[C]ounting by almost-identity provides us with just what we wanted to say all along: “There is only one person in in [your] chair. . . .” Feel better?—*I*, for one, feel swindled. I had hoped (in vain, I knew) for a way to say that “There is only one person in [your] chair . . . .” which *isn't* compatible with counting by identity and saying “There is an infinity of distinct persons in Legion’s chair at T.” But that’s not what I got. I submit that counting by almost-identity is not the good and natural sense we are after. You *can* do it . . . but it doesn’t make the ontological picture any prettier. (2001, 35, emphasis original)

My opponents may similarly claim that there is a mighty host of (well, at least two) animals in your vicinity, but that there is nonetheless *some* sense in which there is just one. What I claim, and what I have tried to argue for by appealing to Animal Counting is that this is still implausible. Even if there is just one animal in *some* sense or other, the plurality of animals in some *other* sense is an unpalatable result. I thank an anonymous referee for pressing this point.

## 4 On Another Argument for Animalism

I will briefly compare the Animality argument with one leading argument for animalism. Consider:

Suppose for *reductio* that animalism is false; you are a person but not an animal. Surely human animals exist and think, though. And what would your animal think but exactly your thoughts? (You think, after all; the mental supervenes on the physical, and you are a physical duplicate of your animal.) So your animal thinks, among other things, that it is a person, and has exactly the same reasons and evidence for thinking this that you do. But unlike you, your animal is wrong. It is not a person. But then you do not know that you are a person, for you and your animal are exactly alike with respect to reasons and evidence. So if animalism is false, you cannot know you are a person. But surely we can know that we are people, and so animalism is not false. It is true.<sup>19</sup>

This is one formulation of the Thinking Animal Argument (or more carefully, a formulation of the Thinking Animal Argument together with sub-arguments for its premises). It is the leading argument for animalism. To already extensive discussion, I add two notes. First, the Thinking Animal Argument will have little force for those who do not already affirm materialism about human persons. It is primarily an argument from materialism to a distinctively animalist version of materialism. Pure dualists, e.g., have traditionally denied that material objects can think at all (and so deny that your animal can think either). They reject, then, a premise of the Thinking Animal Argument. Dualists of other kinds have also typically thought that the mental does not supervene on the physical, and thus reject another ingredient within the Thinking Animal Argument. Second, the epistemic principles underlying the Thinking Animal Argument or its sub-arguments are obscure and require defense.<sup>20</sup> The defender of the Thinking Animal Argument would do well to specify, e.g., the precise sense in which the animal and the person are in the same evidential state—no simple task.

The Animality Argument suffers neither of these deficits. It does not assume materialism about human persons; nor does it assume the supervenience of the mental on the physical. Instead, it simply assumes that we are animals (in *some sense* or other), and that we are the only human animals in our immediate vicinities. Even moderate dualists have wanted to affirm these theses. Similarly, the Animality Argument deploys no contentious epistemic principles about the evidential state you and your animal might

<sup>19</sup> See especially [Olson 2009](#) and [Snowdon 1990](#). Recent critical treatments include [Sutton 2014](#) and [Watson Forthcoming](#).

<sup>20</sup> See [Brueckner and Buford 2009](#) and [Yang 2013](#).

be in. I conclude that the Animality Argument is superior in certain respects to one leading argument for animalism. Non-animalists of many stripes have good reason to attend to it.

## 5 Conclusion

The central argument of this paper shows that animalism is pretty well off. Philosophers who disagree with my conclusion will find a way to dispute my premises. But they remain plausible, and denying them comes at a price. I, for one, am unwilling to pay it. And so I embrace the thesis that though we may be human, we're still animals.

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