



Carleton University | Department of Philosophy

colloquium

## "ARE WE ALL ANIMALS?"

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Animalism is standardly articulated as the thesis that we are animals. So understood, cases of dicephalus conjoined twins are widely regarded as posing a serious challenge to the view. For such twins would appear to be numerically distinct individuals associated with a single animal (e.g., Campbell and McMahan 2016). In reply, animalists have claimed either that such twins are two animals (e.g., Liao 2006, Snowdon 2014), or that they are not numerically distinct (e.g., Olson 2014, Boyle 2020). Both approaches face serious objections. This motivates a neglected response on which whilst “we” (in a sense to be made precise) are animals, dicephalus conjoined twins are not. Supposing that each twin is instead a distinct proper part of an animal, this proposal quickly encounters an especially severe version of the “thinking parts” objection to animalism. For if the twins are thinking parts of animals, what prevents “our” having proper parts which think in their own right (Olson 2014). By combining Madden’s (2016) reply to the traditional “thinking parts” objection with a more sophisticated, pluralist account of function, I show how this objection can be defused. What emerges is a principled basis for holding that, quite consistent with animalism, dicephalus conjoined twins are a real-world example of nonanimal persons. Time allowing, I’ll draw one striking consequence of this view, and explore whether it applies in any other clinical cases.

**FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021  
1:00 P.M. EST**

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