

The Mass Observation Project

Summer 2009 Directive

Part 1: Animals and humans

This directive is about the part played by animals in your life, from your childhood until the present day. You may live and work with animals or rarely encounter them – whatever your circumstances we are interested in your experiences with animals and any stories you can tell us which throw light on the part they play in your life.

As usual, please start each part of your directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number (NOT name), sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply.

What do animals mean to you?

Before you answer the more specific questions below, please could you jot down ten separate words or phrases which describe what animals mean to you.

Childhood and animals

What part did animals play during your childhood? Did you read stories about animals? See films about animals? Visit zoos or circuses? Ride horses? Have pets? If you had a pet please can you describe your relationship with them. Were you responsible for looking after a pet? Did you experience the death of a pet? How did this make you feel?

What part do animals now play in your life?

Are animals part of your daily life? If so, please can you describe your involvement with them and your relationship to them.

Has the type of animal you're involved with changed over time? Are animals relevant to you in any other way? Do you see this as being typical of your community or social group?

Living with animals

Do you share your home with any animals or have you done so in the past? How would you describe your relationship with them? Is it similar to or different from your relationship/s with the people who you share your home with or are close to?

Please describe your daily routine with an animal that you feel or have felt particularly close to. How would you describe your relationship with this animal?

If you have never shared your home with an animal please could you tell us if there is any reason for this.

PLEASE TURN OVER

Working with animals

Do you work with animals? How would you describe your relationship with the animals that you work with?

Please can you provide an account of your working day and your interactions with the animals you work with. Do you get attached to any of them?

Animals and well-being

Do animals contribute to your well-being in any way?

Do they enable you to meet people? How?

Have you experienced the death of a companion animal? How did this make you feel? What made you feel better?

Animals as food

Do you eat animals/wear clothing made from animal products?

If you do, how does this relate to the way you feel about animals?

If you are a vegetarian please can you tell us how you became one and the reasons for this, particularly if they relate to your feelings about animals.

Animal welfare

Are you concerned about the welfare of the animals that provide us with food and/or clothing?

Do you support any animal welfare organisations? Might you consider leaving a bequest to an animal charity? What do you feel about people who donate to animal welfare in this way?

Sport

Are you involved in any sport with animals? (This could be racing, hunting, shooting, fishing). Please can you describe your relationship to the animals involved.

Do you oppose any sports involving animals? Please can you describe the form this opposition takes.

Television and films

Do you watch television programmes or films about animals? What sort of programmes/films are they and what is it about them that you enjoy?

Wild animals

Do you have any relationship with wild animals? Do you feed birds or other animals in your garden? Do you consider any animals to be vermin?

Have you been 'on safari' or to a wildlife reserve?

Are you involved in any conservation projects or environmental organisations? Why?

And now we'd like you to think about these more general questions

What is it that distinguishes a pet from other animals?

It is often said that a dog is a person's best friend. Do you think there is any truth in this?

People sometimes say that their animals are part of their family – has this been your experience?

Have you encountered any cultural or national differences in the way we relate to animals?

Part 2: Heaven and Hell

Please start both Part 2 and Part 3 of your directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number and a brief biography (see page 1).

This Directive is about 'heaven' and 'hell'. What do these words actually mean to us nowadays?

- What do 'heaven' and 'hell' mean to you? What sorts of feelings, images or relationships come to you when you use or hear these words? (Please expand, or even illustrate)
- What do you think about the idea of an afterlife? Do you spend time thinking about this? What do you think determines what happens to us in the afterlife?
- Where did your first ideas about heaven and hell come from? How have your ideas of heaven and hell changed over time? Have your experiences of life changed your ideas about heaven and hell?
- How do you think science has changed how we think about the afterlife? Do you think our understandings of heaven have been, or will be, affected by the ongoing scientific exploration of the universe?
- Why do you think people have ideas about heaven and hell?

Part 3: Swine flu or H1N1

What do you think about the swine flu pandemic so far?

Views please on the whole issue, publicity and media coverage, health advice, fears for the future.

Please include, as always, your own direct experience either of the illness or of any preparations to cope you have witnessed or done yourself.

How concerned are you for yourself and those near to you?

Have you been involved in any outbreaks? If so how has it affected you?

Have you changed your own behaviour in any way? More careful hand-washing? sneezing into your elbow? Buying medicines? Talking to your doctor? Other changes?

Please post your response to:

**The Mass Observation Archive, FREEPOST BR 2112, The Library, University of Sussex,
Brighton BN1 1ZX**

Or by email to: moa@sussex.ac.uk