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SOCIAL WORK, INDEPENDENT REALITIES & THE CIRCLE OF MORAL CONSIDERABILITY: RESPECT FOR HUMANS, ANIMALS & THE NATURAL WORLD.

DOCTORAL THESIS

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May 2006

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (HUMAN SERVICES)
EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY
BUNBURY
WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

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DEDICATION

To my beloved wife Blanca, our beloved children Thomas-Liam, Jude, Immogen & Mirabehn, our much loved Gran, and last but not least, our cherished Simone, Tessa, Lucy, Jayke, Clarabelle, Matilda, Marge, the chooks and ducks (who *all* go to make up the wider Ryan Household), the loves of my life.

man, to be truly man, must cease to abnegate his common fellowship with all living nature.

- *Henry S. Salt* **(1894:104)**

The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated.

- *Mohandas Gandhi* **(in Wynne-Tyson, 1985:91)**

We are not of another, radically different kind. Ties of loyalty may bind us to particular non-humans as much as to particular humans. When we open our eyes to see the reality of another creature, and so learn to respect its being, that other creature may as easily be non-human. Those who would live virtuously, tradition tells us, must seek to allow each creature its own place, and to appreciate the beauty of the whole.

- *Stephen R. L. Clark* **(1994c:30)**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Pauline Meemeduma for her supervision of my thesis. Her insightful and perceptive contributions and suggestions have made this thesis a far better piece of work than it would otherwise have been, and her unremitting faith in my abilities has been of immeasurable value.

Finally, I express my appreciation to all the library staff at Edith Cowan University for their every assistance and attention to detail, which was always far above and beyond the call of duty.

Last, but by no means least, I dedicate this thesis to Cilla, Tessa, Simone, Lucy, Jayke & Clarabelle (and the ducks and chooks!), much loved members of my wider household.

Wherever in the world of animals there is a psychology with which to empathize, a personality whose welfare can be affected by what we do (or fail to do), there the feelings of love and compassion, of justice and protection must find a home.
- Tom Regan **(1986b:93).**

ABSTRACT

Social work's conceptualization as to what it is that entitles an individual or entity to moral consideration, or as having moral status, is thoroughly anthropocentric, and is articulated in complete disregard of the context of our fundamental evolutionary continuity and our embeddedness within an evolving natural world, and flies in the face of the reality that we *already* inhabit mixed communities and a wider household. It is deemed to be *obvious* that we are islands of moral value in an otherwise valueless natural world.

The reality that we too *are* animals has yet to be fully acknowledged, let alone the moral and ethical implications of this fact given due consideration. We, as a discipline, have yet to engage in reflection upon a deeper understanding of what constitutes the right moral relations we might have with fellow animals.

Social work's worldview has far reaching implications for the discipline's understanding of the nature of morality and subjectivity, and critically shapes how we understand not only our own nature but that of other species, as well an appreciation of our place within the natural world; for "If we do not grasp our links with that world, we cannot properly understand ourselves" (Midgley,1994b:14). Social work, whilst ostensibly discarding religious notions of our unique value, embraces the humanist dogma that human dignity demands an irrevocable divide between humankind and all other species, and decrees that respect is owed *only* to our conspecifics.

Such an undertaking is fundamentally at odds with the reality of our evolutionary continuity, and this rupture serves to misrepresent our understanding of human nature, subjectivity and motivation, let alone that of our fellow animals.

Accordingly, this thesis is fundamentally concerned with identifying which entities social work has chosen to incorporate within its moral universe, and to discern its rationale for moral inclusion *and* exclusion. It is not enough to assume it *obvious*, for such an assumption is nothing more than a disingenuous device to secure the *a priori* demand for human uniqueness.

Indeed it will be argued that social work (in theory, if not always in practice) accords moral centrality to subjectivity, with the notion of the individual being an end in

himself/herself serving as the discipline's sovereign moral value. This fact, independent of a subject's attributes or qualities, grounds the inclusion of *all* human beings, and unless recourse is made to arbitrary criteria or speciesist prejudices, allows for the extension of moral consideration to be accorded to all subjective beings, *independent* of their species membership. There is a reality that transcends us, and there are realities independent of us.

The practical relevance of this thesis resides in the reality that social workers, knowingly or not, routinely work within a wider household, one that includes many other independent realities. That this fact is rarely acknowledged, let alone reflected upon, all too often results in an ossification of social workers' moral faculties, and culminates in an attitude of moral indifference to the welfare and well-being of fellow animals.

This thesis entreats social work to adopt and embrace as its sovereign moral principle a respect for all subjective beings as ends in themselves, whatever their species membership, and a respect for the natural world in which all species are embedded. Therein rests our dignity.

each creature is the outward sign of an equal soul, and to be respected as such.
- *Stephen R. L. Clark* (1984:177).

CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(1)   incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(11)   contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(111) contain any defamatory material.

Thomas David Anthony Ryan

__Nota bene__ – For the sakes of simplicity and succinctness, the term *animal* has been employed in this thesis to refer to the *non-human* animal, but it needs be read as indicating that we are, in truth, their animal fellows.

All italics in quotes in the body of the thesis are thus in the referenced literature, unless indicated otherwise.

…thence he learned

In oft-recurring hours of sober thought

To look on nature with a humble heart…

And with a superstitious eye of love.

- *William Wordsworth* **('The Excursion', n.d.:341)**

Few people seem to perceive fully as yet that the most far-reaching consequence of the establishment of the common origin of all species, is ethical; that it logically involved a readjustment of altruistic morals by enlarging as a *necessity of rightness* the application of what has been called 'The Golden Rule' beyond the area of mere mankind to the whole animal kingdom…The discovery of the law of evolution, which revealed that all organic creatures are of one family, shifted the centre of altruism to the whole conscious world collectively.
- Thomas Hardy (**1930a:141,138**)

A social worker receives a phone call from a woman who requests assistance, and who discloses that she is a victim of domestic violence. Although she and her husband separated some six months prior, he has continued to routinely harass and make all manner of threats against her. On attending the woman's home, the social worker learns that the violence is longstanding and severe in nature, and that her four pre-teen children have often witnessed their mother being verbally abused and physically assaulted by their father. The family are in dire financial straits, having little in the way of food and with outstanding electricity and telephone accounts, as well as being in arrears with the property rental. It is all too obvious that the woman is at her wit's end. The children appear withdrawn, listless and melancholy, and have been infrequent in their school attendance. During the course of the visit, the social worker observes two dogs, both restrained on short chains in the backyard, without shelter, shade or clean water, and surrounded by mounds of their own excrement. Both dogs are in poor physical condition, being obviously malnourished and flea-ridden, and appear to have mange. In this situation, who is the social worker's 'client' (in traditional language), and to whom, and to what, should the social worker attend?

Another social worker is engaged by a child welfare agency to work with a thirteen year old male child who has been the victim of physical and sexual abuse. Over the course of many months the social worker observes that the boy has had any number of various companion animals (birds, guinea pigs, kittens, pups, rabbits,) who have died with varying injuries for

any number of vague reasons. Once again, in this situation, who is the 'client', and to whom and to what should the social worker attend?

A fourth year social work student, on her final placement, works with a family who have three young children, and who are experiencing myriad difficulties. The parents appear to be barely coping. At the commencement of her visits the social work student notices that the family has three puppies, and that the children regularly drop them or otherwise hold and carry them about in inappropriate ways. On subsequent visits she notices that the number of pups decreases from three to two, and then to one. Whilst she feels a degree of disquiet about their disappearance, she does not enquire as to their absence. The remaining pup looks obviously ill, but apart from suggesting to the children the correct way to hold the animal, the social work student, *in spite* of her concern about the animal's welfare and well-being, takes the matter no further. Upon further reflection, she then resolves that on her next visit she will voice her concern, but when she asks after the pup she is informed that the animal has died. The social work student feels guilt about not acting on her concerns, concerns that progressively escalated during the course of her contact with the family, and agonizes over how she might have done things differently. If the family are her 'clients', as indeed they are, then why is she feeling that she has somehow failed in her duty, and is somewhat culpable as a consequence?

In the final snapshot, a social worker is attempting to facilitate arrangements for a woman, who is emotionally and psychologically fragile, leaving her home and community due to longstanding domestic violence. The woman has made the decision to leave her children with her husband, but has a number of animals, and insists that unless she takes them with her, in spite of everything, she will remain in her current situation. The social worker concerned wrestles with the very same question: who is or are the 'client'/'clients', and to what, and to whom, should the social worker attend?

All four scenarios are drawn from an amalgam of the author's casework experience, and are presented in order to encourage reflection upon what it is that social workers attend to and prioritize, and what it is that they ignore or relegate to relative unimportance.

The importance of this thesis lies in its examination of the rationale for inclusion in, or exclusion from, social work's moral universe, rather than the discipline's current *assumption* that anthropocentrism is a valid and non-negotiable *given*. As part of the process of examining the supposedly *obvious*, it is essential to identify the philosophical and metaphysical assumptions that underlie the worldview of the Western tradition *and*, by

association, the moral framework of contemporary social work, and to ask ourselves whether or not moral considerability is conveniently and irrevocably circumscribed by membership of the human species. Social work has unreservedly embraced this *a priori* assumption.

That this was not always so, as shall be shown later in this chapter, will undoubtedly be a source of great bewilderment given the incredulity that one is routinely met with at the mere suggestion that social workers give *consideration* to the question as to whether or not we should attend to the interests and well-being of animals, let alone commit ourselves to respecting subjectivity irrespective of species membership. This response is reflective of Midgley's (1996a:232) observation that "a tradition that a certain topic does not matter is one of the hardest things to get rid of - discussion tends to be tabooed before it starts".

In the author's personal experience within his discipline, a social work academic ventured the opinion that concern for animals had as much relevance to social work as did aeronautical engineering, another senior academic expressed misgivings that moral consideration of animals waylaid social work's attention from more *deserving* and *relevant* issues, whilst a social work practitioner (and Masters student) opined that it is *obvious* that domesticated animals are here but for us to eat - indeed, what other function could they possibly serve?!

The negative appears so *obvious* that it is not even considered necessary to be dignified with, or justified by, reasoned moral argument; the well-being of animals and the natural world, apart from serving instrumental or aesthetic ends, is of no consequence or import for social work. Or so the orthodox refrain would have one believe. The notion that humankind is central to the cosmos is held as an article of faith, encapsulated in the belief that the world was either made *for* us, or is made *by* us (Shepard, 1996), never leading us to pause for one moment to consider that maybe we are made *for* the world (Clark, 1997d; Murdoch, 1977; Plato, 1980), and that "our true good lies in enjoying and caring for the good in all things" (Clark, 1987:148).

All four aforementioned scenarios are drawn from an amalgam of casework experience, and are presented by way of exploring what it is that social workers attend to and prioritize, and what it is that they ignore or relegate to relative unimportance. Even where, as in the case of the social work student, concern for the animals is all too obviously *felt*, and deemed to be of *some* importance, there appears to be no guide or source of intra-discipline illumination to which the social worker can refer in order to make an appropriate response,

or engage in appropriate moral judgement. It would be an odd social worker who would remain entirely indifferent to the plight of the animals so described, for it would be fair to say that few, except perhaps the truly pathological, consider that we have no duties whatsoever to animals and that whatever befalls them at the hands of human beings is of no moral significance. In all probability the aforementioned social workers would feel varying degrees of unease about the conditions and fate of the animals involved, but this may be not so much for the experience of the animals *per se*, but for what it might bode or entail for the character, or fate, of the humans involved.

> But still those innocents are thralls
> To throbless hearts, near, far, that hear no calls
> Of honour towards their too-dependent frail… (Hardy, 1976:822)

Concern for animals and their well-being is marked by great ambiguity in Western societies, alternating between compassion and instrumentalism (Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997; Ryder, 1989). Most prohibitions against cruelty concern themselves with those animals with whom who share our lives and homes in a form of extended kinship, whilst the greater community of animals utilized for myriad human purposes are routinely subjected to treatment that would result in prosecution for cruelty or neglect were it occasioned in the domestic sphere. And yet we all too often betray the trust of even domestic animals (Palmer, 2006; Rollin & Rollin, 2001) - Coetzee's (2000:78) Lucy pointedly observes that dogs "do us the honour of treating us like gods, and we respond by treating them like things".

It would not be generalizing to make the observation that social work folklore is replete with stories of animal neglect and/or abuse; it is often implicit in much casework experience, but infrequently made explicit. It is not as though social workers are unaware of, routinely indifferent to, or negligent by malevolent intent, of animal neglect and abuse. But it is also fair to say that social workers, by and large, rarely, if ever, act upon incidents that patently impact upon the welfare and well-being of domestic animals, let alone those animals routinely utilized in commercial agriculture, experimentation or any other number of activities that violate the inherent value of sentient creatures.

Social work's moral framework does not allow for the moral considerability of any creatures *but* human beings, for human beings are seen as not only possessing inherent

value and dignity, but are deemed to be the *only* beings having such status. It is little wonder then that social work practitioners, their own *feelings* aside, routinely fail to act upon the neglect and abuse of animals, or take into consideration the importance of animals as extended family. The role that Code of Ethics plays in the failure of social workers to respond appropriately is a central moral concern of this thesis.

Even though it is well known in social work circles that perpetrators of domestic violence and sexual abuse/assault often injure or kill family animals (or at the very least vow to make good such threats), social workers by and large remain resolutely indifferent, even dismissive of according moral considerability to the aforesaid animals. A recently implemented (laudably so) initiative of domestic violence and sexual assault services in Launceston, Tasmania to provide financial assistance for crisis shelter for animals of those accessing their services met with an initial degree of worker resistance and suspicion, *because* funds should be employed to assist *human* victims and survivors, and somehow detracts from or diminishes the experiences of those human beings. The substantial linkage between domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and animal abuse (Ascione & Arkow, 1999; Lockwood & Ascione, 1998) has as yet received negligible assent in social work circles, and compassion continues to be conceptualized as a rare and irreplaceable commodity, not, as Midgley (1983c) contends, a power of mind which increases with usage. When and where it is taken into account, negligible or nil attention is paid to the interests of the animals involved; consideration *has* to be presented in terms of human interests alone.

Social work's dogmatic anthropocentrism is metaphysical, conceptualizing ourselves as different in *kind* from all other animals, and it serves to obscure our understanding of the human animal. It is assumed, not argued, that human beings are the measure of all things. And it is this absence that has particular implications for our consideration of the interests of animals. To omit any individual, group or issue is to send a loud and unmistakably incontrovertible message that any and all of the aforementioned *do not matter*, that their interests are trivial, and that we ought concern ourselves with more pressing issues. These are exactly the practical implications that routinely result from social work's moral indifference to the plight of animals; in practice, such moral dilemmas invariably tend to be resolved on species grounds. The 'client' is *always*, and *only*, the human being.

This thesis contends that social work's worldview, irrespective of theoretical orientation, is uniformly anthropocentric, and conspicuous exceptions to this orthodoxy are accorded

scant attention in the mainstream, to be found (sleuth-like expertise is required to unearth them) as contributions to interdisciplinary studies (Loar, 1999; Loar & White, 1998; Quackenbush, 1981), a one-off limited format social work branch newsletter (noteworthy nevertheless) dedicated to an exploration of the bond between human beings and animals (Cullen, 1999; Morris, 1999; Reed, 1999; Robinson, 1999; Shield, 1999), a social work honours thesis given over to an exploration of why social work ought concern itself with animal rights (Ryan, 1993a), and a subsequent journal article (Ryan, 1993b).

And one would look in vain for *any* guidance in coursework literature specifically devoted to ethical deliberation (Banks, 1990,1995; Hugman & Smith, 1995; Levy, 1976; Loewenberg & Dolgoff, 1996; Reamer, 1990,1995; Shardlow, 1998; Watson, 1985b; Wells & Masch, 1986), or, for that matter, in any social work code of ethics (Australian Association of Social Workers, 1999; British Association of Social Workers, 1996; National Association of Social Workers, 1996). Animals are conspicuous by their absence, and the scope of social work ethics is invariably treated as *inherently* anthropocentric, or, when cursorily considered, are either dismissed on the grounds that to do so would lead us well beyond the confines of our Western tradition (Clark & Asquith,1985), or even where consideration is acknowledged (even these exceptions devote no more than a couple of pages, at most), normative implications are not explored because the subject matter is held to be beyond social work's legitimate ambit (Clark, 2000; Downie & Telfer, 1969,1980; Ife, 2001). These oddities aside, the invisibility of animals in social work literature merely serves to confirm the perception that expressions of concern for animals are at best misplaced, and at worst frivolous, preposterous and misanthropic to boot. Social workers, who make a virtue of their practicality, are all too likely to be "ignorant of the principles on which they act, and careless of the consequences of what they do - because they prefer to think the present obvious. How things are is not how they must be" (Clark, 1991b:121).

To understand how it is that social work thinks in this way and where we go to from here (to provide practical guidance to its practitioners), the Western worldview will be briefly examined, particularly its metaphysical and philosophical conceptualizations of the moral standing of animals, in order to provide the context within which social work resides. Social work's criteria for moral regard and considerability is thoroughly human centred, and this singular failure to acknowledge our embeddedness and biological continuity, and its moral implications, is the central problem that will occupy this thesis. Social work's

ubiquitous anthropocentrism and its exclusion of animals from the moral sphere are the result of an uncritical acceptance of the prevailing Western worldview.

Worldviews, or our *imaginative visions* (Midgley, 2001a), have profound implications for how we define ourselves, as well as our understanding of our place in the natural world and our responsibilities to other species (Sen, 2004). There exists an important correlation between morals and metaphysics (Murdoch, 1993a,1997), for "The ways in which we imagine the world determines what we think important in it" (Midgley, 2003a:2). In the Western world there are enduring metaphysical, philosophical and theological traditions that view humankind as not only unique, but whose dignity demands a transcendence of animality and the natural world - Schweitzer (1955a:228-229) comments that

> European thinkers watch carefully that no animals run about in the fields of their ethics...Either they leave out altogether all sympathy for animals, or they take care that it shrinks to a mere afterthought, which means nothing. If they admit anything more than that, they think themselves obliged to produce elaborate justifications, or even excuses, for so doing.

Orthodoxy, Fuller (1949:833) observes, supposes that "the only way of keeping the system in order and man master of it is to shoo them out of the house altogether and stop one's ears against their scratchings at the door".

In all cultures animals assist in the definition of what it is to be human (Baker, 1993; Clark, 1997a; Franklin, 1999,2006; Fudge, 2002a,2002b; Ingold, 1988a,1988b; Levi-Strauss, 1966; Midgley, 1996a; Simons, 2002; Tester, 1991; Thomas, 1983). Our similarities and dissimilarities have preoccupied humans across the ages (Harwood, 1928), and Thomas (1983:40) observes that "Neither the same as humans, nor wholly dissimilar, the animals offered an almost inexhaustible fund of symbolic meaning". Their very being is utilized as an affirmation of our *otherness*, and entails their disparagement as embodiments of our all too human failings, leading to what Mason (1993) terms *misothery*, hateful and contemptuous attitudes towards them.

Whilst the Judaeo-Christian tradition is often deemed to be responsible for this radical disjuncture, and to be inherently antithetical to concern for animals and the natural world

(Mason, 1993; Santmire, 1985; Singer, 1976; Toynbee & Ikeda, 1976; White, 1967), this is by no means held to be uniformly the case (Agius, 1973; Clark, 1986a,1993a; Drummond, 2005; Hume, 1957; Linzey, 1976,1985,1987,1994,1998b; Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997; Linzey & Yamamoto, 1998; Preece, 2005; Preece & Fraser, 2000; Scully, 2002; Sobosan, 1991). Indeed Preece (2003,2005) argues that Christianity engendered more respectful attitudes to animals than did Darwinism. Nevertheless, one need not look far for evidence of neglect - the author of Genesis (9:2-3) decrees that "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth…air…sea…into your hand are they delivered", interpreted by Aquinas as sanctioning *absolute* dominion (Aquinas, 1989a,1989b,1990a,1990b; Calvin, 1990; Linzey, 1987). Robert Burns (n.d.:9) laments

> I'm truly sorry Man's dominion
>
> Has broken Nature's social union…

Augustine holds that human rationality mirrors the divine (Clark, Gillian, 1998; Ickert, 1998), and because animals lack reason we have no need to concern ourselves with their suffering, for their purpose is human ends (Augustine, 1990).

For all its obvious shortcomings the Judaeo-Christian tradition ultimately held human beings accountable for their actions to a being greater than their individual and collective selves (God's existence reminds us that we are *not* God), and in theory, at least, conceptualized human beings as stewards of creation (Linzey, 1987,1994; Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997; Spanner, 1998), a notion that has evolutionary plausibility (Midgley, 1983c). Freed from the constraints of spiritual traditions, the natural world was duly divested of associated feelings of awe and wonder (Sheldrake, 1981; Sheldrake & Fox, 1997; Thomas, 1973,1983), and Thomas (1983) claims that the basis for the contemporary concept of balance in nature was theological *before* it was scientific. The notion of a covenant between God and *all* living things entails the rejection of an *exclusive* human community in preference to a *mixed community* inclusive of animals (McDaniel, 1993), finds parallels in the metaphysics of the Eastern traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism (Chapple, 1993,2001,2002a,2002b; Tobias, 1991).

The prophet Nathan (II Samuel 12:3) reflects a quite different relationship to that conceived to be the norm - "the poor man had only one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He tended it and it grew up together with him and his children: it used to share his morsel of bread, drink from his cup, and nestle in his bosom; *it was like a daughter to him*" (italics mine). Reflecting on the moral of this tale, Midgley (1983c) notes that the poor man's solicitude is no bourgeois folly, it is not a substitute for absent children, and his affection and relationship with the ewe lamb is perfectly natural. In other words, it is appropriate that we exhibit affection toward humans and animals, *for their own sakes*. This relationship is complete in itself, not an incomplete model of something else (Buber, in Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997; Hearne, 1987); instrumentalism eclipses genuine encounter (Hardy, 1929; Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997).

Within the Christian tradition St. Francis of Assisi proposes a radically different conception of our relationship with animals (Armstrong, 1973; Sorrell, 1988), one that acknowledges *ontological continuity*, and in common with St. John Chrysostom (Linzey & Regan, 1988), our *shared origins* (St. Bonaventure, 1978). The Franciscan legacy is that of cosmic awareness and compassion for animals (Gaffney, 1998; House, 2001; Linzey, 1987; Robson, 1997). We find parallel sentiments in the world of literature, where Dostoevsky's (1952:167) Father Zossima entreats us to

> Love all God's creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all embracing love. Love the animals: God has given them the rudiments of thought and joy untroubled. Do not trouble it, don't harass them, don't deprive them of their happiness, don't work against God's intent. Man, do not pride yourself on superiority to the animals; they are without sin, and you, with your greatness, defile the earth by your appearance on it, and leave traces of your foulness after you – alas, it is true of almost everyone of us.

By way of contrast, Callicott (1982) identifies Western natural philosophy, with its much greater influence upon modern scientific thought, as the chief culprit. Modern materialism, with its roots in the reductive and mechanical ontology of the Greek atomists, entails a *monadic moral philosophy* which posits two fundamental options for ethics - either a

Hobbesian harmonization of our appetites, or a conceptual talisman like Kant's Reason (Callicott, 1989a).

Not unexpectedly, the Western philosophical tradition is a mixed bag - Dombrowksi (2000) claims that whereas the Stoics were unambiguously dismissive of animals, Plato and Aristotle are more respectful (if ambivalent), whilst Plotinus (1952), Plutarch (1999; Newmyer, 2005), Porphyry (1965) and Pythagoras (Dombrowski, 1984; Walters & Portmess, 1999) were part of the tradition that emphasized similarities between species, a sense of kinship and responsibilities to other animals (Preece, 2002).

Whilst Greek and Roman philosophers did not employ the language of *rights*, Nash (1990) observes that their utilization of the principles *jus naturae* were a recognition that prior to human-made law human beings lived according to certain biological principles, which were in due course overlaid by conceptions of justice, *jus commune* or the common law. The Greek and Roman philosophers were also greatly preoccupied as to the nature of the relationship between human beings and animals. As a consequence the Romans articulated the moral precepts *jus animalium*, which inferred that animals, independent of humankind and their legal and political structures, possessed what subsequent philosophers referred to as *inherent* or *natural rights*, and Nash (1990:17) observes that "As the third-century Roman jurist Ulpian understood it, the *jus animalium* was part of the *jus naturale* because the latter includes "that which nature has taught all animals; this law indeed is not peculiar to the human race, but belongs to all animals" ".

Aristotle (1990; Yamamoto, 1998) conceptualizes the natural world as hierarchical in nature, and contends that it is only right and proper that the role of the less rational, and consequently *less* perfect, is to be beholden to, and serve, the more rational, and consequently, *more* perfect (Singer,1979); these two beliefs, Steiner (1998:272) observes, "are foundational for the entire subsequent tradition of Western thinking regarding the relationship between human beings and animals". Even so, his ethics (that which is requisite for the *flourishing* of *all* animals) are informed by biology (Aristotle, 1952; Clark, 1975), but Clark (1995e) argues that Plato, received knowledge notwithstanding, posits a greater ontological continuity, and duties to animals not of our kind, than does Aristotle - indeed, Aristotle maintains that our responsibilities to animals are lessened by their inability to share a sense of community with humans (Preece, 2002). A Cartesian, Hobbesian or Kantian formulation of ethics is intrinsically human-centred,

with subjectivity deemed to be incontrovertibly the sole preserve animals of *our* kind. Human beings, Hobbes (1904,1990) argues, are calculating egoists, and our need of others is predicated solely on their utility to us; animals, having no language, and therefore unable to enter into contracts, fall outside the circle of moral standing.

Descartes (1989,1990) avers that animals cannot be harmed or suffer because they are insensible and irrational machines, for reason is *dependent* upon speech. It was Descartes' metaphysics that paved the way for a radical rendering asunder of human beings from the natural world, and inculcated a reductionistic and instrumental view of all fellow animals - his distinction between rational, autonomous beings and mechanistic automatons, entails that human beings are not only unique, they are *all* that matter. Descartes (1989:17,19) opines that "there is no prejudice to which we are all accustomed from our earliest years than the belief that dumb animals think…my opinion is not so much cruel to animals as indulgent to men…since it absolves them from the suspicion of crime when they eat or kill animals".

By way of contrast, Spinoza (n.d.) insists that ethical concern for others is dependent upon their being like *us*, and whilst conceding that animals feel, their exploitation receives its justification from their essential *dissimilarity* to human beings.

Kantian morality posits that human relationships with the natural world are determined by the fact that *Man* is "the single being on earth that possesses understanding, (and) he is certainly titular lord of nature and, supposing we regard nature as a teleological system, he is born to be its ultimate end" (Kant, quoted in Passmore, 1974:15). Kant holds that rationality, *not* consciousness, is *the* characteristic which qualifies a being for moral regard (Acton, 1985; Midgley, 1996a; Scruton, 1982), and as animals are not *self*-conscious, we have no duties towards them; he nevertheless credits animals with an emotional life (Midgley, 1996a). Central to Kantian philosophy is the distinction between persons and things, between subjects and objects, and as important as this distinction is for how we view and treat human beings, it specifically excludes animals from the moral universe given that only rational beings can be persons and subjects.

In arguing why cruelty to animals is an evil, Kant (1989:23-24) maintains that

> *Animals are not self-conscious and are there merely as a means to an end. That end is man.*
> We can ask, "Why do animals exist?" But to ask, "Why does man exist?" is a meaningless

question. *Our duties towards animals are merely indirect duties towards humanity*…Thus, if a dog has served his master long and faithfully, his service, on the analogy of human service, deserves reward, and when the dog has grown too old to serve, his master ought to keep him until he dies…we have duties towards the animals because thus we cultivate the corresponding duties towards human beings. If a man shoots his dog because the animal is no longer of capable of service, he does not fail in his duty *to the dog*, for the dog cannot judge, but his act is inhuman and damages in himself that humanity which it is his duty to show towards mankind. If he is not to stifle his human feelings, he must practice kindness towards animals, for he who is cruel to animals becomes hard also in his dealing with men. We can judge the heart of a man by his treatment of animals. (all italics mine)

Likewise, Aquinas (1989b) dismisses animals as recipients deserving of our charity due to their being *irrational* creatures, and he contends that

> If any passages of Holy Writ seem to forbid us to be cruel to dumb animals, for instance to kill a bird with its young: this is either to remove man's thought from being cruel to other men, and lest through being cruel to animals one becomes cruel to human beings: or because injury to an animal leads to the temporal hurt of man, either of the doer of the deed, or of another. (Aquinas, 1989a:9)

Kantians and Thomists thus view animals as mattering *only* in relation to ourselves (Broadie & Pybus, 1974,1978), their value contingent upon *our* interests, "to be cared for only as a practice for caring for people" (Clark, 1983a:175).

But this was not the uniform philosophical position - indeed there has been an historical discrepancy between the proclamations of metaphysicians and philosophers and everyday thinking about animals, and there were discordant, albeit minority voices, raised against the blanket exclusion of animals from the circle of moral considerability (Drummond, 2005; Harwood, 1928; Hursthouse, 2000; Nicholson, 1879; Oswald, 2000; Preece, 2002; Ryder, 1989; Serpell, 1986,1999; Sorabji, 1993; Thomas, 1983; Wynne-Tyson,1985; Young, 2001).

By way of example, Rousseau (quoted in Donovan, 1996b:39), whilst maintaining that animals are neither rational nor autonomous beings, nevertheless holds that they are indubitably *sentient* creatures; he argues that

as they partake in some measure of our nature in virtue of that sensibility with which they are endowed, we may well imagine they ought likewise to partake of the benefit of natural law, and that man owes them a certain kind of duty. In fact, it seems that, if I am obliged not to injure any being like myself, it is not so much because he is a reasonable being, as because he is a sensible being.

The view that sentience, rather than rationality or free will, ought be the decisive attribute that grounds our moral duties toward animals, finds its parallel in Bentham's (quoted in Singer, 1976:8) conviction that

The day *may* come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which could never have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. The French have already discovered that the blackness of the skin is no reason why a human being should be abandoned without redress to the caprice of a tormentor. It may one day come to be recognized that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum* are reasons equally insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the same fate. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day or a week or even a month, old. But suppose they were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, Can they *reason*? nor Can they *talk*? but, *Can they suffer*?

It is Donovan's (1996b) belief that Bentham (1990) and Rousseau consider sentience, a common condition that unites human beings *and* animals, to be *the* attribute which secures entrance into Kant's kingdom of ends.

Schopenhauer (quoted in Midgley, 1983c:52) is indignant at the notion that moral standing ought be confined to rational beings, and that all others be uniformly consigned instrumental status:

Genuine morality is outraged by the proposition that beings devoid of reason (hence animals) are *things* and therefore should be treated merely as *means* that are not at the same time an *end*...Thus only for practice are we to have sympathy for animals, and they are, so to speak, the pathological phantom for the purpose of practising sympathy for human beings.

In its stead Schopenhauer (ibid.) avers that "Boundless compassion for all living beings is the firmest and surest guarantee of pure moral conduct, and needs no casuistry...If we attempt to say, 'This man is virtuous, but knows no compassion'...the contradiction is obvious".

What this brief overview evidences is the prevailing tendency in the Western tradition to equate moral status and subjectivity *with* rationality. Descartes encapsulates this pervasive trend with his phrase *'Cogito, ergo sum' ('I think, therefore I am')*, with rationality installed as absolute sovereign. In observing that the Cartesian worldview is premised on the assumption that reason is the being of both the universe and God, Coetzee's (1999:33) Elizabeth Costello reflects that *'Cogito ergo sum'*

> implies that a living being that does not do what we call thinking is somehow second-class. To thinking, cogitation, I oppose fullness, embodiedness, the sensation of being - of being a body with limbs that have extension in space, of being alive to the world. This fullness contrasts starkly with Descartes's key state, which has an empty feel to it: the feel of a pea rattling around in a shell.

In the Middle Ages animals were held accountable for myriad crimes against human beings and their property, and were subjected to both legal and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, resulting in criminal prosecution and capital punishment, as well as exorcisms and excommunications (Evans, 1906; Hyde, 1915/1916). As bizarre as this might sound to modern ears, such practices at least accorded to animals status as more than mere objects and forbade summary execution (Ryder, 1989).

That which orthodox Christianity promulgated was in turn appropriated by humanism; the worship of God was replaced by the worship of humanity -Armstrong (1994) argues that humanism is a religion without God. Humanism, in trumpeting human beings as the *summum bonum* of creation, and human dignity as a consequence of their resting atop the natural order, was more dogmatically anthropocentric than the religious traditions it sought to supplant (Clark, 1994c) - Turner (1964:27) claims that "Only the feeblest flame of humanitarianism stirred in the cold wind of humanism".

Humanism *enthroned* humanity - the eighteenth century French philosopher Diderot (quoted in Malik, 2000:62) proclaims, magisterially, that "It is the presence of man which makes the existence of beings meaningful". Humanism endeavoured to condemn and

transcend divine or temporal subjugation of humanity by subjugating *everything* in the natural world to Man, and stands condemned as a disingenuous attempt to supplant conflict between human beings by an imaginary war against the world of animals and plants (Clark, 1977).

What humanist moralists feared above all else was that human beings would assuredly be treated like animals should the rupture between human beings and animals be, in any significant manner, breached (Clark, 1985b). Whereas animals had been seen as God's creatures and the natural world a manifestation of God's beneficence and grandeur, humanism declared that humankind alone had inherent value. Human dignity required a transcendence of the natural order, and comparisons with animals were considered an anathema. Whereas the religious Everyman had been shackled by the dictates of blind faith, all animals were creatures enslaved, in total bondage to blind instinct. The metaphysical map of humanism contrasted rational (and hence moral) Man with irrational (and therefore non-moral) animals - a world neatly divided between subjects and objects, persons and things. Humanity became self-absorbed and partial, content to gaze and marvel at its own reflection like a modern day Narcissus.

The most profound challenge to both religious and humanist worldviews came with the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, and from our contemporary vantage point it is difficult to imagine, let alone appreciate, the degree of controversy that Darwin theory of evolution engendered. Darwinism, Moore (1979:14) observes, involved "a crisis of belief in creation, providence, and design, of belief in the reality of the divine purposes in nature and the omnipotence and beneficence of the divine character which they reveal", whilst Brophy (1979a:95) argues that it caused Western civilization to suffer "one of its gravest intellectual trauma". Thomas Hardy (1930b:157) captures in thus -

> Next this strange message Darwin brings,
>   (Though saying his say
>   In a quiet way);
> We all are one with creeping things;
>   And apes and men
>   Blood-brethren,
> And likewise reptile forms with stings.

Darwin's worldview, which would forever alter the way in which we view ourselves and our place in the natural world, refutes the notion of an ontological divide between ourselves and all other species, and furthermore contends that morality itself developed out of the process of evolution (Darwin, 1936; McGinn, 1979; Midgley, 1984b,1994b,1995a; Ryder, 1989; Rachels, 1999; Rodd, 1990,1996). Human beings and animals, Darwin (1936,1965) insists, share a common ancestry, and the difference in mental and emotional capacities is one of degree, not kind; this represented a stupendous affront and perturbation to Victorian sensibilities (Desmond & Moore, 1991; Moore, 1979; Turner, 1980), and it continues to cause disquietude (Gray, 2002; Malik, 2000; Midgley, 1995a). Darwin (1936:494) was of the considered opinion that as ethics progressively evolved *all* sentient beings would come to be included within the sphere of moral concern, resulting in a "*disinterested love for all living creatures*" (italics mine), and his writings significantly enhanced the standing of animals (Midgley, 1989a; Rachels, 1999; Scholtmeijer, 1993; Singer, 1976). Darwin's conceptualization of the evolution of ethics was influenced by the Irish historian William Lecky (quoted in Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989:66), who, in his *History of European Morals*, observes that

> At one time the benevolent affections embrace merely the family, soon the circle expanding includes first a class, then a nation, then a coalition of nations, then all humanity; and finally its influence is felt in the dealings of man with the animal world. In each of these cases a standard is formed, different from that of the preceding stage, but in each case the same tendency is recognized as virtue…It is abundantly evident, both from history and from present experience, that the instinctive shock, or natural feelings of disgust, caused by the sight of the sufferings of men, is not generically different from that which is caused by the sight of the suffering of animals.

Social work's summary rejection of Darwinism, and (it is argued) its consequential dismissal of any moral consideration of animals, is in large part due to the deleterious moral and ethical implications of Social Darwinism. As a consequence, Darwinian theory itself was rejected out of hand for its seemingly misanthropic intent and implications. That this was not a uniform response by early social workers to Darwin's theory is borne out by Charles Brace, a leading American social worker and reformer, who read *On The Origin of*

Species thirteen times and discerned in evolution the basis and efficacy of human virtue and the assurance of human perfectibility, observing that "if the Darwinian theory be true, the law of natural selection applies to all the moral history of mankind, as well as the physical. Evil must die ultimately as the weaker element, in the struggle with good" (Brace, quoted in Hofstadter, 1965:16).

It is little wonder then that Ryder (1983:132) likens the impact of *On the Origin of Species* to

> a bombshell which blasted man's arrogant assumption that he was in a superior and separate category to all other animals. Once man had reluctantly accepted that he was just one species among many others, and that despite his greater intelligence he was biologically similar to other creatures and indeed shared kinship with them, then one of his main pretexts for abusing them was blown to pieces. He could no longer justify an entirely separate moral status for himself. *If there was biological kinship then why not a moral kinship also*? (italics mine)

It is to be noted however that Darwin's espousal of a moral egalitarianism was to have minimal effect then *and* now (Moore, 1907,1992; Ritvo, 1987; Rachels, 1999; Salt, 1921,1935) - indeed Gray (2002:31) opines that "Darwinism is now the central prop of the humanist faith that we can transcend our animal natures and rule the earth".

Precisely because Social Darwinism was so strident in deducing egoistic ethical precepts from Darwinian theory, it was invariably assumed that the only possible Darwinian approach to ethics was an egoistic rendering (Hofstadter, 1965; Midgley, 1995a; Rachels, 1999; Williams, 1974). Such an assumption was to have significant implications for how the developing discipline of social work would conceptualize human nature and our place within the natural world, as well as social work's conceptualization of morality. In a reaction to what it perceived to be the deterministic and fatalistic implications of Darwinian theory, social work conceived human nature as interminably malleable, and so commenced social work's extolling of nurture to the virtual exclusion of nature. The tragedy lies not in its rejection of Social Darwinism - a philosophy, as Midgley (1995a:6) reminds us, with "very little connection with physical science…born in economics and nurtured by political theory" - rather, in its rejection of Darwinian theory *per se*.

It is Nash's (1990:13) considered belief that the Magna Carta of 1215, which ushered in the concept that eighteenth century revolutionaries termed natural rights, was "ethical dynamite", observing that this concept possesses a tendency to take on expanded meaning and has within it the seeds of revolutionary ethical extension (Paine, 1930,1998). Its significance lay in the attribution of rights by mere virtue of existence, albeit limited to a specific section of society, the English male nobility, and by placing limitations upon the exercising of royal power - the natural rights due to human beings issue from the *nature* of human beings, and these moral entitlements are pre-conventional, in that they are not derivative of any legal, moral or contractual criteria (Rowlands, 1998). Natural rights principles took root and bore fruit in Western thought throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and Thomas (1983) argues that there were three forces at play in bringing animals into the circle of moral considerability - firstly, the admittedly minority Christian position that humans were God's stewards; secondly, the awareness that the world had value apart from human ends, which, he claims, represented a revolutionary development in Western thought; and thirdly, sentience, rather than rationality, was accorded *the* criterion for moral standing.

Several humanitarian founders of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA) had also been prominent advocates for the abolition of slavery, workplace and social reform, as well as child protection (Moss, 1961; Ryder, 1989). In its formative stages the animal welfare movement was fostered by Christian moralists, amongst whose numbers were Quakers, Methodists and Evangelicals, as well as sceptics (Attfield, 1983a; Li, 2000). Nineteenth century humanitarians conceived the interrelatedness of cruelty, suffering and oppression as transcending species boundaries, and their conception derived from natural rights principles that averred that oppression and suffering were not peculiarly human experiences. Compassion and empathy were not conceptualized as rare and irreplaceable resources, rather a habit or power of mind, a viewpoint that was accorded legitimacy by the humanitarian reformers who spoke out as vociferously in defence of human beings as for animals, and who personage included such luminaries as Voltaire, Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Bentham, Mill and Shaw (Midgley, 1983c,1992a).

Simultaneous concern for the well-being of human beings (*especially* those formerly despised) and animals gathered significant momentum in the nineteenth century reflected an ever widening of moral sensibilities (Gould, 1988; Harrison, 1982; Harwood, 1928;

Mortensen, 2000; Perkins, 2003; Preece, 2002; Thomas, 1983), and political and social change (Hendrick, 1977; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989; Kean, 1998; Mill, n.d.; Salt, 1886,1894,1921,1935; Weinbren, 1994). There exists, Henry Salt (1894), the nineteenth century animal rights advocate who combined a concern for animals with socialism, feminism and pacifism, insists, an intrinsic relationship between oppression and cruelty *and* a dearth of imaginative sympathy and kinship (Bailey, 1956,1972; Gowdy, 2000; Orel, 1975); sentience and individuality in *all* animals are matters morally (Ryder, 1989), for "*man* is an animal no less than they" (Salt, 1894:15).

Historically, the utilitarian tradition sought to expand the moral circle beyond human interests (Mill, 1990a,1990b), and holds that "the point of morality is...the happiness of beings in *this* world" (Rachel, 1995:92), to be "secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation" (Mill, 1901:17). For Mill, following in the footsteps of Bentham, morality and membership of the moral community is not a status confined, *a priori*, to the human species.

Legislation specifically relating to animals was tardy in making its entrance, and the earliest success anywhere in the world was 'An Act to Prevent the Cruel and Improper Treatment of Cattle', also known as Martin's Act, in England in 1822, which made cruelty a punishable nationwide offence. The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, later to become the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, was established in 1824 by Anglican clergyman Arthur Broome and fellow humanitarians, including Richard Martin, Thomas Foxwell Buxton and William Wilberforce (the latter two staunch opponents of slavery) (Ryder, 1983), and this organization played a pivotal role in the promotion of legal reform, including the outlawing in 1835 of fighting or baiting any bull, bear, badger, dog, cock or any other animal; the prohibition of the use of carts drawn by dogs in 1854; the regulation of vivisection in 1876; and the regulation of animals in transit in 1878 (Ryder, 1989). Ryder notes, by way of comparison, that the dissection of living animals in the United States went unchallenged and unrestricted until the Animal Welfare Act of 1966.

Martin's Act was phrased in terms of injury to *other* persons' animals and therein reflected the disinclination of those drafting legislation to address cruelty inflicted upon animals by their owners. Nash (1990) draws parallels with this aversion to intervention with the disinclination of contemporary law drafters to respond to early attempts to ameliorate master-slave and husband-wife relationships. Likewise, concern for animal welfare was

disproportionately centred upon the pursuits and interests of the working class (Harrison, 1967; Kean, 1998; Lansbury, 1985; Ritvo, 1987; Ryder, 1989; Thomas, 1983; Turner, 1980), and the state intervened on behalf of domestic animals decades prior to doing so on behalf of women and children (Kean, 1998). Those humanitarian reformers who sought to draw attention to the inherent linkage between human and non-human welfare were condemnatory of such obvious contradictions (Ritvo, 1987; Ryder, 1989; Salt, 1894), and Salt (1894:59), in rejecting the artificial and arbitrary moral classism that obfuscated inhumane treatment of sentient animals by *all* classes, insisted "that *all* barbarities, whether practiced by rich or poor, are alike condemned by any conceivable principle of justice and humaneness". The better it be, Wordsworth (n.d.:109) insists,

> Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
> With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.

Richard Martin, who had introduced Martin's Act into Parliament and who was a co-founder of the RSPCA, was responsible, in tandem with others, for the promotion of laws that sought to guarantee protection to child labourers in 1802 and 1833 in Great Britain. The seventh Earl of Shaftesbury and William Wilberforce, the most historically lauded social reformers of the nineteenth century (Ryder, 1989), conspicuously devoted the latter years of their lives in engaged in advocating on behalf of the welfare of animals. Shaftesbury, who steadfastly opposed the practice of vivisection, made significant contributions to reforming legislation that dealt with the treatment of the insane, the employment of children as chimney sweeps and in mines, the condition of workers in mills and factories, as well as measures designed to ameliorate the education and the housing of the poor (Ryder, 1989).

It was not only in the British Isles that the pioneers of legal action against child abuse happened also to be advocates for the welfare of animals. In 1866 Henry Bergh, the founder of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA), with the assistance of ASPCA attorney Elbridge Gerry and Quaker activist John Wright, were instrumental in establishing the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (SPCC) from a corner in the ASPCA office (Clifton, 1991; Ryder, 1983). Legislation specifically enacted to combat cruelty to animals was utilized to counteract ill-treatment of children, with Bergh (quoted in Scott & Swain, 2002:7) averring that "The child is an animal...If

there is no justice for it as a human being it shall at least have the rights of a stray cur in the streets. It shall not be abused".

In Great Britain the RSPCA established the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) in the same year, and the endeavours of Shaftesbury, Cardinal Manning and Dr. Barnardo were instrumental in its creation (Turner, 1964). The commonly acknowledged founder of the NSPCC, the Reverend Benjamin Waugh, professed the Society's debt to the RSPCA by expressing that "Your Society, the RSPCA, has given birth to a kindred institution whose object is the protection of defenceless children" (quoted in Ryder, 1983:132). As Lansbury (1985) observes, attention to the wellbeing and welfare of children was a natural outgrowth from human compassion toward animals. Parallel trends were likewise evident in the Antipodes; the Queensland Society for the Prevention of Cruelty (QSPC) was initially established in 1883 specifically for the protection of animals prior to turning its attentions to the plight of children, whilst the Victorian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (VSPCC) extended its brief in late 1884 so as to include concern for children (Scott & Swain, 2002).

The American Humane Society (AHS), founded in 1877 with the express objective of achieving federal laws to ensure the protection of animals involved in interstate commerce, expanded to become a society for the protection of animals and children in 1885. Of particular interest is the fact that the American Humane Society was subsequently involved in the creation of the International Children's Congress in 1913, and the International Child Welfare League in 1916. The American Humane Society was intimately involved with myriad human welfare issues, including the promotion of legal rights and humane care for orphans and illegitimate children; the combating of baby-selling rackets; the initiation of road safety education for children in 1926; and as recently as 1948 AHS affiliates were engaged in the provision of shelter to 50,000 children from abusive situations per year. Contemporarily, the AHS lobbies for legislation that promotes the welfare of children and is best known for its studies and accompanying statistical data relating to myriad child welfare issues (Clifton, 1991). The close connections between animal and child protection societies in both Great Britain and the United States belies the contemporary notion that human and animal concerns are unrelated, and is a classic example of the concomitancy of "the association of humanity to animals with humanity to humans" (Ryder, 1983:132).

Henry Salt, whom we encountered a little earlier, was amongst the first to make linkage between the plight of women and animals as victims of an oppressive social order

(Hendrick, 1977), and he contends that the essential prerequisite for change is that oppressors recognize those they oppress as being members of *their own community* (Nash, 1990; Salt, 1894,1935). This linkage between the plight of women and animals (Elston, 1990; Kean, 1995; Lansbury, 1985; Leneman, 1997) was corroborated by the fact that at the closure of the nineteenth century the majority of positions of leadership in animal welfare societies were occupied by women, who were also disproportionately represented in the movement as a whole; indeed French (1975) notes that female participation in the anti-vivisectionist movement was amongst the highest of any cause without explicitly feminist objectives.

The most formidable anti-vivisectionist of this period was Anglo-Irish writer, feminist, journalist and social worker Frances Power Cobbe, who in her prolific literary outpouring succinctly clarified the linkage between anti-vivisection, philanthropy, and the women's movement (Elston, 1990). In the 1850's, whilst in her early thirties, Cobbe assisted a pioneering social worker Mary Carpenter in the teaching of children in the Bristol slums (Ryder, 1989). Cobbe held cruelty to constitute the worst evil, and devoted substantial time and energy to the cause of animal welfare (Dombrowski, 1985), but the rights of human beings, especially those of women, remained her primary concern. Cobbe campaigned for the legal protection of women who were subjected to what she termed 'wife torture' and the reform of the institution of marriage, as well as advocating for university places and women's suffrage (Elston, 1990; Ryder, 1989). Paralleling Cobbe in the United States was the prominent animal welfare advocate Caroline Earle White, who had initially been passionately engaged in the movement to abolish slavery, but who was to spend the remainder of her life working on behalf of women, children and animals (Clifton, 1991).

Consequently, in Great Britain in the late Victorian and Edwardian eras, campaigns on the behalf of animals were increasingly associated with campaigns for the advancement of the interests of women (Elston, 1990; Lansbury, 1985). Cobbe's anti-vivisection campaigns had the subsidiary goal of facilitating the improvement of women's economic, political and social position, and her employed tactic of bestowing feminism with a mantle of respectability imbued with moral conservatism greatly enhanced the prospects of both causes (Elston, 1990). Prominent feminists who were also advocates for welfare of animals included amongst their number personages such as Annie Besant, Charlotte Despard, Anna Kingsford, Lewis Gompertz, John Stuart Mill, and the social worker Maria Dickin, who founded the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals of the Poor in 1917 in London, and

whose work was subsequently extended nationwide - Dickin, who worked in slums, aimed to procure the provision of free veterinary treatment for animals of the poor, and her work was transferred by her workers in subsequent years to other European nations as well as to North Africa (Kean, 1998; Ryder, 1989). Charlotte Despard, the secretary of the Women's Social and Political Union in Britain, who was imprisoned as a result of her activities in support of the movement to procure universal suffrage, was also a staunch anti-vivisectionist and vegetarian (Carpenter, 1916; Charlton, Coe & Francione, 1993).

It is Lansbury's (1985) contention that the working classes and women shared a profound mutual distrust of the medical profession, and discerned in the practice of vivisection symbols of their own oppression. Such observations were not in the least surprising given the reality that women, members of the working classes, and the unemployed, who were not in the position of being able to afford medical treatment were as a consequence compelled to receive treatment by volunteering as teaching tools, or were utilized as experimental subjects, often without their informed consent, whilst it was common that the bodies of the deceased poor were often procured and utilized for the purposes of dissection (Lansbury, 1985).

Following Cobbe's departure opponents of the movement to enhance the welfare of animals, and their moral standing, played upon male prejudice by derogatively equating concern for animals as exhibiting 'womanly' tendencies, inferring sentimentality, irrationality, lack of objectivity, hysteria and squeamishness (Clark, 1983a; Lansbury, 1985; Midgley, 1983c). Clark (1987:148) argues that, on the contrary, "it is the person who refuses to see his or her own kinship with the beasts, and who denies that such miseries matter, who is denying reason", and contends that "traditional oppression of woman is linked with fear of their sexuality and distrust of 'womanish' sentiment" (Clark, 1983a:170) Such an attribution was utilized to ridicule the validity of human concern for animals, and was exceedingly effective in marginalizing and rendering invisible both the issue and the advocates themselves. Such forms of sexual politics were utilized to bolster powerful vested interests, and to discredit human concern about animals, and given that the overwhelmingly majority of early social work practitioners were women, the fledgling discipline was itself no stranger to the role that sexual politics played in the wider society and in marginalization. This process had far reaching ramifications, and in particular it ensured that for the majority of the twentieth century feminism would fail to make linkage between the oppression of women and animals, although this omission is now being

rectified (Adams, 1990,1994a; Adams & Donovan, 1995; Birke, 1994; Collard with Contrucci, 1988; Curtin, 2004; Donovan & Adams, 1996; Gruen, 2004; Kheel, 2004; Shield, 1999).

Even the passion of the aforementioned individuals cannot mask the reality that they were essentially a minority voice that always struggled merely to be heard, let alone be accorded any modicum of seriousness. Since the early twentieth century, social work has assiduously excluded animals from both its moral map and sphere of interest. Contemporary social workers would quite understandably assume that this has always been the case, and in keeping with tradition, quite likely assume that thus it ever will be. One can safely venture that they would be quite taken aback to discover that in the nineteenth century there existed clear linkage between human and animal concerns, and that early social workers accorded explicit attention to the well-being of both groups. The reason or reasons for the discipline's contemporary indifference would have likewise been a source of consternation to many social work pioneers. It is a matter of speculation as to why this state of affairs came to pass, and to be seen as not only obvious *but* essential.

The fact that concern for animals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused overwhelmingly upon members of the working classes is surely a not insignificant factor then *and* now for social work's dismissal of moral consideration of animals, given that social workers have historically worked almost exclusively with the weak and vulnerable in human society (as witnessed in the practice scenarios). It also needs saying that whilst the influence of sexual politics was not insignificant, these were not the only, nor indeed preeminent, reasons for the marginalization of concern for animals. The dual influences of psychiatry and sociology on the development of social work post World War I served to focus nigh-exclusive attention on the human individual or human society in abstraction from the natural world, whilst social work's desire to be accorded professional status surely played a not insignificant role in the jettisoning of animals from the discipline's sphere of interest (allied to a desire, surely, not to be seen as involving itself with issues that were likely to be viewed by the mainstream as essentially eccentric or frivolous - if a contemporary social worker can finds the term 'worker' degrading (!) (AASW, 2003), one can only imagine the response were one to raise one's voice about concern for animals).

Allied to these reasons is the almost universal notion that social work values are by definition exclusively human-centred; no animals stray into social work's house, let alone have a place at morality's high table. Anthropocentric orthodoxy was and remains the chief

villain of the piece - the exclusion of animals from the moral sphere was seen as obvious, and as proof of one's concern for human beings. Zoophilism and misanthropy were, and are, invariably taken to be natural bedfellows.

Paradoxically, the Darwinian revolution, which pointed us in the direction of our ontological continuity, with its consequential moral implications, was interpreted to almost invariably reinforce anthropocentrism. On the one hand it was considered an anathema and repudiated accordingly (in no small part due to the reductive Social Darwinian ideology), it being held that human dignity was dependent upon a distinct demarcation between humankind and animals; on the other hand, evolution was conceived escalator-like, with human beings the crowning glory of creation, precisely because we had supposedly transcended our animality. Either way, either interpretation impeded serious moral consideration of the nature of the relationship between ourselves and all other animals (not to mention the nature of ourselves), as well as the nature of our duties and obligations to them.

 Whilst it is fair to say that it is extremely unlikely that any social worker would advocate cruelty to animals, the majority would object to it on the grounds that it may well lead to cruelty to human beings, whilst many are seemingly indifferent even to this reality (given the almost deafening silence on the subject), and most, one suspects, are not particularly clear in their own minds what they think about this issue or why. To be sure, "it does not make sense to morally care about the suffering inflicted upon other animals unless some value is placed upon the lives of those animals" (Godlovitch, Roslind, 1971:171). All in all, it represents a most unsatisfactory state of affairs, and moral arguments cannot be disregarded *just* because they have always been ignored *thus far* (Rollin, 1983).

This thesis will be centrally concerned with an extended exploration of the the following questions:

- on what basis can claims for moral inclusion and exclusion be made?
- how can we understand our similitude and continuity with our fellow animals?
- does social work's conceptualization of the principle of *respect for persons* offer a means of moral inclusion?
- How may social work move forward with a new moral code?

All that remains to be done in this chapter is to provide an outline of the focus of each subsequent chapter.

Chapter Two will provide confirmation that social work is a discipline that is essentially concerned with respect for the subjectivity of human beings, and that social work has an inherently moral dimension. The chapter will also undertake an exploration of how moral inclusion or exclusion is dependent upon how social work thinks about itself, and by way of an examination of the concepts of moral considerability and the moral community, and reflection upon the origins of morality, an argument will be mounted that moral standing cannot be circumscribed by the species barrier.

Chapter Three undertakes an extended exploration of the nature of human beings and animals, arguing that an acknowledgement and acceptance of our status as terrestrial creatures, allied with a greater understanding of and respect for our fellow animals, is perfectly consistent with human dignity and moral standing. Rejecting both biological and cultural determinism, it will argue that our biological continuity with other species has moral implications.

Chapter Four will undertake an examination of *the* cardinal value of social work and morality generally, that being the principle of *respect for persons.* It will argue that this principle, as traditionally conceptualized, is problematic for many human beings, and arbitrarily excludes our fellow animals from the moral community. A moral framework will be articulated that is inclusive of all animals, human and non-human, one that holds that all subjective creatures have moral standing and possess inherent value.

Chapter Five will reflect upon some of the practical implications of this thesis' arguments, and the ways in which a new moral code (in Appendix) that is inclusive of animals will make for a manner of practice that respects the subjectivity all independent realities.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL WORK, SUBJECTIVITY, AND THE MORAL WORLD.

Our whole life is startlingly moral
- Henry David Thoreau (2004:210).

Social work is a moral discipline, and the very existence of social work values presupposes that social work has a moral framework and a vision of a moral community. This chapter locates social work as a moral discipline, and is foundational - we need to understand why social work conceptualizes morality and moral considerability in the way it does, and how this impacts upon our understanding of both humans *and* animals, and the chapter will mount the case that the subjectivity of our fellow animals makes the widening of the moral circle, and thus the scope of the Code of Ethics, morally obligatory. It will also examine accounts of the origins and purposes of morality. If moral subjectivity is dependent upon rationality and/or linguistic practice, it needs to be acknowledged that many humans fail to directly meet such stringent criteria.

Social work conceptualizes human beings as social beings, and acknowledges the inherent tension between its being an instrument of social change *and* social stability, and of having duties and responsibilities to the individual *and* society. This chapter makes the assumption that social work's theoretical multitudinousness, and the contested nature of social work definitions (Pithouse, 1987), belies the fact that we are dealing with a conceptual whole, underpinned by shared values and moral framework (Siporin,1992), and can therefore be seen to be a definable, bounded discipline. Social work has historically attended to the human individual as the primary locus of moral value, and social work is best characterized by its moral attentiveness to the centrality of subjectivity, which underpins and guides social work practice. That being so, I ask myself why is it that social work does not extend *any* moral consideration to the subjectivity of other species?

Contemporary social work tends to be dismissive of the notion that it has an explicit moral mission of assisting people to lead good lives in a good, and just, society (Siporin, 1982,1992). Little wonder then that social work is increasingly becoming a discipline

averse to the notion of service, with social workers straying from their core mission of serving society's weak and vulnerable (Gaha, 1998; Keith-Lucas, 1992; Specht & Courtney, 1995). A partial explanation for this trend is the augmented penchant for professional *status*, as distinct from a discipline motivated by specific values, that currently permeates social work. Social work is increasingly pursued as a *career* rather than a *calling* or *vocation*, and consequently it is no longer a rarity to come across social workers who practice in a perfunctory manner, who are singularly indifferent to the *indigent* (as officially opposed to *indigence*), in rapid retreat from their traditional domain. Expressions of professional arrogance and indifference to bread and butter concerns is antithetical to the traditional social work notion that whatever the presenting issue, it is not trivial to the individual presenting. One is reminded of Gandhi's conviction that for the poor God always appears firstly in the form of food; in other words, first things first. Even (often especially) agencies trumpeting social justice seem ignorant of this reality.

It was for such reasons that Mother Teresa (quoted in Wilkes, 1985:42) refused the title social worker, observing that "social workers work for a cause; the Church works for people". Whilst the terminology may sound somewhat archaic to some modern ears, social work holds clear conceptions as to what it is that constitutes good and evil for the human individual and society, and these conceptions are not arbitrary, but are reflective of the needs of our *nature*.

One regularly encounters a tintinnabulation of voices attesting to 'the value base of social work', 'the values underpinning practice', 'value dilemmas', 'value judgements', 'questions of value', or that social work is a 'value-laden activity'. Apart from literature that specifically addresses ethics, morality and values, one is struck by the paucity of treatment accorded to the role of social work values in the broader literature, let alone moral philosophy. Discussion of values and morality tend to be conducted in generalized, cursory and at times desultory manner, and this observation includes major theoretical texts (Howe, 1987; Payne, 1997; Turner, 1996a). Values are more often than not treated as though they are self-evident and self-explanatory entities, which only serves to reinforce the not uncommon perception that they are of secondary importance and arbitrary in nature. That the language of the literature dealing with values and morality tends to exhibit rather than analyze (Timms, 1983) feeds the perception that values are merely preferences (Gordon, 1965).

It did not fall to social work to create its values *ex nihilo*, for they are largely derivative of the Western moral tradition (Clark & Asquith, 1985; Plant, 1970; Reid, 1992, Watson, 1985a). The traditional conception of human life as both *unique* and *irreplaceable* has provided the bedrock for the fundamental moral and social values of Western society (Wilkes, 1981); Kant posits that *all* moral thinking is predicated upon an awareness of *otherness* (Midgley, 1996a), whilst Todorov (2000) characterizes *all* morality as concerned with an awareness of *other individuals*. The emphasis upon freedom, and recognition of the individual, were significant features of Enlightenment thought, and a necessary corrective to political tyranny and religious dogmatism (Rousseau, 1968). It had an important point to impart - each and every individual mattered by virtue of their *being*, irrespective of station or status in life; each and every individual had natural rights, and inherent dignity. The Enlightenment brought forth the evolution of a theory of rights for human beings, and prepared the way for truly revolutionary progress towards social justice (Midgley, 1996a). Its extremism however was manifested in its decree that human beings were taken to be the measure of *all* things, and that human dignity demanded an irrevocable divide between human beings and all other animals.

In engaging in an exploration of social work's values and moral framework this chapter will specifically be interested in discerning why it is that both values and morality are conceptualized as being limited in scope to human beings. It will be argued that the exclusion of animals from social work's moral universe is the consequence of ignorance and indifference rather than premeditated malign intent, for as evidenced in Chapter One, this has not always been a uniform feature of social work. This chapter will conduct an enquiry as to why it is we require values and morality in the first instance, where they derive their sanction from, and the consequences both have for our conceptualization of moral value and considerability.

That social work is an undertaking fundamentally concerned with issues of an ethical, moral and value nature is incontrovertibly confirmed by social work literature (Banks, 1995; Bosanquet, 1917; Butrym, 1979; Clark, 2000; Clark & Asquith, 1985; Downie & Proudfoot, 1978; Elliott, 1931; Gaha, 1998; Goldstein, 1973; Horne, 1987; Imre, 1982; Levy, 1976; MacCunn, 1911; Pinker, 1990; Plant, 1970; Siporin, 1989,1992; Watson, 1985a; Wilkes, 1981), and it is argued that social work is shaped and informed to a far greater extent by values and morality than it is by theory. Whilst "responsible, ethical practice needs to be built on strong theory" (Turner, 1996b:10,12), it is nevertheless

acknowledged that "theories are value driven". Social problems are essentially moral problems, and as Watson (1980) reminds us, social policies differ markedly from economic ones, for their aim lies in creating "moral relationships between individuals, giving individuals moral identities in relation to others". Any society that is bereft of common social ethics tends to substitute rights for functions, and self-interest for social purpose (Tawney, 1930; Wright, 1987).

The literature also shows that social work is fundamentally concerned with the subjectivity of human beings (Bartlett, 1964; Biestek, 1976; Butrym, 1979; England, 1986; Hofstein, 1964; Hollis, 1972; Imre, 1982; Perlman, 1974,1979; Ragg, 1977; Richmond, 1917,1922; Robinson, 1930,1942; Shulman, 1991,1992; Smalley, 1967,1970; Wilkes, 1981; Woods & Hollis, 1990), and Biestek (1976:18) deems relationship to constitute "the soul of casework".

This emphasis derives from both the ubiquity and universality of the belief that human being possess inherent and unique value or worth, that "distinct individuals" (Goldstein,1973:xiii) are the ultimate concern of social work; Hollis (1972:14) regards it as *the* "fundamental characteristic of casework", Shaw (1974:xiii) claims that social work "is about understanding the individual, rather than knowledge about people in general", whilst Biestek (1976:74), in observing that individuals have a right to be treated not as *a*, but as *this* human being, avers that "Man's worth is inalienable", a direct consequence of our being children of God, simultaneously social beings *and* individuals. Indeed Cordner (2002) argues that the Christian emphasis upon the moral significance and love of every individual was historically without precedent.

Whilst social work knowledge has historically been primarily derived from the disciplines of psychology and sociology (Butrym,1979; Clark & Asquith, 1985; Payne, 1997; Wilkes, 1981), its philosophical roots rest in the soils of Christianity (Bowpitt, 1998; Niebuhr, 1932) - Calvinism and Pauline theology (Grimm,1970) in particular - and classical liberalism (Biestek, 1976; Clark & Asquith, 1985; Niebuhr, 1932; Reamer, 1992; Siporin, 1986; Woodroofe, 1971), and the manner in which social workers practice is more likely to be guided, albeit unconsciously, by Pauline rather than Kantian principles.

Social work, according to Pearson (1975:128) "emphatically embraces human subjectivity and regards itself as a carrier of the human tradition of compassion", whilst Philp (1979:91) argues that "social work is concerned to produce a knowledge of man as a *subject*" (italics mine), and Horne (1987:86) asserts that "social work is essentially concerned with

producing a knowledge of the *individual as a subject*" (italics mine). It is this inherent and inalienable value that grounds our duty, as a moral obligation and as a matter of justice, to extend respect to all fellow human beings. Central to social work's self-definition is its affirmation of the inherent and inalienable value of each human being, its according of moral priority to the weak and vulnerable, and of its essentially intrinsic moral nature.

It will helpful to place this discussion in an historical context. The very notion of a consciousness of selfhood in pre-modern Europe was, Mandler (2004) argues, inordinately circumscribed to a select few, and so continued until well into the nineteenth century. The modern understanding of the self was by contrast expansive, inclusive of *all* humans, and affirmed ordinary life (Taylor, 1989). However, status and contract societies were not without their redeeming features, for it was in the fulfilling of our duties to our social inferiors that we were owed obedience (Clark, 1995c). The Poor Laws, whilst acknowledging that society had a modicum of responsibility for the alleviation of poverty (de Schweinitz, 1943; Woodroofe, 1971), were nevertheless underpinned by the assumption that social distress was ultimately explicable as the wages of sin, thereby absolving society from any responsibility or culpability - assistance acted simultaneously as relief and deterrence (Keith-Lucas, 1953). The assailing of pauperism failed to distinguish between moral and economic motives (Tawney, 1948), and resulted in the excision of economics from moral life (Carter, 2003; Wright, 1987). St. Paul's dictum that the poor shall always be with us was taken to heart as a salve to societal conscience, and Weber (1958) argues that capitalism represents the social counterpart of Calvinism. Social work evolved out of religious traditions with an emphasis upon charity, understood as "the love of one's fellow person(s)" (Jones, 2004:38), but Jones (1971) asserts that charity was ultimately a means of social control, and the individual was to be moulded and adapted to the existing economic and social order. Moral inclusion was ultimately dependent upon economic and social conformity, with a conceptual divide between the deserving and undeserving poor, and penury effectively effaced subjectivity.

The economic upheavals of the 1880's served to undermine the orthodox account of poverty (Booth, 1889; Booth, 1890; Hattersley, 2000; Jones, 1971), and were a harbinger and catalyst in the creation of modern day social work. As Thomas (1983) observes, new attitudes emanate from, and are not external to, the contradictions of existing traditions. That penury was no longer explicable in terms of individual culpability marked a seismic shift in the conceptualization of the relationship between the individual and their society,

the moral status of the poor, and an acknowledgement of, and attentiveness to, the inherent subjectivity of *all* humans - Siporin (1992) observes that this entailed a marked shift from earlier paternalistic moralism to moral mission. There was a belief in the moral character of the poor (Himmelfarb, 1991), and a moral imagination that saw them as no less deserving of respect (Himmelfarb, 1984). They were seen as individuals within a social matrix, possessing an abundant community life, ingenuity and social strengths (Addams, 1910,1922,1930; Pottick, 1989; Specht & Courtney, 1995), having "that system of prompt and patchwork generosity which is the daily glory of the poor" (Chesterton, quoted in Canovan, 1977:56).

Whilst it undoubtedly had it genesis in religious values, there was a discernible stream of thought and feeling in mid-Victorian England that accorded greater emphasis to the notion of the love of humanity, than that previously conceded to the service of God (Colloms, 1982; Walkowitz, 1998; Webb, 1980; Woodroofe, 1971), giving impetus to myriad social reforms. Authentic human society was understood to be founded not on economic principles, but upon *social relationships* (Ruskin, 1900), and the Settlement movement was underpinned by an implicit faith in a common humanity, and a moral commitment to fellowship and equality across the class divide (Himmelfarb, 1991; Terrill, 1974; Woodroofe, 1971). Among the sundry influences that helped fashion this transformation were Christian notions of *agape*, *caritas*, and love of one's neighbour, which served as an inspiration Christian socialists and Christian reformers of the nineteenth century (Colloms, 1982), as well as secular socialists of every hue (Armytage, 1961; Carpenter, 1887; Dennis & Halsey, 1988; Hendrick, 1977; MacCarthy, 1995; Morris, 1962,1993; Pierson, 1970; Rowbotham, 1977; Salt, 1921,1929,1935; Shaw, 1889,1971; Thompson, 1976; Yeo, 1977). This love of humanity was grounded in the particular, discrete human being, rather than abstract humanity (Lennon, 1998) - Octavia Hill (quoted in Woodroofe, 1971:65,49), asserted that the principal emphasis was on the creation of what she termed "a solemn sense of relationship", and her accentuation of the inherent dignity and worth of, and the need to attend to, *each* and *every* individual, to ever keep in mind that they were not a class apart, but "husbands, wives, sons and daughters, members of households, as we are ourselves", provided the moral foundations for latter day social work (Woodroofe, 1971). Whereas the language of morality is contemporarily supposed to be the exclusive preserve of conservatism, in the Victorian era, which was characterized by a quite remarkable social conscience and compassion, it spanned the political spectrum (Himmelfarb, 1991).

Nevertheless, the emphasis upon individualization was a two edged sword, for whilst the individual was seen a subject possessing inherent worth and dignity, the tendency to view that individual judgementally and atomistically was not an uncommon feature.

Early social workers conveyed the essential humanity of the poor to the wider society, and attempted to provide a portrait of the individual as subjective *and* social (Philp, 1979), and a recognition of the poor as members of the moral community. At the terminus of the nineteenth century social work directed its gaze from the amelioration of the individual to the reform of society, and the two seminal social work pioneers Mary Richmond and Jane Addams are often seen as embodying social work's dual function, that of a focus on the individual and environmental factors respectively. Such a conceptualization is simplistic and misleading, for neither saw their preferred mode as prescriptively exclusive. Richmond's work with individuals, and her concern for subjectivity (Keith-Lucas, 1953), had a systemic focus, whilst Addam's communities were comprised of flesh and blood individuals. Richmond sees social work as essentially concerned with understanding the human individual *within* the context of their environment, whilst affirming their uniqueness and the necessity of an *individualized* response to the person-in-situation. Both had an implicit respect for the individual (Towle, 1961; Woods & Robinson, 1996), and a commitment to the betterment of society *and* individuals, the latter representing, Pumphrey (1961:64) argues, the unique characteristics of social work, "a feeling of obligation *always* to consider social needs when dealing with individuals, and the effect on individuals when dealing with communities".

The subsequent psychological and psychiatric influence upon social work from the late 1920's to the 1950's, as opposed to its earlier sociological underpinnings (Alexander, 1972; Howe, 1987; Keith-Lucas, 1953; Woodroofe, 1971), more an American than British phenomenon (Miles, 1954), resulted in an emphasis upon individual inadequacy and psychological adjustment, to the exclusion of structural considerations (Fromm, 1969; Specht & Courtney, 1995), thereby disregarding the inherent moral dimension (Imre, 1982; Nelson & Popple, 1992a; Siporin, 1975,1982,1983,1986). It nevertheless accorded primacy to subjective experience and accentuated the significance of relationship (Gellner, 1985; Keith-Lucas, 1992; Strean, 1996), and a deeper experience of self (Taft, 1937), and sought to understand motivation rather than explain it away (Midgley, 1986); these aspects were embraced by later humanistic models with their person-centred approaches (Cowley, 1996;

Maslow, 1968,1970,1993; Rogers, 1951,1961,1977), the latter having its genesis in both Octavia Hill and Mary Richmond (Rowe, 1996).

Social work's historical championing of the individual as an absolute end in herself/himself, as a subject possessing inherent value and dignity, is a radically compassionate and moral position. In contrast to radical individualism, it acknowledges the inherent relationship between the individual and society and the indispensability of the social matrix (Imre, 1982; Pincus & Minahan, 1973; Tanner, 2003), and accordingly values relationship *and* community. However, Vigilante (1974:110) laments that the notion that the individual has inherent dignity and worth has been confused and conflated with individualism, a pervasive feature of Western industrialized societies (Carnley, 2001; Hamilton, 2004,2006; Hamilton & Denniss, 2005); social work is not immune, for the emphasis accorded to self-determination within social work (McDermott, 1975b) is itself a moral statement about the desirability of personal independence over dependency (Frankel, 1966), with the consequent implication that to be in receipt of care and attention is somehow inherently demeaning, with precedence accorded to those who can be *enabled* (Wilkes, 1985).

The word *individualism* was coined by de Tocqueville, who whilst enamoured of the democratic processes in the United States in the nineteenth century, expressed grave reservations about the emerging psychological consequences; de Tocqueville (quoted in Midgley, 2001a:152,15) contrasts individualism with selfishness, observing that

> Selfishness is a passionate and exaggerated love of self, which leads a man to connect everything with himself, and to prefer himself to everything in the world. Individualism is a mature and calm feeling, which disposes each member of the community to sever himself from the mass of his fellows…Selfishness originates in blind instinct: individualism proceeds from erroneous judgement more than from depraved feelings: it originates as much in deficiencies of mind as in perversity of heart. Selfishness blights the germ of all virtue: individualism, at first, only blights the virtues of public life: but, in the long run, it attacks and destroys all others, and is at length absorbed in downright selfishness…(people) acquire the habit of always considering themselves as standing alone, and they are apt to imagine that their whole destiny is in their own hands…Thus, not only does democracy make every man forget his ancestors, but it hides his descendants and separates his contemporaries from him: it throws him back for ever upon himself alone, and threatens in the end to confine him entirely within the solitude of his own heart.

The apotheosis of individualism reached its zenith, or depending on one's view, its nadir, with Margaret Thatcher's remarkable decree that there is no such thing as society, *only* individuals. An Irish proverb begs to differ, for *'It is in the shelter of each other that the people live'* - individuals require a social matrix in order to flourish (Mead, 1934; Taylor, 1985), for as Rowe (2003:139) observes, "It is not just that no man is an island. No man or woman can *be* an island". A significant contributing factor in the exaltation of individualism, Midgley (2001a) observes, is that our moral, political and psychological concepts have been fireproofed against holism. The notion that personal bonds and mutual interdependence somehow *limit* our freedom and are *inimical* to our natures would be plausible for Rousseau's solitary, pre-ethical human beings; it is nonsensical for the social beings we incontrovertibly are. It is the nature of our faculties, Midgley (1996a:357) insists, not moral weakness, that underpins our need for personal bonds, for people dissimilar to ourselves, and "A rational being is someone who sees himself as a unit among others, not as the core of the universe".

This much said, Wilkes (1981) cautions that we ought not lose sight of the fact that human beings inhabit three worlds - the natural, the social, and the world of self, and that this acknowledgement ought act as a counter against an instrumental morality that seeks to dovetail the individual to either a psychological or sociological reality, with the social worker having been born to set the world to rights. Subjectivity has historically been deemed to be central to social work's theoretical and practical formulations and its understanding of itself, with attention to the individual being seen as an essential and fundamental expression of a love of, and service to, humanity, a simultaneous attention to individuals and their societies. It conveys to the wider society the essential humanity and subjectivity of those with whom it works.

There is, Wilkes (1981) observes, a world of difference between social work understood as a detached and amoral social science, and social work that is related to a metaphysical way of thinking. The former concerns itself with technical know-how and an emphasis upon change and outcomes, whereas the latter is *other-centred*, and engaged in an attentive and respectful exploration of the nature of being. Too little attention is given to reflection upon the *why*, too much accorded to execution of the *how*. Accordingly, it will be beneficial to reflect upon how we ought best understand the individual and their place within the world.

A helpful conceptualization is provided by Antonaccio (2000:8-9), who argues that contemporary endeavours to flesh out a plausible and judicious account of moral subjectivity tend to oscillate between liberal and communitarian commitments, to Kantian and Hegelian frameworks respectively - the former "believe that the self constitutes its own world through its acts and choices apart from determination by the givens of its situation...the self grounds its identity and its moral claims through some existential decision or transcendental act that escapes the contingencies of the self's situation", whilst the latter "believe that the aims and purposes of the self are in fact constituted by the givens of its natural, social, and historical existence in particular communities…human subjectivity is not self-constituting but is itself constituted with respect to some antecedent order of value". The self, Antonaccio (2001) observes, is therefore conceptualized as either *unencumbered* (Foucault, 1970,1983; Murdoch, 1999; Rawls, 1999; Sartre, 1957,1958), or as *radically situated* (Benton, 1993a; MacIntyre, 1981,1999; Sandel, 1984a,1984b; Taylor, 1989).

Liberalism's chief virtue is its insistence that the individual has irreducible value, and communitarianism's that the self is a social self. Liberalism, by and large, wants to contract morality to the private sphere, with goodness a correlate of individual *choice*, independent of considerations as to what *is* chosen, whilst communitarianism conceives morality and goodness as *inseparable* from inherited cultural traditions (Eagleton,1997), and the self as having no independent irreducibility (Murdoch, 1997). Because both lack a meaningful sense of a substantial self, the individual is often obscured -

> One may fail to see the individual…because we are ourselves sunk in a social whole which we allow uncritically to determine our reactions, or because we see each other exclusively as so determined. Or we may fail to see the individual because we are completely enclosed in a fantasy world of our own into which we try to draw things from outside, not grasping their reality and independence. (Murdoch, 1959a:52)

Whereas the world of the ancients conceptualized morality and virtue as *independent* of will, the modern world deems rationality and will to be *constitutive* of morality (Taylor, 1989). The upshot of this radical shift, witnessed most clearly in Kant, is that *only* rational beings have unconditional and absolute value, a conception that Taylor (1989:366) depicts as "radically anthropocentric".

Because it is supposed that morality originates in the human will, it cannot in any way be attached to the substance of the world (Murdoch, 1957), and accordingly we no longer see ourselves against a background of values and realities that necessarily transcends us (Murdoch, 1961). This restricted notion that equates morality with human will and conduct, rather than attentive study and the possibilities of goodness and truth (Murdoch, 1993a,1996; Ramanathan, 1990), obscures the reality that virtue is connected with unselfishness, objectivity and realism (Murdoch, 1959b).

Reality transcends the individual, but the individual cannot be wholly subsumed in the givens of their situation. Rather than lose much of value in both liberal and communitarian models, it is argued that instead of thinking of morality "as essentially and by its nature centred on the individual", it is better that we see it "as part of a general framework of reality which includes the individual" (Murdoch,1957:112). And it is the discrete individual, *not* the rational agent, who is owed respect (Murdoch, 1959a), who is central to this framework of reality, because consciousness, not will, is the "fundamental mode or form of moral being" (Murdoch, 1993a:171). The conception of an individual, Murdoch (1996:25) claims, is "inseparable from morality". And this framework cannot be centred exclusively upon the human world, nor be inclusive of *only* humankind.

There is an objective reality that necessarily transcends *us* (Clark, 1984,2002), "distinct from our imaginings or utterances about it" (Clark, 1997a:124). Of necessity, "There must be things single and steady there for us to know, which are separate from the multifarious and shifting world of 'becoming'. These steady entities are guarantors equally of the unity and objectivity of morals and the reliability of knowledge" (Murdoch, 1977:3). The intimate connection between reality, value and transcendence of self is integral to all great artistic endeavours (Armstrong, 2001,2005; Murdoch, 1976; Ruskin, 1906,1995; Spalding, 2005).

For Aristotle, Plato and Spinoza the aim of knowledge is *contemplation*,

> not merely of all discovery but of life itself. For them, knowledge was simply an aspect of wisdom. It was part of an understanding of life as a whole, out of which a sense of what really mattered in it would become possible. Knowledge indeed had the same goal as love; contemplation was the highest human happiness. (Midgley, 1995b:13)

And, Weil (1952:107) observes, "We cannot contemplate without a certain love". The life of wisdom, Aristotle (1952) insists, constitutes the truly worthwhile life, with *eudaimonia* (Annas, 1998) being "virtuous activity over a whole life" (Clark, 1993f:29), whilst for Plato (n.d.), wisdom is "the practical intelligence which guides virtuous living" (Annas, 2003:54). Social work, like all disciplines, is fundamentally concerned with knowledge and moral principles; the two are intrinsically related. That social work literature has tended to exalt the former whilst perfunctorily doffing its collective cap in the direction of the latter is evidence of a disposition to dualism in consideration of knowledge and values. Knowledge encompasses far more than mere technique and methodology; Fromm (1993) makes an important distinction between having knowledge and knowing, the modes of *having* and *being* respectively. Action cannot be an end in itself; we must attend to the *why* before we concern ourselves with the *how*.

Knowledge, Stevenson (1971) helpfully reminds us, is not interchangeable nor synonymous with truth or understanding, for understanding entails the acquirement of knowledge *and* judgement - knowledge, after all, is not merely a collection of loose facts, rather it is *understanding* (Midgley, 1990). All too often we are faced with "the plethoric growth of knowledge simultaneously with the stunting of wisdom" (Hardy, 1976:560). Knowledge is an aspect of wisdom and part of understanding life as a *whole* (Midgley, 1995b; Murdoch, 1993a). The interposition of judgement between knowledge and understanding reinforces the intrinsic centrality of moral principles, and the immanent relationship between knowledge and morality. It is Stevenson's (1971:232) contention that concentration upon principles and concepts "enables us to focus and refocus knowledge in a meaningful way". Knowledge is directed toward contemplation of life as a whole and the acquiring of wisdom, and contemplation entails awe or wonder, and as Midgley (1995b:41) refreshes our memory, "an essential element in wonder (is) that we recognize what we see as something that we did not make, cannot fully understand, and acknowledge as containing something greater than ourselves…Knowledge here…is a *loving union*" (italics mine). This sense of awe and wonderment, of *boundless mystery* (Clark, 1992b), cannot be restricted to our kind, as witnessed in Whitman's (1982:217) epiphany -

     I believe a leaf of grass is no less than the journey-work of the stars,
     And that the pismire is equally perfect, and a grain of sand, and the egg of the wren,
     And the tree-toad is a chef-d'oeuvre for the highest,

> And the running blackberry would adorn the parlours of heaven,
>
> And the narrowest hinge in my hand puts to scorn all machinery.
>
> And the cow crunching with depress'd head surpasses and statue,
>
> And a mouse is miracle enough to stagger sextillions of infidels.

Likewise, Hardy (1976:446-447) muses

> The wind blew words along the skies,
>
>   And these it blew to me
>
> Through the wide dusk: 'Lift up your eyes,
>
>   Behold this troubled tree,
>
> Complaining as it sways and plies;
>
>   It is a limb of thee.

> 'Yea, too, the creatures sheltering round –
>
>   Dumb figures, wild and tame…
>
> They are the stuff of thy own frame.'

Knowledge and morality direct us away from ego, fantasy and illusion, and point us toward reality, goodness and virtue (Murdoch,1996). Midgley's (1995b) understanding of knowledge as a *loving union* finds its parallel in Murdoch's (1996:30) conviction that "the central concept of morality is *'the individual' thought of as knowable by love*" (italics mine), with love being commensurate with knowledge of the individual. Love, (Murdoch (1959a:51-52) avers, "is the perception of individuals…the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real…Love is the imaginative recognition of, that is respect for, this otherness". It entails an unselfing (Gordon, 1995), a transcendence of self, an attention to others, and as Weil (1952:118) reminds us, "love is not real unless it is directed towards a particular object". And it is this love of the individual which, Antonaccio (2000) observes, transforms self-consciousness *into* moral consciousness.

Amazingly, *love* is a term that, with but a few exceptions aside (Halmos, 1966; Hollis, 1967; Wilkes, 1981; Younghusband, 1964), dares not mention its name in social work literature or practice discourse (Morley & Ife, 2002). This neglect is all the odder given the observation that love is in fact central to the very notion of human rights (Kirby, cited in

Shiel, 2003), and underpins both relationships and community (Lewis & Lannon & Amini, 2001).

Notwithstanding, it is hereby advanced that *social work is intrinsically concerned with and engaged in acquiring knowledge of the individual*, and that *the central concept of social work morality is the individual, knowable through love and loving union*.

Knowledge can furnish us with many varied and valued things (Midgley, Mary, 1981), but it cannot of itself instruct us as to *how* we should act or live, or *what* it is that we should do (Millard, 1977). Knowledge is an aspect of wisdom and a constituent of understanding life as a *whole* (Midgley, 1995b), because "It is only wisdom which can transcend reason and know the Truth" (Griffiths, 1977:18). Philosophy commenced as the quest for wisdom and care of the soul (Clark, 1984), and, etymologically, it designated a love of wisdom (De Botton, 2000).

It will be helpful to define what it is that we understand the term *values* to mean. The United Kingdom Central Council for Education and Training in Social Work (quoted in Horne, 1987:1) states that

> A value determines what a person thinks he ought to do, which may not be the same as what he really wants to do, or what it is in his interests to do, or what in fact he actually does. Values in this sense give rise to general standards and ideals by which we judge our own and others' conduct; they also give rise to specific obligations.

Social work values, in Levy's (1973:36,34) opinion, are neither random in nature, nor a mirror reflection of the wider society, and "may be conceived along three basic dimensions which would account for the major value orientations shared by social workers…preferred conceptions of people, preferred outcomes for people, and preferred instrumentalities for dealing with people". It is Banks' (1995:4) belief that social work values refer to "a set of fundamental moral/ethical principles to which social workers are/should be committed". The problem that confronts social work may not so much be an absence of consensus (Shardlow, 1989,1998) as a dearth of discussion about values, and a lack of conceptual analysis (Timms, 1983). This state of affairs is a very different kettle of fish to the notion that there exists *no* general agreement or concord as to the value base of social work. Moral dilemmas by their very nature *preclude* factual answers, for "What we have here is a moral question about whether to go on trying to think out an answer. Problems that have not been

thought through so far may yet be so" (Midgley, 1993:165). An unwillingness to think, albeit about difficult concepts and dilemmas, is hardly a virtue; indeed the inverse is the case. To invite and encourage a dogmatic scepticism about the possibility of a common conceptual value base for social work is, to borrow an analogy, to suggest that "One would, at least, appear to be in the position of mariners replacing all the planks of their ship at once" (O'Hear, 1997:47).

Values provide a background framework and map from which we may gather our bearings and make sense of what it is we are confronted with, and to then bring reflection to bear upon action; the moral life is more aptly conceptualized as piecemeal and continuous, not merely called into action for explicit moral choice (Murdoch, 1996). That is substantially dissimilar from the notion that values are a panacea that are neatly indexed for all manner of situations and occasions, and we have but to refer to as though to a ready reckoner, and apply them rote-like to guarantee efficacious outcomes. Complexity is quite distinct from incomprehensibility, calling for a relating of interconnected parts in order that they be understood as a *whole*.

The notion that social workers are too busy to indulge in the luxury of moral reflection and contemplation is to posit practice and values as distinct and competitive. Methods and skills are viewed as ends in themselves, rather than being seen as means that must exhibit fidelity to and draw their sanction from social work values, resulting in an inordinate emphasis upon methods and skills (the *how)* to the lasting detriment of the development of values and knowledge bases (the *why)* that inform practice (Bartlett, 1970).

Precisely because social work engages in the lives of others, social work practice *must* receive its vindication in moral terms rather than by reference to theory alone (Butrym, 1979; Clark & Asquith, 1985). Outlawing moral conflicts does not serve to rescue us from the horns of dilemma, rather it obfuscates our abilities to effect resolution. Disagreement over emphasis and interpretation of values is quite distinct from disagreement over the very existence of shared values *per se*. Indeed, Midgley (1993:151) contends that

> Moral disagreement is hardly ever a simple confrontation between opponents who don't share each others' presuppositions at all…Normally a great deal is agreed, but is not mentioned, while the relatively small point of disagreement gets all the attention and all the publicity. Our background of thought is a social network, a vast, complex web of

assumptions into which we were born and within which we live. It is not our own private invention or creation...

To regard morality and values as abstractions and distractions from the business of practice, as abstract articles of faith, and of no great practical profit, is to conceptualize them as impositions upon us, rather than as growing out of our natures (Butrym, 1979) and as "part of the moral structure of the universe" (Wilkes, 1981:7). A more apt analogy is that morality is akin to the air we breathe (Midgley, 1993), a prerequisite and ongoing requirement of life itself, being as it is internal and central to our being, commonplace and substantial, and our means of resolving conflict (Midgley, 1995a). It enables us to construct moral frameworks that articulate respect, rights, duties and responsibilities not only to our fellow human beings (this thesis assumes that human possess rights), but permits their extrapolation to the animal universe.

Is our social worker, who in all probability will vigorously defend the notion that knowledge *cannot* be value-free, be now paradoxically wanting us to believe that practice can be a value-free zone? Such an intimation would be remarkable, and far from excluding a moral or values framework, its reliance upon pragmatism ensures a predominantly psychological or sociological understanding of human beings, which calls for *treatment* rather than *respect* (Ragg, 1977; Wilkes, 1981). It is also exceedingly difficult to envisage how social workers conceptualize that which counts as human good if fact and value are deemed to be fundamentally distinct, for as Midgley (1995b:14) avers, "knowledge about what goodness means must be at the centre, because it is what shows the point of all other knowledge, indeed of all other activity".

The tendency of social workers to prefer practicality - or more likely, uncritical and unthinking adherence to, and partisan embrace of, agency function - all too often a social worker's individual moral responsibility is subverted, willingly or no, by the sovereignty of bureaucratic decision making (Rhodes, 1986) - over and above moral reflection merely reinforces the perception that values are best left for ruminating upon on a proverbial rainy day, and by armchair philosophers at that. We could well substitute 'social worker' for Tawney's (1930:1) 'Englishmen' -

It is a commonplace that the characteristic virtue of Englishmen is their power of sustained practical activity, and their characteristic vice a reluctance to test the quality of that activity

by reference to principles. They are incurious as to theory, take fundamentals for granted, and are more interested in the state of the roads than in their place on the map…

The busy practitioner may well mistake headlong hustle and bustle for efficacy, with little forethought or reflection upon not solely what the action *aims* at but on the values *underlying* activity. Inveterate activity may well be antithetical to underlying moral principles, let alone desirable (Russell, 2004). Pragmatism needs to be informed and guided by moral reflection, and failure to do so also ensures that exclusion of the non-human is obvious and natural, for they are beyond the realms of action.

What *is* required is conceptual comprehensibility and an intelligent relating of values to practice. Without both, values can all too readily appear to be either ineffectual curios or obscure distractions, with negligible worth in the real world. As Gaita (1999:270) reminds us, "To try to use concepts while withdrawing from the conditions of their application, from what conditions their sense, is to saw away the branch on which one is sitting". Theoretical knowledge and practice wisdom are of necessity complementary parts of a whole, rather than competitive paradigms, and both *must* be informed by underlying moral principles. Practice wisdom ought also draw upon contemplation of what is worthy, upon what is morally preferable, for practice ought always to be instructed and guided by values, moral vision and moral purpose. That they do far greater justice to our understanding of the human condition when considered in tandem, than they do in isolation, should not be a cause for astonishment. Parts must be related to the whole.

Extreme psychologism excises the individual from their social world and extols atomism and autonomy (Siporin, 1982), whilst extreme sociologism reifies the social world and extirpates the individual (Wilkes, 1981), models which roughly approximate liberal and communitarian perspectives. Mutually exclusive focuses are unbalanced and misleading precisely because they are partial - failure to attend to sociological wisdom obfuscates the significance of social structure upon individual behaviour, whilst a likewise neglect of psychological insight significantly impairs the according of respect and effectiveness in understanding and assisting a specific individual (Stevenson, 1971). Psychological and sociological theories dovetail social work's dual function, the view from *within*, and the view from *without*, respectively; this thesis argues that what is needed is a framework of reality that includes the individual, a background that acknowledges the natural world and our common animality.

It is Keith-Lucas' (1992) contention that psychoanalysts emphasized the importance of relationship and common human vulnerability, and a view of the person from their own perspective. The negative consequences are noted by Siporin (1992), who argues that an inordinate emphasis upon a positivistic approach and its purported value-free orientation led to the adoption of a mental health ethic which serves to eclipse the inherent moral nature of social work, obfuscating the moral complexities of life and enervating social workers ability to assist people to deal with moral issues. We would be better served, Midgley (1995b:236) maintains, to acknowledge that we all live in numerous overlapping circles, and "the notion that a 'form of life' could be a sealed, exclusive circle containing a set of ideas that are wholly fixed and harmonious with each other is unreal".

A reliance upon psychological and sociological theories, to the *exclusion* of moral philosophy, has resulted, Wilkes (1981:86,3) avers, in modern day social work paying mere lip-service to the notion of sanctity of life -

> the uncritical acceptance of value as instrumental to the social worker's purpose without any reference to the notion of value itself… (and has) turned the social worker's attention away from respect for the individual towards the exercise of managerial expertise designed to change people.

The reality is that a grasp of fundamentals is, more than anything else, exactly what rigour demands of us, for else we are all too apt to attend to the edifice rather than to the bedrock (Hubbard, 1976); as Franklin (2003:276) observes, "it is to be doubted whether training in values without education in the reasons for them is a credible plan". Philosophical dimensions are part of the fabric of social work (Biestek, 1976; Downie & Telfer, 1980; Imre, 1982,1984; Ragg, 1980) - social work, Timms (quoted in Butrym, 1976:55) contends, is "primarily neither an applied science nor simple good works but a kind of practical philosophising". Philosophy entails "a quest for self-knowledge as an aspect of understanding the world" (Midgley, 1989b:32), "becoming conscious of the shape of our lives" (Midgley, in Bavidge & Ground, 1994:vii), is usually only noticed when something goes awry (Midgley, 1996d); an undertaking once called wisdom, it is something that matters everywhere (Midgley, 1996d; Stove, 1995).

When it is argued that the nature of social work values is contested (Shardlow, 1998), it is all too easy to fall into the trap of believing that the notion of a specifiable and common

value base is therefore called into question, or elsewise abandoned, with slapdash pluralism being a panacea. Whilst emphasis and interpretations have historically shifted, commitment to fundamental values has remained abiding Siporin (1992), and Plant, Lesser & Taylor-Gooby (1980) caution that differences about values are more often than not less profound than they initially appear, and disputes about the ends people ought to pursue are quite distinct from what constitutes their needs.

It is as nonsensical to suppose that social workers can operate *without* a value system as it is to spuriously claim that knowledge can be value-free; neutrality truly is a fiction, for *any* social work intervention of necessity involves values (Clark, 2000). A separation between knowledge and values has profound epistemological and moral implications for social work considered as a whole, for the disconcerting feature of social work is ultimately not the distance between theory and practice, but that betwixt its social values, epistemological assumptions *and* practice (Clark & Asquith, 1985). Illustrative of this separation is Gordon's (1965:33,34) contention that "knowledge refers to what, in fact, *seems to be*, established by the highest standards of objectivity and rationality of which man is capable. Value refers to what man *prefers* or would *want to be*". This ignores the reality that *all* our thinking is *shaped* by our concepts (Midgley, 1987a).

The extent to which social work is reliant upon knowledge devoted to treatment and outcomes, to the exclusion of an adequate moral philosophy, holds within it the seeds of a reductionist understanding of the individual and their experiences. Morality, and moral philosophy, are concerned with what really matters in life (Midgley, 1980b), *how* we are to live, and *why* (Rachels, 1995). The two things required of moral philosophy, Murdoch (1996) contends, are the discoverable attributes of human nature and the commendation of a worthy ethical ideal. Reid & Popple (1992b) go so far as to argue that professions primarily justify their existence on intervention, knowledge and outcome criteria rather than philosophically. The influence of positivistic principles upon the development of social work has not only served to posit a gap between knowledge and values, but to deprecate the standing and validity of the former, having a significant impact upon the relationship between the articulated value base of social work and social work practice. Knowledge is conceptualized as that which is scientific *and* value-free, whilst values are characterized as arbitrary preferences, the former *objectively established* whilst the latter is *subjectively preferred*. There nevertheless remains the elementary expectation that social workers be

committed to certain values and ethics, and as a consequence, Imre (1982:57-58) observes that

> It almost seems as if social work has sought to hold onto values which have been severed from their roots. The reason that these values have not been seriously challenged within the profession is probably because individual social workers have either remained connected to these roots in a personal way and/or have been able to compartmentalize intellectually so that values and the search for scientific knowledge are not seen to be integrally related.

Value-free knowledge is an impossibility, for values are implicit in all theories (Whittaker, 1974), and "facts are not gathered in a vacuum, but to fill gaps in a world-picture which already exists" (Midgley, 1986:2). It inevitably contributes to an inordinate emphasis in social work upon "explanatory theories and models, the aims and methods of each approach, but rarely explicitly look at the underlying values" (Banks, 1995:52), and undermines community values whilst simultaneously exalting an individualistic ethos (Vigilante, 1974). This leads Bauman (2001:81-82) to conjecture that social work's future

> does not depend today on sharpening up, narrowing down and better focusing the rules, the classifications, the procedure; nor on reducing the variety and complexity of human needs and problems. It depends, instead, on the ethical standards of the society we all inhabit. It is those ethical standards which, much more than the rationality and diligence of social workers, are today in crisis and under threat.

The philosophical rationale for a gap between facts and values was provided by Hume (1888), who contends that whereas reason sheds light upon facts, feelings are the wellspring of values, and morality, in essence, is founded in sentiment, not reason (Melchert, 1995; Stroud, 1988). The attempt to define goodness via the process of deriving values from facts, to argue from *is* to *ought*, was termed a *naturalistic fallacy* by Moore (1903), for, so he argues, good in essence is a *non-natural* property. Moore (1903) supposes that, morally, judgements are wholly contingent, and is committed to a logical and metaphysical atomism, ignoring the reality that moral judgements cannot be merely random if they are to be comprehended (Midgley, 1980a). Whilst it has been pointed out that Moore's conception of goodness entails "the idea that good was *something* (and so a

kind of fact)" (Murdoch, 1993a:44), the notion that there exists a gap between facts and values has been extremely influential in moral philosophy, to such an extent that Murdoch (1957:106) claims "it is almost the whole of modern moral philosophy".

In Murdoch's (1957) view, Moore's emphasis upon the human activity of bestowing things with value to the absolute exclusion of any notion of the Good marked *the* definitive breach with metaphysical ethics. Moore contends that reasoning cannot support moral judgement, the implication being that moral judgements are merely reflections and expressions of personal feeling (Midgley, 1983b). Such disjunction is the causal factor in social work's tendency to assume values as givens, as articles of faith, heirlooms that are displayed upon the discipline's mantelpiece and occasionally dusted down, exhibited rather than subjected to analysis (Timms, 1983). The unfortunate upshot, Vigilante (1974) argues, is that social workers exhibit a predilection to view values symbolically rather than as the actual fulcrum of daily practice. The notion that rationality be limited to descriptive, as opposed to evaluative considerations, leads Timms (1983:135-136) to contend that

> It is possible to use 'value' and 'values' as conversation-terminators… (for example) 'We must just agree to differ: it's a question of values.'…they simply and only report or express people's attitudes for or against something…they can only be fought over by a proxy, and never battled through to an exchange of ideas and a conversion or change of mind or even a conversation.

Such a conceptualization of values invariably leaves one beholden to a moral subjectivism and moral solipsism, whereby morality is contracted to the sphere of the atomized individual, and whereon we are led to believe "that moral views are valid…only within a given single life. Each person must invent or create them from scratch" (Midgley, 1993:99). Indeed, as Murdoch (1988) observes, the whole point of solipsism is that it abolishes morality, a fact that often goes unnoticed.

Attempts to define and specify that which is good in human life, and a framework for consequential normative ethics, entails the necessity of a broadening of social work's philosophical base (Imre, 1984). To *know* what is good and valuable presupposes a relation of values to facts (Nussbaum, 1988,1992) - what is deemed to be good has to be related to underlying characteristics, dispositions, motivations, needs and wants, for "Values register needs" (Midgley, 1996a:xliii). It is also salutary to acknowledge that "we can indeed only

understand our values if we first grasp the given facts about our wants" (Midgley, 1996a:178), for "if there were no values, there would be no facts" (Clark, 1995d:1).

This thesis assumes that there exists no inherent and insurmountable difficulty in reasoning from facts to values, for it is precisely because our basic structure of wants and needs are given that we are capable of discerning what it is that constitutes good for us. Furthermore, the consequences of denying that consciousness, emotion, rationality and motivation have a natural basis are at least twofold - it creates a metaphysical divide between human beings and animals, and decrees that morality is an exclusively human affair. Social work endorses the latter view as a logical deduction from the former premise.

The valid point that the proponents of value-free knowledge seek to make concerns a *particular* sense of objectivity, a recognition and exclusion of personal biases or prejudices, and relates to a laudable desire to see things as they *are*, rather than as we believe them to be, or would have them be (Clark, 1998c). The problematic formulation of objectivity decrees that facts are epistemologically separate from implications of a moral or emotional nature (Clark, 1998c), and seeks to banish subjectivity.

Modern materialism no longer assails God but subjective experience (Midgley, 1995a) - the pioneering behavioural psychologist J.B. Watson (1924,1967) insists that consciousness is illusory, and that disregard of subjectivity is a guarantee of scientific objectivity (Midgley, 1986), whilst Skinner (1973), Watson's principal behaviourist heir, conceptualizes consciousness and subjectivity (human *and* animal alike) as having incidental epistemological value. It assumes the superiority of objective knowledge over subjective knowledge, and is knowledge *independent* of a knowing subject (Butrym, 1979).

But our subjective experiences represent the most substantial aspect of our lives (Birch, 1995; Midgley, 1999), and constitute our central good (Midgley, 1996a), for morality is a matter of heart *and* mind (Kheel, 1996; Midgley, 1983b; Murdoch, 1993a,1996). Consciousness and subjectivity are integral to morality (Murdoch, 1993a), and the true paradigm of objectivity is ethical, not epistemological (Eagleton, 2002), objectivity representing "a decentred openness to the reality of others" (Eagleton, 1997:123). True objectivity, Clark (1984:114) insists, entails the "sympathetic penetration of things-as-they-are", and whilst our emotional entanglements may prevent us from ascertaining truths, we ought not suppose that we have no befitting moral or emotional responses to the world because it is comprised *only* of objects for our *use* - objectivism, thus conceived, does not

allow us to "*understand and delight in independent realities*" (Clark, 1984:114) (italics mine).

An objective and subjective necessity is inherent in contemporary social work, as it was historically; Popple (1992) notes that Jane Addams articulated the objective and subjective necessity for the Settlement movement - responding to social and economic deprivations of the time was the objective necessity that underpinned the rationale for their existence, whilst the subjective necessity of their existence was moral purpose. Love respects the independent reality of that which is the object of one's attention and love (Cordner, 2002; Gaita, 2002), a responsiveness to *particularity* (Blum, 1987), and social work is essentially concerned, not with generality, but with understanding of the individual, acknowledging a substantial self. Social work is intrinsically a process of relationships *between* selves (Biestek, 1976; Dowrick, 1997a,1997b,2000; Moran, 2001; Perlman, 1979; Ragg, 1967; Salomon, 1967; Sheppard, 1964; Watson, 1980), and is fundamentally concerned with knowledge of individuals, by the means of *love, attention and loving union*.

It is imperative that we not evade the conflict between the *apparent* and the *real*, which Murdoch (1977) avers stirs the mind toward philosophy; indeed moral realism, the commitment to the existence of the real, guarantees not only the reliability of knowledge, but also the unity and objectivity of morals. Goodness, consisting in a curbing of selfishness, an attention to others and to a real world beyond ourselves, "means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world *as it really is*" (italics mine), and "It is in the capacity to love, that is to *see*, that the liberation of the soul from fantasy consists" (Murdoch, 1996:93,66). Values and morality therefore can be seen as unavoidably concerned with conveying pictures of what it is that constitutes human nature and the good.

The great moral philosophers, Murdoch (1957:107) remarks, "present a total metaphysical picture of which ethics forms a part. The universe, including our own nature, is like *this*, they say". Metaphysics entails critical reflection upon reality and the construction of images, metaphors and conceptual frameworks (Antonaccio, 2000; Murdoch, 1957). The elimination of metaphysics from ethics and the consequent rejection of any transcendent background (Murdoch, 1957), has important implications for our understanding of the interrelationship between morality, the self, and our conceptions of goodness and freedom (Antonaccio, 2000; Antonaccio & Schweiker, 1996).

Metaphysics failed to fit into a positivistic rendering of reality, renounced "in favour of logic, intelligence and analytic reason" (Wilkes, 1981:113), resulting in respect for *fact* and *doing*, and disrespect for *value* and *being* (Farrer, 1948; Fromm, 1993). It is Wilkes' (1981:79) conviction we ought view the individual "not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be apprehended", and that "There is a need, though, to find a metaphysic that will enable man to return to himself and to nature". When our attention transcends the exclusively human sphere, to matters of animals and the natural world, the necessity of metaphysics is all the more apparent (Callicott, 1989a; Dombrowki, 1986,1988a; Fox, 1991,1995; Skolimowski, 1990).

Given social work's historical pragmatism, and task centredness (Perlman, 1974,1979; Reid, 1992; Reid & Epstein, 1972), the mere mention of metaphysics in connection with social work's knowledge and value base is likely to be greeted with extreme scepticism. On the contrary, Imre (1982,1984) argues that metaphysics lies at the very heart of social work, for as Murdoch's (1987:89) Acastos affirms, "actions come out of states of mind and how we *see* the world". Besides, "genuine mastery of anything entails sound philosophical thought of one sort or another" (Hearne, 1987:13). The necessity of philosophical language to shed light upon what it means to be human, and the nature of our relationship with the world we inhabit, constitutes areas of inquiry that are central to social work. It is not enough to know *how*; we first and foremost must ask and know *why*.

A non-metaphysical way of thinking leads, Wilkes (1981) insists, to an emphasis upon change rather than interpretation of our world, an undervaluing of those who remind us of our shared vulnerabilities, and a predilection for *treatment* rather than *respect*. In order to experience ourselves as whole beings, Wilkes (1981) argues that we must, of necessity, respect individuals, and be attentive to the reality of a substantial self. All too often the desire to make the world a better place translates into one more to *our* liking (Clark, 1997c), and in common with the modern artist (Murdoch, 1993b), the aim of many a contemporary social worker is to *change* rather than *explain* the world.

Of late, Clark (1998c) observes, the tide has turned against moral realism, and in its stead we are urged to view all moral beliefs as culturally relative and historically contingent, but to reduce all moral thought to preference is to leave us utterly at the mercy of prevailing cultural and historical winds, or personal whims. In what represents a veritable withdrawal from reality, Rorty (quoted in Clark, 1998b:49) maintains that "Truth is what it is better for

us to believe, rather than the accurate representation of reality", as though both Beauty and Truth were literally in the eye of the beholder, to which Clark (1998b:49-50,46) retorts

> we should indeed acknowledge what is true, but that its being true is nothing to do with us. The world is not *my* world, and neither is it unambiguously *ours*. Those philosophers who equate 'truth' merely with what 'we' happen to endorse, or doubt the possibility that we are sometimes wrong, reduce all conversation to power politics. Because they do not think that anyone is ever 'really wrong', they have no need to reconsider their own convictions, or imagine that another might be 'really right…Those who say there is no truth are liars; those who say we cannot find it out have *no* reason for what they say'.

We seek truth, not for truth sakes alone, but *because* it is good (Weil,1986).

The danger we are faced with in our time, according to Wilkes (1981:120), is *not* certainty, but "a thorough-going scepticism, relativism, and nihilism", whilst Soskice (2004:8) argues that the rationale of the social sciences is increasingly beholden to "successive rhetorics of power and control and are therefore pathways to nihilism". Scepticism, subjectivism, relativism and nihilism do not allow us as a discipline to go anywhere with animals (or all that far with our fellow humans, come to that). The alternatives to moral realism will be briefly canvassed in order to exemplify their problematic consequences.

Moral relativism conceptualizes values and morality as purely cultural in origin, and in common with moral subjectivism, eschews universalizable moral principles (Hughes, 1984). Both deal with the reality of conflict and moral disagreement in exceedingly damaging ways, seeking resolution by making it a matter of societal and personal taste respectively. The former posits that we are incapable of relating our moral concepts beyond the frontiers of our own hermetically sealed cultures, whilst the latter condemns us to mutual moral solitude and incomprehensibility. Whereas relativism posits that moral views have validity only within the confines and context of a specific culture, subjectivism radically narrows the sphere of morality to encompass *only* the individual (Midgley, 1993). As a logical extension of radical individualism, subjectivism conceptualizes morality as being the creation, *ex nihilo*, of atomistic moral beings, who "already know what *they* want, and need not trouble to find out if they 'should' " (Clark, 1993d:99).

Relativism reduces morality to societal consensus rather individual reflection, but as Gaita (1996:48) argues, "serious deficiency in one's capacity for sober judgment undermines

one's ability to apply properly the very concepts which give substance to the idea of a rationally supported belief: in the absence of judgment the application of these concepts will take us away from rather than to reality".

Moral relativism is not without its redeeming features, it being a clarion call against the assumption that the values of one's culture are *unquestionably* veritable and universalizable, but this virtue of questioning is quite distinct from the standpoint that we are thereby incapable of settling upon universal moral precepts, or making moral judgements. It is in part a reaction to the cultural insensitivity that assumes that one's own culture and values are not only right, but right for *everyone*. Nevertheless, the rejection of moral judgement, as a supposedly essential component of value pluralism, obfuscates serious moral inquiry and reflection, and the responsibility of the individual moral agent (Goldhagen, 2002). The difficulties in understanding other cultures are unnecessarily compounded by what Midgley (1983b) terms *moral isolationism*, whereby the world is divvied up into disparate, quarantined societies, each with their own unique and unrelatable system of thought. Failure to engage in moral reflection and judgement (Hollis & Howe, 1990; Macdonald, 1990) entails that social workers, in abdicating their individual moral responsibility, are left to rest content with either agency function or bureaucratic procedural processes serving as their talisman and guide.

An inordinate emphasis upon sociocultural diversity confuses the laudable motive of respect for other cultures with a capitulation to cultural relativism (Siporin, 1982), and as a consequence, moral isolationists equate respect and tolerance with an absolute veto on the adoption of a critical position vis-à-vis any other culture, oblivious to the reality that expression of respect for other cultures is contingent upon our capacity for making moral judgements (Levy, 2002) given that we cannot respect what is utterly unintelligible, for "To respect someone, we have to know enough about him to make a *favourable* judgement, however general and tentative" (Midgley, 1983b:69). To treat tolerance as synonymous with respect, Cordner (2002) maintains, erodes any substantial conception of what it is to respect others. Besides, tolerance is often only extended to what *we* think is not wrong (Clark, 1993g), and few of us suppose that we ought tolerate *every* kind of conduct (Midgley, 1993).

Cross-cultural sensitivity is quite distinct from the notion that such differences are absolute and therefore admit no possibility of making informed and perceptive moral judgements. The particular danger for social work is that it will, albeit unwittingly or not, leave its

practitioners open to the charge of being cultural apologists (Meemeduma & Atkinson, 1996). Cultural differences, Rachels (1995) argues, are more a matter of degree than kind, and we are mistaken in overestimating dissimilarity. All cultures have a moral concern for what their members make of themselves (Downie & Telfer,1969), and the reason that we can justifiably condemn cultural insensitivity is *because* we are capable of making such moral judgements in the first instance, for "In so far as we cannot judge other cultures, we cannot learn from them either" (Midgley, 1978:401).

The relativistic objection that standards of right and wrong vary *infinitely* from culture to culture ensues from a false magnification of cultural difference, and cannot warrant our moral faculties grinding to a standstill (Midgley, 1996b), or an atrophying of our sense of cultural evils (Clark, 1989b; Okin, 1999). Differences are real, but difference cannot invariably entail incomprehensibility, for we ineluctably are, and remain, one species, and we inhabit one world (Midgley, 1983b).

Historically, the notion that any moral judgement cannot but be the reflection of the customs of each particular society, arose from the growing familiarity of nineteenth century Europe with distant cultures (Singer, 1984), of seemingly dramatic differences in what constitutes right and wrong (Rachels, 1995). It increasingly got into the water of most Western societies, inducing a creeping moral paralysis that seeks to outlaw normative and universalizable principles, duly holding that *nothing* is knowable in the sphere of morals. But the implications that this commits us to are highlighted by Singer (1993:17), who remarks that

> if there is really no basis for ethics, except one's own culture, what is the meaning of the claim that we should not impose our culture on others? Is that view just a reflection of the speaker's culture?...Those who want to argue that we should stop this practice [of imposing our culture on others] need some footing *outside* their culture. Cultural relativism denies the possibility of *any* such footing. (italics mine)

Relativism reduces morality to societal consensus rather than individual reflection (Boghossian, 2006; O'Hear, 1997; Singer, 1984), and far from getting outside morality, merely substitutes custom for rational moral deliberation (Singer, 1993). The card carrying relativist, although seemingly oblivious of the fact, is actually in a catch-22 situation, for "Someone who attempts to live out his relativism loses the ability to say that he truly

believes anything, for he believes nothing to be true-in-fact. That what he believes he believes to be true-for-him only means that whatever he believes he believes that he believes" (Clark, 1984:7). Furthermore, "if it is true, there is at least one truth that does not depend on us, and so it is false" (Clark, 1986b:56).

Subjectivism reduces morality to personal preference, and so long as one is *sincere* in one's thoughts or feelings, subjectivism implies moral infallibility (Regan, 1991). But whereas emphasis upon sincerity entails a focus upon *self*, an accent upon truth is *other* centred (Murdoch, 1961,1993a,1996) - the cult of sincerity is not the same thing as truth or honesty (Clark, 1984), for "Wants become needs and rights as a way of pressing the claims of self-interest" (Siporin, 1982:528). But one begs to ask, how reflective is this of the manner in which we actually conduct our lives, and seek to resolve moral conflicts? Rather pointedly, Midgley (1993:102) asks that "if everyone invents their own standards, how can there be such a thing as their being wrong at all?" Subjectivism sidelines rational deliberation, and we must just agree to disagree - as Singer (1984:6-7) illustrates, "when I say that cruelty to animals is wrong I am really only saying that *I* disapprove of cruelty to animals…If this means that I disapprove of cruelty to animals and someone else does not, both statements may be true and so there is nothing to argue about".

Cultural relativism not only presents significant problems for human beings; postmodernism, which embraces cultural relativism as its foundational concept (Sessions, 1996), all too readily conceptualizes the natural world as nothing more than a social construct (Sessions, 1995,1996), in ignorance of the fact that we construct *conceptions* of things, *not* things (Naess, 1997; Noske, 1997). Social work is likewise susceptible to fall prey to the primacy of symbolism over reality; for instance, the *reality* of child abuse is more often than not subordinated to what it *means*, whereby conceptual analysis obfuscates, or reifies, the lived experience and the flesh and blood *realness* of those individuals. Truth and reality are concepts that on closer examination are merely cultural constructs (Wolin, 2004); social constructionism constricts attention and moral value to humankind, and Soule (1995) argues that it is inherently committed to a *relativistic anthropocentrism* - superstitious cultural practices are condoned for fear that any criticism will be deemed racist, whilst the extermination of less powerful beings fails to rate a mention, let alone causes a moral ripple. Postmodernism's grandiose claim that reality is what *we* decide is proof positive that it is, Gray (2002:55) insists, but the latest fad in anthropocentrism, "implicitly rejecting any limit on human ambitions. By making human beliefs the final

arbiter of reality, they are effectively claiming that nothing exists unless it appears in human consciousness".

Postmodernism's rejection of the moral primacy of consciousness entails the subsumption of the individual subject within a linguistic system (Antonaccio, 2000; Benhabib, 1992), what Murdoch (1993a:193) terms *Linguistic Determinism,* whereby "What is 'transcendent' is not the world, but the great sea of language itself which cannot be dominated by the individuals who move or play in it, and who not speak or use language, but are spoken or used by it". Postmodernism has replaced the paradigm of consciousness with that of language (Benhabib, 1992), whereby truth (Hitchens, 2002; Lacan, 1977) and the self (Barthes, 1986; Foucault, 1970) are deemed to be linguistically contingent. Individuals do not possess an essential identity, personality, subjectivity, or a capacity for integration (Parton & Marshall, 1998), subjectivity being characterized by contradiction, precariousness, process and subject to perpetual reconstruction (Weedon, 1987). In its rejection of morality, reality, reason, society, truth, and all other verities that we once took as givens (Himmelfarb, 1994), postmodernism detaches us from any pre-existing frame of reference, extolling a *fundamental discontinuity of meaning* (Foucault, 1970).

Postmodernism's extreme scepticism and relativism, and its exaltation of pluralism, can be seen as a reaction to notions of infallible knowledge; it highlights the interrelationship between ideas and the social world (Payne, 1997), and the linkage between knowledge and power, and offers a salutary caution against *expertism* (Trainor, 2002). Social work rightly disavows of a *particular* understanding of expertise, a *professional imperialism* (Midgley, James, 1981) - it is for not dissimilar reasons that George Bernard Shaw (1928) avers that *all* professions are conspiracies against the laity. An expert, so the story goes, is someone who knows more and more about less and less. That said, there is no reason why particular knowledge and skills ought not to be utilized *for* and *with*, rather than *against* or *over* those who seek out the services of a social worker. To lay claim to knowledge and wisdom in a specific field, that being the interaction of individuals with their social environment and the honouring and respecting of the subject, is clearly distinct from the claim that one knows *all* there is to know about both, or to presume that one is an expert about the lives of others. It is also distinct from the claim that one knows *everything* there is to know about that particular domain, or worse still, makes the simultaneous assumption that those with whom

one works know *nothing*, or possess neither knowledge nor wisdom of their own to bring to bear upon their particular situation.

But there is a fundamental distinction between what Midgley (1993) terms an *enquiring* and a *dogmatic* scepticism - the former entails due reserve about specific claims until the facts are in and an evaluation can be made, whilst the latter entails a belief that there exists *no* possibility of answering or resolving moral questions. The dogmatic scepticism that pervades postmodernism presumes that because there is no *absolute* truth there can be no partial or contingent truths, bequeathing us with an *absolute relativism* (Himmelfarb, 1994). Postmodernism has enjoyed appreciable currency within social work (Aldridge, 1996; Chambon & Irving, 1994; Chambon & Irving & Epstein, 1999; Dominelli, 1996; Gorman, 1993; Healy, 1999; Howe, 1994; McBeath & Webb, 1991; Pardeck, Murphy & Choi, 1994; Parton, 1994a,1994b,1996; Parton & Marshall, 1998; Pietroni, 1995; Pozatek, 1994; Rojek, Peacock & Collins, 1988; Saleeby, 1994; Sands & Nuccio, 1992; Scott, 1989; White & Epson, 1990), but it is argued that its moral relativism undermines social work practice and core social work ideals, especially social justice (Ife,1999; Piele & McCouat,1997; Solas,2002; Trainor,2002; Wood,1997); it is likewise condemned for its abuse of science (Slezak, 1994; Sokal & Bricmont, 1998). Its fetishism of difference, and virtual silence on the great liberal ideals of equality, human rights and justice (Eagleton, 1997,1998a,1998b), and its subversion of subjectivity (Benhabib, 1992; Malik, 2000; Murdoch, 1993a) ought alarm social work.

The epistemological assumptions undergirding these exorbitant claims strike a discordant note with everyday experience. The trails, tribulations and conflicts that beset the common man and woman are not resolved by reference to an unerring truth; resolution is accomplished by engaging in a process of accumulation of evidence, appraisal, reflection, resolve and course of action. They are likewise not resolved by the throwing of hands in the air and an abdication of responsibility, nor by virtue of an abstracted and isolated exercising of will, for the world in principle is both *coherent* and *intelligible* (Clark, 1986c; Midgley, 1993). In essence, postmodernism is an *epistemological* rather than *moral* theory, concerned with "a theory of knowing, rather than a theory about what sort of society we should have and how people should behave within it" (Fook, 2002:16).

The notion that social work engages in activities that are inherently moral was historically an uncontroversial assumption. Early social workers had definite conceptions of the nature

of good society, and this was deduced from what they deemed to constitute the good of individuals (Siporin, 1983). Furthermore social workers were perceived as moral agents *and* the moral conscience of society (Siporin, 1982), their vision bringing to mind Murdoch's (1977:5) observation that "The just man and the just society are in harmony under the direction of reason and goodness".

Social work, along with both the left and right of the political spectrum, unapologetically utilized the language of morality as foundational in justifying its existence, but contemporarily exhibits a predilection for the language of values and ethics (Reid & Popple, 1992). The genesis of the language of values, Himmelfarb (1995) claims, can be found in Nietzsche, who in proclaiming the death of God, sought to likewise strike a fatal blow against truth and morality. However Himmelfarb (1995:9) argues that it was not until the twentieth century that the classical virtues were supplanted by the language of values, this being a consequence of morality being "thoroughly relativized and subjectified", with the concomitant claim to moral equality and neutrality. The diffusive notion that we inhabit a time marked by the disappearance or death of morality is evidence of a profound misunderstanding of the concept itself. By way of analysis, Todorov (2000:285) observes that

> the contemporary world seems to favor two supposedly self-evident, if incompatible, propositions on the subject. The first, voiced with either satisfaction or regret, holds that what characterizes Western societies today is the absence of moral life: duty is dead, and in its place we champion something called authenticity. The second proposition tends to be expressed in more imperative tones: it's high time we freed ourselves from the last vestiges of moral oppression, people say. Or: Watch out! Morality is making a comeback!

Furthermore, Todorov (2000:286-287) contends that the origin of these propositions rests in two distinct misconceptions about both the meaning and gamut of the term moral:

> The first proposition confuses species and genus: from the disappearance of a particular form of morality (the kind rooted in, for lack of a better term, traditional morality), one deduces (falsely) the disappearance of moral life in general… morality cannot "disappear" without a radical mutation of the human species.

It's not that social work lacks a history of moral discernment, but its endeavours in this sphere have been selective, often treated in a rather slipshod, slapdash, and superficial manner by the discipline. In polite circles, *moral* has come to represent somewhat of a dirty word (Midgley, 1972,1987a), or a source of embarrassment (Emmet, 1962). In the twentieth century morality increasingly came to be conceptualized as being intrinsically trivial, irrational and subjective in nature (Midgley, 1995a), and as being both culturally and historically relative (Clark and Asquith, 1985). Morality is often conceptualized as comprising competing claims rather than as referring to the whole scene of conflict (Midgley, 1996b), conceived as primarily concerned with *preventing* others from doing something, rather than as essentially concerned with reflection upon what really matters in life (Midgley, 1980b).

Social work's moral mission, Siporin (1975) declares, entails assisting individuals in the resolution of severe value dilemmas, and to enable them to become morally better persons and morally responsible community members. This vision assuredly grounds the centrality of the notion of goodness and the Good. Freedom rests in contemplation upon what it would be good to *be* and to *do*, upon reality, not selfish desires (Murdoch, 1987). That *personality* has come to supplant *character* in modern discourse serves to only obfuscate one's connections to the wider world (Collini, 1985; Sennett, 1999; Smiles, 2002), and eclipse the notion of a *moral self* (Goldstein, 1984).

The belief that social work represents the embodiment of society's conscience is unfortunately often construed negatively by practitioners; conscience, according to Timms (1983) is best conceptualized in terms of content and function, and fidelity to a moral ideal (Himmelfarb, 1993; Richter, 1964). It is not difficult however to identify the moralizing that placed responsibility for poverty and social distress upon the purported moral inadequacies of the individual, rather than their being symptomatic of structural inequalities, as one historical source of contemporary unease with the language of morality. This attitude continually reinvents itself (Abbott, 1981,2000; Gordon & Gray, 2001; Marston & Watts, 2004; Measham, 2003; Peel, 2003), as currently witnessed in hostility to the welfare state and welfare recipients, with admonitory and clockwork-like pronouncements about the supposedly demoralizing effects of dependency (O'Connor, 2001) - read *pauperization* for the nineteenth century (Jones, 2004).

But moralizing is quite distinct from moral judgement (Reid, 1992), and Butrym (1979) contends that social workers tend to conflate the notions of *moralizing* and *acting morally*. Whilst Richmond (1917,1922,1930) and Addams (1902) understood the moral nature of social work, from the 1920's onwards there was an increasing tendency to minimize or disavow this reality. In the opinion of Reamer (1992:20), the inordinate influence exerted by psychiatry on social work, especially in the United States, fostered "an *amoralistic orientation*, whose principal feature is the absence of normative concepts".

In exploring why it is that contemporary social workers, unlike their Victorian forbears, possess but a rudimentary conception of the nature of moral judgements, Emmet (1962:169) proposes that in part this results from "the prevalence of the idea that moral standards are personal, subjective and emotional", and as such are not conducive to rational argument and reflection. It will be helpful to distinguish between judgementalism on the one hand, and moral judgement on the other - in Stalley's (1978) view, to be judgmental is, among other things, to engage in authoritarian or dogmatic moralizing, and a failure to respond to the uniqueness of the individual, the latter is particularly insidious for it places individuals in preconceived categories. What remains to be seen is whether the moral judgement that categorizes animals as being *outside* morality is a justifiable and warranted obfuscation of animals, precluding our knowing them as individuals.

The conflation of judgementalism and moral judgement (Ramsey, 1976) is the source of much blurred and confused thinking in social work about morality. It leads, in the opinion of Stalley (1978:93), to the view that "to be non-judgmental is always, so to speak, to 'leave morality out of it' ", but the onus rests with those who insist that moral considerations are to be excluded from casework to show there exists a logical gap between moral *and* casework judgements. Fortunately, morality is not an optional extra, that we can either take or leave, for

> Getting right outside morality…would mean losing the basic social network within which we live and communicate with others, including all those others in the past who have formed our culture… (without morality) there is no sense of community with others, no shared wishes, principles, aspirations or ideals, no mutual trust or fellowship with those outside, no preferred set of concepts, nothing agreed on as important. (Midgley, 1993:10)

The assumption that moral judgements ought *always* to be excluded from the province of casework, as though this were proof positive of the qualitative difference between early and contemporary social work, provides social workers with neither guidance nor accountable standards, and obfuscates social work's moral dimensions and the *moral anchors* of practice (Hughes, 1984).

According to Singer (1990), the nature of making of moral judgements entails a transcendence of individual interests and arbitrary preferences in favour of a universal standard, and whilst it has been traditional to conceptualize interests and preferences in exclusively human terms, so as the interests and preferences of humans invariably override those of animals, this cannot be a matter decided upon *a priori* or arbitrarily. It cannot be a mere matter of opinion or personal taste that animals are deemed to be no more than means to human ends, or that social work need never concern itself with anything beyond the human realm; as Rachels (1995) reminds us, it is not *preferable* that we have reasons, rather it is *essential* that we do. If social workers are to exclude consideration of the interests of animals from our moral deliberations, they cannot merely assume that this is so obvious that it requires no rational justification. Appeals to the supposedly *obvious* preempt rational and moral reflection.

Moral judgements, Midgley (1993:30) asserts, are typically conceived as follows -

1. a judgement about *others*, not about oneself,

2. an *unfavourable* judgement - blame or disapproval - not a
   favourable or neutral one,

3. an *uncharitable* judgement - that is, one not making allowance for
    mitigating circumstances,

4. a judgement *on an act already done*, not on one contemplated, and
   usually -

5. a judgement made *from a detached position* - either by a superior
   about subordinates, or by a spectator - not from a sympathiser or from inside the
   inside the situation.

We are mistaken, Midgley (1993:25-26) believes, to see judgement as a mere flipping of the moral coin whereby we plump for one or other of two ready-made alternatives; rather, it entails a continual exercising of rationality, as befits our nature as social and linguistic creatures, and "It is a comprehensive function, involving our whole nature, by which we direct ourselves and find our way through a whole forest of possibilities…It is continuous with the rest of life". We are likewise mistaken to conceptualize moral judgement as focused on the moment of choice; rather, it is the result of continual *attentiveness*. The distinction rests on an emphasis on *movement* and *vision* respectively (Murdoch, 1996). We as individuals, and as social workers, can no more refrain from moral judgement than we can go on living without breathing.

To make a moral judgement, Midgley (1983b:72) avers,

> is, in fact, not a luxury, not a perverse indulgence of the self-righteous. It is a necessity. When we judge something to be bad or good, better or worse than something else, we are taking it as an example to aim at or avoid. Without opinions of this sort, we would have no framework of comparison for our own policy, no chance of profiting by other people's insights or mistakes. In this vacuum, we could form no judgements on our own actions.

It is sobering in the extreme to reflect upon what the conflated conceptualization of morality and moral judgement commits us to - do we really want to affirm that child physical and sexual abuse, child pornography, domestic violence, and murder are activities which we cannot judge as inherently *wrong* behaviour? One could safely assume that *all* social workers would invariably consider *all* of the aforementioned as *immoral* activities, in the sense that they are *wrong*, and that such judgements are not merely reflective of personal preference, but can supported by rational arguments and objective standards. A world in which all human actions were deemed to have moral equivalence would not be one worth thinking about, let alone worth living in (Todorov, 2000).

The primary purpose of morality, Stalley (1978) observes, is to *guide* action, and moral judgements refer to the consideration of the rightness or wrongness of *future* actions as much as concerns about the moral probity or otherwise of *past* actions (he suggests that judgementalism refers to an undue preoccupation with the latter). The failure to attribute the faculty of moral judgement commits one to a variety of fatalistic determinism; we are

merely acted upon, as so much flotsam and jetsam in the chaos of life, and responsibility is abrogated, or else we assume that morality is narrowly encapsulated in the act of choosing, in the exercising of will. But, as Murdoch (1961:20) soberly cautions us, "We are not isolated free choosers, monarchs of all we survey, but benighted creatures sunk in a reality whose nature we are constantly and overwhelmingly tempted to deform by fantasy".

To summarily abolish moral judgement has consequences every bit as pernicious as does judgementalism. Our epistemological scepticism invariably results in the dominance of ideology, and Hunt (1978) argues that ideology flourishes in social work precisely because philosophy is largely absent from the consideration of substantive issues. There exists, Timms (1983:133) claims, a common assumption in social work circles that *any* observation is so suffused with a person's personal and political values that it makes negligible sense to inquire about their beliefs, but rather more so their ideology, "i.e. the ways in which they seek to confront others about that on which they themselves stand in no need of argument". The reality is that neither ideology nor irrationalism can guide us in choosing what it that we ought do, and Hunt (1978:20) insists that the most sinister aspect of ideology is that it necessarily reduces judgement and viewpoints to arbitrary choice or unsubstantiated opinion, and vitiates communication and understanding - "once the issues are removed from the sphere of reason, they are liable in practice to be decided by power alone".

As a means of exposing the inadequacy of a gap between fact and value, Stalley (1978) argues that it is well nigh impossible for a social worker to abstain from *any* judgement as to the morality of the actions of those with whom he or she works, especially in relation to actions that either contribute to or impair the said individuals' interests or happiness. Paradoxically, those who would vehemently affirm that there is no value free knowledge would now, with ingenious intellectual dexterity, have us commit to a logical gap between fact and value in relation to moral judgement.

This position is belied by the reality that even the description of facts involves evaluation, as to which facts are taken into account or held to matter (Murdoch, 1957,1993a,1997). A conceptual gap between facts and values leads to a baleful subjectivism and relativism (Midgley, 1996a), and a moral scepticism wherein it is held that rationality concerns itself solely with facts, whilst values must be dealt with by feelings (Midgley, 1986). But moral

judgements are not what are subjectively *preferred*, they are discoveries about the real world (Murdoch, 1996).

The function of moral judgement in our inner lives is, according to Midgley (1996b:49) "to build up a store of cases approved and disapproved for various reasons - a map by which we can orient ourselves and plot our own course when we have to make decisions. Because we each have to act as individuals, these cases must in the first place be individual ones". It is a mistaken notion to suppose that we ought never pass judgement on others, as though moral judgements can only refer to verdicts on *our* behaviour (Midgley, 1996b). Indeed Midgley (1996b:170) contends that to dispense with approval and disapproval, absolutely necessary to our attitudes towards others, would result in an abject failure to treat them *as* people, for

> We need the natural, sincere reactions of those around us if we are to locate ourselves morally or socially at all. They give us our bearings in the world. No child ever grows up without constantly experiencing both disapproval and approval, and the serious possibility that both will continue is essential for our lives.

As Clark (1988b) comments, the very same people who will censoriously condemn supposed 'moralizing' are seemingly oblivious to the fact that they, by their very reproach, are likewise engaged.

As social workers we do absolutely no favours at all when, faced with an individual convinced they have a moral problem, be that regret and/or remorse for past actions, or deciding what it is that he/she ought do in the future, we act as though none exists (Stalley, 1978). More likely than not, *when* attended to, social workers are apt to conceptualize the task at hand as an act of will, geared *to* action, rather than *seeing*, whereas the task of morality is purification and reorientation of attachments, for "*Good, not will, is transcendent*" (Murdoch, 1996:69). Moral change and achievement are not products of the will. Rather they need to be cultivated, for as Murdoch (1996:40) avers, "If I attend properly I will have no choices and this is the ultimate condition to be aimed at".

Indeed were one to proscribe the faculty of moral judgement then the very notion of ethical and/or moral dilemmas and problems becomes meaningless - we would simply have to

refer to them as ethical and moral no-go areas, and leave it all in the lap of the gods. But this is absurd, for as Banks (1995) argues, an ethical dilemma is by definition that which confronts one *prior* to the making of a judgement, and we can either subscribe to random choice (by sudden exercising of the will), or else by *informed* and *attentive* judgement. In observing that ordinary experience precludes the invariable suspension of *all* judgement, Clark (1989b:174) maintains that "never to do so would be to abandon all attempt to rule our own lives, would amount to a surrender to the judgment of those less humble or cautious than ourselves".

But such a process is not the sole preserve of social workers, or a moral elite - we *all* inhabit the same universe. All our lives we are faced with moral conflicts that require resolution, and there is general consensus that this may be best achieved by rational reflection and choice than be by treating it as though it were a lottery. Morality is no fair-weather indulgence, no superficial custom or etiquette, and not, as Marx would have us believe, a bourgeois illusion - morality is *inherent* in our nature.

Furthermore, it is not obvious that animals are to be excluded from the circle of moral considerability *a priori*, thereby absolving us from the necessity of advancing rational justification for such a decision. Social work cannot fall back onto the argument that the species barrier is so clearly demarcated so as to be of significant moral relevance, and thereby can be utilized as a credible justification for moral indifference; in truth, the species barrier is neither hermetic nor all that relevant in itself. Indeed Clark (1988a:30,33) observes that "If humankind is not a natural kind, but an assembly of interbreeding populations like any other species…then a number of traditional categories must be judged merely artificial…other creatures than the biologically human might be persons". We are evolutionarily related, not freaks of nature nor a species apart, and the characteristics of moral considerability cannot be decided merely by reference to our own species.

The traditional argument for the exclusion of animals from the moral circle correlates moral standing with the possession of rationality, witnessed in Kant's (1964) central moral insight of distinguishing between *subjects* (people) and *objects* (things), entailing a normative response that all persons are ends in themselves. For Kant, *person* and *human being* are interchangeable and synonymous designations, and human moral agency is a *transcendental* characteristic, and as a consequence whilst "Traits of character might command admiration and other such responses…*respect* is owed to a man irrespective of

what he does, because he is a *man*" (Plant, 1970:12). This respect is formulated on deontological principles, whereby respect is due as a right and not as a consequence, and it is from Kantian philosophy that *the* central social work value, *respect for persons*, is derived.

Indeed Regan (1982:117) maintains that

> *A basic moral right is itself the ground of a moral obligation; it is not the consequence of our having a moral obligation.* For example, if A has a basic moral right to life, then A's having this right is itself the ground of our obligation not to take A's life. More generally, if there are basic rights, we cannot establish, independently of these rights, the full range of our obligations; on the contrary, there is at least a subset of obligations we have to certain beings grounded in their possession of basic moral rights. (italics mine)

Kant grounds morality and respect for human beings in their rationality, rather than viewing consciousness as fundamental to human moral being (Antonaccio, 1996,2000; Blum, 1986; Murdoch, 1986,1993a,1996); Kant (quoted in Sapontzis, 1987:40) argues that rationality is the faculty that distinguishes and separates human beings from animals, and he contends that "A rational being must regard himself as…belonging to the world of understanding and not to that of the senses", as an autonomous, not heteronomous, being. This is an important distinction, for whilst one may admit consciousness to animals, it is held that they are irrational beings and therefore beyond the orbit of direct moral concern. Whilst Kant is not dismissive of sentience, he sees it as a subsidiary of rationality, as contributing nowt to the *intrinsic* worth of a person (Downie & Telfer, 1969); human beings are valued not because they are *conscious* beings, but precisely because they are *rational* beings (Midgley, 1996a). Precisely because Kantian thought has had such a pervasive influence upon social work values (Banks, 1995; Biestek, 1976; Clark & Asquith, 1985; Downie & Telfer, 1969), it is hardly surprising that in social work literature moral value has been conceptualized as the sole preserve of human beings, albeit largely by omission; Banks (1995:10) unequivocally (and characteristically) declares that "Moral judgements are about *human welfare*". To be sure, this is so, but no explanation or argument is proffered as to why it is, or more to the point, ought to be *exclusively* the case.

This conceptualization of morality and subjectivity as referring to *normal adult human* intelligence not only excludes animals from the circle of moral considerability, but it also

raises key questions about the status of humans who are philosophically deemed to be *marginal cases*.

Enlightenment thought evidences a tendency to assign contracts, constructed by rational assent on the grounds of enlightened self-interest, the status of being at *the* centre of morality (Midgley, 1983c), and in Kant's contractual view the meaning of rights and duties is dependent upon a social convention that is expressed linguistically (Midgley, 1996a). But this conceptualization cannot be *the* centre of morality, for it is too narrow and ultimately arbitrary, hermetically cordoning off human beings from all other animals, as though we were an island of subjects surrounded by a sea of objects.

The way in which one conceptualizes the subjects of the moral community serves to circumscribe the boundaries of moral considerability (Bernstein, 1992; Buchanan, 1983; Cohen & Regan, 2001; Goodpaster, 1978; Johnson, L., 1991; Moline, 1986; Warren, 1997). Until relatively recently, it appeared axiomatic that ethics and morality were circumscribedly humanocentric (Frankena, 1979; MacIver, 1948; Passmore, 1974, 1975; Singer, 1999b), although there have been significant challenges from environmental (Attfield, 1983b; Birch, 1993; Birch & Cobb, 1990; Brown, 2004; Callicott, 1979, 1986, 1989b; Clark, 1983b, 1989c, 1993a, 1995a; Devall & Sessions, 1985; Elliot & Gare, 1983; Fox, Warwick, 1995; Goodpaster, 1979; Hay, 2002; Jamieson, 2001; Johnson, L., 1991; Leopold, 1949; Lovelock, 1979, 1988, 1989; Merchant, 1992; Midgley, 2001b; Naess, 1986, 1989; Nash, 1990; Regan, 1981, 1982; Rodman, 1977; Routley & Routley, 1979; Stone, 1972, 1987; Taylor, 1986) and animal rights philosophies (Benton, 1993a; Cavalieri, 2001; Clark, 1977, 1997a; DeGrazia, 1996, 2002; Finsen & Finsen, 1994; Franklin, 2005; Garner, 1993; Godlovitch & Godlovitch & Harris, 1972; Linzey, 1987, 1994; Midgley, 1983c, 2003b; Munro, 2001; Paterson & Ryder, 1979; Pluhar, 1995; Regan, 1983, 2001b, 2003, 2004; Rollin, 1990a, 1992; Ryder, 1983, 1989; Singer, 1976, 1985a, 2006; Sunstein & Nussbaum, 2004) to this human-centred ethic during the latter part of the twentieth century.

There has, however, been an uneasy tension between those concerned for animals and the natural world, but to suppose that they are inherently antithetical is patently wrong (Benton, 1993a, 1996; Callicott, 1992a, 1992b; Clark, 1989c, 1993a, 1997a; Finsen, 1988; Jamieson, 1998, 2002; Jasper & Nelkin, 1992; Johnson, E., 1981; Johnson, L., 1991; Kheel, 1996; Luke, 1995; Midgley, 1983e, 1987c, 1992a, 1992b, 1992c, 1992d, 2001a, 2001b; Moriarty & Woods, 1997; Noske, 1994, 1997; Pluhar, 1983; Regan, 1981, 1982, 1983; Ryder, 1992b;

Salt, 1894,1935,1993; Scherer, 1982; Serpell, 1992; Singer, 1979,1992,1997b; Suckling, 1992; Taylor, 1996a,1996b,1999; Townend, 1980,1985; Warren, 1983,1997; Westra, 1989). Both remind us that we have duties to other beings and entities that extend far beyond the purely rational and human, of a reality beyond ourselves, and both share a rejection of an instrumentalist and mechanistic view of non-human beings and the natural world.

Notwithstanding, human welfare and interests have traditionally been held to exhaust our moral deliberations, and the circle of morality is conceptualized as humankind being both its genesis and terminus. Moral considerability is succinctly demarcated between *us* (although it needs accentuating that the subjects who are ostensibly gathered beneath this banner are by no means as inclusive and incontrovertible as one may at first be given to believe), and *them* (all other beings). From such a restrictive and competitive model of moral considerability, Midgley (1983c) argues that it is a short step from *us* and *them*, to the Hobbesian model of *me* and *them*, which invariably misrepresents the inherent complexity of moral claims. The very notion of enlightened self-interest presupposes rationality to be the cornerstone of moral considerability, and leaves us without the wherewithal to effectively grapple with the claims of other species and the natural world.

When we embark on an exploration as to what it is that constitutes a being's moral considerability, we would be well advised to take into account Midgley's (1983e) contention that the history of ethics is riddled with copious examples of what sages *omit* to mention; whilst omission may be benign in intent, in practice it infers that those beings or categories who are excluded from moral consideration are of *no consequence*. To answer these questions, we need to understand what is meant by the terms moral community and moral considerability.

There are two questions, Pluhar (1995:xiv) asserts, that that are fundamental to moral theory:

> (1) What sorts of beings are morally considerable (i.e., proper subjects of our moral concern)? (2) Are all morally considerable beings equally morally significant (i.e., due the same degree of moral respect from us)?

To be morally considerable, in Pluhar's (1995:166,xiii) opinion, "is to be the sort of being to whom others can have duties", and "maximum moral respect is due any being, human or

nonhuman, who is capable of caring about what befalls him or her". Defining moral considerability as having moral entitlement to consideration or respect (Rowlands, 1998,2002), Rowlands (1998:29) claims that morality entails "*treating individuals with equal consideration and respect*".

In characterizing *intersubjective actions* as those "whose distinguishing feature is that they establish a relationship between two or more individuals", Todorov (2000:286) asserts that we can no more imagine ourselves divorced from intersubjective relations, than we can envisage ourselves as being devoid of a moral dimension. Even in the death camps, veritable hells on earth, morality survived (Bauman, 2000; Des Pres, 1976; Frankl, 1965; Todorov, 2000). Furthermore, Todorov (2000:287,288) argues that

> moral action is always one that the individual takes on himself (the moral action is in this sense "subjective") and that is directed toward one or more individuals (it is "personal," for when I act morally I treat the other as a person, which is to say, he becomes the end of my action)…a moral standpoint (is) one that takes the interests of individuals into account.

To have moral standing is to *matter* morally, to some degree (Sumner, 1988), and it imposes limits upon what we consider it right and fitting to do (Timms, 1983), whilst Warnock (1971:148) argues that *moral relevance* entails "having a claim to be considered, by rational agents to whom moral principles apply". Moral status endows an entity with a right not to be treated in *any* which way *we* so desire or decree, to be treated well for *their* sakes (DeGrazia, 2002); normatively, "we are morally obliged to give weight in our deliberations to its needs, interests, or well-being…not merely because protecting it may benefit ourselves or other persons, but because its needs have moral importance *in their own right*" (Warren, 1997:3) (italics mine).

Whilst observing that definition of the scope of the moral community has historically varied, often decided by self-interest, race or nationality, Rachels (1995:186) contends that it refers to beings whose interests are to be taken into account, and that "*we ought to give equal consideration to the interests of everyone who will be affected by our conduct*", whilst Regan (1983:152) defines the moral community "as comprising all those individuals who are of direct moral concern or alternatively, as consisting of all those individuals toward whom moral agents have direct duties". Equal consideration of interests does not entail sameness in treatment, but it does demand that consideration and respect be extended

to all individuals possessing inherent value. This said, it is Midgley's (1991) contention that in the Western tradition the species barrier has almost without exception been seen as demarcating the boundaries of the moral circle, and that elaborate metaphysical doctrines have been formulated in order to further bolster this constriction.

It is helpful, Goodpaster (1978:311-312) maintains, to make a distinction between the criteria of *moral considerability* and *moral significance* - the latter refers to "beings who deserve moral consideration in themselves, not simply by reason of their utility to human beings", whilst the latter "aims at governing *comparative* judgments of moral "weight" in cases of conflict", and a lack of clarity about this distinction

> leads some to a preoccupation with rights in dealing with morality. I suspect that the real force of attributions of "rights" derives from comparative contexts, contexts in which moral considerability is presupposed and the issue of strength is crucial.

The concept of moral status specifically proscribes treating possessors of such status as though they were our mere playthings, in ways that disregard their interests, needs or well-being, precisely because those beings have moral value in and of themselves; moral status, Warren (1997:9) claims,

> is a means of specifying those entities towards which we believe ourselves to have moral obligations, as well as something of what we take those obligations to be... Rather than delineating all of our moral obligations towards other individuals, ascriptions of moral status serve to represent very general claims about the ways in which moral agents ought to conduct themselves towards entities of particular sorts.

Such considerations provide a welcome counterweight to the prevalent *self-interested* notion of rights, whereby we all too readily conceptualize rights without due regard to our duties to respect the rights of others, with an inordinate emphasis upon *our* entitlement, with scant attention paid to what it is that we *ought* to do (O'Neill, 2002). Rights are often experienced as abstract, formal entitlements that are divorced from the realities of social life (Benton, 1993b), and the very notion of moral rights is considered suspect by some because of what is seen as its inherent social atomism (Jaggar, 1983; Wolgast, 1987).

A helpful clarification of the ways in which different disciplines set about investigating the membership of the moral community is provided by Regan (1991:20-21), who observes that this subject can be approached by recourse to either *descriptive* or *normative* ethics:

> The goal of a person doing descriptive ethics, as the name suggests, is accurately to describe various features of the moral life, including in particular the conditions that qualify one to be a member of this or that identifiable moral community…The goals of normative ethics, by contrast, are to establish who *should* belong to *any* moral community, and what ethical principles *any* moral community *should* acknowledge....The descriptive ethicist is concerned with *what is the case* (whether it "ought" to be so or not), whereas the normative ethicist is concerned with *what ought to be the case* (whether it "is" or not).

Elsewhere Regan (1983) advances two concepts to ground the notion of moral considerability, those being *subjects-of-a-life* and *inherent value*. The former concept is defined by Regan (1983:243) as follows:

> individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory and a sense of the future, including their own future; an emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference- and welfare-interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well or ill for them, logically independent of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interests. Those who satisfy the subject-of-a-life criterion themselves have a distinctive kind of value - inherent value - and are not to be viewed or treated as mere receptacles.

In Regan's (1983) opinion, the concept of *subject-of-a-life* is applicable to human moral agents *and* human moral patients, as well as, at the least, to *all* mammals. A helpful clarification of the distinction between *moral agents* and *moral patients* (inclusive of human infants, young children, the senile and demented, the mentally deranged, *and* animals) is provided by Regan (1983:151-153):

> Moral agents are individuals who have a variety of sophisticated abilities, including the particular ability to bring impartial moral principles to bear on the determination of what, all considered, morally ought to be done and, having made this determination, to freely choose

or fail to choose to act as morality, as they conceive it, requires…it is fair to hold them morally accountable for what they do, assuming that the circumstances of their acting as they do in a particular case do not dictate otherwise…*Normal adult human beings are the paradigm individuals believed to be moral agents…moral patients* (italics in text) lack the prerequisites that would enable them to control their own behavior in ways that would make them morally accountable for what they do. A moral patient lacks the ability to formulate, let alone bring to bear, moral principles in deliberating about which one among a number of possible acts it would be right or proper to perform. *Moral patients, in a word, cannot do what is right, nor can they do what is wrong…Only moral agents can do what is wrong.* (italics mine)

The concept of *inherent value*, in Regan's (1983) eyes, has four central components, and is a *categorical* value - the inherent value of an individual is independent of *other's interests*, utility, one's character or behaviour, and of a subject's experiences or mental states (what Regan terms *intrinsic value*).

In arguing that "the moral rights of the individual place a justifiable limit on what the group can do to the individual", Regan (1982:91,94) contends that individuals who have inherent value possess moral rights - "Human beings have inherent value because, logically independently of the interests of others, *each individual is the subject of a life that is better or worse for that individual*" (italics mine).

It follows that *all* subjects-of-a-life possess inherent value, but significantly Regan (1983) contends that being a subject-of-a-life is a *sufficient* but not a *necessary* condition for an individual possessing inherent value. In other words, whilst being a subject-of-a-life automatically infers inherent value, it does not automatically follow that those individuals who fail to meet the subject-of-a-life criterion lack inherent value. In essence, an individual does not have to satisfy all subject-of-a-life criteria to have inherent value.

In arguing that moral agents and moral patients can both be harmed in relevantly similar ways, Regan (1983) contends that it would be arbitrary to grant inherent value to moral agents while simultaneously denying it to moral patients. Therefore *all* moral agents and *all* moral patients, whether they are subjects-of-a-life or not, possess inherent value, and this position undermines the traditional distinction between moral agents and moral patients.

Inherent value admits no degrees, and Regan (1983:248,279) avers that the concept of inherent value informs the principle of *respect for individuals*, which entails that

> *We are to treat those individuals who have inherent value in ways that respect their inherent value...The validity of the claim to respectful treatment, and thus the case for recognition of the right to such treatment, cannot be any stronger or weaker in the case of moral patients than it is in the case of moral agents.*

That moral patients do not conform to the rationalist criteria of moral agency does not exclude them from moral considerability; for instance, we consider it immoral to use human moral patients as mere ends for moral agents. Likewise, the unique capacities for moral agency do not confer a unique moral status on all and only moral agents (Regan, 2001b). The moral community is comprised of beings *other* than moral agents; despite rationality being time and again championed as *the* defining characteristic of moral considerability, it is all too obvious that in everyday life we come to the realization that we often have duties to our fellow human beings *independent* of their degree of rationality. This being so, the arbitrarily demarcated moral boundary is not as watertight as traditional philosophy and metaphysics would lead us to believe. And the fact that we have duties to human beings that are non-contractual in nature ought alert us to the possibility that we might have duties elsewhere - for as Midgley (1983e:178) points out, to speak of duties "expresses merely that there are suitable and unsuitable ways of behaving in given situations".

If we accord moral considerability to fellow human beings who patently fail to meet the traditional, stringent rational criteria, the continued *a priori* exclusion of all animals on the spurious grounds they fail to meet such criteria is to apply double standards. And in relation to our non-contractual duties, Midgley (1983e:175) declares that "the idea that, starting at some given point on this list, we have a general licence for destruction, is itself a moral view which would have to be justified".

Precisely because animals have no duties, it follows that human beings have *no* claims to rights against animals at all (Clark, 1977). The belief that there exists a correlative relationship between rights and duties is routinely invoked to exclude all manner of beings from consideration, but this is essentially misguided; whilst the value of the social contract model lies in its ability to facilitate arbitration of conflicts between autonomous, rational

agents, this serves to belie the fact that either rights or duties may be narrowed without having an affect on the other, for they keep different company (Midgley, 1983e).

In the minds of many, moral agency is employed to justify the exploitation of animals (Sapontzis, 1987), and is deemed to accord special moral status to human beings, but DeGrazia (1991b,1993,1996) contends that attempts to insist that moral agency is a prerequisite of equal consideration is itself a product of bias. Indeed Murdoch (1996:34) challenges the notion that moral considerability can be narrowed in this manner, suggesting that "the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent" (noting that " 'Characteristic' and 'proper' suggest in turn a logical and normative claim") is "*a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality*" (italics mine). But does this, by implication, refer implicitly and exclusively to the human individual? Well, Murdoch (1996:38) obviously thinks not, for she suggests that the *essence* of morality is "attention to individuals, human individuals or individual realities of *other* kinds" (italics mine).

A being's inability to do what is either right or wrong does not, *a priori*, exclude that being from moral considerability (Pluhar, 1995). Attempts to limit direct moral considerability to contractual symmetrical pairs bequeaths nefarious moral and practical consequences, and run contrary to common thought and custom, as witnessed by Grice's (quoted in Midgley, 1983e:167) statement that

> certain classes cannot have natural rights: animals, the human embryo, future generations, lunatics and children under the age of, say, ten. In the case of young children at least, my experience is that this consequence is found hard to accept. But it is a consequence of the theory; it is, I believe, true; and I think we should be willing to accept it. At first sight it appears a harsh conclusion, but it is not nearly so harsh as it appears.

The very notion that babies (Singer (1984) and children are *marginal* people, and what this logically commits us to, ought strike one, upon even momentary reflection, as rather peculiar (and counter-intuitive to boot), and no amount of sophistry will convince or assuage us that we should not find it as harsh as it sounds to ordinary ears (Dombrowski, 2000; Clark, 1979,1989a,1995c).

When we are identifying those individuals who are owed a duty of justice, Regan (1983:171) contends that we need to make a clear distinction between the ability to select

between alternative principles of justice on the one hand, and the abilities necessary to be owed duties of justice on the other -

> While *those who select* these principles must have a sense of justice, *those who are owed* duties of justice need not. A *sufficient* condition of being owed such duties is that one have a welfare - that one be the experiencing subject of a life that fares well or ill for one as an individual - independently of whether one also has a conception of what this is.

The notion of indirect duties is an attempt to ground duties toward moral patients, whilst explicitly disavowing that we are capable of *directly* wronging or benefiting those patients. As a consequence, it remains a matter of moral indifference as to what occurs to any animal as far as *that* animal's interests are concerned. In noting that words like *rights* and *duties* have wider senses whereby they encompass the *whole* moral sphere, Midgley (1983e:171) cautions that where the realm of right and duty ceases, we enter an optional domain, for "To say "they do not have rights", or "you do not have duties to *them*" conveys to any ordinary hearer a very simple message; namely, *"they do not matter"*. This is an absolution, a removal of blame for ill-treatment of "them", whoever *they* may be" (italics mine).

There are obvious implications for social work and social work practice - by such light, social workers would have, or be expected, to walk away from the suffering and distress of animals which they encounter, on the grounds that the former is of no moral significance, and that the latter do not matter, or are not entitled to moral consideration. But social work and social workers cannot, in good conscience, walk away from the interests of fellow sentient beings, for they *are* morally significant (Sapontzis, 1982), cannot pretend that their suffering and distress are phantasmal, or that it is someone else's responsibility. Once concerns and interests are acknowledged and taken into account, they of necessity must be admitted at both conceptual and practical levels, and accorded intellectual and moral assent. In its practical import, indirect duties entail that the moral significance of our conduct toward animals is contingent upon human consequences (Singer, 1979). Those inclined to believe that such attitudes are vestiges of the pre-modern era, historical dogmas that those of us living in supposedly more enlightened times have transcended, need think again; by way of explicating this mindset, Midgley (2001a:161) cites a contemporary illustration of this phenomenon, whereby the rationale for opposition to animal abuse rests upon the improvement of human character -

The persistent power of this view in official quarters can be seen in a recent move by the Charity Commissioners in Britain, who warned the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals that it might lose its status as a charity if it went on campaigning against forms of animal abuse which were advantageous to humans. In a letter to *The Guardian* the Chief Charity Commissioner himself explained that campaigns for animal protection could only count as charitable in so far as they were aimed at 'raising public morality by repressing brutality and cruelty *and thereby elevating the human race by stimulating compassion*'.

This attitude is, one suspects, not at all that dissimilar to that of official social work - social work practitioners might quite legitimately care for and be concerned for animals in their private and domestic lives, but it is considered unbecoming and not the done thing to allow such attitudes and sentiments to spill over into the public and practice sphere. Social workers, or so official social work decrees, ought confine themselves to a concern for human beings. Any expressions of a modicum of moral consideration for other animals are invariably construed as entailing *indirect* duties. It is precisely this conceptualization that leaves social work practitioners bereft of guidance for the variety of practice dilemmas, of which the examples presented at the beginning of Chapter One are but characteristic, which hearsay confirms they encounter on a not irregular basis.

There were, Midgley (2001a) maintains, two divergent strands of Enlightenment thinking on the nature of moral considerability, one that that sought to constrict the moral circle, the other that widened its scope. In observing that ever since the Enlightenment it has been decided *a priori* that rationality is an attribute that admits of no degree, Midgley (1983e:166-167,170) comments that

> All the terms which express that an obligation is serious or binding - duty, right, law, morality, obligation, justice - have been deliberately narrowed in their use so as to apply only in the framework of contract, to describe only relations holding between free and rational agents...It isolates the duties which people owe each other *merely as thinkers* from those deeper and more general ones which they owe each other as beings who feel. It cannot, therefore, fail both to split a man's nature and to isolate him from the rest of the creation to which he belongs.

Whilst noting that social contact thinking, on embarkation, had the respectable aim of counteracting the over-inflated notions of duties to God, and to those terrestrial rulers who claimed to be God's regents, Midgley (2001a) claims that, apart from its intense individualism (Midgley, 1983e), it has the unfortunate contemporary effect of making it difficult for us to come to grips with our responsibility to human beings *outside* our own society (Hardin, 1969,1979), and nigh on impossible for us to give account for our responsibilities to animals, whom Clark (1999:2) terms "fellow voyagers in the odyssey of evolution, neighbours, and fellow members of society", and the natural world. This traditional constriction of moral considerability to rational and contracting entities, as though it were the solitary mode of ethical relationship (Clark, 1977), is problematical for humans *and* animals -

> If we narrow the notion of *duty* to cover only contracts between articulate equals, we are going to need some other word to express the binding element in our relations, not just to animals, but to the inarticulate and helpless generally - to children, defectives, lunatics and the old, and also to people with whom we cannot communicate. (Midgley, 1983c:52)

As a discipline, social work clearly does not conceive duty as linked to an individual's degree of competence, rather quite the opposite - for instance, Titmuss (1970,1977b), by way of his notion of the *universal stranger*, argues that we are in a *caring relationship*, whilst Watson (1980) asserts that social work in essence represents a *caring for strangers.*
In the Gospel story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37), Midgley (1980b) observes that the answer to the question *'who is my neighbour?'* was *already* known by those who heard it. The Good Samaritan does not leave the stricken man to his own devices or fate; he does not remain *indifferent* to the plight of another, albeit a stranger, he considers he is his brother's keeper, that his duties are not confined to, nor circumscribed by, kith and kin. His actions embody Jesus' message (Matthew 25:35-36) "For I was hungry, and you gave me food, thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you welcomed me, naked, and you clothed me, sick, and you cared for me, a prisoner, and you came to me".
The Good Samaritan, Weil (1952) argues, exemplifies the fact that love for our neighbour is dependent upon *creative attention*, and it is Midgley's (1996a) conviction that the crux of the tale of the Good Samaritan is that we ought dispense with the contract notion when we are ascertaining the nature of our duties to our neighbour. In the Torah, love for one's

fellow specifically includes the stranger (Deuteronomy 10:18-19; Epstein, 1982). The tale of the Good Samaritan embodies the belief that one is a moral being precisely to the extent that one recognizes one's brother's and sister's dependence and accepts the responsibility that follows this recognition (Bauman, 2001; Levinas, 1997). It therefore saddens me to make the observation that the individual attended to by the Good Samaritan was fortunate that he was not noticed by many a contemporary social worker, for by the time it was ascertained whether or not the 'client' fitted agency guidelines and the proper referral process had been adhered to, and appropriate assessment and an ongoing plan linked to identified goals or outcomes initiated, the poor man would have long given up the ghost. Sadly, all too often agency function replaces moral deliberation as the discipline's guiding light; the poor as often as not *experience* social justice, the reality as distinct from its philosophy, as regimentation and petty tyranny (Canovan, 1977), or intrusive bureaucratic authoritarianism (Fitzgerald, 1997).

Ethics, so Schweitzer (1955a:239) avers, entails "Subjective responsibility for all life". *We* cannot exclusively refer to *us*, neither are we a solipsistic species, and an acknowledgement of this reality requires a radical revision of our moral sensibilities, and recognition that we are not the only species that *matter*, or the *summum bonum* of creation. Unless we are prepared to assert that humankind *alone* is created in the image of God (and nothing in religion necessarily or *a priori* morally excludes all other beings - see Birch, Eakin & McDaniel, 1990; Birch & Vischer, 1997; Chapple, 1993,1994,2002a; Clark, 1984,1986a,1993a,1994a,1995a,2000a; Collins, 1995; Dombrowski, 1988a,2000; Eaton, 1995; Kalechofsky, 1992; Kapleau, 1982; Kasher, 2002; Kowalski, 1991; Linzey, 1987,1994,1995,1998a,1998b; Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997; Linzey&Yamamoto, 1998; Manes,1997; McDaniel, 1986,1989,1995; Pick, 1977; Pinches & McDaniel, 1993; Regan, 1986a; Regenstein, 1991; Rosen, 1987; Schwartz, 1988; Scully, 2002; Shore, 2000; Sobosan, 1991; Tobias, 1991; Webb, 1995,1998), or that rationality is the moral attribute par excellence, we ought acknowledge that our biological continuity infers a shared ethic of compassion for all sentient beings, for when the *other* is seen as *self* nonviolence prevails (Chapple, 1993; Radhakrishnan, 1971).

The constriction of moral considerability is often predicated on the notion that compassion is a scarce resource, and consequently ought be exclusively directed toward human beings. Whilst not logically restrictive, invariably it is so interpreted; to extend moral consideration

and compassion to *them* is to disadvantage and discriminate against *us*. But precisely because animals like dogs and horses understand the feelings of others of their own or closely related species, when distressed or wounded, they themselves can be said to exhibit compassion (Doniger, 1999; Garber, 1996; Hearne, 1987; Masson, 1998,2000; Masson & McCarthy, 1996; Thomas, 1994). By way of addressing the peculiarity of the mode of thought that treats compassion as though it were a commodity best characterized by scarcity, an oasis in the midst of otherwise inhospitable terrain, Midgley (1983c:31) observes that

> Someone who sees an injured dog lying writhing in the road after being hit by a car may well think, not just that he will do something about it, but that he *ought* to. If he has hit it himself, the grounds for this will seem still stronger. It is not obvious that his reasons for thinking like this are of a different kind from those that would arise if (like the Samaritan) he saw an injured human being…It would be rather an odd response to such a situation for someone (who was not actually rushing off on a life-or-death mission) to drive past, ignoring the human or animal casualty, on the grounds that his resources of compassion are limited, and there may be more deserving cases somewhere else. The reason why this would be odd is that compassion does not need to be treated hydraulically in this way, as a rare and irreplaceable fluid, usable only for exceptionally impressive cases. *It is a habit or power of the mind, which grows and develops with use*. Such powers (as is obvious in cases like intelligence) are magic powers which *increase* with pouring. (all italics mine)

In the view of Midgley (1983c), one can discern in the rationalist tradition two dominant tendencies in attitudes toward animals, which she categorizes as *absolute* and *relative dismissal*. The former dismisses expressions of concern for the well-being of animals as emotional or sentimental, for morality is held to be entirely a contract between rational beings and we therefore owe them *no* consideration - for a poignant illustration, see Midgley (1983c:14-15) -whilst the latter admits that although animals are entitled to *some* consideration, human interests *always* take precedence.

Whereas Hume excludes animals from the sphere of justice, he believes that animals are capable of reasoning (Huntley, 1972; Seidler, 1977; Stroud, 1988), and this conviction is further developed in its normative implications by both Bentham and Mill; all three see no

logical reason for the exclusion of animal suffering from the moral scene (Midgley, 1983c). Counteracting this strand of thought, Kant (1990) insists that we can have no duties toward animals, given that in essence morality entails a transaction between rational beings, and that duty itself is a rational bond, whilst Spinoza, although admitting that animals possess feeling, contends that as humans have a nature and emotional structure entirely distinct to those of animals, we may use them as we feel so inclined without moral compunction (Midgley, 1983c).

Social work's indifference to animals and their wellbeing and welfare is more easily explicable, if no less deserving of condemnation, given social work's conceptualization and understanding of moral considerability. The amalgam of examples derived from practice experience that were presented at the beginning of Chapter One could, I suggest, be augmented *ad infinitum* were social work practitioners attentive, concerned and possessed of a moral clarity and acumen. Indifference is a moral canker (Baum, 1988; Bauman, 2000; Brennan, 2003,2004; Clendinnen, 1998; Des Pres, 1976; Geras, 1998; Gilbert, 1987; Goldhagen, 1997,2002; Helton, 2002; Hilberg, 1992; Kershaw, 1983,2000; Kren, 1988; Lanzmann, 1985; Levi, 1986,1989,2000,2001; Lipstadt, 1994; Marr & Wilkinson, 2003; Rosenberg & Myers, 1988; MacCallum, 2002; Manne & Corlett, 2004; Mares, 2001; Schweitzer, 1970; Shaw, 1934a; Tatz, 1999,2003; Wiesel, 1982,1985a,1985b,1985c; Wiesenthal, 1998), blinding our vision and imaginative capacities, and hardening our hearts. Subjective beings become *things*, and more than that, it is deemed to be *obvious*; we remain steadfastly inattentive, indifferent and insensitive to the reality and individuality of other beings.

As Midgley (1993:16) reminds us, "Ignorance (of morality), after all, provides only a reason for *indifference*, for detachment, for not caring about what other people do or suffer", whilst Pinker (1971) suggests that the very existence of social services delineates a compromise between compassion and indifference. And not only indifference and not caring about what people suffer, but ignorance of morality ensures that we remain indifferent about the moral status of other animals. Morality is the antithesis of solipsism, for as Bauman (2001:72) insists,

> I am a moral person because I recognize that dependence and accept the responsibility that follows. The moment I question that dependence, and demand as Cain did to be given reasons why I should I care, I renounce my responsibility and am no longer a moral self. My

brother's dependence is what makes me an ethical being. *Dependence and ethics stand together and together they fall.* (italics mine)

However, the moral and psychological device of distancing is not limited to certain categories of human beings, but is regularly employed in our dealings with the non-human world. We routinely exploit all manner of animals for *our* purposes, be it for food, for medical experimentation, for the testing of myriad pharmaceutical and household products, for hunting (Moore, 1965; Thomas, R., 1983; Windeatt, 1982), entertainment (Jamieson, 2006; McKenna, Travers & Wray, 1987) and sport. Habitually we employ what Adams (1990) designates as *absent referents*, and language is utilized to mask reality; animals become *absent referents* in three ways - firstly, and *literally*, they are absent in the practice of meat eating by their deaths; secondly, by *definitional* means, animals are transformed from living entities into meat; and thirdly, animals are utilized as *metaphors* for describing human experience.

Animals are variously described as 'livestock', 'units of production', 'research tools', 'game', 'meat', and we no longer kill them, rather we 'cull', 'harvest', or 'value add' them; and increasingly in conservation and environmental circles we witness a reification of individual creatures, whereby

> our eye is on the creature itself, but our mind is on the system of interactions of which it is the earthly, material embodiment…An ecological philosophy that tells us to live side by side with other creatures justifies itself by appealing to an idea, an idea of a higher order than any living creature. (Coetzee, 1999:54)

and where it is held appropriate to cull those deemed surplus to requirements, and we are exhorted to believe that all non-human beings must pay their way (Flannery, 2003). In failing to respect the *otherness* and *individuality* of animals (Plumwood, 1992), "we are superstitiously Platonic: it is the Idea that is real to us, not the individual suffering entities" (Clark, 1977:64). Meat itself is symbolic of our domination of the natural world (Adams, 1990; Braunstein, 1983; Clark, 1977; Fiddes, 1992; Twigg, 1983), and represents, so Plumwood (1997:22) argues, "a sphere of radical otherness".

Historically, many categories of human beings have been considered beast-like, and Thomas (1983) claims that the ethic of human domination served to expressly exclude

animals *and* those considered animal-like from the circle of moral concern. Whilst drawing analogous comparisons between the experience of human beings *in extremis* and the plight of animals (Patterson, 2002; Sax, 2002; Spiegel, 1989) is almost invariably seen as demeaning, sacrilegious and trivializing, and quite probably misanthropic, the Jewish novelist Isaac Bashevis Singer believes it to be an apposite analogy; in his novel *Enemies: A Love Story*, Singer (1972:257) relates that

> As often as Herman had witnessed the slaughter of animals and fish, he always had the same thought; *in their behaviour towards creatures, all men were Nazis*. The smugness with which men could do to other species as he pleased exemplified the most extreme racist theories, the principle that might is right. (italics mine)

Bereft of compassion, empathy and sympathy for the *other*, we assuredly descend into a moral no-man's-land. Interned in a Nazi slave labour camp, the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1990:153; Clark, 1997; Llewelyn, 1991) relates how it was a dog who reaffirmed the humanity of himself and other prisoners - Bobby, he writes, "was the last Kantian in Nazi Germany".

The utilization of the *absent referent* enables us to either ignore or overlook, to be indifferent to, to forget or remain oblivious to animals as independent entities, and also permits us to resist any attempts to make those animals present (Adams,1990). Animal existence is fundamentally meaningless; in arguing that "animals lack the individuality which is internal to our sense of human preciousness", Gaita (1991:120-121) authoritatively declares that "An animal's life does not have meaning because an animal cannot live its life deeply or shallowly, lucidly or opaquely, honestly or dishonestly, worthily or unworthily", whilst Tester (1991:42,46) insists that "animals *are* blank paper; they are only important because they can tell us something about ourselves…They are nothing other than what we make them".

Gaita's argument takes water when one factors in those human beings who are deemed to be *marginal*; like other animals, their lives nevertheless matter to *them*, and besides, animals *can* lead good and virtuous lives (Bekoff, 2002b,2004a; Clark, 1985a; Sapontzis, 1987); Hardy (1976:446), about a bird intentionally blinded, asks

> Who hath charity? This bird.

Who suffereth long and is kind…

Who hopeth, endureth all things?

Who thinketh no evil, but sings?

Who is divine? This bird.

And those of us who share our lives with animals are surely not deluded to have a certain sense of *their* preciousness, whilst Tester, throwing in his lot with the social constructionist barrow (one that supposes that there is *no* reality that transcends *us*), seems unaware as to what this logically commits him to *vis-à-vis* our own species.

It is ultimately a matter of indifference as to what befalls animals at our behest, for we steadfastly refuse to think our way into *their* place. Their interests are invariably denied whenever they conflict with our own, and their sufferings are relegated to self-serving incomprehensibility. Language is regularly and routinely utilized to all but obliterate any residual thoughts of living, sentient beings (Schleifer, 1985), and such objectification inevitably removes animals from the circle of moral considerability, presenting human beings with a *carte blanche* that allays and assuages any residual moral qualms. By way of analysis, Haille's (1969) contends that institutional cruelty both protects and condones acts of personal and collective cruelty perpetrated by those individuals who are societally powerful, and achieves obfuscation of this reality by virtue of *secrecy* and *rigid abstraction*. Secrecy is often achieved by the utilization of language specifically employed to disguise reality, and the concept of *rigid abstraction* refers to the utilization of terminology that transforms the victim into a creature worlds apart, bereft of either individuality or personality (Hallie, 1969).

The employment of both secrecy and rigid abstraction are also evident in our relations with animals; in the concealment of slaughterhouses and their reality (Eisnitz, 1997), the elaborate seclusion of vivisection establishments from public scrutiny, and the sequestering of the sites and associated misinformation and disingenuousness about the actualities of modern factory farming (Bryant, 1983; Harrison, 1964,1971,1979; Mason, 1985; Mason & Finelli, 2006; Mason & Singer, 1980; Rollin, 1990a; Ruesch, 1982,1983; Ryder, 1983; Singer, 1976; Vyvyan, 1988,1989). Our moral indifference to their suffering and interests is conveniently informed by an attitude of out of sight, out of mind, reflective of Bauman's (2000:192) observation that "morality seems to conform to the law of optical perspective". Secrecy *and* complicity are essential to the continuance of an oppressive system (Spiegel,

1989), as is stereotyping (Allport, 1954). By virtue of rigid abstraction, animals are invariably stripped of both individuality and personality; they are objectified as units of production or experimentation, mere raw material for human ends, outside the circle of moral considerability. This leads Harrison (1964:144) to make the observation that

> *if one person is unkind to an animal it is considered to be cruelty, but where a lot of people are unkind to a lot of animals, especially in the name of commerce, the cruelty is condoned, and, once large sums of money are at stake, will be defended to the last by otherwise intelligent people.* (italics mine)

It is difficult to overstate the importance and influence that language plays in shaping our attitudes to that which we name or describe (Meyers, 2000; Orwell, 1949; Taylor, 2003; Watson, 2003), and our attitudes and conduct towards animals are revealed by the manner in which we speak about them (Adams, 1990; Dover, 1985; Dunayer, 1995,2001,2004; Hearne, 1987; Midgley, 1983c,1996a; Salisbury, 1994; Salt, 1894,1921,1935) - Mola (quoted in Adams, 1990:65), argues that "The words we choose do more than name or describe things; *they assign status and value*" (italics mine), and that our regular employment of euphemisms in relation to our treatment of animals serves to disguise their suffering. Our depiction of animals also has direct bearing upon and import for our understanding of human identity - Clark (1977:119) makes the observation that "Nature is a grand mirror for humanity", whilst Salisbury (1994:11) argues that "We define ourselves as much by what we are not as by what we are. Our attitudes towards animals, our treatment of animals reveal our attitudes towards ourselves".

Taking social constructionism to new heights, and casting dogmatic scepticism on our ability to designate cruelty, Tester (1991:207) would have us believe that we are epistemologically inept and moral dilettantes, insisting that "We cannot know whether the present treatment of animals is preferable to the treatment of two or three centuries ago. There is no supra-historical basis upon which it is viable to ask the question, nor indeed answer it, in anything other than the most trite fashion". Modern day tyrants might quite happily avail themselves of Tester's argument *vis-à-vis* human beings; they might be inclined to likewise insist that there exists no supra-historical basis upon which we make comparisons about, let alone condemn, the treatment of, say, women, children and other races over time (or be loath to recognize, or admit, the moral validity of such arguments),

except in the most banal manner. As Benton (1992b:130) comments, "We can *think* about animals any way we please (so long as we do not mind getting hopelessly muddled), but we cannot *treat* them any way we please: that is a historical *and* biological fact, and also a moral requirement".

It is argued that, until relatively recently, we have conceptualized ethics and morality with scant consideration given to our dealings with animals or the natural world (Clark, 1962,1964), with morality limited to being merely a contract between rational beings (Midgley, 1983c). However, such a constriction is nonsensically narrow; we surely owe duties far beyond rational considerations; what of affection, care, love, respect, sympathy, to name but a random quintet? For as Salt (1894:90-91) notes, "reason itself can never be at its best, can never be truly rational, except when it is in perfect harmony with the deep-seated instincts and sympathies which underlie all thought".

In the contract tradition animals are not alone in being given the assignation of penurious, and morally disenfranchised, country cousins, for contract society is no respecter of *all* human beings (Clark, 1995c), positing the rational adult human being as the paradigmatic, moral norm. No self-respecting social worker could fail but to object to such a state of affairs that conceived babies and other human beings as *marginal* people, or that the boundaries of justice are circumscribed by our rational capacities (Clark, 1989a), for it would represent the antithesis of social work values and practice. As Dombrowski (2000:129) observes, "from a practical point of view children have more rights (in the sense of laying more duties on the rest of us) than rational contract-signers". It therefore is more than a tad mystifying as to why it is then that social work proposes that we ought so act in relation to other species - such duality by way of response to not dissimilar subjects is exceedingly problematic for social work. By way of contrast, Clark (1995c:225) contends that in status societies "it is because we fulfill our duties of care, to our inferiors, that we may be owed obedience", and the claims of animals are not dismissed out of hand.

The traditional justification for the exclusion of animals from the moral community, Sapontzis (1985,1987) argues, is dependent upon four principal arguments:

- *the reciprocity requirement* (moral rights are in effect the exclusive entitlement of those who possess the capacity to respect the moral rights of others)
- *the agency requirement* (entitlement to moral rights is confined to moral agents)

- *the relations requirement* (one's entitlement to moral rights against others is dependent upon one's capacity for economic, familial, personal and political relations)
- *the humanist requirement* (moral rights are exclusively concerned with, and confined to, human beings).

In due course, it will be shown that the reciprocity, agency, relations and humanist requirements signally fail to provide justification for social work's exclusion of animals from its circle of moral considerability.

The *reciprocity requirement* stipulates a symbiotic relationship between rights and duties (Cebik, 1981; Watson, 1979), whereby the rights of an individual are *dependent* upon a recognition of concomitant duties, but as Sapontzis (1987:144) draws to our attention, "in relations between the powerful and the powerless, it is not reciprocity but moral rights of the powerless against the powerful, without correlative duties of the powerless to the powerful, that are needed for fairness". Given that the reciprocity requirement is not applicable to dealings between the strong and the weak, and given that human beings are substantially more powerful than animals, Sapontzis (1985,1987) maintains that accordingly the reciprocity requirement does not place an impediment to our extending moral rights to animals. Such a view finds parallels in Clark's (1977:21) conviction that "those that are weak deserve our especial care", whilst Linzey (1994:28) avows that

> the weak and the defenceless should not be given equal, but *greater* consideration. *The weak should have moral priority*…whenever we find ourselves in a position of power over those who are relatively powerless our moral obligation of generosity increases in proportion. If our power over animals confers upon us any rights, there is only one: the right to serve. (italics mine)

The moral priority due to the weak, the poor and the dispossessed is not a newfangled notion (Bauman, 1990; Boff, 1982; Chatterjee, 1985; Desai, 1984; Gandhi, 1959,1987,1990; Gutierrez, 1988a,1988b,1990; Mark 5:1-12; Sobrino, 1984). We would do well to conceptualize moral rights as "the individual's defence against factitious calculations of the greater good…*places in the sun guaranteed to the defenceless* under

some generally accepted system which represents our mutual concern" (Clark, 1977:22,29) (italics mine).

The rejection of the reciprocity argument seeks to ground morality in our affections and relatedness, not in our rationality. This in fact is in keeping with the manner in which social workers actually conduct their relationships with fellow human beings, and there exists a strong intellectual and philosophical history that supports this position. We do not extend moral standing to fellow human beings by virtue of their capacity to engage in rational discourse, or by virtue of an arbitrary benchmark of intelligence. It is indeed an odd morality that constricts moral considerability to autonomous moral agents who abide by mutually struck, prudential bargains. This model presupposes that individuals are best conceptualized as individualistic, moral atoms, and that our initial coming together in society demanded that we strike contracts in order to secure our own interests.

Whilst Hobbesian egoism proclaims that I have need of others *only* to the extent that they serve my own outward advantage, Rousseauian egoism maintains that I can identify with and love others, but *only* on the proviso that those others share a likeness with myself *(*Midgley, 1996a). And whereas Hobbes insists that it is fear that propels humankind to construct civil society, Rousseau argues that is human weakness that forces humankind to be social beings (Cranston, in Rousseau, 1968). In Clark's (1989a) view, it is obvious that there never existed a need to fashion civil society out of solitary ships in the night, nor ought we consider that the supposed primacy of self-interest is *rational*, or that it is *irrational* to enjoy the company of others or wish them well. Indeed, to suppose otherwise is the height of folly, for our existence and welfare is ultimately interdependent with that of our fellows.

Whilst there existed historical disagreement and contention as to which of our own species were like *us*, it is commonly assumed that animals are patently dissimilar. But as Clark (1995b:322) points out, the belief that because we are capable of making explicit bargains with fellow rational beings, we ought behave decently to other rational beings as though we had in fact already entered into agreement to treat each other decently, ignores the fact that "no such actual agreement to be decent could affect us if we weren't *already* decent" (italics mine). The egoistic models mystifyingly assume that we were calculating *before* we were social beings (Midgley, 1996a), as though our sociability was a latter adaptation imposed over and above our original solitary and self-interested natures; in truth, we were social long before anything else, for "we now know - as Hobbes did not - that people are

descended from social creatures already provided both with contentiousness and with a strong, subtle, positive sociability to control it" (Midgley, 1983c:86).

That we extend our moral concern towards the weak and vulnerable within our communities derives from the centrality of natural affections and relationships in our lives (Clark, 1995b), for what holds social creatures together is not fear, but attachment, "a bond of affection constantly fed and maintained by *friendly attention*" (Midgley, 1996a:338) (italics mine), and "It is...from these habits of care and affection that civil society takes its beginning (Clark, 1989a:127).

Likewise, social work does not conceive duties as correlative with reciprocity, for indeed not an insignificant number of those people with whom social workers interact signally fail such a requirement, but are nevertheless entitled to our respect precisely because they possess moral rights, the right to moral considerability, by virtue of their inherent subjectivity. Our rights, Eagleton (1997:79-80) surmises, "may just refer to those human needs and capacities which are so vital for our thriving and well-being". Social workers do not practice as though there exists an irrevocable correlation between rights and duties. For social work to then exclude animals on the grounds that animals fail to satisfy the reciprocity requirement is to apply moral double standards - it should be obvious that animals besides ourselves also have needs and capacities that are central to their flourishing and good.

In addressing what he terms the *agency requirement*, and its rationale for rejection of the extension of moral rights to animals (Cohen, 2001b; Rawls, 1999; Steinbock, 1978), Sapontzis (1987) maintains that it does not logically follow that an acknowledgement of priority for fully moral agents in non-routine conflict of interest situations thereby commits us to either blanket denial of moral rights in moral patients, or sanctions animal exploitation. In observing that "Kant's argument that no rational being should be treated as a means merely does not show that nonrational beings may be so treated", Sapontzis (1987:147) reflects that the reduction of suffering and attempts to ensure that life is more enjoyable and fulfilling is more likely to be assured by according respect and impartial consideration of *interests* to all sentient beings.

But is it possible that other animals, or at least *some* animals, may possess the rudiments of moral sensibility? If we self-servingly restrict morality to those we deem to be rational agents, and indeed to those beings capable of engaging in abstract and complex processes, then we can feel assuredly confident that animals can be readily consigned to a moral no-

man's-land. This traditional viewpoint, in the eyes of Sapontzis (1987), advances the argument that given that moral agency is dependent upon rationality (and not upon sensation, instinct, emotion or feeling), and given that animals are irrational beings, logic therefore decrees it *obvious* that animals cannot be moral agents. Whilst acknowledging that human beings are rational in ways that animals are not, and that this makes for an important moral difference, Sapontzis (1987) is adamant that this does not provide justification for human exploitation of other animals.

In response to the traditional argument for moral agency, Sapontzis (1987) counters that if human beings are *not* required to be moral theorists in order that they may act morally, we ought *not* demand that animals do so either. However, Sapontzis (1987:28) argues that

> if moral evaluations were confined to the behavioral level of describing what was done, and determining whether it sufficiently resembles paradigm cases of courageous, kind, responsible, and otherwise virtuous action, then it would be clear that animals are capable of moral action. At a behavioral level, a dog's pulling a child to safety is no less a moral action than a human's doing the same thing.

Whilst Sapontzis (1987:46) readily acknowledges that animals do not always follow the dictates of practical reason, animals *act* virtuously, and "Although they may be unable to recognize how virtuous action contributes to the attainment of an ideal world, they do recognize the needs of others and respond to those needs compassionately, courageously, responsibly, loyally, and so forth. To that degree, they do recognize and respond to moral values" (moral values in this context understood, in Sapontzis' terms, to refer to agent-independent moral value of action). It is argued that certain animals exhibit a morality of their own, based upon a mutual sympathy (Rachels, 1976), and exhibit virtues of character (Clark, 1985a). None of this would have surprised Darwin (1936,1965), for he reminds us that animals possess a rudimentary moral sense, and that human moral agency differs but in degree, and not kind, from that of our animal kin, of which more will be said later in this chapter.

Social workers regularly interact with human moral patients, but far from warranting their moral exclusion, their very lack of moral agency entitles them to *greater* consideration, precisely because of their vulnerability - moral agency cannot be held to be morally sovereign over the interests of subjective beings. For this reason, social work cannot resort

to the moral agency requirement as a legitimate justification for the non-consideration of the moral interests of our fellow animals.

The *relations requirement* holds that one's entitlement to moral rights is not predicated upon abstract, universal principles, but seeks to draw its sanction from a common morality that is dependent upon one's capacity to enter into economic, familial, personal and political relations with one another (Sapontzis, 1987). Precisely because animals lack the capacity to enter into relations with human beings (Diamond, 1978; Francis & Norman, 1978; Gaita, 1991), not only are we *justified* in prioritizing human interests, but we have an *obligation* to do so. In response, Sapontzis (1987:153) contends that this inverts the relationship between morality and community, placing the community cart before the morality horse, for "it is feeling that "we're all in the same boat" and morally bound to each other that gives us a sense of being part of a global, moral community…it is not being part of a community that generates our moral obligations but our sense of moral obligation that generates our community".

The fact that animals lack the capacity to engage in familial, economic and like relations with human beings, Sapontzis (1987) argues, in no way prevents them from membership in a global moral community, and having moral claims against us. In truth, the human community has always included other species (Haraway, 2003), and Serpell (1986) speculates that the inclusion of animals in our communities has served to increase our awareness of our biological affinities with them. The reality is that human beings already inhabit what Midgley (1983c) terms the *mixed community*, incorporating many varieties of domesticated animals, a community of shared lives and interests (Amory, 1990; Beck & Katcher, 1996; Hall, 2000; Hearne, 1987; Kete, 1994; Manning & Serpell, 1994; Masson, 1998,2003; Newby, 1999; Podberscek, Paul & Serpell, 2000; Sapontzis, 1987; Schoen, 2001; Serpell, 1986). Society exists to maintain the households within which we are all reared, and animals are an integral part and parcel of those households (Clark, 1988b; Salt, 1894) - "society is much more like a household, including different age-groups, ranks and species, and that a similar analogical process reveals the *wider Household which is the community of living creatures*" (Clark, 1977:35) (italics mine). Little wonder then that Mary Webb's Hazel (1945:79) avows that "all animals be my brothers and sisters".

Our moral obligations to our fellow animals derive in large part from the fact that human beings share relationships with their animal kin (Midgley, 1983c; Serpell, 1986; Sharpe, 2005), and from the necessity to view *all* animals as subjective beings, albeit with varying

degrees of complexity (Midgley, 1996a). Historically, Clark (1995b) observes, we form loyalties to domestic and working animals, and that the affection a child feels for her human family and friends is not so very different to the affection she feels for the domesticated animals with whom she shares her life. Whilst human beings undoubtedly differ in terms of attributes and capacities, social workers nevertheless (at least in theory, if not always in practice) would be horrified if it were proposed that some humans, on such grounds, were to be denied equal attention and consideration - they would insist, quite rightly, that all human beings have a *right* to be thus treated. It is this entitlement to attention and equal consideration of interests that social workers must, for the very same reasons, extend to all other animals.

In claiming that humans and animals stand in relation to each other, and are socially and ecologically interdependent, Benton (1993a) argues that animals are to some degree *constitutive* of human societies; he contends that any adequate depiction of societies and social relationships must of necessity make reference to animals as inhabitants of social positions and as embodying social *and* moral relationships. There is a need to distinguish between natural and acquired, as well as negative and positive, obligations; generally speaking, our obligations to non-domestic animals are natural and negative, whilst those appertaining to domesticated animals are acquired and positive in scope (Rowlands, 2002).

Social workers, of all people, ought be aware of the position of centrality that animals occupy in the lives of many of those with whom they interact in the course of their daily duties - and most of those would consider any social worker rather odd who advanced the stipulation that a being satisfy the relations requirement *before* qualifying for moral consideration of their interests. The households within which they work are necessarily wider in scope than most social workers imagine, precisely because people are not speaking figuratively when they say that animals are family (Beck & Katcher, 1996; Sanders, 1999). Pets, Sorabji (1993:215) claims, "are literally *oikeioi* - members of the household". For such reasons, social workers cannot rely on the relations requirement as validating the neglect of due moral consideration of the interests of other animals.

Finally, the *humanist requirement*, Sapontzis (1987) argues, draws a hard and fast line around the human species (Ritchie, 1894,1900); animals are of a qualitatively different order, and morality is limited to intra- and interhuman affairs, and specifically directed toward the attainment of human ends. The humanist assumption would have us believe that morality is an evolutionary phenomenon confined to the human species, but if we are good

evolutionary humanists, we have no justification for supposing that we are an evolutionary anomaly, for "our moral systems are enormously elaborated rationalizations of pre-rational sentiments" (Clark, 1982:109). One thing, however, is for certain; it is patently false to presume that we alone are virtuous creatures. It is not anthropocentric to state that many animals exhibit behaviours and possess qualities that we would not hesitate to describe as moral or virtuous in our own kind. Indeed Hearne (1987) argues that the relationship between animals and human beings is constituted by a complex, albeit fallible, moral understanding. Ethological studies have challenged not only our preconceptions and prejudices about our fellow animals, but have sought to place us as beings continuous with the natural world (Clark, 1982,1988a,1988d) - animals exhibit devoted care of the young, and love of offspring is the norm, the strong often care for the weak, they show loyalty and courage, and often exhibit self-denial over food (Clark, 1982,1983a,1999; Midgley, 1995a; Sapontzis, 1987). Whilst we might be the only species capable of genuine moral behaviour (Coady, 1999), virtuous behaviour is discernable in other species (Johnson, E., 1983; Leakey & Lewis, 1977; Sapontzis, 1980,1987), whilst reciprocity and resolution of conflict are of central importance in primate communities (de Waal, 1996a,1996b,1998).

Such findings counterbalance the notion that animals are lawless and brutish, for the roots of morality may be discerned in animals (Clark, 1999; Sapontzis, 1987). That we should ever have thought that we alone lived lives of order and virtue seems to have largely stemmed from either ignorance, or theological and humanistic pretensions, or our proclivity for hubris. To continue to do so in light of substantial ethological evidence to the contrary, and in post-Darwinian times, appears little more than anthropocentric prejudice and/or conceit. For social work to cling to the humanist requirement as warranting the exclusion of other animals from being accorded due moral consideration of their interests is plainly an antiquated prejudice and inconsistent with what we know about our terrestrial status and shared genetic heritage. Social work must eventually acknowledge that, to paraphrase Midgley (1996a), we ourselves are not moderately similar and somewhat like animals, but that we *are* animals, and that this reality has normative moral implications.

Absolute dismissal of the moral claims of animals requires justification, not an adherence to *a priori* assumptions, and the onus rests upon *those* who claim that the moral community and moral considerability are exclusively restricted to human beings. Given that we *are* animals, utilisation of knowledge from the discipline of ethology, the term utilized to cover all systematic animal behaviour studies (Midgley, 1996a), is appropriate, for comparison

with fellow species can assist in facilitating understanding of ourselves and our motives. Whilst ethological comparisons make sense only when they are considered "in the context of the entire character of the species concerned and of the known principles governing resemblances between species" (Midgley, 1996a:24,18), their value lies in the recognition that

> *Understanding* is *relating*; it is fitting things into a context. Nothing can be understood on its own. Had we known no other animate life-form than our own, we should have been utterly mysterious to ourselves as a species. And that would have made it immensely harder for us to understand ourselves as individuals too. Anything that puts us in context, that shows us as part of a continuum, an example of a type that varies on intelligible principles, is a great help.

Given that social work literature is replete with confirmations that social work truly is a value-laden undertaking, and that each and every social worker will be regularly confronted with problems and dilemmas that are essentially moral in nature, it is all the more surprising that so little attention has been paid to speculations as to the origin of ethics and morality. Why, it may be asked, should social workers concern themselves with a topic that is so speculative and abstract, and has no obvious bearing on the trials and tribulations arising, as a matter of course, out of daily practice?

In response to what initially seems a not wholly invalid objection, it is important to understand that irrespective of whether or not we disavow the necessity of engaging in such reflections, we all operate within frameworks that presuppose morality myths. And just as importantly, we ought dispel the notion that myths are either fabrications or disconnected tales, rather we should conceive them as "imaginative patterns, networks of powerful symbols that suggest particular ways of interpreting the world. *They shape its meaning*" (Midgley, 2003a:1) (italics mine), and that "When we attend to the range of facts that any particular myth sums up, we are always strongly led to draw the moral that belongs to that myth" (Midgley, 1995a:117). And as Murdoch (1997:191) reminds us, "The mythical is not something 'extra'; we live in myth and symbol all the time". We need to be clear as to what these myths, as to the origins of morality, commit us to holding about human nature, as well as the boundaries of moral considerability.

When we are considering questions of value, it *matters* where one starts (Gaita, 1999), and what it is that one takes as one's background picture (Cordner, 2002; Midgley, 2003; Murdoch, 1993a,1996). Because morality is traditionally deemed a human only affair, the dominant moral myths of our Western culture treat it as a patently obvious fact that morality had its genesis with the emergence of humankind. Whatever else animals may or may not be, it is *obvious* that they are amoral creatures, whereas human beings are essentially moral beings. In Kantian philosophy, morality is linked to the transcendental characteristic of moral agency that human beings, and human beings alone, possess, and that respect for human beings derives from the fact that they are *human*.

In the Western tradition two explanations as to the origins of morality have predominated and occupied centre stage, both conceiving morality to be an imposition upon human nature, and almost invariably constricting moral considerability to human beings (although it has not been incontrovertible that *all* humans qualify for this category). What will now be advanced is a third which seeks to include all animals, and which sees morality as growing out of our natures. It is to these matters that we shall now turn our attention.

In the opinion of Midgley (1991), when we are enquiring as to the origin of ethics or morality, we are confronted with two very different questions - one is concerned with *historical fact*, whilst the other relates to *authority*. Until relatively recently, Midgley (1995a) argues that these questions have been answered in Western culture by reference to two sweeping myths, those being the Christian and social contract myths, and both wistfully gaze back to a golden pre-Fall time. In the former, as the book of Genesis reminds us, humankind pre-existed in a paradisiacal state in the Garden of Eden, but the Fall of Humankind, its origin myth, ensured that imperfection entered the nature of human beings. The Christian myth accounts for the origin of morality as a necessary device aimed at realigning our radically imperfect nature with the will of God.

According to the social contract myth, the natural and pre-moral state of humankind was solitude (Midgley, 1995a), as Rousseau (quoted in Midgley, 1995a:109) relates - "Having no fixed habitation and no need of one another's assistance, the same persons hardly met twice in their lives, and perhaps then without knowing one another or speaking together...They maintained no kind of intercourse with one another". By this account, hell veritably is other people, and it is because that we no longer inhabit our naturally solitary and unsocial condition that morality is required to impose peace and order. Without morality, Hobbes (1904:83,85) supposes that

> Hereby it is manifest, that during the time men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre*; and such a warre, as is of every man, against every man...To this warre of every man against every man, this also is consequent; that nothing can be Unjust. The notions of Right and Wrong, Justice and Injustice have there no place.

How it is that such people came to place their trust in one another abiding by an agreement in the first instance is, Singer (1981) muses, perplexing. In Rowlands' (1998:3,55) opinion, Hobbesian contractarianism reduces morality to *rational*, or what is elsewhere termed *enlightened*, self-interest,

> And rational self-interest will extend the scope of one's contractual commitments only as far as those individuals who in some way constitute a threat, or to those individuals with whom contracting might yield some advantage...Moral constraints can arise only between individuals who are roughly equal in power. When this condition is not satisfied, as in the case of individuals who are unusually weak for some reason, such individuals fall outside the scope of morality. The strong, therefore, have no obligations towards them.

Needless to say, because animals generally pose minimal threat to human beings, and because they cannot contract with us, we have nothing to gain by considering their interests - and as Rowlands (1998) comments, the same argument and conclusions pertain to those deemed to be marginal humans.

Both myths account for morality as an imposition upon our actual nature. Whereas the Christian myth declares all humans are born in original sin, and that we can attain salvation, *in spite of our nature*, by submitting our will to God, the social contract myth invents a calculating morality to cope with our supposed Fall from the state of solitude. Precisely because animals were seen as symbols of evil, Midgley (1996a) contends that until relatively recently, human beings were afforded a choice between viewing themselves as little or no better than animals (a reductive and pessimistic view), *or* as souls who, whilst embodied, bore no relation to other earthly beings (otherworldly view). In Midgley's (1991:7) opinion,

On the social contract pattern all animate beings equally were egoists, and human beings were distinctive only in their calculating intelligence. They were merely the first *enlightened* egoists. On the religious view, by contrast, the insertion of souls introduced, at a stroke, not just intelligence, but also a vast range of new motivation, most of it altruistic...And today, even among non-religious thinkers, there is still often found an intense exaltation of human capacities which treats them as something totally different in kind from those of all other animals, to an extent which seems to demand a different, non-terrestrial source.

Hobbesian principles, Midgley (1995a:121) argues, are deeply embedded within our political philosophy, underpinning the central concepts of political freedom and autonomy that were formulated during the Enlightenment - "The whole idea of what an individual is was shaped to fit that form, to turn him (though not usually her) into a simple, standardized contracting party, a political unity emancipated from family and friends".

Our conception of our place in the natural scheme of things has importance for our understanding of ourselves, and for understanding of other creatures. If we consider the natural world to be somehow alien, and to be transcended at all costs, or that in the natural state, human life is "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short" (Hobbes, 1904:84), we may well be inclined to believe that only reason can set us free, and that the sooner we shed our animality so much the better. It is Regan's (1991:86) contention that the fundamental principles of morality in the Western tradition are predicated upon an *a priori* assumption that human beings are solitary individuals, abstracted from their biological and cultural moorings, as though they were "atoms of reason abstracted from their incidental biological and cultural molecular structure". The ubiquitous image of a human being that characterizes a significant portion of Western moral and political thought is one that insists that "Each of us is by nature selfish, innately predisposed to look out for only our own good. Moreover, this deeply rooted selfishness is expressed by our standing *apart from*, rather than in our being *a part of*, a biological, ecological, or social community" (Regan, 1991:87) (italics mine).

Christianity's representation of human beings as uniquely created in the image of God, as souls on a brief terrestrial sojourn, at home neither with our nature nor on earth, or alternatively, Rousseau's (1935) portrayal of humankind as essentially solitary and self-contained creatures, and Hobbes' depiction of society as being peopled by atomistic and calculating egoists, might well have retained their appeal and currency were it not for the

insights provided by evolutionary theory and ethology. Depicted as "the creation myth of our age" (Midgley, 1986:30), the theory of evolution has come to occupy a central place in our deliberations, metaphysical and other, about the kind of beings we are. But as Clark (1998b:62) cautions, evolutionary theory, in common with all tales about the past, is never imparted as merely descriptive of that which has gone before, rather "it is, implicitly, a political story, slanted to confirm whatever current theorists prefer".

It can be argued that Darwin's thought has exerted a more persuasive, influential and enduring impact than that of either Marx or Freud. This is especially the case in the search for the origins of morality; whereas Marx sees morality as being in essence nothing more than a bourgeois illusion (Lukes, 1987), Freud (1938; Fromm, 1959) conceptualizes the individual as being inherently solitary in nature, and culture as an imposed and quite alien system (Midgley, 1996b). In contrast, Darwin posits that morality is not a device to aright our essentially corrupted or fallen nature, neither a contrivance, nor an imposition, on our essentially solitary or egoistic natures, nor can it be reductively dismissed as an illusion conceived to serve ruling class interests. Morality, Darwin (1936) proposes, arises from *within* our nature, and derives from our innate sociability. This counters the notion, variously advanced by Rousseau, Hobbes, Descartes and Freud, that we are essentially solitary and independent beings, which Midgley (1994b:17) terms "biological nonsense"; Butler (1886:394) refers to this piece of metaphysics as "the speculative absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our nature which has respect to our fellow-creatures".

Indeed, as Midgley (1996a:167) remarks, "It is not clear how a species could evolve which did what Hobbes supposed, and became calculating *before* becoming social" (italics mine), for

> there had been social mammals who, long before humanity ever existed, had begun to love and help those around them on the ground, not of prudence, but of *natural affection*. Human beings were descended from these mammals, and quite evidently were not inferior to them in these natural affections. Our primate ancestors could not have possibly have had either the powers of prudent calculation or the coldly solitary emotional constitution demanded by the social contract myth. They did not wait to acquire them; they became deeply social before ever they expanded their cerebral cortices. (Midgley, 1994b:16-17)(italics mine)

For since it is now known that human beings lived in groups, not as Rousseauian solitaries or Hobbesian egoists, Singer (1981) contends that it is certain that we would have had to exercise restraint in our behaviour toward our fellows *prior* to us becoming rational beings, and that ethics had their genesis in these pre-human behavioural patterns rather than with the emergence of fully fledged, deliberating, rational human beings.

Whilst acknowledging that human beings now possess few special instincts, Darwin (1936:481) sees no good reason to suppose that humans did not, from some extremely far-off era, retain some degree of instinctive love and sympathy for their fellows, *in common* with other social animals - "they are likewise in part impelled by mutual love and sympathy, assisted apparently by some amount of reason", and

> He would from an inherited tendency be willing to defend, in concert with others, his fellow-man; and would be ready to aid them in any way, which did not too greatly interfere with his own welfare or his own strong desires…Although man...has no special instincts to tell how to aid his fellow-men, he still has the impulse, and with his improved intellectual faculties would naturally be much guided in this respect by reason and experience. Instinctive sympathy would also cause him to value the approbation of his fellows...Consequently man would be influenced in the highest degree by the wishes, approbation, and blame of his fellow-men, as expressed by their gestures and language. Thus the social instincts, which have been acquired by man in a very rude state, and probably even by his ape-like progenitors, still give the impulse to some of his best actions; but his actions are in a higher degree determined by the expressed wishes and judgment of his fellow-men, and unfortunately very often by his own strong selfish desires. But as love, sympathy and self-command become strengthened by habit, and as the power of reasoning becomes clearer, so that man can value justly the judgments of his fellows, he will feel himself impelled, apart from any transitory pleasure or pain, to certain lines of conduct. He might then declare...I am the supreme judge of my own conduct, and in the words of Kant, I will not in my own person violate the dignity of humanity.

An instinct and motive to aid one's fellows can be seen as underlying a commitment to the welfare of both individuals and the wider society. For Darwin, morality is our device for resolving conflicts of motive, indeed conflict makes morality *necessary* (Midgley, 1991,1994b,1995a), and conflicts are experienced by all social creatures, both internally and externally; we need to take account of our fellows, attend to instances of discord, and

arbitrate conflicting motives. As Midgley (1995a:144) observes, *"*Morality, as much as language, seems to be something that could only occur among naturally sociable beings". Others are not merely backdrops or extras whose function it is to benefit ourselves; in Kantian terms, we are all *ends*.

Darwin distinguishes between *strong* and *passing* motives on the one hand, and our *central* and *permanent* social motives on the other; in expanding upon the relationship between social instincts and conscience, Darwin (1936:484) maintains that

> A man cannot prevent past impressions often repassing through his mind; he will thus be driven to make a comparison between the impressions of past hunger, vengeance satisfied, or danger shunned at other men's cost, with the almost ever-present instinct of sympathy, and with his early knowledge of what others consider as praiseworthy or blameable. This knowledge cannot be banished from his mind, and from instinctive sympathy is esteemed of great moment. He will then feel as if he had been baulked in following a present instinct or habit, and this with all animals causes dissatisfaction, or even misery...At the moment of action, man will no doubt be apt to follow the stronger impulse; and thought this may occasionally prompt him to the noblest deeds, it will more commonly lead him to gratify his own desires at the expense of other men. But after their gratification when past and weaker impressions are judged by the *ever-enduring social instinct*, and by his deep regard for the good opinion of his fellows, retribution will surely come. He will then feel remorse, repentance, regret, or shame; this latter feeling, however, relates almost exclusively to the judgment of others. He will consequently resolve more or less firmly to act differently for the future; and this is conscience; *for conscience looks backwards, and serves as a guide for the future*. (italics mine)

This capacity for reflection upon our behaviour and motives is an innate characteristic; Butler (1886:392) asserts that "We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature...There is therefore this principle of reflection or conscience in mankind". Conscience incorporates both cognitive and emotional components, and Garnett (1969) contends that it refers to an assured conviction that each individual should reflect on what it is that they ought do, and to then act in accordance with that conviction. It is also inherent in social work decision making, where the individual and social aspects are accentuated by considerations of conscience, understood as referring to "moral feelings *and* to reflection and decision" (Timms,1983:37). It entails individual moral responsibility, and

a moral attention to others, and Timms (ibid.) makes the observation that "Failure to grasp the concept of conscience surely accounts for the surprising absence of any reference to conscientious behaviour and judgments of conscience in situations seemingly demanding just such reference".

But Darwin's account is in no way reductive, for he does not claim for the social affections the mantle of morality; what he does posit is that the social affections *supplemented* by increased intelligence (*social affections are the matrix, not the consequence, of intelligence*) would give rise to reflection upon behaviour - for as Midgley (1994b:17) observes,

> As the cortex did expand, and wider thinking became possible, early people could become aware of how unevenly their affections were working. Improving memory, along with increased power of thinking about the future, would bring back past actions for repeated scrutiny…Remorse and regret, says Darwin, would surely become urgent, and the natural way to control remorse and regret would be to work out policies for the future that would stop them recurring...Thus rules would begin to be formed - not all at once (as the contract model may suggest) but gradually, through a process involving continual developments both in thought and feeling, a process which is open-ended and is still going on today. He knows that the functions we find for it will develop as we ourselves develop.

It is because our inner lives are soaked with values that reflection and evaluation of our behaviours is inescapable (Murdoch, 1993a). It is our natural social dispositions that furnish us with the raw materials of the moral life, the matrix from which it evolves, one that is further enhanced by intelligence and speech (Midgley, 1991); Darwin (1936:495) maintains that "the social instincts,- the *prime* principle of man's constitution - with the aid of active intellectual powers and the effects of habit, naturally lead to the golden rule, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye to them likewise;" and this lies at the *foundation* of morality" (italics mine). Darwin (1936:471-472) does not presuppose a radical demarcation between human beings and fellow animals in either the possession of social instincts, or where that sociability may lead, thinking it highly probable "that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would *inevitably* acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well developed, as in man" (italics

mine). The revelatory awareness that there are lives *besides* our own marks the advent of moral consciousness (Clark, 1996b). It is love of others that transforms self-consciousness into moral consciousness (Murdoch, 1993a,1996).

For Darwin, the difference is one of degree, not kind; the relationship between social instincts, intelligence and morality leads Midgley (1995a:140) to claim that "The power of thought, if it once makes visible the conflicts of motive that all animals have, must generate morality". Our social instincts, fortified by both reason and habit, facilitate an extension beyond kin and local concerns, and ultimately and logically leads to a widening of the moral circle to include animals ; in contending that the higher moral rules "are founded on the social instincts, and relate to the welfare of others", Darwin (1936:491-492) observes that

> As man advances in civilisation, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all members of the same nation, though personally unknown to him. This point being reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races...Sympathy beyond the confines of man, that is humanity to the lower animals, seems to be one of the latest moral acquisitions...This virtue, one of the noblest with which man is endowed, seems to rise incidentally from our sympathies becoming more tender and more widely diffused, *until they are extended to all sentient beings.* (italics mine)

Once the social instincts of human beings are increasingly guided by reason, Darwin (1936:493) predicts that "his sympathies become more tender and widely diffused, extending to men of all races, to the imbecile, maimed, and other useless members of society, *and* finally to the lower animals,- so would the standard of his morality rise higher and higher" (italics mine).

The theory of evolution, positing as it does common ancestry, ought have implications for our view of our animal fellows. It presupposes a radically different metaphysic than we have hitherto been inclined to accept as our guide. Where we once adhered to a *discontinuity ontology*, believing that we were either a unique creation or, at the very least, intrinsically dissimilar, evolutionary theory confirms an *ontological continuity*. But this is not an isolated historical problem, given that we still all too often fail to make

accommodation with the reality of our being part and parcel of the natural world (Midgley, 1994b). But, as Clark (1984:32) avows, "we do not find the universe wholly alien; we are of a piece with the nature of things".

In a like manner, it is often assumed that evolution represents a linear progression that reaches all the way to the perfected human state (Birke, 1994), conceptualized as the *ascent of man* (Gould, 1991), whereas in actuality evolutionary change need not entail progress (Clark, 1993a,1993b,2000a). The concerns that evolutionary explanations are inherently antithetical to human dignity and serve to degrade human motivation, to result in the *descent* of humankind, is, as we will discover in the following chapter, not without foundation.

But in large part, such disquiet is largely attributable to reductive and misleading impressions of the nature of social animals, who are variously seen as automata or embodiments of vice (Hearne, 1987; Midgley, 1994b). What Darwin seeks to do is to rectify this insensitive and unenlightened metaphysic, by maintaining that humans differ in *degree* from other animals; as Rachels (1999:174) observes, "the fundamental reality is best represented by saying that the earth is populated by individuals who resemble each other, and who differ from one another, in myriad ways, rather than saying that the earth is populated by different *kinds* of beings".

Darwinism challenges the traditional notion that human beings and animals inhabit different moral universes; Shaw (1934b) argues that the muddled views about the implications of Darwin's theory for human morality are no better exemplified than by those in the scientific fraternity who, in explicit contradiction to evolutionary continuity, seek to justify the experimental utilisation of animals on the grounds that there exists a clear demarcation between humankind and the animal kingdom; likewise Salt (1921:14) makes the observation that "The very scientists themselves, who have in theory renounced the old-fashioned idea of a universe created for mankind, are inclined to belie their own biological faith".

The belief that human beings possess supreme moral considerability derives from two related ideas about human nature - that we, and we alone, are created in the image of God, and that we, and we alone, are rational creatures (Rachels, 1999). Traditional morality, deeming humankind to be radically different in kind, seeks, in the opinion of Rachels (1999), to guarantee human dignity and justify differential moral status, and demands that humans and animals be treated in radically different ways. It needs be said that this ought

not be construed as an argument for the inherent irreconcilability of evolution and religion, rather a caveat against conceptions of religion that require human uniqueness and animal insignificance as natural corollaries.

After Darwin, Rachels (1999:1) maintains, "we can no longer think of ourselves as occupying a special place in creation". Human dignity ought not be deemed to have such fragility that it invariably demands the derogation of all other species as of no ultimate consequence. What is needed is a recognition that "Granted that things exist 'for their own sake', because God wishes just those things to be, then they are not simply 'for us' " (Clark, 2000a:284). That said, we ought also to reject the notion that evolution be treated as a religion, with humanity atop the evolutionary escalator (de Chardin, 1959; Midgley, 1986), or as a religion of science (Midgley, 2001a) that seeks to "deaden or to render unrespectable the normal affections and sympathies which we feel as mammals, warm-blooded creatures, vertebrates" (Clark, 1977:154). The very real danger is that we shall continue down the road to what Midgley (1992b:10,8) terms *humanolatry*, "a fantasy that has expanded the notion of 'humanism' from a modest, honorable respect for what is good in humanity into a disreputable quasi-religion, exalting us into substitute gods...degrading all other creatures into mere material for our free activity".

In line with Darwin's assertion that humankind and other animal species are *not* radically different in kind, Rachel's (1999) argues that this fact requires that we ought consequently reason differently; unless there exist differences that justify treating individuals in different ways, and given that differences between humans and animals are more a matter of degree, not kind, we ought be more sensitive to the pattern of similarities and differences. It is Rachel's (1999:174) opinion, what he terms *moral individualism*, "a view that looks to individual similarities and differences for moral justification", that the way we treat an individual ought to be determined by consideration of that individual's specific characteristics, *not* by reference to that individual's group membership.

Darwin's contributions to our understanding of the origins of morality are significant for ourselves *and* other animals; in observing that the Darwinian picture raises disquieting questions about the extent to which the experiences of animals may approximate our own, Midgley (1989a:45) comments that "The question "*Would you like this done to you?*" begins to seem increasingly relevant, not on sentimental but on scientific grounds. If we are to dismiss it, we seem now to need much better reasons than those that satisfied some of our ancestors" (italics mine).

It needs, however, be asserted that Darwin did *not* equate human morality with anything we may detect in other social creatures; as Midgley (1991:12) comments, "It is always a fallacy (the 'genetic fallacy') to equate any product with its source - to say 'that flower is really only organized dirt'. Morality as it emerges from this matrix is what it is". What Darwin shows is how morality could have evolved from, and be perfectly compatible with, our mammalian base, whilst neither undermining our uniqueness (remembering that *all* animals are unique in their own way), nor disparaging our origins:

> Darwin shows how vital our emotional constitution is to all that we most admire, he enables us to accept and celebrate duly this emotional constitution which is so close to that of the other social animals, instead of insisting that everything we value is the work of that over-strained and hypertrophied cerebral cortex. He leaves us at home with our own nature and on the earth. (Midgley, 1994b:17-18)

Perhaps the most important contribution that Darwin has bequeathed to us is that we now know that we are naturally terrestrial beings, and that the natural world is not only our home, but rather the only home we could have, and that all other animals are truly kindred creatures. In providing an increasingly plausible account for the origin of morality, Darwin reminds us that animals ought be included in the circle of moral considerability as a matter of strict justice.

This chapter has confirmed that social work is an inescapably moral discipline, concerned with subjectivity and notions of what constitutes the good of individuals, and the nature of a good society, and that practitioners' capacity to make moral judgements is an essential corollary of such an enterprise. Ignorance of morality and its origins has been shown to be exceedingly problematic in the human sphere, and antithetical to consideration of the interests of animals. The thesis will now proceed to look at new directions that provide the intellectual foundation for the inclusion of all entities in the AASW Code of Ethics.

Knowledge, understood as a prerequisite but subsidiary nevertheless to understanding and wisdom, is not the sole preserve of any discipline. *Breadth* is the apposite word (Imre, 1984), for no discipline has a knowledge base that presents as a hermetically sealed circle or island, and no discipline, however specialized or complex it may be, knows all there is to know about their *particular* field, let alone of the many other fields in our world. Knowledge is an interlocking and cross-fertilizing process, akin to overlapping circles

(Midgley, 1995b), not reducible to what can be termed monopolistic claims, and explanations are by nature of various kinds. Different disciplines are part of one world, albeit a big one (Midgley, 1996c), and it is imperative that they be related (Midgley, 1987b,1996d), not viewed as self-contained and atomistic islands.

The knowledge base of social work should entail the broadest of inquiries, and the following chapter will be exploring disciplines that have either received superficial and perfunctory attention at best, or precipitant dismissal at worst. It has been shown that social work is a discipline essentially concerned with attentiveness to, and one that is respectful of, inherent *subjectivity*, and this thesis posits that such according of attention and respect cannot, *a priori*, be exclusively confined to human beings, but can and should be extended to encompass other animals. It is acknowledged that precisely because what is being proposed represents such a radical departure from social work as traditionally conceptualized, a very powerful and detailed case needs to be put forward to do due justice to the issue. If one seeks to change and transform the prevailing worldview of the discipline, one invariably needs to present clear, cogent and compelling arguments, and for this reason I ask for the reader's patience with the inevitable complexity and protracted nature of the subject matter. If we are to change social work's worldview we also need to educate and provide guidance for students and practitioners. By way of an extended exploration of the nature of human beings and animals (Chapter Three), and the conceptualization of personhood, moral considerability, and respect (Chapter Four), we shall ultimately derive some theoretical and practical implications for social work (Chapter Five). The remaining chapters will advance the argument that non-human animals have a moral right to be the subjects of our attention and respect.

CHAPTER THREE

KINDRED CREATURES: BIOLOGICAL CONTINUITY AND MORAL KINSHIP.

We are not just rather like animals, we *are* animals.
-Mary Midgley **(1996a:xxxiv)**

Nothing is guaranteed to frighten the horses more in the social sciences than suggestions that there is a biological aspect to human nature. Admittedly, this observation is intentionally quite sweeping and generalizing, but its central thesis is sound. Apart from sexuality, which is only too readily identified and attributed to our natural dispositions, without any perceived accompanying diminution of human dignity or freedom, all other human needs are conceptualized as embellishments, created in a higgledy-piggledy manner, specifically without reference to any underlying natural structure.

By way of analogy, we build floor upon floor of our social lives, and endeavour to ascertain understanding without reference to *any* biological base or footings. We are embodied intellects unlike any other being in our world. This is because biological explanations are invariably held to be inimical to human dignity and freedom, deleterious constraints upon the human spirit. Humans are social *rather* than biological beings, shaped by nurture *rather* than nature; *culture is sovereign*. But such a view is at odds with the fact that human beings are primates (Dawkins, 1986,1993), and cultural determinism is every bit as reductive as its biological counterpart (Eagleton, 1997). As Midgley (1996a:327) observes,

> it is no misfortune to have a specific nature - that freedom, in the sense in which we really value it, does not mean total indeterminacy, still less omnipotence. It means the chance to do *what each of us has it in him to do* - to be oneself, not another person. Though all human ranges overlap, we each have a distinctive range of talents, tastes and emotional possibilities.

This thesis will argue that evolution and evolutionary continuity have moral implications, particularly for morality as understood by social work, given that traditional morality (and by inference social work morality) has almost uniformly posited humankind as being

different in *kind* rather than in degree. Given the crudity of Social Darwinism, and the reductionism of much neo-Darwinism, it is not surprising that social work (and the social sciences generally) looks askance at suggestions that evolution ought inform morality. The debate, Rachels (1999) argues, tends to oscillate between two positions - on the one hand, there are those who protest that Darwinian theory insidiously weakens traditional morality and for this reason must be rejected, whilst on the other, many advocates of evolutionary theory insist that it has no implications and thus poses no threats to traditional morality and values. This impasse serves only to reinforce the perception in the social sciences that that evolutionary theory has minimal epistemological value and no implications for morality *per se*.

The notion that we are social *rather* than biological beings is but one extreme of the epistemological and ontological continuum. The other asserts that we are *only* explicable as biological beings, with nurture being so much humbug, the flotsam and jetsam of theological and humanistic pretensions; *nature rules supreme*. Given the nihilistic vacuity of the latter, it is invariably supposed that *any* biological account must be inherently antithetical to the value base of the social sciences. Given the evolutionary ignorance of the former, the value base of the social sciences is supposed to be little more than idealistic and ideological whistling in the wind. We have the unedifying spectacle of two sides warring, both seeking recruits committed *a priori* to their respective causes and ontological dogmas.

A resolution of this dichotomous conceptualization is important for social work, for there exists a practice imperative to understand the relationship and interchange between biology and culture. Speciesism, a term coined by Richard Ryder (1983:5) "to describe the widespread discrimination that is practiced by man against the other species", has, Dawkins (1976:11) insists, "no proper basis in evolutionary biology". On the contrary, Cohen (2001a:66) argues, speciesism represents "a *demand* of morality" (italics mine). In asserting that we are but one animal species among many, Ryder (1983) urges that we extend our ready acknowledgement of a biological continuum to a recognition that humans and animals are on the same *moral continuum*, whilst Midgley (1989a:45) maintains that the Darwinian theory of evolution "shows us that we ourselves have had ancestors at *every* level of the animal kingdom, *are akin to them all*" (italics mine).

What this chapter will endeavour to elucidate is that both immoderate stances fundamentally misrepresent or distort our understanding of human beings *and* other animals, and that a biological *and* social account is essential to any comprehensive

epistemology and ontology. Biological understandings need not logically be inimical to the values we cherish. That they often are is no reason to subscribe to a wholesale throwing out of the proverbial baby with the bath water; what is required is a more reasoned and plausible account.

In observing that evolution represents the contemporary creation myth, Midgley (1986:30) contends that "By telling us our origins it *shapes* our views of what we are" (italics mine), but cautions that beyond its official function as biological theory there is a not infrequent assumption that objective scientific knowledge possesses ultimate explanatory powers (Dawkins, Richard, 1998; Wilson, 1975,1978). Attempts to discern and decipher what is best in human life is a *philosophical* question (Midgley, 1996a,2003a; Murdoch, 1996), and as Midgley (2003a:21) reminds us, there are many maps of, and windows onto, our world, and what is needed, above all else, is a *scientific pluralism*, for "Thought has many forms".

In its rejection of the Blank Paper and biological deterministic models that characterize both extremes, this chapter will seek to guide the reader through the maze in order to posit a more realistic understanding of the natures of human beings *and* animals, and the criteria for moral considerability, by critically assessing two extreme positions; firstly, the notion that human beings are *essentially* different in kind from all other animals (allied with the scepticism and ambivalence often attached to the notion of human nature), and secondly, the overarching attempts to explain *all* behaviour (human and nonhuman) through sociobiological explanations. This done, a middle way that acknowledges that we are biological *and* social creatures (and not freaks of nature) will be advanced, one, it will be argued, that is not only more realistic, but also much more respectful of the dignity and value of both the human and non-human animal. Such an exploration will necessitate extended consideration of key subject matters such as the nature of consciousness, human nature, instinct and intelligence (and the relationship between nature and nurture), and language. The importance of this chapter content and its relevance to social work resides in locating ourselves in a biological *and* social context, part and parcel of natural world, and given the obnoxiousness and reductiveness of many historical and contemporary biological accounts, this exploration will of necessity require careful and thoughtful attention. This integration of the biological and social underpins the moral and intellectual foundations of the thesis, and it is this integration that provides a new direction for social work and a new Code of Ethics. If we can do this, it will allow the social workers faced with the moral dilemmas in Chapter One to know how, what and why to think and act.

Social Darwinism, most associated with the philosopher Herbert Spencer (1879,1895-1898), postulated that Darwinian theory provided scientific validation of egoism, and purported to deduce normative ethical and moral implications from the theory of evolution for human society (Dickens, 2000; Hofstadter, 1965; Keller, 1991; Midgley, 1983a,1984b,1995a; Moore, 1979; Rachels, 1999; Williams, 1974) - 'survival of the fittest' (coined by Spencer) was held to be in accordance with the laws of both nature *and* God (Rachels, 1999), and the theory of natural selection was seen as sanctioning the domination of weak by stronger individuals, classes and species (Ryder,1989). In truth, it was represented a crude travesty of Darwinian theory, and in time fell into disrepute (officially, at least).

Sociobiology and evolutionary psychology are two of the most visible and vigorous contemporary incarnations of an atomistic and egoistic doctrine (Barash, 1977,1980; Barash & Barash, 1999; Barkow, Cosmides, & Tooby, 1992; Dawkins, Richard, 1976,1986,1998; Ghiselin, 1974; Midgley, 1984,

1984c; Pinker, 1997; Ridley, 1996,1999,2003; Rose & Rose, 2000a; Thornhill & Palmer, 2000; Wilson, 1975;1978,1998), with Rose (2000) observing that the former mutated into the latter. Sociobiology is defined by Singer (1982:42) "as the belief that *all* social behaviour, including that of humans, has a biological basis and is the outcome of an evolutionary process that selects some genes or groups of genes in preference to others" (italics mine).

Paralleling the Hobbesian creed that all motivation is ultimately reducible to an enlightened self-interest, sociobiology and evolutionary psychology introduce egoism into their elucidation of evolutionary processes; Nelkin (2000) argues that evolutionary psychologists have moved beyond consideration of the relative roles that nature and nurture play in determining human behaviour in order to seek *universal* explanations. The primary values are held to be survival and reproductive fitness; purpose is reducible to the proliferation of genes, with the supposed identification of a causal linkage between genes and behaviour enjoying contemporary currency and countenance (Rose, 1997,1998); unadulterated self-interest is the omnipotent evolutionary motive (Barash, 1977; Betzig, 1997; Dawkins, 1998; Wilson, 1975; Rose & Rose, 2000b), and culture itself is transmitted by memes, units of culture that colonize the human mind (Blackmore, 1999; Dawkins, 1976; Dennett, 1992; Midgley, 2000c), as mental microbes (Clark, 1996a). Whilst ostensibly endorsing biological fatalism, decreeing that biology is indeed destiny, biological determinism holds

out the promissory hope that we can transcend this destiny via biotechnological elixirs (Rose & Rose, 2000b), with the same fervour once reserved for eugenics (Clark, 1994c; Hofstadter, 1965; Nelkin, 1999; Pearce, 1997). Such a worldview represents the antithesis of social work values, given the centrality of subjectivity and altruism for the moral justification of social work as a discipline.

It is Rose's (1998) assertion that human existence is best conceived as being shaped by both nature *and* nurture, for it is simultaneously biological *and* social; inordinate emphasis upon genetic explanations results in the *genetics of blame* that exculpates structural factors (Lewontin, Rose & Kamin, 1984), and biology continually reinvents itself ideologically as a   social   weapon (Lewontin, 1977,1991; Rose, 1980,1998). This results, Rose & Rose (1982:7,10) argue, in "a methodological individualism rooted in biological determinism" that conceptualizes society as the regulated battle of all against all, with the individual conceived as "ontologically prior to the society of which that individual is a part, and that humans have a biologically based nature which society regulates but cannot change".

Genetic determinism, Nelkin (1999) argues, is of especial value in any society seeking to diminish state responsibility for provision of social services, for predisposition, *not* opportunity, is accorded primacy - existing economic, political social categories are bestowed with a scientific *imprimatur*. Whilst contemporary sociobiologists deny that their theories have moral or political implications, their writings often imply the opposite (McKinnon, 2006). For example, Wilson (cited in Rose, 1987) maintains that a substantial division of labour is the consequence of genetic bias, Dawkins (1976) criticizes the welfare state as an *unnatural* development, and takes to task those who encourage the poor to breed beyond self-sufficiency, and Ridley (1996) calls for the abolition of welfare payments for sole mothers on the grounds that they are *unnatural*. Social work has a long and honourable history of contesting and countering victim blaming, and ultra-modern variations upon an old theme demand that social work exhibits a deftness in redoubling its efforts, in marshalling and deploying alternative defences from within its moral arsenal. Social work indubitably rejects such opinions out of hand (a case of putting it down to where it comes from, as my grandmother would say), and has long had to combat rabid and insidious anti-welfarism, perhaps never more so than in the present day climate (Abbott, 2000; Gordon & Gray, 2001; Macintyre, 1999; Measham, 2003; Mendes, 2001,2005; Peel, 2003; Saunders,

2002,2004), what with its penchant for vilifying all forms of dependency (Bauman, 2001; Fraser & Gordon, 1994), as though attachment represents a corruption.

One can argue that contemporary biological determinism is more sophisticated than its Social Darwinian forbear, and has a less explicit moral tenor. It nevertheless attempts to accord scientific credence to the moral notion that human beings are natural egoists and that the motive of competitiveness underlies all life; as with Social Darwinism it is seen to sanction unfettered capitalism, or what Rose (1987:49) terms the "genetic defense of the free market". Far from having been rendered obsolete, Midgley (1995a,2001a) avers that the Social Darwinist metaphysic and psychology continues to provide the backdrop to biological deterministic theories.

What are we to make of the fatalistic biological determinism that endorses an atomistic, competitive and egoistic metaphysic? Are altruism and co-operation merely preferences that are contrary to biological reality, and if so, should we not develop social policies that accord with biological realism? Ought we to understand ourselves as biological *rather* than social beings, with genes being definitive of our quintessence? We shall now turn our attention to an examination of these issues, identifying both the insights and limitations of biological explanations as to our understanding of ourselves (with extended reflection upon human nature) and other animals.

In observing that the representation of genes as independent and disconnected intimates an invariably individualistic society, Midgley (1986:46) cautions that "they are now known to form a most complex system of *interdependent parts*" (italics mine). Contrary to contemporary evolutionary orthodoxy, Rose (1997:125,127,169,171) maintains that

> Far from being isolated in the cell nucleus, magisterially issuing orders by which the rest of the cell is commanded, genes…are in constant dynamic exchange with their cellular environment… What brings DNA to life, what gives it meaning is the cellular environment in which it is embedded… So the functioning cell, as a unit, constrains the properties of its individual components. *The whole has primacy over its parts*…Lifelines, then, are not embedded in genes: their existence implies homeodynamics…*The organism is both the weaver and the pattern it weaves, the choreographer and the dance that is danced*. (italics mine)

The coalescence of egoism and fatalism in sociobiological literature has invariably led the social sciences to regard *all* biological explanations, and an evolutionary context, as uniformly antithetical to human dignity and as having no consequence for our understanding of human beings and their nature (Midgley, 1986). These suspicions are no better exemplified than in sociobiological conceptualizations of altruism, where seemingly altruistic behaviours in fact enhance *genetic fitness* - that is, the number of offspring an individual may leave behind (Wilson, 1975). The inordinate emphasis accorded by Wilson (1975) to kin as opposed to group selection results, according to Midgley (1996a), in attempts to identify ways in which the individual agent is benefited, and is a problem that arises only for egoists, for it is immediately at odds with the everyday understanding of what constitutes selfishness.

The notion that genetic fitness is the ultimate biological value and altruism merely a derivative function, is perplexing, for as Clark (1982:100) remarks that "Our normal moralizing does not treat *everything* as a means to our genetic success" (italics mine), and Midgley (1996a) maintains that we would surely consider any person, obsessed with nothing besides the number of descendants he or she will have five centuries hence, as either clannish or crazy.

The existence of altruism, and a need to explain it away in terms other than as an act in itself, have a long history; Hobbes' decree that we ought invariably to pursue our own interest led him to construe altruism via means of psychological egoism. His rationale for sympathizing with others in their afflictions, and relieving their distress, is that by so doing we alleviate our own anguish (Ryan, 1974). The seemingly obvious consideration for social workers to mull over is, are we primarily motivated to do what we do because it eliminates or assuages our own or society's distress, which in effect is *self*-centred, or alternatively, do we attend to the distress of others for *their* sakes? The problem is not that *we* often feel distress (indeed not to do so would be exceedingly problematical, for it would bespeak a dearth of empathic imagination), but that this ought be our *exclusive* motivation or what we *singularly* attend to - *our* distress at others' anguish or adversity is of great consequence, but it cannot be all that matters. As social workers we need to go beyond placing ourselves in someone else's shoes, and imagine what it would be like to be *them* in *their* shoes (Black, 2004).

A significant source of confusion derives from sociobiological technical definitions of terms such as *selfish* and *altruism*. Whilst not officially seen as motives at all, one discerns

in sociobiological literature a convergence between selfishness as a state of motivation, and as a genetic phenomenon (Midgley, 1986; Rodd, 1990; Singer, 1981,1982), a mistaking of metaphors for actual identities, and a simultaneous failure to acknowledge their source (Lewontin, Rose & Kamin, 1984). Clumsily chosen scientific terminology that utilizes everyday common meanings has, Midgley (1986:117) argues, important consequences -

> The fact that 'selfishness' in its ordinary sense is not just the name of a motive but of a fault naturally makes things much worse. *To widen the imputation of selfishness is to alter people's view of the human race* (italics mine) …And it needs to be stressed that the word 'selfish' in its normal use is essentially a *negative* (italics in text) word. It means a shortage of this normal regard for others. Calling someone selfish simply does not mean that they are prudent or successfully self-preserving. It merely says that they are exceptional - and faulty - in having too little care for anybody else.

The notion that human beings (and animals) are primarily motivated by the proliferation of their genes reiterates that individual beings are ultimately and essentially genetic conduits (Dawkins, 1976; Wilson, 1978). For instance, parental-love and mother-love are unmasked as just that (Barash, 1980; Daly & Wilson, 1999), a variation upon Freud's contention that they are nothing more than born again disguised narcissism (Midgley, 1995a), which confuses genetic function with genuine psychological motivation by implying that the latter is a deceit. On such a reading, we ought not be in the least bit dumbfounded should our children, on reaching adulthood, issue us with an indictment that we did not *really* love and care about *them*, rather our concern rested only with our genetic heritage and legacy (Blackburn, 2001).

The disparagement of genuine non-reciprocal altruism (Titmuss, 1970), is a cornerstone of sociobiology (Midgley, 2001a; Wilson, 1978) - Wilson (quoted in Midgley, 1986:125) labels it "the enemy of civilization" - and one discerns in sociobiological literature the salient tendency to suspect the worst of all explicit conscious motivation (Rodd, 1990). The seemingly altruistic behaviour of Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Muggeridge, 1971) is, Wilson (1978) reveals, ultimately explicable as being motivated by her hope for eternal life. What appears to be disinterested *caritas* and *agape* is in reality disguised self-interest - to care for others is instrumental to *our ends*, those people with whom social workers work are only there to help us solve *our* own problems. Were this so, social work would veritably be a

travesty of its historical formulation and principles, for those people with whom we work would have to meet *our* needs. Thus, "On this view we can do nothing but what satisfies our desires, nothing but use each other for our private profit, even if we sometimes fail to secure the expected gain" (Clark, 1982:57). Such a reading by Wilson of Mother Teresa's motives is singularly at odds with Jesus' (John 15:12-13; Matthew 22:37) commandment that we should love others as we love ourselves. Closeness and relatedness matter, but neither absolutely nor exclusively (Clark & Clark, 1989).

A division in human nature between self-interest and altruistic motives is a fact that Singer (1981:146) claims philosophers have long been cognizant of, noting that "whereas philosophers like Plato and Kant have seen the conflict as one between our reason and our desires, Wilson is closer to Hume's view that it is a conflict between self-interested desires and desires like sympathy and benevolence, with reason standing on the sidelines powerless to intervene". Wilson's (1978) reading conflates conscious motivations and biological explanations, and erroneously assumes that the latter takes precedence over the former, and the former are totally explicable in terms of the latter; for as Singer (1995:105) argues,

> It would be absurd to deny that an action is ethical merely because people who carry out the action in fact may in fact gain from it, if they are not motivated by the prospect of personal gain- and even more absurd if they are not even aware of this prospect... Conscious motivations and biological explanations apply on different levels.

Biological theory does not exclude genuine altruism, and is in actuality antithetical to egoism, for

> Nothing in biological theory, when correctly stated, precludes the possibility that I would rather that some other creature were content than that I gain some lesser good: I do not seek their good merely as a means to my own happiness- my happiness consists in part in their achieving good. (Clark, 1982:57-58)

The seeming inability of evolutionary theory and sociobiology to distinguish between selfishness as a mental state and as a genetic phenomenon, is Rodd (1990) argues, a consequence of the generalized behaviourist distrust of subjectivity, and invariably leads to the viewing of evolutionary function as the supreme motive (Midgley, 1986). The notion

that we invariably act so as to further our own interests, be that in the traditional sense, or in the biological sense of gene maximization, and that our moral feelings or rationality are vassals of our genes, is fallacious (Rodd, 1990; Singer, 1982). Notwithstanding the ubiquity of the former view, our biology does not compel us to be selfish (Singer, 1995).

 In affirming our nature as biological *and* social beings (a position essential for social work, for it cannot think of itself, or those with whom it works, other than in this way), Rodd (1990) asserts that it is more apposite to view human behaviour as subject to sociobiological constraints but mediated by consciousness. This view acts as a corrective to Dawkins' (1976:2-3) argument that "Much as we might wish to believe otherwise, universal love and the welfare of species as a whole are concepts which simply do not make evolutionary sense", and to Budiansky's (1999:133) affirmation that "natural selection doesn't care if a species survives. It is individuals that have genes", oblivious to the fact that "*Wholes and parts are equally real*" (Midgley, 2001a:186), and that genes and DNA are not the *only* locus of evolution (Jablonka & Lamb, 2005).

Altruistic and cooperative behaviours in both human beings and animals are perfectly compatible with Darwinian principles (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971). The conundrum that surrounds the transmission of altruistic behaviour, which Wilson (1975) describes as *the* principal theoretical dilemma confronting sociobiology, is, according to Midgley (1996a:129), "solved by showing that it benefits one's kin *and* one's group" (italics mine); social creatures regularly exhibit tendencies to assist, favour, care for, and take delight in, the young of other parents (Clark, 1982; Midgley, 1996a; Singer, 1995).

In observing that we are creatures seemingly biologically predisposed to the formation of unique attachments, Marris (1974,1980) argues that specific attachment (concern for the *particular*, and the fact we care for our own) enables us to practice generalizability (because we care for our own, we can understand and care for others). Specificity of attachment arises from structures of meaning, "by which each of us sustains the relationships to people, work, and the physical and social circumstance on which our lives depend" (Marris, 1980:101). Because we form structures of meaning around the objects we become attached to, and because these structures of meaning have both real and symbolic value to us, Marris (1974,1980) argues we are then able to care not only about ourselves and those near and dear to us, but to others in our community of concern. Therefore, this community of concern can extend to as wide a range as possible. Concern that kin-selection might serve to preclude or atrophy our concern for others by securing an inordinate focus

upon kin is misplaced, for as Midgley (1984b:212) notes, this is a loose limitation, and "Because these tendencies do *not* spring from calculation, but from *inherited disposition*, they cannot be regularly switched off when someone less closely related heaves in sight".

As a way of clarifying the confusions that are endemic in this debate, Midgley (1986) insists that all that needs stating is that altruistic tendencies must be *compatible* with gene-promotion, and precisely because these tendencies do not derive from calculation, rather from inherited disposition, they are not restricted to kin alone. Psychological egoism is contrary to evolution, and far from reducing individual 'fitness', a genuine regard for others has utility in evolutionary terms, for genes that promote altruistic behaviour are more likely to survive than those promoting selfishness (Blackburn, 2001; Singer, 1981). Likewise, the pervasive notion that altruism in animals is merely a device to ensure gene replication (Budiansky, 1999), or at best a calculated contrivance predicated upon a thoroughgoing self-interest, reinforces the metaphysic that animals are machines invariably ruled by blind instinct. Evolution is conceptualized teleologically, and Keller (1991) argues that contemporary evolutionary theory seeks to mould humanity in the Hobbesian image; the gene is personified and bestowed with ultimate meaning, whilst the individual organisms are as so many interchangeable and valueless receptacles.

The criticisms already levelled against the inherent egoism and fatalism of this metaphysic with respect to human beings are equally valid with respect to animals. Existence of altruism in animals is not some anthropomorphic fantasy (Bekoff, 2002a,2004a; Masson & McCarthy, 1996; Midgley, 1995a; Rachels, 1999; Sharpe, 2005; Singer, 1995), nor genetic contrivance (Budiansky, 1999). By the latter reading the overriding motive is paradoxically one that no creature is conscious of, for, behind the facade, the invisible but omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent gene reigns *sovereign*, manipulating at will its mechanistic pawns. However, if we are prepared to accept the very real possibility of multiple motives as compared to a solitary overarching motive, then the behaviours of animals can look markedly different (Masson & McCarthy, 1996)

In exploring the evolutionary origin of affection and love, Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1971), whilst agreeing with Lorenz (1966) that aggression serves an important function in the formation of social bonds, suggests that their roots lie in parental care, in an *individualized cherishing* of the young, rather than sexuality. This makes for a markedly different portrait of the existence of social species than does the sociobiological model that posits Hobbesian individualism or genetic surreptitiousness as the hallmarks of the evolutionary process.

Whilst human beings and other animals may be predetermined to care more for kin then strangers, this is the consequence of the centrality of personal relationships rather than genetic closeness or calculation (Rodd, 1990; Sharpe, 2005). The fact that we have preferences for our own offspring, or those closest to us (Clark, 1997a) - Clark (1983a) argues that concern for others has literally *familiar* origins - is, Midgley (1983c:102) argues, *because* "We are bond-forming creatures, not abstract intellects". Whilst such preferences can often be discriminatory, Midgley (1983c) argues they are neither inherently prejudicial, nor necessarily exclusive. There exist good biological reasons for predilection to one's own; Singer (1981:36) asserts that "ethical rules which accept a degree of partiality towards the interests of one's own family may be the best means of promoting the welfare of all families and thus of the entire community".

The notion that the motives of love and affection are the evolutionary backbone of all social species contradicts the pervasive belief that biological theories justify moral indifference to our treatment of animals (Hettinger, 1994; Leahy, 1994; Rodd, 1990; Swan, 1995). Even a unitary theory such as sociobiology which postulates universal genetic determinism posits a dichotomous metaphysic - human beings retain the vestiges of free-will and autonomy, whilst animals are envisaged as genetic automatons, programmed to be thoroughly 'selfish' in the strict biological sense, and thereby incapable of exhibiting self-sacrificing, altruistic behaviour.

Whilst human beings are disposed toward kin altruism, reciprocal altruism and group altruism, genuine non-reciprocal altruism is a not an irregular occurrence (Nagel, 1970). Our preference for kin is part of our nature - it is specitivity which allows for generalizability and the understanding of others (Marris, 1974) - and in Midgley's (1983c:103) opinion this preference "is the root from which charity grows. Morality shows a constant tension between measures to protect the sacredness of these special claims and counter-measures to secure justice and widen sympathies for outsiders". Rationality does not create the phenomenon of altruism, rather it enables and facilitates its extension to strangers and those currently standing outside our moral circle; it furthers a caring for strangers (Bauman, 2000,2001,2003; Gaita, 1999,2001; Geras, 1995; Ignatieff, 1985; Levinas, 1969,1997; Sennett, 2003; Singer, 1981,1995; Titmuss, 1970,1977b; Watson, 1980; Weil, 1986), and plausibly accounts for the ubiquitousness of kindness to strangers that is a cross-cultural phenomenon (George, 2003).

Those who maintain that moral status is ultimately contingent upon and circumscribed by our capacity to emotionally connect, in the cultivation of interpersonal relationships (Gilligan, 1982; Noddings, 1984), surely ignore the reality that there is a legitimate place for *both* reason and emotion in moral matters. Without the former, we would, Regan (1991) argues, have negligible reason to care for those to whom we are indifferent. Whilst admitting that species-bonds are genuine and strong, Midgley (1983c) asserts that they are *not* invariably exclusive, possessing neither the force nor authority to accord justification for the absolute dismissal of other species. Indeed Callicott (1992b:256), in arguing that animals have historically been an integral component of human society, and that there has existed "a kind of evolved and unspoken social contract between man and beast", suggests that the notion of kin altruism can be utilized to ground human concern for animals. Kin altruism, thus understood, provides us with an awareness of other beings, and human-animal interaction can be utilized by social workers to enable those who have experienced abuse and/or neglect, or who to all intents and purposes lack this capacity, to be able to acquire a concept of the other - Sharpe (2005:101) asserts that "consciousness of self can also be defined as awareness of oneself as one among other selves" - at least to some degree, and to experience respect for self and others, human and non-human (De Grave, 1999; George, 1999; Irvine, 2004; Rathmann, 1999; Robin & ten Bensel, 1998; Roseberry & Rovin, 1999; Ross, 1999).

Rationality enables us to understand the ways in which we are genetically influenced *and* to challenging that influence (Rodd, 1990; Singer, 1981). The ubiquitousness and universality of the Golden Rule across cultures confirms, in Singer's (1981:137) mind, the significance of the role of reason in widening the circle of morality so as to ensure an *impartial ethic*, which "is not a recommendation that we do to others as they have done to us, but that we do to them what we would wish them to do to us. Nor is anything said about doing this only if they are likely to respond in kind". This concurs with Darwin's (1936) belief that our social instincts predispose us to have an active concern for, and to act, so as that others may benefited, for both human beings and animals both possess the capacity to consider the interests of others. In Rachel's (1999:147) opinion, Darwin's theory parallels his thinking about rationality, and entails that "The social instincts lead us to set aside our own narrow interests, and do what is for the good of the whole community. But other animals also have social instincts and are capable of acting for the benefit of their fellow creatures. Therefore they should also be thought of as acting morally".

The notion that the circle of altruism is *naturally* constricted to the interests of the individual, premised on the assumption that psychological egoism is reflective of the ontology of human beings and animals, is mistaken. Our ability to extend our *natural* disposition to altruism has normative moral implications for our relations with other animals, with Singer (1981:120) contending that "The only justifiable stopping place for the expansion of altruism is the point at which all whose welfare can be affected by our actions are included within the circle of altruism". In effect, this represents the purpose of this thesis, the development of a revised and expanded Code of Ethics that includes non-human animals within its moral and ethical gamut, thereby providing social work practitioners with the conceptual framework and skills necessary to resolve the dilemmas posed in Chapter One. Whilst the case has been made for a moral inclusiveness grounded in our evolutionary continuity, one is nevertheless aware that consideration of biology introduces notions which, on face value at least, appear to weaken if not invalidate what has been argued thus far. It will therefore be essential to address such concerns, and to these matters we shall now turn our attention.

In countering the belief that biology implicitly endorses competitiveness, Goodwin (1995:xii) observes that whereas Darwin assumes that organisms are the basic and irreplaceable units of life, modern biology has substituted genes for organisms - where competition, selfishness and survival are deemed to underpin evolution *and* complement the values of our culture, "Both culture and nature then become rooted in similar ways of seeing the world, which are shaped at a deeper level than metaphor by cultural myths, from which the metaphors arise". This modern Darwinian worldview decrees that species have no intrinsic value (Budiansky, 1999; Dawkins, 1976), and misrepresents our biological natures, and biological reality, for Goodwin (1995:xiv) avers that

> We are every bit as co-operative as we are competitive; as altruistic as we are selfish; as creative and playful as we are destructive and repetitive. And we are biologically grounded in relationships which operate at all the different levels of our beings as the basis of our natures as agents of creative evolutionary emergence, a property we share with all other species.

And what's more, "If organisms are seen as mechanisms, they will be treated as such, and as such we will treat each other" (Goodwin, 1995:215).

This is precisely the point that Malik (2000) misconstrues when he fears that acknowledgement of our animal status - "as if we were not animals ourselves!" (Salt, 1935:55) - will invariably lead to human beings being treated as objects, things, or machines (animals, he insists, are *automatons*). The redoubtable longevity of the Cartesian metaphysic of animals as automata is all the more remarkable given Darwin's insights (Midgley, 1988a). It is therefore more apposite to speak in terms of organisms than mechanisms (Goodwin, 1988,1995), when we are considering the nature and behaviour of human beings *and* other animals. In Malik's (2000) eyes evil inheres in treating human beings as we currently see fit to treat animals. However, this is to lose sight of the fact that to treat *any* conscious, sentient subject mechanistically is to view that being as a thing or object, a mere means to another's ends (French, 1993).

The attendant dangers in so doing are borne out in Thomas' (1983:41,44) study of attitudes toward the natural world in the period from sixteenth to the nineteenth century, for the

> abiding urge to distinguish the human from the animal also had important consequences for relations *between* men. For, if the essence of humanity was defined as consisting in some specific quality, then it followed that any man who did not display that quality was subhuman, semi-animal...*Once perceived as beasts, people were liable to be treated accordingly*. The ethic of human domination removed animals from the sphere of human concern. But it also legitimized the ill-treatment of those humans who were in a supposedly animal condition. (italics mine)

History is replete with examples of the attribution of animal qualities or animal status to specific groups of human beings as a means of sanctioning their exclusion from the moral community, or their dehumanization to justify their victimization (Benson, 1983; Patterson, 2002; Pois, 1986; Sax, 2002; Spiegel, 1989), and Thomas (1983:48) notes that "nearly all the protests which were made on behalf of the poor and oppressed in the early modern period were couched in terms of the very same ideology of human domination that were used to justify their oppression".

The only certain way to guarantee human dignity, Malik (2000:389) insists, is to posit a metaphysical and ontological divide between human beings and all other animals, arguing that "the less animal we are, the more human we become". How we can be other than what we are, i.e., *animals*, Malik does not explain. In reality, the inverse of Malik's prognosis

holds true, for to treat non-human subjective beings and organisms as mechanisms is to inevitably treat human beings in a like manner (Goodwin, 1995; Rosenfield, 1941). It is a mistaken, albeit commonplace, argument that assumes that *all or any* attempts that seek to elevate both the moral status and treatment of animals invariably diminish the moral standing and treatment of human beings in inverse proportion. The reality of social work practice is that when and where children are ill-treated, so are animals (almost invariably), and vice versa - concern for the welfare and wellbeing of children *and* animals are parallel, not inverse or divergent, concerns.

Why the elevation of animal-kind is held, seesaw-like, to inexorably detract from humankind (Allen, cited in Griffin, 1981,1990; Cohen, 2001b; Malik, 2000) is profoundly mystifying. We might just as well suppose that due consideration of, say, women's interests and Third World peoples must diminish the standing of men and those in the First World respectively, or that attention to the poor will unduly impinge on and encumber the well-to-do. Moral considerability and standing, as well as compassion and respect, are not finite resources, whose very value is dependent on their being restricted to the chosen few. It is difficult to follow the logic of such arguments - if we grant the premise that animals differ but in degree and not in kind, then logic does dictate equality in moral *consideration*. Similar arguments were historically advanced to exclude all manner of nationalities, women and children from the circle of moral considerability (Lansbury, 1985; Manne, 2001,2003; Reynolds, 1999; Ryder, 1989; Singer, 1976; Sax, 2002; Thomas, 1983), arguments which the social work discipline has historically argued against most trenchantly (Addams, 1902,1910; Ife, 2001; IFSW literature; Reynolds, 1985,1991). Should it not just as likely entail that all animals *and* human beings have moral rights and moral status, the latter concept embodying the notion that we should treat individuals well for *their* own sakes (DeGrazia, 2002; Warren, 1997) and individual dignity, as being subjects with inherent value?

Harmony, *not* competition, is the distinguishing hallmark of nature (Midgley (1995a), and contra-Tennyson (1890:261), Midgley (1986:64) makes the observation that that nature is "not specially red in tooth and claw, but resolute to remain in general green and alive" (indeed, if Tennyson's charge be true, it is just as apposite of human behaviour to *all* creatures) - Goodwin (1995) contends that mutualism and symbiosis are a ubiquitous feature of the natural world - and that

competition relevant to natural selection is mainly that within a species than that without…competition, in the vast, impersonal sense required for talking about evolution, goes on, both within species and between them, without the consciousness of those involved in it, and does not at all require what we think of on our tiny scale as deliberate competitive behaviour. (Midgley, 1983c:24)

By way of summation, Midgley (1984b) argues that the three central failings of sociobiological thought are that it confuses ideas about motive with ones about evolutionary function, it appears to substantially undermine free-will, and it fails to make animal comparisons compatible with notions of human dignity and uniqueness. Sociobiology's important contribution, reminding us that we, as animals, are part of the natural world, is diminished by an explicit intent that neurobiology supplant all other disciplines, that ethics be the preserve of biologists, not philosophers (Ruse & Wilson, 1986; Wilson, 1975,1978).

Whilst acknowledging that the physical and social circumstances of specific beings constrains the content of morality, O'Hear (1997:139) avers that "morality, if it is to be morality, has to rest on principles of greater generality than what merely happens to conduce to my (or our) well-being at a given time". For differing reasons, Midgley (1995a:73) contends that Wilson is both right *and* wrong - right to draw our attention to the facts about human nature necessary (among many others) for moral choices, but wrong to surmise that such facts can *only* be derived from neurobiology, for

We find out about human nature from a thousand sources, most obviously from everyday life and from history. Without those other sources brain science would not have the concepts and assumptions from which its investigations start. Moreover, it must continually use these outside concepts and assumptions to check the meaning of its work.

Indeed the very idea that sociobiological explanations can categorically encompass and exhaustively account for ethics, or philosophy (Crick & Koch, 1995; Wilson, 1975,1978), *even* love (Harlow, 1959), is profoundly mistaken (Birch, 1995; Clark, 1977,1993e,1998e,2000a,2000c; O'Hear, 1997; McGinn, 1979; Midgley, 1984b,1996a; Murdoch, 1996; Nagel, 1978; Rachels, 1999; Rodd, 1996; Rolston, 1999; Searle, 1997; Singer, 1981). We should not expect science to definitively capture the complexity of

human existence (Hardy, 1931; Haught, 2003), for science can instruct but not subsume morality (Murdoch, 1996). Similarly, attempts to explain away religious belief as akin to a computer virus (Dawkins, 1992), or a mere function of the brain, is somewhat analogous to expecting the match ball to produce the superlative football of Newcastle United.

It is seemingly difficult to escape the conclusion that human dignity requires a dualistic metaphysic and a rejection of biological considerations; both have long histories. The former is unbiological, whilst the latter misrepresents human nature. There is nothing antithetical to human dignity from biology properly understood, or from an acknowledgement of our ontological continuity. Indeed, as Midgley (2001a:185) affirms,

> The Darwinian perspective on evolution places us firmly in a wider kinship than Descartes or Hobbes ever dreamed of. We know that we belong on this earth. We are not machines or alien beings or disembodied spirits but primates - animals as naturally and incurably dependent on the earthly biosphere as each one of us is dependent on human society.

And it is high time that we recognized that the world does not exist for us alone (Clark, 1977,1997a; Midgley, 2002a; Murdoch, 1977; Plato, 1980); indeed Clark (1994c:17) maintains that "The true and only centre of the world is everywhere, and its circumference is nowhere".

The reality of our evolutionary origins is a generally accepted hypothesis - though we are more inclined to the anthropocentric and thoroughly *un*biological notion that it operates linearly, in a ladder-like, or escalator-like, Lamarckian fashion with ourselves (needless to say) at the summit (Midgley,1986,1996a) - but there has however been a marked shift in its purport for human beings, borne out by Malik's (2000:22) observation that "Whereas nineteenth-century Darwinists saw evolution as the story of the ascent of Man from his brutish origins, today's Darwinists want rather to tell the tale of the Fall of Man back into beastliness. It is the story of the ascent of Man, and the descent of humanity".

Whilst these interpretations are diametrically opposed, both presuppose animal existence to be a state of barbarity and chaos. An ontological dogma decrees that animal existence and our own origins are *intrinsically* brutish. On such a reading our humanity is a tenuous and fragile thing which is secured only by positing an irrevocable chasm between ourselves and all other species. Failure to maintain a gap is to ensure that human beings cease to be viewed as *subjects* and will assuredly be utilized as *objects* (Malik, 2000), but it is rarely

acknowledged why this fear holds true. The danger rests not in an acceptance of our ontological continuity - given our shared genetic heritage, it is perplexing that we are exhorted to respect *only* the *human* animal (Clark, 2000d) - but in our treating humans in the manner in which we currently view and treat animals *like* animals, as objects, as things. Hitherto we sought to secure our status and our dignity by constricting the circle of moral considerability to *specific* human beings, but most of us now tend to assume that we ought instinctively recoil from any suggestion that seeks as its goal the location of certain peoples beyond those parameters. In truth, we all too often consider other humans to *be* animals in order to rationalize our maltreatment of them (Clark, 2000a; Thomas, 1983). No self-respecting social worker would be willing (ostensibly at least) to define specific categories of human beings *out* of the sphere of moral attention. Social work is acutely cognizant and mindful of the reality and consequences of exclusion (Barry & Hallett, 1998), and much of its efforts are expended in attempts to effect acknowledgement of, and respect for, subjectivity.

Malik (2000) ultimately seeks sanctuary in the Kantian dictum that rationality is the prerequisite of moral status and subjectivity, and is the *sole* preserve of human beings, for whilst animals behave as though they are rational, thinking and conscious beings, appearances flatter to deceive. They are, in a resurrection of Cartesian metaphysics, merely automatons, and we can therefore discern that Malik's (2000) observations are one of a piece with the long-standing tradition that morally dismisses non-human animals. In reality it is our subjectivity that is the most substantial aspect of our lives (Birch, 1995), and intersubjectivity *transcends* species barriers (Irvine, 2004; Smuts, 1999).

Animals fare no better under sociobiologist Edward Wilson (1975:176), who contends that any attempt to attribute mental criteria to animals "would be a retreat into mysticism". The dogmatic injunction decreeing that *only* humans can have minds (Midgley, 1996a) has it avid acolytes in modern philosophy (Carruthers, 1989,1992; Frey, 1980; Scruton, 2000); moral standing is dependent upon language which is in turn dependent upon the possession of self-consciousness, thereby excluding animals (Leahy, 1994). Likewise, the social work writer Nicholas Ragg (1977) conceptualizes personhood and moral standing as essentially derivative of human language possession, consigning all else to utter incomprehensibility.

Apart from morally banishing all other animals, this linguistic determinism directly threatens the very notions of self and subjectivity. But, thankfully, "words are not the world… (and) changing the way we speak of things does not change the way things *are*";

were it otherwise, an Orwellian dystopia would be inescapable (Clark, 1992a,1998d). In reality, "statements are made, propositions are uttered, by individual incarnate persons in particular extra-linguistic situations, and it is in the whole of this larger context that our familiar and essential concepts of *truth* and *truthfulness* live and work" (Murdoch, 1993a:194). Anti-realism threatens the moral standing of *all* animals (Clark, 1997a).

The traditional view that morality and language are intertwined is, Midgley (1996a:217) argues,

> simply a bad piece of metaphysics…This position cannot in any case be reconciled with evolution. For if it were true, there would have to have been a quite advanced point in animal evolution when parents who were merely unconsciousness *suddenly* had a child which was a fully conscious subject. And that situation makes no sense. (italics mine)

If moral standing is ultimately contingent on possession of rationality and language it would be extremely problematic for specific categories of human beings, for it narrows morality to such an extent that it presupposes that our duties to human beings are contingent upon their being rational and/or linguistic creatures (Dombrowski, 1997; Pluhar, 1995). Whilst Kant proposes a model of rights and duties that is dependent upon its expression in language, even he does not decree that the presence of language is *all* that matters in our moral lives (Midgley, 1996a).

It is Clark's (1998a) contention that Wittgenstein's (1953:223) ubiquitous aphorism that "If a lion could talk, we would not understand him" is often utilized by contemporary philosophers to deny the attribution of thought, inner life and feeling to *all* animals *per se*, but this is belied by the fact that we routinely understand the moods and intentions of humans *and* animals via non-verbal communication (Clark, 2000a; Long, 2005), and by Wittgenstein himself (Beardsmore, 1996). Indeed Hearne (1987:30,58) contends that having *learned* to talk, a dog *and* his/her handler "are now in the presence of and are commanded by love", and to the extent that we deny any capacity in a dog, for example, for belief, intention and meaning, there will necessarily be an absence of the foregoing, for "It takes two to conceive".

Darwin (1936,1965) repudiates the notion that human language is of a radically different kind to that which we find amongst other animals, once again positing difference *in* degree, *not* kind; he also denies that language is an essential prerequisite for the possession of

rationality (Rachels, 1999). Language possession serves a similar function in our time as possession of a soul did in earlier ages; it is seen as securing passage to the circle of moral considerability. The reality is that social workers (or at least, any worth their salt) would not exclude or preclude any human being on the basis of language proficiency, or any other characteristic or attribute, come to think of it - and as Singer (1985b:6) observes in relation to supposedly *marginal* human beings, "The fact that we do not use them as means to our ends indicates that we do not really see decisive moral significance in rationality, or autonomy, or language, or a sense of justice, or any other criteria said to distinguish us from other animals". Indeed failure to respect animals *because* they do not share our linguistic capacities is akin to disrespecting the human illiterate (Ingold, 1988b).

In critiquing the notion that language renders all other moral considerations obsolete, Midgley (1996a:225) avers that

> It is not just the fact that a human being talks which gives him a claim to be treated with respect. It is what his talk shows- and he shows the same things in other ways as well, through his actions. If the chimps turn out able to talk well, this can be of enormous interest and tell us much about both their nature and ours. But whatever is true of their moral status is true also, and will continue to be true, of many other fairly advanced creatures. Educated chimps would not form, along with man, an exploitative elite, exalted above all other life-forms as subject above object. The only intelligible arrangement is to regard *all* animals as subjects of some kind, though with a life that varies greatly in its kind and degree of complexity.

In effect this asks no more of us than that which we already do in relation to *all* human beings (at least in theory), as an article of social work faith, be extended to all other animals - that is, quintessentially, moral consideration of the interests of *all* subjective creatures.

What immediately strikes one in reading Darwin is his readiness to attribute emotions, intelligence - to even the humble earthworm (Darwin, 1945) - and motives to animals. His convictions about language would surely have received further substantiation and validation by the latter-day attempts to teach human language to chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans, wherein comparisons are made with language development in human children (Cohen, 2000; Fouts & Fouts, 1993; Lieberman, 1984; Linden, 1976,1999; Miles, 1993; Patterson & Gordon, 1993).

A fairly standard riposte to the claim that animals are indeed conscious beings is the accusation of anthropomorphism (Kennedy, 1992), relating more often than not to a *blanket denial* of consciousness or sentience rather than identification of the attribution of erroneous feelings and thoughts (Midgley, 1983c), and in its extreme form outlawing the ascription of *any* human attribute to animals (Clark, 1985a,1997a; Crocker, 1984; Fisher, 1990; Radner & Radner, 1996). The levelling of the charge of anthropomorphism obscures the reality that we inhabit a mixed community of humans *and* animals, and far from being an aberration, this has been a feature of *all* human communities (Harwood, 2002; Manning & Serpell, 1994; Midgley, 1983c; Podberscek, Paul & Serpell, 2000; Serpell, 1986; Sharpe, 2005; Thomas, 1983).

From the nineteenth century onwards it was assumed that the correct and knowledgeable way to view animals was *objectively* and *scientifically* (Ritvo, 1987,1994; Rollin, 1990a,1990b; Turner, 1980), and

> In place of a natural world redolent with human analogy and symbolic meaning, and sensitive to man's behaviour…a detached natural scene to be viewed and studied by the observer from the outside, as if by peering through a window, in the secure knowledge that the objects of contemplation inhabited a separate realm, offering no omens or signs, without human meaning or significance. (Thomas, 1983:89)

The self-satisfied superiority of supposedly civilized societies was sharply contrasted with the reverence exhibited in the animistic and anthropomorphic attitudes of putatively primitive persons (Midgley, 1994a).

The *a priori* decree that *only* human beings are conscious, or that animals can only have mental experiences on the proviso that they be the *selfsame* as our own, leads Griffin (1981:124) to declare that "It is this conceit which is truly anthropomorphic". Respect is *not* dependent upon similitude - we anthropocentrically form our opinions of other species by comparison to *our* aptitudes, interpreting difference as confirmation of inferiority, and underestimating complexity (Coy, 1988; Ingold, 1988b). More often than not, respect for others is due to their *unlikeness* (Buber, 1970; Clark, 1997a; Midgley, 1996a; Murdoch, 1996). It is *unlikeness* that social workers as often than not have to engage with as a matter of course, and social work education seeks to cultivate and inculcate just *this*, to effect an engagement with difference. Were we to do otherwise, it would often be difficult to see

what similarities exist between social workers and many of the people with whom they work - in spite of surface differences outweighing resemblances, social workers nevertheless achieve engagement, and the fact of difference ought not unduly perturb or confound us.

We are sorely mistaken to view animals as failed attempts at humanity, for "All present animals are our contemporaries" (Clark, 1977:111-112) - far better that we conceive species as evolving populations working from a largely common genetic heritage, rather than as distinct natural kinds (Clark, 1988a,1998a), for "We now know that species are not permanent, timeless essences" (Midgley, 2003:109).

It is incomprehensible to suppose that experience could have emanated out of that which is singularly physical (Birch, 1995; Clark, 1984; Nagel, 1974), for consciousness itself is an *evolved* endowment (Bekoff, 1998b,2002a; Bekoff & Jamieson, 1990c; Griffin, 1984). A more plausible hypothesis, one not reliant upon the insertion of a transcendental attribute or attribution of emergence, is that consciousness *across* species arose as a consequence of the demands and increasing complexity of social life, and has a biological function for carrying out introspective psychology (Humphrey, 1976,1979). The capacity for doing psychology, Humphrey (1979:58) argues, is a characteristic of *all* social animals, and the need for introspection is precisely why consciousness is required, for "different kinds of knowledge entail different ways of knowing". Social workers are cognizant of the fact that those with whom they work inhabit a *shared*, not alien, world - social workers attain an understanding of others by the tool of empathy. In realizing that 'I *can* know what is not me', social workers are in a position to have direction and guidance for practice.

A necessary interdependent relationship between intelligence and our sociability seems sensible, but the belief that it is the exclusive province of human beings is evolutionarily nonsensical. In speculating on the nature of 'primitive man' and the evolution of intelligence, Midgley (1996a:40) suggests that

> He is not without natural inhibitions, but his inhibitions are weak…He does horrible things and is filled with remorse afterwards. These conflicts are prerational; they do not fall between his reason and his primitive motives, but between two groups of those primitive motives themselves. They are not the result of thinking; more likely they are among the first things that made him think. They are not the result of social conditioning; they are part of its

cause. Intelligence is evolved as a way of dealing with puzzles, an alternative to the strength that can kick its way past them or the inertness that can hide from them.

Nevertheless the tendency to accord pride of place to intelligence is everywhere to be found - by way of example, Wilson (1975:381) hypothesizes that intelligence is *the* "impelling force" that generated our sociability, but to suggest that intelligence made its grand entry at some stage in the evolution of human beings *as* human beings, as evolutionary orthodoxy would have us believe (Birch, 1995), is surely to put the cart before the horse. A far more satisfying explanation, given our evolutionary continuity, is Midgley's (1996a:130) observation that

> There might, perhaps, have been an intelligent species somewhere which did not develop direct social impulses at all, but depended for all its social activity on calculation of consequences. We are not it…Insofar as there is one "impelling force", it is sociability. From that comes increasing power of communication, which provides the matrix for intelligence.

That human beings have the capacity to relay or report their subjective experiences to one another via the symbolic medium of language is admittedly a distinct advantage. However, to view language and rationality as *the* attributes that are prerequisites for the possession of consciousness and moral standing is an arbitrary device and misleading; it appears more plausible and appropriate that we conceptualize the development of consciousness as an outcome of increasing social complexity, and therefore not logically limited or restricted to human beings. The very sentiments that are intrinsic features of human beings are *not* derivative of our intellectual prowess, and human morality is congruent with our natural dispositions (Clark, 1982) - rationality itself "includes a definite structure of preferences, a priority system *based on feeling*… (and) is not peculiar to the human race, but is also found in the higher animals" (Midgley, 1996a:256) (italics mine).

What of Humphrey's (1979) assertion that different kinds of knowledge of necessity entail different ways of knowing? By way of observation, Nagel (1974:440) observes that our predilection for explanation of incomprehensibility in familiar and accepted terminology results in improbable representations of mentality -

the analogical form of the English expression "what is it *like*" is misleading. It does not mean "what (in our experience) it *resembles*," but rather "how is it for the subject himself"…The subjective character of the experience of a person deaf and blind from birth is not accessible to me, for example, nor presumably is mine to him. This does not prevent us each from believing that the other's experience has such a subjective character.

Nor ought it diminish one iota the moral importance of subjectivity (Birch, 1995; Dawkins, Marian, 1998; Regan, 1983; Sprigge, 1979b,1982), and a preparedness not merely to place oneself in another's shoes, but to assume as an *opus operandi* that an experiential subject dwells therein (McLaughlin, 1999). That this is unremarkable is because "we know from the inside what it is like to be an *animal*" (Clark, 2003b:198; see Banville, 2005:158). Consciousness is central to moral being, and to a respecting of the irreducible value of the individual (Murdoch, 1993a,1996).

The desire for explanation in well-known and well understood terminology is of particular hindrance in connection with the inquiry into animals minds (Bavidge & Ground, 1994; Nagel, 1974; Page, 2000; Radner & Radner, 1996; Rogers, 1997; Walker, 1983); to see animals solely in *our* terms is to obscure efforts to know them as they *are*, to encounter and respect their *otherness*, their *unlikeness*. This awareness, an overcoming of self, occurs in Murdoch's (1996:84-85) opinion when, for example,

> I am looking out of my window in an anxious and resentful state of mind, oblivious of my surroundings, brooding perhaps on some damage done to my prestige. Then suddenly I observe a hovering kestrel. In a moment everything is altered. The brooding self with its hurt vanity has disappeared. There is nothing now but the kestrel. And when I return to thinking of the other matter it seems less important… we take a self-forgetful pleasure in the *sheer alien pointless independent existence* of animals, birds, stones and trees. '*Not how the world is, but that it is, is the mystical*'. (italics mine)

'Pointless' in the sense that its existence has value *independent* of human calculations, we revel in, are lost in wonder (Ferry, 1973),

> …a surging awe
>   Of inarticulateness (Hardy,1976:447)

a reverence and respect for its *unlikeness* -

> Glory be to God for dappled things –
>   For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
>   For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
> Fresh-firecoal chestnut-falls; finches' wings… (Hopkins, 1967:63)

In our dealings with the world, we do well to remain cognizant of the reality that "we know that it transcends our knowledge and our present purposes" (Clark, 1992b:964). All the foregoing are reflective of the seminal role that awe, reverence and wonder play in our lives (Bate, 1991,2000; Banfield, 1968; Batchelor, 2001; Blake, 1988; Brown, 1990; Clare, 1984; Coles, 1978,1990; Cordner, 2002; Emerson, 1890; Jamie, 2005; McKusick, 1991/1992; Robinson, 2004; Ruskin, 1904,1906; Salt, 1908,1922; Schweitzer, 1955b; Thoreau, 2001,2004; Webb, 1929), or what Clark (1986d:1049) terms *intelligent piety*, "that the truth is known through love, awe, worship".

The predominant tendency that leads us to invariably understand animals by means of reference to human *similitude* is critiqued by Bavidge & Ground (1995:170), who maintain that we must distinguish between the statements

> *a) Animal pain is like ours.*
> *b) Like us, animals experience pain.*
> The first is analogical…we are saying that we must always be engaged in the analogical modelling of the subjective qualities of their experience on the subjective qualities of our own. All our thought and talk about animal minds is an exercise in *comparative objective phenomenology*.

Reliance upon analogy alone confines us to interpretation of animal consciousness in *our* terms, and diverts our attention from an understanding of their subjective and expressive lives in *their* terms. Analogical comparisons on their own inhibit the ascription of consciousness and psychological states to animals. In response to the question as to where else we may commence, if not from our *own* experience, Bavidge & Ground (1995:170-171) suggest that "If there is a comparative element in our thinking it involves large-scale

comparisons between our lives and the lives of other species… 'Like us, animals experience pain', that is, our lives share common shapes".

Rather than insisting that all consciousness must be identical with that to be found in animals of our kind, consciousness is better conceptualized as having diverse manifestations (Milward, 1995; Radner & Radner, 1996). Whilst analogy can indeed be misleading and obscure an animal's viewpoint, at a fundamental level it is indispensable (Crocker, 1984; Dawkins, 1985), and saves us from solipsism. But there is analogy *and* analogy, and Dawkins (1985:40) argues that analogy which makes recourse to biological knowledge of animals, as opposed to seeing them as alike ourselves with add ons of feather and fur, "is the only kind of analogy which, in the end, will give us any real hope of being able to unlock other species from their skins and of beginning to see the world through not just *our* eyes but *theirs* as well" (italics mine).

To speak of motives and animals in the same breath is deemed an open-and-shut case of anthropomorphism, or in sociobiology's view, delusory (Rodd, 1990). In examining the central importance of motives for ourselves *and* animals, Midgley (1996a:105-106) alleges that this accusation is thoroughly misplaced, for motives "are not the names of hypothetical inner states, but of major patterns in anyone's life, the signs of which are regular and visible…Both with animals and with men, we respond to the feelings and intentions we read in an action, not only to the action itself".

Difference is difference, rather than automatically being a reason for the attribution of inferiority, and indifference. This is the very point that Darwin (1936:453,494-495), who in noting that reason is the faculty of the human mind deemed paramount, makes, when, with certitude, he observes that

> the more the habits of any particular animal are studied by a naturalist, *the more he attributes to reason and less to unlearnt instincts*…the difference in mind between man and the higher animals, great as it is, certainly *is one of degree and not kind*. We have seen that the senses and intuitions, the various emotions and faculties, such as love, memory, attention, curiosity, imitation, reason, &c., of which man boasts, may be found in an incipient, or even sometimes in a well-developed condition, in the lower animals. (italics mine)

We are not islands of consciousness in an otherwise unconscious world (Hauser, 2000); we inhabit a *shared* world that "contains a cornucopia of minds" (Bavidge & Ground, 1994:2). What is required is the exercise of the faculty of *empathic* or *sympathetic imagination* (Coetzee, 1999; Donovan, 1996a; Fisher, 1987; Fox, 1990), and an acceptance that subjectivity exists *independently* of language possession. Insight into the minds of others occurs via an *imaginative sympathy* (Harris, 1991; Rodd, 1996), and our imaginative capacity to understand our fellows is innate (Rodd, 1990; Sharpe, 2005). Likewise, Midgley (1983c:91) maintains that "As social creatures ourselves, we perceive and respond to consciousness in others in a special way", but proceeds to caution that whilst sentience does make a substantial moral difference, it does not mark the boundaries of moral claims, for "as beings forming a small part of the fauna of this planet, we also exist in relation to the whole, and its fate cannot be a matter of moral indifference to us".

The methodological ruling that consciousness is the sole preserve of human beings has been extremely influential - the very notion of animal subjectivity has tended to be viewed as "an extravagant metaphysical hypothesis" (Midgley, 1983c:134), for denial is commonly considered more respectable than assertion (Midgley, 1988a). It was but a short step from an objective methodology to a methodological ruling, that when it came to a study of animals and the natural world (Merchant, 1990), we ought only concern ourselves with the view from *without* - hence, *methodology became ontology*. Whereas folk psychology, which has elaborate beliefs about mental processes (Rips & Conrad, 1989), readily attributes mental states to animals, scientific orthodoxy, premised on positivistic and behaviourist principles, has invariably decreed the conjunction of 'animal' and 'consciousness' as unscientific (Boakes, 1984; Griffin, 1984,1989; Jolly, 1985; Midgley, 1983c,1996a; Rollin, 1989,1990a,1990b). Given the difficulty of rigorous substantiation, Griffin (1992) remarks that scientists repeatedly fall back on the time-honoured precept that *all* animal behaviour, ingenuity notwithstanding, is unconscious. Conversely, the existence of mental states in animals accords with biological and psychological continuity (Bavidge & Ground, 1994; Bekoff & Allen, 1997; Bekoff & Jamieson, 1990a,1990b,1991; Birch, 1995; Crisp, 1990; Dupre, 1990; Griffin, 1981,1984,1992; Matthews, 1978; Page, 2000; Radner & Radner, 1996; Walker, 1983), with the difference in consciousness between humans and other animals being a matter of degree, not kind (Darwin, 1936,1965; Gould & Grant, 1994). Given the dominant religious and secular traditions in the Western world, Midgley (1996a:232) remarks that the prevalence of a dismissive attitude towards animal

intelligence is unsurprising, for "a tradition that a certain topic *does not matter* is one of the hardest things to get rid of- discussion tends to be tabooed before it starts".

For the greater part of the twentieth century science and behaviourist psychology (Skinner, 1973,1974) sought to simplify existence by adopting either an atheistic or agnostic orientation towards consciousness in humans *and* animals (Boakes, 1984; Clark, 1982; Pluhar, 1995; Rollin, 1989,1990a,1995; Sprigge, 1979b,1982), deeming it "impossible to think objectively about subjectivity" (Midgley, 2001a:8). Indeed, Midgley (1996c) asserts that a *naïve dogmatic materialism* decreed that consciousness was not only trivial, but to all intents and purposes had no place in our world, and it was this assumption which led behaviourist psychologists to their outlandish and ultimately unworkable deductions -

> The first step is to measure whatever can be easily measured. This is OK as far as it goes. The second step is to disregard that which can't be measured or to give it an arbitrary quantitative value. This is artificial and misleading. The third step is to presume that what can't be measured isn't very important. This is blindness. The fourth step is to say that what can't be easily measured really doesn't exist. This is suicide. (Yankelovitch, quoted in Griffin, 1981:112)

And whilst rigidly orthodox behaviourism is contemporarily seen as antithetical to a realistic representation of human existence, it is assumed to be an apposite explanation for our understanding of animal existence (Hearne, 1987), "not only as a methodological device to delay too ready an assumption of intuitive insight, but as an ontological dogma" (Clark, 1982:14-15). Attempts to apply such a methodology to the social work sphere, for instance in the areas of child protection and mental illness (to name but two examples), whereby they are constructed in such ways that only measurement matters, would result in absurdity, and be ethically problematic.

Whilst the issue of consciousness is an area of inquiry that has always intrigued and enthralled philosophers, Bavidge & Ground (1994:8) observe that (a sprinkling of dissenters aside) "philosophers interested in the nature of mind have done philosophy almost as if there weren't *any* animals" (italics mine), with the inordinate focus upon the division between the conscious and non-conscious marginalizing interest in its diversity. What has occurred is a prevalent tendency to view consciousness as a substance, somehow detached from its rightful place as an integral component of every day mental activity, and

"*This is what stops it being accepted as a normal aspect of mental activity, an emergent capacity acquired naturally by social creatures during the regular course of evolution*" (Midgley, 2001a:110).

The dismissive attitudes of the majority of twentieth century thinking towards animal consciousness are thoroughly *un*Darwinian. The ever-circumspect Darwin continually sought to counter and rebut the notion of evolutionary discontinuity. By way of addressing the mental powers of animals, specifically in relation to abstraction, general conceptions, self-consciousness and mental individuality, Darwin (1936:446) holds that "there is no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties". The practical implications of the denial of the existence of rationality and consciousness in animals entails that it is a matter of *moral indifference* that we treat animals as *things*, and as raw material for well-nigh any human purpose (DeGrazia, 1996), and gives succour to the belief that respecting them as subjects or assigning them moral standing inevitably, or logically, opens the floodgates atop the slippery slope (Carruthers, 1992).

As we've seen, language and rationality are conceptualized anthropocentrically and exclusively - for instance, Budiansky (1999:18,193) pronounces that language "*is* a discontinuity", and this discontinuity between human minds and those of other animals is not one of degree or quantity *but* quality, "for whether or not language causes consciousness, language is so intimately tied to consciousness that the two seem inseparable". Should a being's entitlement to moral consideration be contingent upon reflective consciousness or language possession, such criteria would result in many humans being left on the moral sidelines - one can have interests, and thereby be owed duties by moral agents, that are logically independent of such attributes, and indeed their absence often serves to heighten, not lessen, our concern for them. Social work readily acknowledges such a reality.

Can it be that language *causes* consciousness? Language faculties, Chomsky (1968) contends, are innate *and* uniquely human, conceptualizing human language as evolutionarily distinct from animal communication. Language joins consciousness as an attribute that we are encouraged to believe appeared miraculously and uniquely in the human species, examples of what Chomsky (1968:62) terms "true emergence". Chomsky adopts the innatist view that the brains of humans and animals differ because of specific genetic differences between species, but Goodwin (1988) insists that this ignores the

genetic similitude between humans and chimpanzees. Evolution, Midgley (1983c:140) asserts, *demands* continuity,

> for anybody who does not believe in the special creation of man, it not only may but *must* (italics in text) be true…Tradition, following Descartes, has tied them (uses of consciousness) closely to our higher intellectual capacities, particularly to logic, mathematics and speech. It is not, however, in the least plausible that these capacities could arise directly from a state of total unconsciousness…speech only gains it point among creatures who are already social…In fact, before any of these faculties can be used, those possessing them must already have all the very complex emotional and perceptual adaptations which make it possible to live harmoniously together. But no creature could even start on the arduous road that leads to this condition *unless* it was already conscious. (italics mine)

Chomsky places a chasm between language and gestures, thereby ignoring their inherent linkage "for speech makes sense only for a species that is already constantly communicating by gestures" (Midgley, 1996a:243). That animals obviously do not engage in linguistic discourse invariably obscures the richness of their communicative gestures (Clark, 1982,1997a,1998a; Darwin, 1936,1965; Hearne, 1987; Ingold, 1988a; Tanner, 1988), many of which we share in common. The reality is that "Neither with dog nor human do we need words to reveal to us what expressive and interpretative capacities far older and far deeper than words make clear immediately" (Midgley, 1983c:59).

The pervasive belief that intelligence requires linguistic competency (Hampshire,1959) is mistaken - intelligence is more plausibly linked to a being's aptitude for appropriate and flexible responsiveness to specific situational problems, and an ability to so conceptualize the situation (Dupre, 1990). And if our capacity for language is dependent upon innate faculties, given that "Blotting paper does not talk" (Midgley, 1996a:251), as seems the only sensible explanation, Midgley (1983c:60) insists that nothing in linguistic philosophy requires the extravagant claim "that speech could have originated among creatures which had no understanding, no concepts, no emotions, no beliefs and no desires". The notion that language *pre-dates* consciousness, that thought was an impossibility *prior* to speech, is nonsensical, for as Clark (1997a:145) illustrates, "this is to make the acquisition of speech a standing miracle in every growing child, and in the first beginnings of the human

kind…*how do individuals begin to speak without ever having thought before they spoke*?" (italics mine).

As with consciousness, language is presented as an either/or attribute, which all seems to beg the question - all other animals, barring human mammals, are essentially mute and mutually incomprehensible beings. In point of fact, Gandhi (1984) avers that their want of *human* language makes their appeal all the *greater*. Moreover, Midgley (1996a:226) contends that

> "Having language" in the sense in which human beings have it is having a large and versatile tool kit. But kits containing some of the same tools are found in much less ambitious quarters. Or, to return to the image of the key- there is no question of keeping the chimps out of the castle. They and many other animals have always been inside, and only our conceit and prejudice have stopped us from seeing them. They are all over the ground floor, which is still a central area of our life as well as theirs. But there are many other floors to which they do not go and cannot, because they have never wanted to enough, and so have never developed their powers beyond a certain rudimentary point.

It is our shared evolutionary background *rather* than language that facilitates mutual understanding leads (Clark, 1997a).

Whilst it is undoubtedly the case that the foundations of language can be seen to have sprung from our social engagement with one another (Hobson, 2002), this by no means warrants a discontinuity between ourselves and other animals - it merely confirms the reality that language, in all its manifestations, only arises in beings who are *already* social creatures (Midgley, 1983c,1996a). Linguistic capacity and competence have ubiquitously been advanced as key distinguishing characteristics between human beings and animals, both ontologically *and* morally - Ragg (1977:62) maintains that "What is outside language or language-dependent forms is unknowable", and contends that our standing as *persons* is intrinsically dependent upon language usage. This attempt to accord language primacy over and above consciousness is to lose sight of the fact that it is consciousness that is constitutive of moral being (Murdoch, 1993a,1996; Ryder, 1992a); it is respect for consciousness, not impersonal linguistic systems, that guarantees respect for the individual as irreducible value (Antonaccio, 2000). The lauding of language seems but yet another device designed to ensure that moral considerability is restricted to humankind.

What, in point of fact, would be the logical implication of Ragg's (1977) notion for social work? It would assuredly bode ill for many human beings, unless of course, one wants to have one's cake and eat it too, by arbitrarily arguing for the aptness of such a position for other species, whilst simultaneously insisting upon its inappropriateness when applied to human beings. In what seems an attempt to rescue those imperiled humans, Ragg (1977:101) acknowledges the role of non-verbal communication, whilst insisting that the absence the language entails that "the experience is relatively inaccessible to the caseworker; more important though, it is also inaccessible to the client".

Why it is that we ought to extend consideration of non-verbal communication in our dealings with fellow humans, *whilst* simultaneously denying or outlawing it in our dealings with other animals, is not elucidated. Animals, thus bereft, are unknowable and incomprehensible to themselves and others. Solipsism within other species is no more tenable than it is within our own, or to be sure, between species (Midgley, 1988a), for "We do not exist just within the boundary of *our s*kin" (Rowe, 2003:139) (italics mine).

Rather than relying upon language possession as the *differentiating* moral attribute, Carruthers (1992:171) distinguishes between *consciousness* and *reflexive consciousness*, arguing that whilst animals are conscious in the sense that they are aware of the world that surrounds them and their own bodies, they do not have conscious mental states - "If consciousness is like the turning on of a light, then it may be that their lives are nothing but darkness" (Carruthers, 1992). Whilst our dogs Cilla, Lucy, Simone and Tessa, and Jayke the cat, for instance, may be aware of Clarabelle, our Jersey cow, waiting for her morning molasses at our paddock fence, they are incapable of reflecting upon the fact that they are conscious of that awareness.

Although conscious and non-conscious mental states, more commonly understood as self-aware and aware (Sharpe, 2005), differ considerably, the difference is not absolute (Birch, 1995; Darwin, 1936; Jamieson, 1983). A stipulation that one be able to engage in rumination upon one's thoughts as a prerequisite for a capacity to feel, or to be aware, would leave a significant number of humans adrift (Pluhar, 1993a), but "interests need not be consciously felt in order to be one's own" (McDaniel, 1989:62). The upshot, as Johnson (1991:192) notes, is that "Once animals have been ontologically darkened in this way, the conclusion that they lack meaningful moral status becomes tempting".

Conscious experience, Chalmers (1995:80) suggests, is simultaneously "the most familiar thing in the world and the most mysterious". However, consciousness is somewhat

demystified if we understand it, not as though we ourselves were freaks of nature, but "as simply an *intensification of life* - a stronger form of that power to use and respond to one's surroundings which is characteristic of *all* living things" (Midgley, 2002b:11) (italics mine), or as "the *subjectivity of being*" (Clark, 1984:29) (italics mine).

It is ironic, Ingold (1988a:96) remarks, that that we demand of animals that they be conscious and aware in *all* their activities, and proceed to act from rationally deliberated plans, when humans seldom do so in the course of everyday life; he claims that "Animals act as conscious, intentional agents, much as we do; that is, their actions are directed by *practical* consciousness. The difference is simply that we are able to isolate separate intentions from the stream of consciousness, to focus attention on them, and to articulate them in discourse" (italics mine). Indeed, when it comes to our capacity for learning, it remains a distinct advantage that we do not think about a significant amount of the things that we do, for it thereby allows us to direct our concentration elsewhere (Medawar, 1957). That introspection is contemporarily isolated and elevated as the litmus test for both humanity *and* moral status intrigues Griffin (1984), given that since the behaviourist era it has been accorded negligible attention by psychologists in the human sphere. The very absence of a compelling case for the denial of consciousness in animals makes the consideration of animal suffering *morally obligatory* (Pluhar, 1993a,1993b), and because consciousness is a good, we have a *prima facie* obligation to refrain from taking the lives, our most common form of interaction with animals (The Animal Studies Group, 2006), of its subjects.

Given that Carruthers (1992:195) avers that the mental states of *all* animals are non-conscious, animals are therefore not only excluded from any moral considerability in their own right, but are precluded from even indirect moral consideration (Carruthers, 1989) - likewise Budiansky (1999:193) pronounces that the purported inability to be conscious of consciousness entails that "sentience is not sentience, and pain isn't even pain" - and he argues that

> we find it intuitively abhorrent that the lives or suffering of animals should be weighed against the lives or sufferings of human beings…the beliefs in question are so deeply embedded in our moral thinking that it might be more reasonable to do without any theory of morality at all, than to accept one that would accord animals equal moral standing with ourselves.

Indeed Carruthers (1992) insists that to feel sympathy for animals is proof positive of misplaced priorities and the result of our own rational imperfection. We can likewise console ourselves that other humans are less troubled by their circumstances than we delicate souls would be were we in their shoes (Clark, 1994c). Carruthers' *absolute* dismissal is conspicuously at odds both with Darwin's explication of the origins of morality, as well as morality being something that is naturally expansive in scope.

Though expressive of admirable states of character (and rational imperfection!), Carruthers (1992:168) admonishes against concern for animal welfare, urging that "Our response to animal lovers should not be 'If it upsets you, don't think about it', but rather 'If it upsets you, think about something more important' ". Carruthers is endorsing the moral injunctive equivalent of laying back and thinking of humans, and his whole conceptualization of compassion as a scarce resource that we clasp close to our hearts for dear, needless-to-say, *human*, life, completely misrepresents the nature of compassion - it is a habit or power of mind that continues to grow and expand with nurturing and usage (Midgley, 1983c).

Indeed, the annals of social work provide ready to hand confirmation that compassion has never been conceptualized as though it were a resource characterized by scarcity or finiteness, and this fact ought counter the notion that social work cannot be interested in the welfare and well-being of animals *so long* as there are human beings deserving of our attention (given that from antiquity we have been told that the poor will always be with us, the implication is somewhat obvious). The latter argument is surely belied by the reality that social work has consistently adapted and expanded in accordance with circumstance and need, especially since the midpoint of the twentieth century.

Even if we were to concede that *all* animals are not self-conscious, that does not banish them from the sphere of moral considerability, any more than it does those humans who lack reflexive consciousness. It may well be that animal consciousness is invariably located in the here and now, but even *if* this is the case, it is unparsimonious to conclude that what seems to our everyday senses to be best described as consciousness ought more aptly be described as the actions of automatons on automatic pilot. Were it otherwise, it would be a matter of utter indifference what state any animal experienced, which is patently nonsensical to anyone who has had a modicum of dealings with animals. Why this is so is borne out by Midgley's (1983c:92) assertion that "A conscious being is one which can *mind* what happens to it, which *prefers* some things to others, which can be pleased or

pained, can suffer or enjoy". Note, not one who *must* have the capacity to engage in philosophical reflection or discourse, nor who can mull over their thoughts, rather one needing to have preferences and an interest in what happens *to them*. This significantly lowers the moral considerability bar, and cannot merely refer to *us*. The incontrovertible truth is that many social workers daily work with human beings who patently lack the aforesaid abilities, and yet this wanting does not warrant their moral exclusion. Were it otherwise, social workers would have a significantly reduced number of people with whom to work!

In nonlinguistic and unreflective animals, it is perfectly intelligible to employ the terminology of preference (Jeffrey, 1985). The ability of other species to interact with human beings strongly correlates, in the view of Coy (1988), with a sense of self, as the ability to distinguish self from non-self is to be found in varying degrees in individuals of many species individuals, as well as a capacity of being able to impute actions to their conspecifics by conscious projection. Indeed Sharpe (2005:101) argues that "consciousness of self can also be defined as awareness of oneself as one among other selves". Once we acknowledge as much and emerge from the Cartesian metaphysical straitjacket, we enter a qualitatively and quantitatively different moral landscape. We are not the only beings that matter, and when confronted with animal suffering we do not need to lay back and console ourselves with more supposedly worthy (read *human-centred*) thoughts. Generally speaking, social workers are not unaware of animal suffering, abuse and/or neglect, as witnessed by the social workers in the practice dilemmas in Chapter One - the unfortunate fact however is that, generally speaking, they just do not know what or how to think, or what to do about it.

Our confidence in attributing conscious mental states to animals, Searle (1992:73) maintains, "isn't just because the dog behaves in a certain way that is appropriate to having conscious mental states, but also because I can see that the causal basis of the behaviour in the dog's physiology is relevantly like my own". What Searle sees, social workers routinely see - for instance, in exhibited behaviours that unmistakably evidence suffering in abused and/or neglected young children. Once we acknowledge this fact, it seems mystifying that it should ever have been otherwise. Once we make the assumption that human beings are possessed of a mental life, Regan (1983) argues that we have a *set* of reasons, rather than any *single* reason, for attributing consciousness to certain animals - accords with commonsense understanding, congruent with everyday language, independent of

metaphysical speculations, correlation between behaviour and consciousness, and evolutionary continuity.

If this is so, what does it mean for social work? The unmistakable conclusion and normative implication is that social work cannot walk away or adopt an attitude of moral indifference to the wellbeing of any conscious creature, for whilst consciousness may well differ in degree, it does not differ in kind. Acknowledgement of consciousness in other species is not merely descriptive, it has normative implications; Midgley (1983c:92) maintains that

> It seems to follow that there is a conceptual link between admitting consciousness and accepting some social duties. These duties find their general *raison d'etre* here, and not at the point where we first detect reason, self-consciousness or speech. Of course these more impressive qualities impose important further duties of their own, but they are not the frontier of all social duty.

We shall briefly return to consider Budiansky's (1999) neo-Cartesianism for a moment, especially his conviction that sentience and pain in animals are of a distinctly different order than human experience because animals are neither conscious nor language using creatures; animals experience pain, but suffering is dependent upon reflective consciousness (Griffiths, 1977; Lewis, 1983). Budiansky's position is essentially a reworking of Frey's (1980:163) acknowledgement that animals experience pain, "or as I would prefer to say, since I think they lack this concept, have unpleasant sensations". To place Frey's observation in context, he bases his denial of the attribution of rights to animals on the claim that animals cannot have interests; they are incapable of having interests because they cannot have desires or emotions; they cannot have desires or emotions because they cannot have the thoughts required for them; and as the final and telling piece in the jigsaw, the reason they cannot have such thoughts is because they do not possess a language (Frey, 1980,1983).

The denial of emotions and desires to animals is of particular moral consequence, for as Sprigge (1979a:94) maintains, "a genuine grasp of the fact that another feels an emotion necessarily involves taking account of it, in deciding what to do, in the same kind of way as one would if one directly felt it oneself", and as a consequence when one assumes one's own interests have a significance that the interests of others do not, one is acting in

ignorance, since "one is refusing to recognize that the feelings of others are realities in just the same way that one's own are". Historically, sentience has always been seen to have primary moral significance (Ryder, 1989), although membership in the sentient order has always been contested. The reason why a being's capacity to experience suffering, rather than pleasure, has occupied a more central place in moral thought is, in Midgley's (1983c) opinion, due to the fact that the duties it entails have *greater* urgency. Indeed it is Darwin's (see Rachels, 1999) conviction that a creature's sentience, rather than our own sympathy toward it, that ought determine moral considerability.

By way of explicating the centrality of sentience in our moral deliberations, Dawkins (1985:27-28) observes that the acknowledgement of subjective experiences in other humans acts as necessary and fundamental moral inhibition against the infliction of pain and suffering on others -

> This is one of the cornerstones of our ideas about what is right and what is wrong…Then we come to the boundary of our own species. No longer do we have words. No longer do we have the high degree of similarity of anatomy, physiology and behaviour. But that is no reason to assume that they are any more locked inside their skins than are members of our species.

Indeed, subjective assumptions of similarity and a capacity for empathy are the cornerstones of human relationships (Storr, 1997) - empathy is *relatedness* (Nesfield-Cookson, 1987), and as Black (2004:31) notes, empathy

> *begins* with sympathy - when we recognise our common humanity in someone else. In that moment we recognise our ethical obligations towards them. Empathy goes one step further. Empathy is not just understanding what it would be like to be ourselves in someone else's shoes, but also what it would be like to be *them* in *their* shoes. (italics mine)

Each of us as human beings only has *direct* knowledge of our own private consciousness, but this does not commit nor condemn us to solipsism; we ought be grateful that we are not mutually invisible (Laing, 1967), nor imprisoned within our own skins (Skinner, 1973). The capacity for empathy is essential for the practice of social work (Wilkes, 1985), allowing for interpersonal engagement skills, and the ability to approximate what the

experience of others might be *for them*. Without empathy, social work would veritably be an impossibility.

We *infer* that other beings, human and animal, are also subjects of experience (Birch, 1995; Clark, 1998a), and as Clark (1984:16) avows, solipsism cannot even be articulated as a metaphysical proposition, for

> To say *anything*, even to say that I am the only reality, is to say that *something* is true, and would be true even if I did not know it…once it is admitted (as I must) that there is a world distinct from my experience of, and my thought about, that world, I can admit the existence of other perspectives also, other minds. (italics mine)

Therefore, I can be empathic to *all* living entities *beyond* my self. By way of contrast to the sceptics, the eighteenth century theologian Humphry Primatt (1992:21) maintains that "Pain is pain, whether it be inflicted on man or beast; and the creature that suffers it, whether man or beast, being sensible of the misery of it whilst it lasts, suffers *evil*". Sentience *is* morally central (Francione, 2000; Ryder, 1989,1992a,2001; Singer, 1989,1998) - Singer (1976:9) avers that it constitutes the "*prerequisite* for having interests at all", and Ryder (1989:325) maintains that it "should be the bedrock of our morality". If pain is *not* an evil, then the arguments against *and* for vivisection fail (Lewis, 1947).

At its simplest level, social work responds to suffering, not happiness - one's capacity to suffer makes one a legitimate subject of social work attention and concern - and what this thesis asks of social workers is in this sense not a radical departure from the discipline's central duty, rather that they ought respond to suffering *wherever* and *in whomever* it occurs. This notion is already of central importance to social work in respect to our own species, and it ought likewise be the case with respect to other species. The moral point of consciousness rests in the fact that "to be conscious is to be a *subject*, not just an object, active not just passive" (Midgley, 1995c:72) (italics mine), and to evict and banish animal consciousness from the real world "abandons the profound respect for life and for the experience of others which has always lain at the root of morality" (Midgley, 1995a:31).

It is as equally difficult to prove that animals are *not* conscious beings as it is to prove the affirmative (Bekoff, 2002a,2003b,2004b; Griffin, 1984); there is simply no evidence for such ontological dualism (Clark, 1977; Milward, 1995). As noted earlier, humans and animals are in the same boat, *subjectively* speaking - we ascribe subjective experiences to

other humans in spite of any absolute certainty, and we ought not apply double standards in relation to such experiences in our fellow animals (Dawkins, 1985). Social workers, it must be said, have always been able to recognize the reality of pain *beyond* behaviours.

As an aside, it bears emphasizing that the attribution of sentience to those deemed *lesser* humans was often a contested notion in nineteenth century medicine (Pernick,1985). Given such a metaphysic, aesthetics or the possession of a delicate constitution aside, it is difficult to see what objections one could possibly have to *any* manner of animal usage. A seventeenth century eye-witness of vivisection provides a case in point -

> They administered beatings to the dogs with perfect indifference, and made fun of those who pitied the creatures as if they felt pain. They said the animals were clocks; that the cries they emitted when struck were only the noise of a little spring that had been touched, but that the whole body was without feeling. They nailed the poor animals up on boards by their four paws to vivisect them and see the circulation of the blood which was a great subject of conversation. (quoted in Singer, 1976:220)

Appalled by such dogma, Voltaire (1989:21) indignantly asks "has nature arranged all the means of feeling in this animal, *so that it may not feel*?" Methodology rapidly became confused with ontology (Clark, 1982). In relating that "It has been said that 'the anatomists began by denying souls to animals and concluded by denying them feeling also' ", Turner (1964:44) notes that paradoxically such experimentation served but to confirm our close resemblance to other species.

If it is a prerequisite that one must have the capacity to reflect upon one's thoughts about one's experiences in order to feel in the first instance (Carruthers, 1989,1992; Harrison, 1989,1991,1992; Pluhar, 1993a), what then of the plight of human babies, the mentally incapacitated and the senile? The importance of the recognition of suffering as an intrinsic evil has, in the view of Warren (1983), direct implications for our relations with fellow human beings; unless we cede the proviso that the infliction of suffering *always* requires exceedingly good justification (Lewis, 1947), undertaken *specifically* to advance the best interests of the individual (Regan, 1989), we invariably fail to have a full appreciation of the reasons as to why it is immoral to treat human beings in certain ways.

The notion that one has to be able to reflect upon pain in order to qualify for moral attention is contrary to our everyday intuitions and modes of thinking. We do not, at least in our

more lucid moments, attribute either consciousness or sentience to the appliances and machinery that surround our everyday lives. No one, at least in their right mind, makes an assumption that the mechanic 'bleeding' our car's brakes is in fact inflicting pain. If however the local vet operates upon our dog without anaesthetic we would quite rightly interpret the howls and tremors of the dog as evidence for suffering in the dog. When a baby falls headfirst onto the floor, we do not deliberate as to whether or not that individual is experiencing a sensation or is actually in pain, or whether they possess the capacity to bring reflective consciousness to bear on their experience. Indeed, most people would consider anyone who classified the presenting behaviours as 'sensations' as opposed to pain, or who launched into a philosophical dissertation on the fact that pain is not pain, to put it kindly, a little odd or coldhearted, or to have all the makings of a budding lunatic or psychopath. Such a notion is antithetical to social work values - in actuality, the absence of reflective consciousness often serves to *heighten* concern. For instance, an abused and/or neglected baby, infant or toddler, far from being relegated to an afterthought, occupies moral centre stage, *not* in spite of, but *because* of their inability to engage in self-conscious reflection.

Nor ought we give any credence to the odd notion that sentience is contingent upon language possession, for animals readily provide vocal and bodily evidence for their being in pain (Clark, 1997a; Dawkins, 1985,1998; Milward, 1995; Regan, 1982), and as Clark (1977:39) observes,

> I *see* that animals are in distress, and the notional addition of a language would not assist my perception. 'I am in pain', after all, only 'replaces' a cry of anguish, which must be recognized as such *before* words may be taught or learned. 'I am in pain' does not explicate, identify or prove the existence of that anguish…It may be that animals feel less distress, or fewer distresses, than we do, though we might remember that the same has been said of the human poor, and of the racially distinct. (italics mine)

Such a radical division between humans and animals is *ideological* rather than *biological* (Regan, 1975). Precisely because our ontological continuity, the burden of proof rests with those who claim that when it comes to consciousness, animals only flatter to deceive. The biological continuity of mental capacities (Dawkins, 1998; Griffin, 1981,1984,1985,1989,1992; Radner & Radner, 1996; Rollin, 1989) lends credence to the

notion that subjectivity is to be found in other animals (Irvine, 2004; Oakley, 1985), as does similarity between animals and ourselves in nervous systems, biochemistry and pain experiencing behaviour, evolutionary continuity, and the fact that what happens to animals matters to them (Birch, 1995; Birch & Vischer, 1997; Rollin, 1989). Logic and biological continuity decree that "If consciousness exists in human beings, it must have evolved; and if human consciousness evolved, it must have had some precedent" (Radner & Radner, 1996:119).

One suspects that a not insignificant contributing factor to scepticism about animal consciousness derives from it being conceptualized as an either/or attribute, and that *any* attribution of consciousness to animals invariably entails a quantum slight against human dignity. One can surely acknowledge human excellence and difference without an *a priori* decree that such an acknowledgement is dependent upon uniqueness - we don't demand uniform consciousness (or rationality or language proficiency for that matter) as a requirement for its existence within our own species. Rationality, like feelings, has a strong bodily foundation (Midgley, 1995a), and the penchant for a *definitive* distinguishing characteristic assumes that what is specified as constituting good *must* of necessity be *exclusive* to a species (Midgley, 1996a). We lose sight of the fact that *every* species is unique in its own way (Clark, 1977,1997a; Ritvo, 1991) -

> Whatever the bird is, is perfect in the bird. (Wright, 2004)

Furthermore, Hardy (1976:147) affirms of other animals that

> They know Earth-secrets that know not I.

Given that essence cannot be expressed in a single differentia, but rather in complexity, Midgley (1996a:203) avers that we are apt to almost invariably ask "What finally (you may ask) does distinguish man from the animals? Nearly everything is wrong with this question…unless we take man to be a machine or an angel, it should read "distinguish man *among* the animals". It is Midgley's (1996a:321) belief that speech, rationality and culture, the traditional distinguishing characteristics of human beings, do not somehow stand in opposition to our nature, but rather are "continuous with and growing out of it". Our capacities are dependent upon our animality (MacIntyre, 1999).

Playing the role of devil's advocate, Marian Dawkins (1998:176-177) observes that nothing *logically* compels us to make the leap from acknowledging behavioural similarities to affirming that animals therefore share consciousness with human beings; however

> logic also says two other things: first, that on the same grounds we would have to allow that other people may not be conscious either, and, second, that some rather special pleading is going to be needed to maintain that similarities in behaviour co-exist with a lack of similarity in conscious awareness…Our near-certainty about shared experiences is based, amongst other things, on a mixture of the complexity of their behaviour, their ability to 'think' intelligently and on their being able to demonstrate to us that they have a point of view in which what happens to them *matters* to them. We now know that these three attributes- complexity, thinking and minding about the world- are also present in other species. The conclusion that they, too, are consciously aware is therefore compelling.

To explain the complex behaviours we observe in animals in mentalistic terms is by far the more economical option than non-mentalistic ones (Bavidge & Ground, 1994; Bekoff, 2002a; Clark,2003b; Griffin, 1981,1984,1985,1989,1992; Page, 2000; Radner & Radner, 1996; Rogers, 1997; Walker, 1983).

To indulge Carruthers (1992), as representative of contemporary scepticism, one could argue that absence of consciousness of the consciousness of pain is all the more reason to accord beings *greater* rather than lesser significance, for those beings would be unable to console themselves with an understanding as to what was occurring, or thoughts of future consolations or rationalizations. The present would be all there is, and one suspects without a skerrick of consolation - "If they are in pain, their whole universe is pain; there is no horizon; they *are* their pain" (Rollin, 1990a:144). But common experience, as well as empirical evidence, belies the notion that animal pain is chimerical (Rollin, 1989,1990a; Singer, 1989); Clark (1998a:101) avers that

> We have to recognize pain in others *before* we can tell them that they are "in pain." They have to have been in pain *before* they can learn that "pain" is what they are in. Expression of pain is a human (even a mammalian or vertebrate or animal) *given…We cannot be taught everything because we cannot learn anything unless we already know enough to learn.* (italics mine)

Indeed the capacity to feign pain, shared by many species besides our own, *presupposes* the capacity to experience the real thing (Bateson,1973). Given that it may well be that the sufferings of some species may well be beyond human ken or experience, let alone imagination (Dawkins, 1985), it is far more parsimonious in the view of Rodd (1990:217) to acknowledge that *"We have inherited minds which care about the feelings of other minds and which can have direct experience of value"*. In fact, Clark (1983a:176) maintains that our capacity to sympathize with our fellow creatures "is indeed a cognitive function, part of the way we know the world".

For very good reasons social work, and the social sciences generally, have shied away from notions that human dignity rests *within* rather than outside our natural dispositions and underlying structure of needs. The concept of human nature has almost invariably been construed as committing one to deterministic and fatalistic implications that negate or truncate free will and autonomy. Biological determinism of varying hues, as opposed to biological theory, has facilitated the assumption that our evolutionary origins are antithetical to justice and freedom (Midgley, 1984b,1986,1996a).

A significant factor in arriving at such a conclusion is the pervasive notion that evolution is mechanistic, and it is only by transcending biology that dignity and freedom are assured. More often than not freedom is conceptualized as open-ended, but Clark (1982:38) asserts that the "equation of freedom with unlimited possibility, with random action, is very ill-founded". In arguing the case for the compatibility of our evolutionary origins and human freedom, Midgley (1995a:164) observes that *"Unlike machines, which typically have a single, fixed function, evolved organisms have a plurality of aims, held together flexibly in a complex but versatile system. It is only this second, complex arrangement that could make our kind of freedom possible at all"*.

The concept of human nature is ubiquitous in both everyday life and theoretical discourse, and it would appear that most people have at the very least a rudimentary notion, perhaps more intuitive than considered, perhaps more speculative than indubitable, of what it is that defines the human condition - so named by Montaigne (Steele, 2003) - or spirit, call it what you will. How often do we hear it said that an almost infinite variety of human behaviours can be assigned to, or made explicable in terms of, human nature.

One almost gets the impression that when human beings are attempting to make sense of either relatively mundane selfish conduct, or momentous acts of human evil (Arendt, 1963,1970; Fromm, 1997; Gaita, 1991,1995a; Kekes, 2005; Levi, 1989; Morton, 2004;

Neiman, 2002; Wiesenthal, 1998), that we are inclined, almost resignedly, somewhat fatalistically, to attribute it to human nature, a nature that will out, whatever else of an optimistic tenor might otherwise be held to apply. Not so much 'the devil made me do it', as 'it's only human nature'. In this light, human nature is invariably conceptualized as a constraint upon human freedom.

Human beings also make recourse to a pervasive belief, evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, that human beings are essentially good at heart, that not only despite, but also *in spite* of, all too obvious human weakness and evil, the goodness of human nature will ultimately triumph. In some ways, it may be said that we make recourse to the concept of human nature when rational explanations seem not to suffice, be that expressed stoically or optimistically. Having said this much, it seems safe to venture that we are as unable to do without *a* concept of human nature, whatever form that may be held to take, as we might be expected to do without the air we breathe. The reality is that we are creatures who are constantly engaged in reflection and speculation, not only on the type of beings we are, but what it is that our lives should aim at and aspire to - the central importance of *picturing* the human (Murdoch, 1957,1993a).

To do without *any* conception of human nature is akin to discarding *all* maps that might otherwise serve to guide our steps, however falteringly and tentatively, toward self-understanding *and* the understanding of others. As Geldard (1995:7) comments, "Every true philosopher must eventually lay out a vision of human nature, one that answers our crucial questions: *Who are we? What is the meaning of our existence? How are we to live*?" (italics mine).

In noting that those situated on the Left of politics argue that we are by nature co-operative and altruistic - a claim exemplified by Singer (1999a) - Birch (1999) recounts that the Russian anarchist Kropotkin (1978,1990), whose central tenet is that mutual aid is inherent in all of nature and an integral factor of evolution, was an inspiration for Jane Addams in her work with the deprived in Chicago. This much said, it is also true that political ideologies of the Left *and* Right alike have provided scarce comfort to those seeking a reassessment and realignment of our moral relations with fellow animals; Karl Marx (1990a) is assured that consciousness is an exclusively human attribute, and his assertion that domestic animals are best understood as instruments of labour (Marx, 1990b,1991,1992) leads Ingold (1980:88) to declare that Marx relegates "animals to the status of mindless machines. In truth, the domestic animal is no more the physical

conductor of its master's activity than is the slave: both constitute labour itself rather than its instruments, and are therefore bound by social relations of production".

Charlton, Coe & Francione (1993) argue that the Left has tended to uncritically accept the indictment levelled by agribusiness, pharmaceutical and scientific lobbies that the animal rights movement is essentially misanthropic in nature, that is seeks to accord greater rights to animals than to the majority of disadvantaged and marginalized human beings. It by and large ignores Orwell's (quoted in Ryder, 1983:143) observation, as to his motives for writing *Animal Farm*, that "men exploit animals in much the same way as the rich exploit the proletariat". Nevertheless there are conspicuous exceptions to this speciesist orthodoxy (Benton, 1988,1989,1992a,1993a,1993b,1996; Benton & Redfearn, 1996; Brophy, 1979a; Charlton, Coe & Francione, 1993; Salt, 1894,1915,1921,1929,1935; Shaw, 1915,1934b,1949; Sinclair, 1906).

The conviction of an intrinsic interplay between the individual and the social has remained a core concern of social work throughout the twentieth century, and is essential to our understanding of ourselves (Butrym, 1979). Expressing a concern that psychological, sociological and political analysis of social work tend to obfuscate the individual and exalt instrumentalism, Wilkes (1981:19-20) asserts that an individual approach, in assuming the existence of a substantial self, "puts human nature into the centre of the discussion. It is easy to work for an abstraction - relationships, communication, systems, and social justice are some of the most popular - and forget about the individual human being". Chesterton (quoted in Canovan, 1977:36) insists that "if we want to talk about poverty, we must talk about it as *the hunger of a human being...*We must say first of the beggar, not that there is insufficient housing accommodation, but that *he has not where to lay his head*" (italics mine). Without notions of a substantial self, it is all too easy to assume that impersonal systems, not individuals, are paradigmatic of reality (Antonaccio, 2000; Murdoch, 1993a; Orwell, 1989).

But Wilkes (1981) does not narrow her investigation of human nature to an analysis of the interaction of the individual and society; she believes that social work ought concern itself with a holistic conceptualization which necessitates attention to *spirit, body, and mind*, for we live in three worlds, the material, the social and the world of self. Whilst observing that it is customary for social workers to view reality *as* society, Wilkes (1981) avers that what we *see* is ultimately dependent upon our metaphysical frame of reference, and that it is preferable to view reality as the *whole of creation*. Nevertheless, those who aver that we

ought attend to everything that exists are invariably deemed to be avoiding rather than facing reality, but Wilkes (1981:107) insists that the latter notion is "a sure sign that our thoughts are not of the universe but are separated from it".

It will be helpful to ascertain or establish what it is we are making reference to when we speak of the nature of a species being - defined as "the particular combination of qualities belonging to a person or thing by birth or constitution; native or inherent character…the instincts or inherent tendencies directing conduct" (Macquarie Dictionary, 1990:1140), Midgley (1996a:58) claims that it "consists in a certain range of powers and tendencies, a repertoire, inherited and forming a fairly firm characteristic pattern, though conditions after birth may vary the details quite a lot". Both definitions make the uncontroversial assumption that the nature of a being refers to certain qualities, characteristics and tendencies which are shared in common by all members of the species in question, albeit in differing degrees, and enables us to have insight into understanding exactly what it is that represents that which is conducive to the wellbeing and good of, or to the detriment of, that species being.

In the human species, for instance, there are certain qualities and tendencies, an underlying structure of needs and dispositions, which enable us to categorically state that their frustration constitutes an evil; for instance, because human beings are social and naturally bond-forming creatures, it is an evil to subject any human to perpetual solitary confinement, or to deny parents and children ongoing contact and interaction - we have a deep seated need to know our origins (Adie, 2005). We are not indeterminate beings, nor are we able to recreate the human condition at will; we are neither disembodied intellects nor incorporeal linguists. This reality merely sets the parameters within which we as a species operate, the range of possibilities open to us, and does not imperil free will or human dignity, or inevitably engender fatalistic determinism. The greatest threat to all things we cherish about ourselves comes not from the notion of human nature, but from the fanciful and nonsensical notion that we are infinitely malleable creatures.

In the absence of human nature, how are we to satisfactorily explain or account for human evil? Concerning himself with the implications for political philosophy in the wake of the Holocaust, with special reference to socialist visions of humankind, Geras (1998:105) alleges that

We have nothing at present but the emptiest of speculations to tell us that the common faults and vices might disappear or all but disappear; that everything that is productive of grave mischief belongs with the discontinuities of history, with the societally generated, and nothing of it with our underlying human nature.

Drawing upon the writings of Ralph Miliband (1994), Geras (1998) suggests that there are four distinctive views of human nature. The first view, termed the *pessimistic assumption*, holds that human nature is *intrinsically evil*; Geras (1998:87) observes that this view

need not require that people are by nature wholly, or even that they are all inordinately, evil. It could just take the form, and it is perhaps more likely to, that impulses toward evil are sufficiently strong and extensive in humankind that they can never be lastingly pacified, and must continue to produce horrors of one sort and another on both a small and large scale.

The second view, termed the *optimistic assumption*, holds that human nature is *intrinsically good*. The historical roots of this view are grounded in the Enlightenment belief in the infinite perfectibility of human beings, a belief subsequently endorsed and embraced by socialism, and Geras (1998:87) observes that human capacity for evil "is to be seen as less typical of, or less powerful within, the species, as adventitious and removable, as due possibly to the corrupting influence of bad circumstances or inadequate education; where the potentiality for good is more integral, more deeply laid".

The third view holds that human nature is *intrinsically blank* - Geras (1998:86) conceptualizes this position as one that assumes that "the social conditions, or relations or institutions, *fully determine* the traits borne by any given group of social agents. Human nature, in other words, is neither like this nor like that, for there is *no* human nature" (italics mine). This peculiar notion that human evil has no internal causes, that we must always choose between either social *or* individual explanations, goes to the very heart of the relationship between causes and free will - "by attending only to outside causes, we try to cut out the idea of personal responsibility" (Midgley, 1996b:9).

The fourth view claims that human nature is *intrinsically mixed*, where the balance of good and evil in human beings is left more open; Geras (1998:84) observes that this view

requires only that, whatever imperfections human beings may have, these are not so great as to exclude the possibility of creating communities with the specified characteristics...permits...the inference that there might be enduring human faults: tendencies perhaps to selfishness, to indifference to the misfortune of others, to undue pride or vanity, needless aggression or whatever else. Along with the run of better human qualities, such tendencies would also be, on this assumption, a permanent part of the constitution of humankind.

The latter view of human nature is more in keeping with the realities of social work practice experience, which tells us that human beings are extremely complex creatures, endowed with mixed motivation for good and evil. Nothing in this counteracts nor negates human capacity for change and growth, or the exercising of free will. Indeed that is a more apposite charge to level against the three preceding views - the fatalism of the *pessimistic assumption* would, if true, serve to vitiate much social work, and in all likelihood engender alternating attitudes of contempt and pity for those with whom social workers work, whilst the initial promissory optimism kindled by claims of infinite perfectibility (the *optimistic assumption*) or infinite malleability (the *Blank Paper* model), that human evil has merely *external* causes, patently fail to adequately account for human evil, let alone extend due justice to the complexity of human nature and individual moral responsibility.

The contrasting views that human nature is either intrinsically *good or evil* argue for the centrality of one disposition in human beings, whilst the views that human nature is either *good or blank* share the belief that it is possible to extirpate human evil; where they (*good or blank)* differ is that whilst the former holds that evil is not intrinsic to human nature because of the centrality of good, the latter rejects the suggestion that evil is intrinsic to human nature on the grounds that *nothing* is. By contrast, the view that human nature is *intrinsically mixed* is predicated upon the assumption that human tendencies toward good and evil are "permanent features of our natures, realities to be negotiated, lived with, if possible understood - and if possible tilted toward the more benign and admirable, and tilted that way as far as possible" (Geras, 1998:89). This view concurs with the notion that human nature, far from committing us to illusory visions of absolute autonomy or fatalism, is the raw material with which we must work and over which we must exercise rational and moral discernment (Midgley, 1995a,1996a,1996b). *Therein* resides our freedom.

The fact that we have conflicting tendencies and motives ought not be the cue for us to hastily embrace positions that lock us into either the centrality of good or evil, or to a position that, in dispensing with the notion altogether, removes all possibility for understanding the types of beings we are. We are, after all, biological *and* social animals, and there are distinct natural limits to what we can make of ourselves (Geras, 1998; Maslow, 1993), notwithstanding Foucault's (1983:216) contention that our aim in life is "not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are".

Inner conflict cannot be neither blithely ignored nor made a virtue of, nor can it be seen entirely as a product of social relations; for as Midgley (1995a:20) reminds us, "Inner conflict itself, of a kind to be expected in an evolved creature, is thus to be seen as central to freedom and to the morality by which we try to manage it". The existence of an essential and unchanging human nature is not only a prerequisite for human freedom and for social work attention to the individual, not only is it deemed to be held in common across cultures, but Wilkes (1981) contends that it cannot be realistically understood in *isolation* from the whole of creation, human and non-human. Such a view of our place in our world strikes a discernibly discordant note with orthodoxy, for as Midgley (1996d:98) observes

> people have seen themselves as placed, not just at the relative centre of a particular life, but at the *absolute, objective centre of everything*. The centrality of Man (*sic*)(italics in text) has been pretty steadily conceived, both in the West and in many other traditions, not as an illusion of perspective imposed from our starting-point, but as an objective fact, and indeed an *essential* fact, about the whole universe. (italics mine)

This myopia has the unfortunate effect of entrenching anthropocentrism, for it assumes not only that human claims must *always* take priority, but that *only* human claims ought to be taken seriously. Social work has historically viewed humanism as a virtuous position for the discipline to hold (Galper, 1980; Glassman & Kates, 1990; Goldstein, 1973,1984; Halmos, 1966,1978; Rogers, 1951,1961,1977), and the merit of the humanistic perspective resides in its averring that each and every human being ought be treated as an individual (Payne, 1997), but therein also rests its defect and drawback. In what she terms an *exclusive humanism*, Midgley (2001a:162) declares that

> This dominant emphasis on human claims was not originally meant to work as a barrier against concern for other earthly beings…In the earlier history of the West, however, the narrow, contractual view of political obligation had become rather strongly entrenched. More generally, it had given rise to a tendentious, reductive notion of rationality itself as essentially the calculation of self-interest…In particular, it furnishes a background which can make it seem flatly impossible for rational people to extend the notion of rights to remote humans or to animals, or to be directly concerned for the environment.

It is what Clark (2000a:194) terms *universal humanism*, "a cultural artifact, and not a biological norm…the doctrine that all and only members of our own species merit serious, equal, benevolent concern".

Contemporary social work, Wilkes (1981) asserts, is Cartesian in the sense that it adheres to a dualistic conception of human nature wherein the mind controls the body, and that ideologies as dissimilar as existentialism, Marxism, and positivism are united in their denial of a transcendent reality, a substantial self or absolute moral values, and that human beings possess the capacity to create themselves by will *ex nihilo*. But as Wilkes (1981) cautions, a morality without content, or mere convention (Clark, 1997a), provides absolutely no protection against a free human transmuting into a monster. This picture of human nature as infinite malleability and solely a product of the will, or as the existentialists would have it, that existence precedes essence (Murdoch, 1999; Sartre, 1957,1958; Stretch, 1967; Thompson, 1992), is a denial of our terrestrial ontology. We are ultimately disembodied intellects, and our dignity and freedom are dependent upon our transcendence of nature and natural beings (Malik, 2000), and of our being in the vertiginous predicament of illimitable creation of self via the exercising of inexhaustible will, out of nothing.

The notion that natural needs are the antithesis of freedom, and that "our ideals should in no way be limited by our needs" (Battersby, 1980:273), or that facts about human nature are but "prevailing tendencies" and Man "'is' what he decides to do" (Cottingham, 1983:466,469), are both ubiquitous and misleading. It is all the more perplexing considering that Cottingham (1983:465) acknowledges that humans are animals "with a specific genetic inheritance", and yet disavows that there exists *any* universal facts about human nature that enable us to identify that which constitutes natural goods.

Human ideals *must* suit our nature, a nature that has a structure of deep and central needs, and far from threatening freedom, the concept of nature is indispensable and central to it

(Midgley, 1983d). Our social and natural inheritance is the realm within which we live (Midgley, 1988b), and what is needed, Antonaccio (2000:8) insists, is "a conception of the self that both acknowledges our freedom *and* allows that freedom to be conditioned by the contingent facts of our situation".

The penchant for viewing human nature dualistically has continued largely unabated from Platonic and Christian traditions right up to and including the present day; Midgley (1995a:129-130) recalls that

> The idea of animality as a foreign principle inside us, alien to all admirable human qualities, is an old one, often used to dramatize psychological conflicts as raging between the soul and 'the beast within'…Yet this idea is still strong in a surprising number of people who are not religious at all. The pride which used to focus on the soul now centres instead on the will and the intelligence, and it often regards natural human feelings, as well as the body, as alien determinants.

Because 'the beast within', essentially an attempt to solve the problem of evil (Midgley, 1996a,1996b), is almost invariably linked with vices and wickedness, our constructed and accumulative mythology of animals has served not only to obscure and misrepresent the natures of animals, but to deem any comparison or similitude as demeaning and degrading (Clark, 1977,1990a; Hearne, 1987; Midgley, 1973; Salisbury, 1994; Thomas, 1983). Dissenting, Whitman (1982:218) muses

> I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd,
> I stand and look at them long and long.

In noting that "Misdeeds and moral illusions keep close company", Benson (1983:79,80) declares that "Cut adrift from the demands of discovering and responding to animals as they present themselves to us, we are free to invent their natures, floating at the impulse of need and fantasy from one false image to another". We come to see animals not as they are, but as objects upon which we project our own anxieties, desires and prejudices (Baker, 1993; Benson, 1983; Harwood, 2002; Ritvo, 1987,1991; Salisbury, 1994; Sax, 2002; Spiegel, 1989; Thomas, 1983; Turner, 1980). The belief that the devil often manifested in animal form (Sheehan, 1991), or in monsters, who were themselves seen as the appalling

products of the mixing of species - Midgley (2003a:109) contends that "Traditional mixed monsters - minotaurs, chimeras, lamias, gorgons - stand for a deep and threatening disorder, something not just confusing but dreadful and invasive" - served to make the human/animal boundary problematic (Davidson, 1991), and reinforced the notion that any blurring was to be interpreted as a threat to human dignity and uniqueness. Notions of the *beast within*, Benson (1983:87) suggests, serve to mask human propensity for irrationality and moral corruption, and "owes substantially to our unwillingness to face our own demonic tendencies. And thus, the animals are mustered once again; this time, as Richard Lewinsohn observes, "to pay by being made to mirror man's depravity" ". The assumption that there is a lawless beast *within* human beings when none exists *outside* of us, mystifies Midgley (1996a:40,197) -

> It would be more natural to say that the beast within gives us partial order; the task of conceptual thought will only be to complete it. But the opposite, a priori, reasoning has prevailed. If the Beast Within was capable of every iniquity, people reasoned, then beasts without probably were too. This notion made man anxious to exaggerate his differences from all other species and to ground all activities he valued in capacities unshared by the animals, whether the evidence warranted it or no…The future was seen as leading man away from the rest of nature as fast as possible, as giving him the hope of escaping continuity with it after all.

Because, or so we are told, animals are beings without will (or soul, mind, consciousness, language, *ad infinitum*) and slaves of instinct, human beings are as different from animals as chalk from cheese. In reality, however, animals do not conform to their mythical stereotypes, being "neither incarnations of wickedness, nor sets of basic needs, nor crude mechanical toys, nor idiot children" (Midgley, 1996a:39), and what anthropology did for the myth of the Savage, ethology does with the Beast myth (Midgley, 1973). They have natures of their own, with underlying structures of needs and natural dispositions, many of which we share in common. In noting that ethological literature, spanning many decades, identifies patterns of resemblance and continuity between human beings and animals (Bekoff, 2005; Bekoff & Jamieson, 1990a,1990b; Beckoff, 1993,2002a; Clark, 1982,1990b; Dawkins, Marian, 1985,1998; de Waal, 1996a,1998,2001; de Waal & Tyack, 2003; Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1971; Griffin, 1976,1984,1992; Hass, 1970; Konner, 1982; Lorenz,

1955,1957,1966; Medawar, 1976; Midgley, 1996a; Rodd, 1990,1996; Tinbergen, 1953a,1953b), Midgley (1983c:14) argues that

> This is not because they illicitly project human qualities onto animals, but because human life really does have an animal basis - an emotional structure on which we build what is distinctively human…The more we know about their detailed behaviour, the clearer and more interesting this continuity becomes. Accordingly, to grasp more fully how their lives work inevitably gives us a sense of fellowship with them. And at this point an emotional and practical concern does naturally tend to join the speculative one.

And whilst ethological literature is seen as predominantly descriptive in essence, Bekoff (1998a,1998b) calls for a deep reflective ethology that will cultivate greater awareness as to the nature of our moral obligations towards other animals. The notion that there are genetic causes of human behaviour is distinct from the implausibly sweeping and fatalistic claim that the behaviour of human being is uniformly explicable in genetic terms. What is being suggested is a far more modest assertion in terms of Darwinian theory, for if we understand instinct as "like collective habits of the species…shaped by experience through many generations" (Sheldrake, 2000:13), and as incorporating a large collection of abilities (Hearne, 1987), and as referring *not* "to a voice within, nor to any supernatural being or entity, but as a *disposition*" (Midgley, 1996a:51) (italics mine), not a *unitary* concept, for "Rather than being a modular Swiss army knife, it is better likened to a kitchen drawer containing a heterogenous collection of implements with different uses" (Bateson, 2000:170), then we ought not to be unduly alarmed. The notion of instinct is most often seen as the fundamental distinguishing characteristic between humans and non-human animals. Whereas it is commonly assumed that animals are genetically programmed, human beings are held to have transcended such constraints - animals are deemed to be bereft of the capacity for autonomous activities precisely because they are slaves of instinct (Frey, 1987a). The notion that instinct is appropriate for explication of animal behaviour, but infelicitous for its human counterpart, is both pervasive and mistaken (Clark, 1982; Griffin, 1992; Midgley, 1979,1996a; Page, 2000; Pluhar, 1995; Radner & Radner, 1996; Sapontzis, 1987; Senchuk, 1991; Walker, 1983), but Midgley (1996a:331-333) maintains that

Instinct and *intelligence* are not parallel terms. *Instinct* covers not just knowing how to do things, but knowing what to do. It concerns ends as well as means. It is the term used for innate tastes and desires, without which we would grind to a halt. With closed instincts, desire and technique go together…But as you go up the evolutionary scale, much wider possibilities open. The more adaptable a creature is, the more directions it can go in. So it has more, not less, need for definite tastes to guide it. *What replaces closed instincts, therefore, is not just cleverness, but strong, innate, general desires and interests*…Just in proportion as automatic skills drop off at the higher levels of evolution, innately determined general desires become more necessary.

Indeed Medawar (1957,1976) suggests that the process of learning is two-fold, involving both instinctive *and* discriminating thought.

Even when and where it is acknowledged that human beings have certain instincts, for example sexual and social, these are more often than not conceptualized as open rather than closed in nature, and predominantly cultural in origin. Whilst Descartes holds to a theory of innate ideas, Locke contends that the mind is a *tabula rasa*, and knowledge is derived from experience alone (Harmon, 1964; Locke, 1991; Melchert, 1995) - "Each one of us…must, so far as knowledge is concerned, be shut up in himself, and cut off from all contact with the outer world" (Russell, 1969:591). Whereas Locke believes that we are all born *without* knowledge but *with* instincts, which predispose us to act and feel in certain ways, Midgley (1996a:56) argues that Watson (the founding father of Behaviourism) took Locke's *Blank Paper* theory to its extreme conclusion by positing that we are all born *without* instincts - when Watson and others

say that man has no instincts, they always mean closed instincts. They point to his failure to make standard webs or do standard honey dances, and ignore his persistent patterns of motivation. Why do people form families? Why do they take care of their homes and quarrel over boundaries? Why do they talk so much, and dance, and sing? Why do children play, and for that matter adults too? Why is nobody living in the Republic of Plato? According to Blank Paper theory, because of cultural conditioning. But this is like explaining gravitation by saying that whenever something falls, something else pushed it; even if it were true, it wouldn't help. Who started it? Nor does it tell us why people ever *resist* their families, why they do what everybody is culturally conditioning them *not* to do.

The very idea that we enter the world as blank paper strikes William Blake (quoted in Ackroyd, 1999:11) as preposterous, for "Man Brings All that he has or Can have Into the World with him. Man is Born like a Garden ready Planted & Sown".

By way of contrast to the notion that intelligence has enabled human beings to *absolutely* free themselves from the shackles of instinct, Clark (2000a:133) notes that "We are readily convinced that animals do all and only what their 'instincts' tell them", never acting for themselves at all, rather always acted upon, literally enslaved to the instinctual forces beyond their ken and control. Such a view parallels the earlier theological view that God provided animals with instinct in lieu of reason (Aquinas, 1989a; Radner & Radner, 1996). Unless one subscribes to the theological belief that human beings are the *special* creation of God, or that an insertion of a soul in humans sets us apart, the notion that intelligence entirely supersedes instinct is nonsensical in evolutionary terms; it would be more apt to claim that intelligence *complements* and *extends* open instincts by experience, in much the same way that culture complements and completes nature - we are "cultural beings by virtue of our nature" (Eagleton, 1997:73). It is the structure of instincts which "as a whole, indicates the good and bad for us" (Midgley, 1996a:75), and without such a structure intelligence would be incapable of accounting for conflicting tendencies and motives, for in settling conflicts "we do not decide things just by abstract reasoning or an arbitrary act of will. We look at the facts, trying to size up the strength and importance of the natural tastes involved…our natural, instinctive tastes ensure that no moderately normal individual is helplessly ignorant about how to start doing this". We once more return to our ability, indeed necessity, to be able to reason from fact to value, for "we can value nothing that the facts of our nature make impossible for us" (Clark, 2000a:7). Truth to tell, Clark (1983b:191) muses, "Nothing is present to us as valuable except through our given natures…If we seriously say that our given natures are not to be valued, we can no longer take anything we say seriously".

But can behaviour that is instinctual ever be intelligent, and can it ever be moral? Well, yes, and yes - Darwin (1936) is of the considered opinion that animals possess a rudimentary moral sensibility, and we are mistaken to assume that instinctual patterns are necessarily unintelligent (Bateson, 2000; Clark, 1982). Even seemingly uniformly closed instincts are not *wholly* predetermined; in order to explicate this point, Midgley (1996a:307) observes that in the process of imprinting

there is a strong, natural, internal tendency to receive from the outside an impression of a certain kind, and to *use* it in a particular, predetermined way in one's life from then on. The details of the impression are not predetermined. They must come from outside. But the tendency to form such habits is. It is a complex and positive power.

The ever-circumspect Darwin (1936:184) was reluctant to provide a definition of instinct, and was at pains to remind us that animals are not in total servitude to instinctual patterns; he writes that

An action, which we ourselves require experience to enable us to perform, when performed by an animal, more especially by a very young one, without experience, and when performed by many individuals in the same way, without their knowing for what purpose it is performed, is usually said to be instinctive…A little dose of judgment or reason…often comes into play, even with animals low in the scale of nature.

Now to return to the question as to whether instinctual behaviours can ever be moral. What, it will be asked, is the importance of such a query, and why should social work even care? *If* it is so, that the rudiments of moral or ethical actions can be discerned within instinctual behaviours, then we would be forced to concede that what we are dealing with is a difference of degree rather than kind, and we might well find ourselves stirred to say *amen* to Clark's (1982:98-99) claim that

it is not unusual for those who have lived with and watched a group of beasts to conclude that they are loyal, protective and affectionate towards each other. They show behaviour that, if they were human, few would hesitate to call courageous, courteous or motherly...Many of our attitudes of deference and concern seem so much of a piece with those of our kindred that they are likely to be innate, or else very easily learnt.

Even in the human sphere, it seems we are moved to cherish, love and protect infants and children *less* by rationality and *more* by instinctual responses - in point of fact, to the extent that we ask ourselves *why* we should so do, it is almost invariably asked *after* the event, as an ancillary motivation (this is *not* to gainsay the fact that rationality assuredly builds upon and expands our compass of concern). Likewise, the behaviour of infants towards one

another is marked more by instinctual responses, but is none the less moral for it being thus.

First impressions tend to negate the very possibility that instinctual behaviours can ever be moral, for morality is so intricately linked with rationality. In the view of Sapontzis (1987:32-33,34)

> an action can be instinctual, in the sense of being directed by something we have inherited, or conditioned, in the sense of being directed by something we have been taught, yet still be a response to moral (in Sapontzis' terms, *to know what is moral*) good and evils. For example, maternal instincts are responses to the needs of the young. A wolf's care for its young is not mechanical nor carried out inflexibly, without regard to the actual needs of the young in particular situations…Ethological studies…suggest that human moral (in Sapontzis' terms, *to act morally*) agency is not an anomaly but an evolutionarily valuable ability that derives and differs only in degree from various forms of animal parental and social instincts or dispositions.

In making the observation that whereas rationalists hold to a radical discontinuity between ourselves and all other animals, empiricists readily acknowledge that *we* and *they* are stirred by shared ethical concerns, Clark (1982) argues that animals are *ethical* rather than *moral* creatures, because whilst they respond in ways that are unequivocally virtuous in nature, they, as far as we know, do not conceptualize or moralize about their behaviours. That said, Clark (1988b:242) insists that "We are moral because we are mammalian, long before we are also rational enough to reconsider our roots".

Such views reaffirm Darwin's (1936) contention that the *greater* our familiarity with animals, the *less* likely we will be to ascribe *instinctual* as opposed to *rational* causes for their behaviour. Such an understanding is contrary to the fact that biologists have historically demarcated instinct from some exalted capacity, and have assumed that only learned, not instinctive, behaviour could provide evidence of consciousness (Page, 2000). However Senchuk (1991) argues that consciousness and intelligence are not the exclusive domain of human beings, for animals readily exhibit flexibility, which is the *principal* indicator of consciousness, whilst Bateson (1990) asserts that animal behaviour involves both *choice* and *preference*.

It is Regan's (1983) contention that autonomy is no human only affair, arguing that animals possess what he terms *preference autonomy* - in his view, animals possess a rudimentary autonomy deriving from their possession of very real preferences in the first instance, and their abilities to act so as to satisfy those preferences. Whilst Regan (1983:86) concedes that it is highly improbable that animals are autonomous in the Kantian sense (imperative for moral agency), "It does not follow that one must be autonomous in *this* sense to be autonomous in *any* sense".

It is Griffin's (1992) contention that there exists no compelling evidence for the traditional assumption that genetically programmed behaviours cannot be guided by conscious thought. The tendency toward dichotomization between instinct and intelligence misrepresents the facts, and leads to the Cartesian metaphysic that humans and animals necessarily inhabit disparate ontological and moral universes. Whereas human beings are *infinitely* free and disembodied intellects, animals are *slavishly* captive to their instincts. Such an ontological schemata is thoroughly *un*Darwinian - Darwin (1936,1965) sees nothing anthropocentric in the attribution of consciousness, intelligence and emotions to animals, and emphasizes that their difference in humans and animals is one of degree and not kind. Nor does Darwin (1936:447) subscribe to the belief that intelligence is qualitatively distinct from instinct, arguing that "a high degree of intelligence is certainly compatible with complex instincts".

The very notion that human beings are social animals bespeaks the centrality of social instincts, and far from threatening human dignity and values, it can be seen to underpin and validate them. The Darwinian understanding of social instincts "is not just one more set of impulses among others, *but a whole way of regarding those around us, based on sympathy, which involves imagining them as subjects like oneself, experiencing life in the same way, and not essentially different in status*" (Midgley, 1984d:90)(italics mine). In identifying the inherent relationship between social instincts and moral sensibility, Darwin (1936:481) concludes that as human beings are social animals they assuredly *inherit* tendencies to aid and defend their fellows, and are, in common with other animals, impelled by mutual love and sympathy, for "*The more enduring Social Instincts conquer the less persistent Instincts*". What are we to make of Malik's (2000:232) contention that unless we view human beings as radically different to animals we invariably move headlong to the precipitous and slippery slope that inevitably will return us to the 'beastliness' of our 'brutish' origins, for, in essence, "viewing beasts as more human is but the other side of

viewing humans as more beastly"? His concern is not without foundation. He is surely correct to express alarm as to the scientific consequences for human beings of our diminution of the centrality of subjectivity. What Malik (and the moral elitists) fail to either see or concede is that to treat *any* subjective being as though it were an object or a machine (or to view the moral community as though it were a select club, membership of which is based upon likeness and/or invitation) is immoral and unethical, and therein lies the crux of morality - *no subjective being is a means to another's ends*. As often as not human power over nature results in the domination by the few over the many, with nature merely the subjugating instrument (Lewis, 1946).

Such a principle is central to social work values and practice, and what is being argued is simply an extension so as to encompass all sentient beings, in line with Salt's (1935:68) conviction that "sympathy, guided by reason, is making it more and more impossible that we should for ever treat as mere automata fellow-beings to whom we are in fact very closely akin". It needs emphasizing that human rights or dignity are in no way disparaged by a recognition of the rights of animals, for "we may take it as certain that, in the long run, as we treat our fellow beings, "the animals," so shall we treat our fellow men" (Salt, 1921:156).

In common speech, "To treat someone 'as an animal', is to ignore any serious wishes that they have" (Clark, 1999:1). To be condemned for acting *like* an animal is "to have abandoned cultivated manners and an awareness of one's place in the social universe" (Clark, 1985a:43), supposedly beholden to transitory impulses in complete disregard of the consequences for oneself or others (Clark, 1985c,1999), thereby forfeiting entitlement to membership in the moral community (Midgley, 1989c). That 'treating someone as an animal' has such obviously unwelcome connotations "rests on ignorance, and willed self-delusion" (Clark, 1999:1), and holds force precisely because it refers to our *actual* treatment of animals. This absence of due acknowledgement leads Adams (1990:42,40) to argue that

> animals have become absent referents, whose fate is transmuted into a metaphor for someone else's existence or fate. Metaphorically, the absent referent can be anything whose original meaning is undercut as it is absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy…The absent referent permits us to forget about the animal as an independent entity; it also enables us to resist efforts to make animals present.

Malik (2000) correctly identifies the continuing tendency to treat consciousness as a ghost in the machine, and the tacit assumption that objective causes of behaviour always outweigh their subjective counterparts. This is one of the cardinal errors of genetic determinism, whatever the hybrid we may choose to consider. We, and to a far greater extent, animals, are conceptualized as creatures who, whatever evidence to the contrary, can best be explained deterministically. The excoriation and attendant asphyxiation of subjectivity is not the sole prerogative of what Malik (2000) terms the *universal Darwinists*; he levels a similar charge at cultural anthropologists - Levy (2002) makes the observation that anthropology is the spiritual home of moral relativism - who assume the sovereignty of culture and deny an intrinsic human nature. We have already seen that the notion that humans are infinitely malleable creatures has had wide currency, especially in the philosophies of behaviourism, existentialism and postmodernism - Watson, the progenitor of behaviourism, declares that humans have *no* instincts (Midgley, 1996a), Sartre (1958:28) asserts "there is no human nature", and postmodernists zealously exhort an anti-essentialism (Eagleton, 1997). Underlying the existentialist rejection of human nature, and any notion of essence, is the conviction that "Statements about essences license universal necessary truths" (Cottingham, 1983:465).

In an attempt to clarify the misconceptions that surround essentialism, Eagleton (1997:97,104) asserts that

> Essentialism in its more innocuous form is the doctrine that things are made up of certain properties, and that some of these properties are actually constitutive of them, such that if they were to be removed or radically transformed the thing in question would then become some other thing, or nothing at all…we need to know among other things which needs are essential to humanity and which are not…any social order which denies such needs can be challenged on the grounds that it is denying our humanity, which is usually a stronger argument against it than the case that it is flouting our contingent cultural conventions.

The social sciences have tenaciously clung to a belief in the absence of a specific human nature, and there exists a pervasive modern assumption, readily embraced by social work, that "man is mouldable because there is nothing inherent in his nature that cannot be shaped to our desires" (Wilkes, 1981:116). Far from being a guarantee of freedom, infinite

malleability entails that we are interminably predisposed to cultural manipulation, more plasticine objects than flesh and blood subjects; after all, "matter is precisely what individuates" (Eagleton, 1997:48). As Midgley (1996a:287) correctly warns, "if it were true that people's emotional needs were entirely acquired, things would be black indeed for the reformer. Oppressors would only need to condition peoples earlier and more thoroughly to enjoy slavery; after that it would be impossible to object to it". It is from this common nature that ethical and political implications are derived (Eagleton, 1997,1998a,1998b,2002; Gaita, 1999; Ryan, 1974), and a consensual understanding of what it is that constitutes moral and social good (Gaita, 1991; Solas, 2002). Social work has been aware, especially since the 1970's, that individuals and communities cannot be moulded any which way against their express wishes, to a vision of what *we* want for them. The notion that human beings are infinitely malleable leads social work to the view that the person is a case for *treatment* rather than *respect* (Ragg, 1977), and that people are undervalued when they do not have specific problems and their situations aren't conducive to change, fostering an attitude that gives pride of place to *changing* rather than *interpreting* the world (Wilkes, 1981), via a watchful attentiveness (Paulin, 1975; Zietlow, 1974). Contrasting pictures of human nature have implications for the philosophy and practice of social work, and in Wilkes' (1981) view malleability is dependent upon a rejection of any notion of a substantial self, whereby we are all the more likely to accord primacy to impersonal systems, and lose sight of the moral primacy and value of the individual subject (Murdoch, 1993a).

If, however, human nature is part of an existing reality, if we assume an irreducible substantial self, then not only is human nature conceived as essentially similar across cultures, but emphasis is accorded to attending to an understanding of individual subjects and of life's significance -

> The first concept of man makes it possible to discriminate between human beings by concentrating on those who are amenable to improvement by various methods. Thus, it is possible to regard the old, the sick, and the dying as being of relatively little importance because their condition is not, on the whole, amenable to change. The second concept of man relates his basic dignity not to any personal attributes such as virtue, but to something that is inherent in his very being. From this standpoint, love of one's neighbour applies to

all, by virtue of one's common humanity, and no exceptions are permitted. (Wilkes, 1981:61)

Conceptions of human nature are inherent in any discussion about what constitutes good or otherwise for human beings (Clark, 1982; Iyer, 1973,1986; Rose, 1987; Ryan, 1974; Stevenson, 1974,1981), and Butrym (1979:41) holds it to be "the main and most significant material with which the social worker is engaged". Notwithstanding, there is probably no more contentious and ideologically charged concept in the domain of the social sciences. Its mere mention tends to conjure up images of fatalistic determinism, and the very notion itself is considered to be pejorative, and antithetical to human dignity and freedom - "Even speak of 'human nature' seems to be to earn the name of 'right-wing reactionary'" (Clark, 1982:5), whilst Midgley (1996a:57-58) maintains that

> The term is suspect because it does suggest cure-all explanations, sweeping theories that man is basically sexual, basically selfish or acquisitive, basically evil, or basically good. These theories try to account for human conduct much as a simpleminded person might attempt to deal with rising damp, looking for a single place where water is coming in, a single source of motivation.

One conspicuous exception in the social sciences is Abraham Maslow (1993), who contends that human values are biologically rooted - in arguing that "the question of a normative biology cannot be escaped or avoided", Maslow (1995:5) insists that the welfare and well-being of individual subjects, and the notion of a good society, ought be central concerns of biological philosophy.

The prevalent tendency to contrast human nature with nature generally (Regan, 1991) extracts human beings from the natural world and from a serious moral consideration of other animal life. This observation is borne out by the major philosophers in the Western tradition; for instance, Regan (1991) relates that Hobbes conceptualizes nature as wild, treacherous and, in his own words, as *nasty*, and that it needs to be brought under human dominion; for Locke, nature attains value only as human property; Kant holds that the value of nature is extrinsic, in that its value is utterly dependent upon the human observer, whilst Mill conceptualizes nature of value as a source of aesthetic sensibility or sublime veneration.

One observes in all these thinkers an assured belief that nature has *extrinsic* rather than *intrinsic* value (Elliot, 1992); they adopt a thoroughly anthropocentric worldview, in that it is human beings who *bequeath* value to the natural world, especially via the medium of rationality, and it is culture that makes nature valuable. In observing that in Kant, Locke and Mill one discerns a continuity with the Hobbesian notion of human beings as *essentially solitary and self-interested beings*, Regan (1991:86), by way of summarizing, posits that

> it is the interests, the pleasures, the freedom, or the rights of discrete, individual human beings, abstracted from their biological relationships to the natural world and their cultural relationships to the society in which they actually live, on which the fundamental principles of morality ultimately depend…these several moral philosophies continue to perpetuate the vision of individual human beings as "solitary" creatures- atoms of reason abstracted from their incidental biological and cultural molecular structure.

This abstraction from the natural world, and a denial or obfuscation of our biological embeddedness, serves to misrepresent human nature, and to exclude the assignably *natural* animals. Value is invariably filtered through an exclusively human lens, and in this line of vision animals are but peripheral phenomena. Because rationality is conceived to be the moral *summum bonum*, humans are deemed to transcend the natural world and biology. Indeed Kant's (1956) *noumenal self*, which is held to be the embodiment of all value, excellence and freedom in human beings, *transcends* terrestrial existence (Regan, 1991).

Such a conceptualization of the relationship between the self and the world reflects what Fox (1991) terms a *discrete entity ontology*, whereby the world is pictured as being constituted by discrete entities, with a fundamental emphasis upon differences. This is in marked contrast to what Fox (1991) terms a *continuity ontology*, whereby beings who are acknowledged to have a degree of independent existence are nonetheless best characterized by a state of interrelationship and connectedness. If we are to understand the relationship of the self to the world in terms of a continuity ontology, Fox (1991:118) contends that it commits us to the recognition that our drive toward wholeness *transcends* our drive toward individuality, and "can be realized to a considerable extent through the psychological process of identification. Identification with others means empathically entering into their

joys and sorrows…Identification remains a relationship between two identities; it is not identity".

Therein lies the central importance of relationship within the social work process, what Helen Perlman (1979), a seminal social work theorist, in reflecting upon and articulating a cumulative statement about the nature of social work at the end of her long career, singles out as the *heart* of helping people, albeit more often than not observed in theory than practice. Sadly though, and all too often, Millard (1977) argues, social workers lack the requisite wherewithal to engage with the *moral dimension* of relationship, thereby heightening the likelihood that technological manipulation will come to be seen as the social worker's stock-in-trade.

This notion of interrelatedness finds its parallels in the terminology of *multitude of webs* (Palmer, 1990) and *Gaia* (Clark, 1983b,1989c; Midgley, 2000d,2001a,2001b,2002a; Lovelock, 1979,1988,1989). In arguing that a realization of *existent and enduring* interrelatedness arises from an awakened sensibility of kinship, Clark (1983b) reminds us that human beings are individually diminutive fragments of a physical, chemical and biochemical system that admits no arbitrary or absolute boundaries, and our rightful relationship with the world entails that our taking ourselves seriously is concomitant with extending a similar degree of seriousness to the whole of which we are integrally a part of (Clark, 1984). It is not a case of valuing the health of the earth ahead of human needs, for the latter are ultimately dependent upon the former (Callicott, 1989a; Midgley, 2001b).

It is inane to consider humankind in isolation from its moorings in the natural world (Callicott, 1982a); we are neither terrestrial interlopers nor displaced beings, for in reality we dwell within "a setting of living things and creatures to which we are attuned, and to whose music we for our part are far from deaf" (Midgley, 1986:87). Human beings, it is argued, possess an inherent affinity, a biological attraction for the natural world and life *per se* (Kellert, 1993,1997; Kellert & Wilson, 1993; Wilson, 1984,1992). Not only is this the *only* home we have (Richardson, 1986; Thoreau, 2001,2004), and *could* have, but more importantly we are *not* sole tenants. To live as though we are either aliens (Haught, 1990) or solipsists (Rolston, 1983) is a fallacious and destructive metaphysical drama. Perhaps our inability to extend due respect and seriousness towards the natural world and living creatures is not a mere expression of aesthetic taste or preference, which in itself is ultimately peripheral to human nature and well-being; it is more likely the cause of our notorious inability to extend *due* respect and seriousness to fellow human beings. We, after

all, are beings who possess an innate drive toward wholeness and connectedness, and a predilection toward a fissuring of ourselves is both psychologically enervating and morally untenable. Rather than viewing our biological nature as an unfortunate and execrable factual interloper that we ought banish at the first possible opportunity, akin to the family black sheep, Maslow (1968,1993) contends that its acknowledgement and embrace has positive metaphysical, moral and psychological implications.

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of conceptualizations of human nature for our understanding of ourselves, our place within the world and our relationship with fellow animals. To acknowledge that we are biological and social beings, and that our biological nature is completed by culture, is evolutionary commonsense. If we understand that the values we cherish are biologically rooted, and that our dignity arises from *within* nature, *not* against or apart from it, we have nothing to fear from an acknowledgement of our animality, and animals have everything to gain. Our insistence upon ontological discontinuity not only misrepresents human nature, but it invariably effaces serious moral consideration of animals.

The moral point underlying an assertion of infinite malleability is, in large part, a rejection of fatalism, which is often mistakenly conflated with determinism; in essence it is representative of the ongoing disputes surrounding the fundamental metaphysical questions of free will and determinism (Stevenson, 1974). In order to clarify misunderstandings, Midgley (1996b:94) notes that

> fatalism is the superstitious acceptance of unnecessary evil, based on a false belief in human impotence to do anything about it. As a practice, it means taking *no* steps to cure evil. As a temper, it is the tendency to take up false beliefs in order to excuse inaction. Determinism, on the other hand, is simply the modest assumption of that degree of regularity in nature which is necessary for science, and is as necessary for the social sciences as for the physical ones…Determinism has no direct relevance to conduct, and there is no deterministic temper, apart from the scientific one.

The fact that determinism is held be antithetical to free will (Peile, 1993) springs, in Midgley's (1996b:94-95) view, from a superstitious and over-inflated conceptualization of both fatalism and determinism, particularly the latter -

A melodramatic tendency to personify physical forces and other scientific entities can represent them as demons driving us, rather than humble general facts about the world, which is all they have a right to be seen as. This produces fatalism, which certainly is incompatible with free-will, since it teaches that we are helpless in the hands of these superhuman beings.

The notion that determinism allows for predictability and provides general facts about our world is quite distinct from the fatalistic belief that human beings are the mere playthings of external forces beyond their control, and as such counters genetic determinism. However, Midgley (1996b:101) observes that continuity of belief in a supernatural being in the background survived the much heralded death of God, and contends that

The language in which determinism is promoted continually goes beyond saying what it needs to say, which is simply that science is possible. It constantly represents human effort as an *unreal cause*. It shows people as helpless pawns and puppets in the grip of all sorts of non-human entities which act as puppet-masters- Nature, Entropy, Evolution, History, personified laws and forces of all kinds (notably economic ones), and most recently the selfish gene…*determinism ought to be a modest assumption about the possibility of knowledge*. (italics mine)

Whereas social work readily embraces notions of economic and cultural determinism in its understanding of individuals and society, it is reticent to acknowledge any meaningful role for biological causes. In order to accord due justice to our terrestrial status, social work needs to discriminate between a fatalistic biological determinism with all its nefarious baggage on the one hand, and the reality that we are biological and social beings on the other. The notion that we are faced with fundamentally incompatible deterministic or autonomous models of human nature (Hollis, 1977) presupposes that absolute determinism or absolute autonomy are the only choices on offer; we are either passively biological or actively social beings.

Social work is potentially presented with two extreme and misleading choices, the notion that we are *incapable* of changing that which it is in our power to change on the one hand, and on the other, the fanciful belief that we can change *everything* (Midgley, 1983d). A not insignificant part of the problem is the conceptualization of inherent binary opposites; nature *or* culture, instinct *or* intelligence, feeling *or* reason, determinism *or* free will,

animals *or* human beings - the duality of biological *or* cultural. On this model human beings and their dignity rests upon our opposition to any natural reading of human nature, which is nonsensical, for as Clark (1983a:179) maintains, "The form of life natural to a creature helps to define what happiness is for that creature's kind, what capacities are there to be filled, what occasions are needed for it wholly to be itself". This has fundamental implications for our understanding of morality and candidates for moral considerability, for, as Clark (1982:117-118) reminds us, "Our morality must in the end depend not only on what we think we are, but on what we think the world is".

Precisely because human beings and animals have evolved by the same processes, of necessity biology must be able to shed some light on our understanding of ourselves (Birch, 1999). In analyzing the polar extremes of biology or culture, Rose & Rose (1982:10-11) observe that the biological determinism of sociobiology was itself a response to the new left utopianism which deemed human nature to be infinitely malleable -

> The helplessness of childhood, the existential pain of madness, the frailties of old age were all reduced to mere labels reflecting disparities of power. But this denial of biology is so contrary to the actualities of personal lived experience that it renders people ideologically vulnerable to the commonsense appeal of the new biological determinism.

And it is not only humans who are biological and social beings. We are not islands of order and sociability in a sea of otherwise unremitting chaos and egoism. In critiquing the sociobiological assumption that social motives are ultimately explicable in egoistic terms, Midgley (1995a) avers that ethologists have irrefutably authenticated the reality of affectionate bonds among social animals, and that this sociability is not merely a means to an end; reciprocity, defence of the weak by the strong and devoted care of the young are but some examples. Whilst competition, conflict and aggression are an undeniable reality in the animal world, Midgley (1995a:134) maintains that "they do all this against a wider background of mutual emotional dependence and friendly acceptance...And there surely is every reason to accept that in this matter human beings closely resemble all their nearest relatives". Far from ensuring human freedom, the notion that we are beings who transcend biology threatens it.

This chapter has located humankind as a biological, social and terrestrial species, and has argued that our dignity and value (or worth) resides therein. It has also made the case that

therein lies the dignity and value of other animals, and that the natural world has value as being the only home that all species on earth could possibly have, and that we have a moral duty to respect and care for it for the reason that it does not exist as a backdrop to, or mere plaything of, loftier human designs, but to house what Clark (1977,1997a) terms the wi*der Household*. Life on our planet is marked by continuity, and differences in the wide range of attributes and qualities witnessed in human beings and other animals nevertheless remain a difference of degree rather than kind. We ought, as Midgley (1996a) argues, always concern ourselves with asking how we differ *among* rather than *from* other species, and acknowledge that human dignity requires neither claims to uniqueness, nor the denigration of other animals (Radner & Radner, 1996).

Our biological and social nature, and that of other species, allows us to take moral account the fact that animals besides our own kind are conscious and sentient creatures, with interests, preferences, welfare and wellbeing needs, and that this fact has normative implications. Accordingly, it has provided the context for this thesis' revised Code of Ethics, which takes cognizance of our ontological continuity and terrestrial status, and provides the conceptual framework to guide our social workers through the practice dilemmas depicted in Chapter One, thereby equipping them (and us) with the wherewithal to know how, what and why to think about, and act toward, other species.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIAL WORK AND RESPECT FOR INDIVIDUALS.

> **a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality. I believe this to be the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent.**
> *- Iris Murdoch* (1996:34)

This thesis seeks to provide social workers with the conceptual framework and attendant practical skills necessary to enable them to make appropriate moral responses to the practice dilemmas presented in Chapter One, and that word of mouth conversations would suggest are, far from being an exception to the norm, a practice commonplace. The preceding chapters have mounted the case that social work has a moral obligation to attend to the welfare and wellbeing of other animals. Such a position, it has been argued, arises out of the inherent moral nature and purpose of social work, allied with social work's historical prioritization of the moral importance of subjectivity, and placed it in the context of our biological and social nature, and ontological continuity with other species. Having observed that social work literature confirms that social work is a discipline that veritably is *value-laden*, it is apposite that we ascertain the key principle or principles that provide the moral and philosophical foundation and justification for social work practice.

At the heart of social work's ethical and moral framework (indeed morality generally) is the ubiquitous concept of *respect for persons*, which is almost universally seen as providing the foundation and rationale for the practice of social work, and whilst it may be couched in varying terminology, it can be said, without fear of contradiction, to be the bedrock and non-negotiable social work principle from which all other social work values are derived (AASW, 1999; Banks, 1995; Biestek, 1976; Biestek & Gehrig, 1978; Butrym, 1979; Clark & Asquith, 1985; Downie & Telfer, 1969; Horne, 1987; Hunt, 1978; Moffett, 1968; Plant, 1970; Ragg, 1977; Siporin, 1982; Timms, 1983; Wilkes, 1981). It is seen as a *presupposition* (Plant, 1970) and *prerequisite* of morality (Clark & Asquith, 1985; Horne, 1987; Ragg, 1980), as *morally basic* (Downie & Telfer, 1969), and in a 1973 paper titled '*The Inalienable Element in Social Work*' (British Association of Social Workers, quoted in

Watson, 1978:39) it is claimed that "*All* social work is based upon respect for the value of the individual" (italics mine).

This chapter will therefore undertake an extended examination of this concept, the importance of which resides in the necessity that social work be congruently guided by a moral framework that actually translates into practice what it theoretically purports to be an article of faith. It will be argued that this pre-eminent concept is, at least so far as orthodoxy mandates it, exceedingly problematic for not only all other animals, but for many human beings, and that the alternative concept of *respect for human beings* solves the dilemma of human exclusion by arbitrarily lifting the moral drawbridge so as to effect the preclusion of all other species from the circle of moral considerability. It will be argued that the concept of *respect for individuals*, based upon an attention to the interests, needs, welfare and wellbeing of a creature, *not* its origin, is a far more efficacious and impartial moral principle to guide social workers and to ensure the extension of respect, irrespective of species membership.

Turning to the broader philosophical literature, Harris (1968:129,113) asserts that the "principle of respect for persons is *fundamental* in morals...We mean simply that any person, as such, has intrinsic worth" (italics mine), entailing three duties:

> (1) First, that each and every person should be regarded as worthy of sympathetic consideration, and should be so treated;
>
> (11) Secondly, that no person should be regarded by another as a mere possession; or used a mere instrument, or treated as a mere obstacle, to another's satisfaction; and
>
> (111) Thirdly, that persons are not and ought never to be treated in any undertaking as mere expendables.

In contending that *respect* suggests "that there is an appropriate attitude towards persons which can be adopted only towards persons, never towards brutes" (Maclagan, 1960b:293), Maclagan (1960a:193) claims that whilst *person* can be held to refer to "ordinary human beings in respect of their nature as self-conscious agents... (this) does not mean that we must in the end maintain that all, or only, human beings should be classed as persons". One can only assume that Maclagan considers it *obvious* that *all* brutes are *non*-persons, otherwise we would surely be ill-advised to say never ever. Elsewhere, Harris (1985,1998) asserts that *respect for persons* entails that we show active concern for a *self-conscious*

individual's welfare, and that we are respectful of their wishes, whilst Kendrick (1992) claims that this principle requires an acceptance of the intrinsic value and worth of a person.

This much confirmed, it will be worthwhile to clarify what it is that the terms *respect* and *person* are commonly held to refer to - the importance of doing so is that this thesis is seeking to locate a foundational base for a more *inclusive* Code of Ethics, and an exploration of both concepts will greatly facilitate this process. The Macquarie Dictionary (1990:1449,1270) defines *respect* as "to show esteem, regard, or consideration for", noting that its ancient meaning entailed *consideration*, whilst person refers to "a human being, whether man, woman, or child...a human being as distinguished from an animal or a thing...a self-conscious or rational being...the actual self or individual personality of a human being".

Downie & Telfer (1969:29) state that the "formal object of respect is 'that which is thought valuable' ", whilst Clark & Asquith (1985:47) claim that "Showing respect implies the recognition of the worth and dignity of all individuals irrespective of race, colour, creed or any other *contingent* attribute" (italics mine). It is unclear as to why respect, and that which is thought valuable, is seen as being, by definition, limited to human beings, or why species membership, a morally arbitrary property (Rowlands, 1998), is deemed to accord worth and dignity to all individuals of *our* species *alone*.

The notion of *active sympathy* utilized by Downie & Telfer (1969:210-211) is derived from Maclagan (1960a:211), who differentiates between what he terms *'animal sympathy'* - "consisting in a sort of psychological infection of one creature by another...Even at the human level there is, in the operation of such animal sympathy, little or no sense of others as independent individual centres of experience" - *'aesthetic'* or *'passive human sympathy'* - "a more distinctively human mode, to which the consciousness, or representation, of others as experiencing subjects is essential. Here there is an imaginative "feeling oneself into" the experience of the other, an emotional "identification" of oneself with the other" - and *'active human sympathy'* - "the sympathy of practical *concern for* others as distinguished from simply feeling with them".

In Maclagan's (1960a:212) view, *passive sympathy* forms the natural matrix of *active sympathy*, and the latter stands "at the very threshold of Agape", variously defined as "altruistic love" (Macquarie Dictionary, 1990:76), as love for *all* our fellow human beings (Fromm, 1995), as "selfless or brotherly love" (Clark & Asquith, 1985:20), and embodied

in the attentive attitude displayed by the Good Samaritan; it is characterised by its very dearth and disavowal of exclusivity. Likewise, the very same can be said of the notion of *caritas*, which Armstrong (2002:11) defines as "unselfish goodwill towards another person".

Whilst suggesting that the attitude of respect may best be likened to the Gospel language of *agape* or *caritas*, Downie & Telfer (1969:29) proceed to claim that respect or agape are fittingly directed toward persons, "*conceived as rational wills...*an attitude which combines a regard for others as *rule-following* with an active sympathy with them in their pursuit of ends" (italics mine), which it must be said appears a travesty of the Biblical sense of love for the individual (Corinthians 13), and that found in the Bhagavad Gita (6:29-31). Jesus' (John 15:12-13) injunction to "Love one another as I have loved you", does not come with a disclaimer that we ought fittingly direct our love toward *only* 'rational wills' - rather, as St. Teresa (quoted in Mascaro, 1970:36) affirms, "What matters is not to think much, but to love much". Whilst we are reminded that not so much as a sparrow falls without God's knowledge (Matthew 10:29-30), we have perversely interpreted this to mean that *we* are of greater value and therefore entitled to do with *them* as we please (Clark, 1989c,2000a).

Elsewhere, Campbell (1975) insists that *respect for persons* requires an incorporation of both reason *and* emotion; the notion that we ought respect only *rational wills* is rightly seen, in the context of, and from the vantage point of our everyday lives, as a nonsense. Descartes' dictum, *cogito ergo sum, 'I think, therefore I am'*, has come to represent the dominant metaphysic that places an irrevocable divide between human beings and animals, but that also, in positing rationality as the *summum bonum* of moral considerability, has iniquitous consequences for human beings who, through no fault of their own, fail to meet the stringent rationalist criteria of personhood, of which more shall be said later.

In contrast, Regan (1991:3) argues that

> Only by acting for the other does one come to know one's self, not in isolation from the ties that bind each to all but in affirmation of them. Apart from such relationships the self is seen to be an empty shell, the word "I" the most impersonal of pronouns. In its place a new declaration is alive: *Ego vivo in civitate, ergo sum* (I live in community, therefore I am).

It seems fair to say that one would not in any way be considered guilty of engaging in sweeping generalization were one to make the observation that in the minds of most people

the terms *person* and *human being* refer to one and the same thing. Human status is deemed to be a *sufficient* condition of being a person, for "Human beings are paradigm persons" (Teichman, 1985:184). Indeed Sapontzis (1981) contends that in quotidian experience the term *person* is held to be synonymous with human being, as distinct from inanimate objects, animals, plants and spirits. In no small part such a conceptualization has its roots in both religious and humanist sentiments and metaphysics; human beings are either conceptualized as unique beings, created in the image of God, or alternatively, uniquely rational creatures coalesced in a religion of humanity. Either way, humankind is bestowed with the mantle of the *summum bonum* of creation.

The importance attached to the concept of *person* rests on the judgement that supreme moral considerability is dependent upon satisfying the criteria deemed essential for qualifying one as a person. The moral centrality of the concept is borne out by Murdoch's (1988:323) Father Bernard who asserts that the concept of *person* "is the highest mode of being that we know". It is Teichman's (1985:184) conviction that "The most common sense of the word 'person' is 'human being', and this is the sense which has moral import. For morality, if it exists for the sake of anything, exists for the sake of human beings, not for the sake of a philosophically defined set of rational substances". Much contemporary moral literature, Darwall (1977/1978) notes, is given over to the belief that respect is unequivocally owed to *all* persons, and he makes a distinction between *recognition* respect (owed to all persons) and *appraisal* respect (persons or features manifesting excellence as persons). However, as we will in due course discern, this prevalent notion that the concept *person* embraces *all* human beings is by no means catholic.

Whilst noting that there has never existed a univocal conception, either in philosophy or in common parlance, Danto (1967:110) remarks that

> In recent common usage, "person" refers to any human being in a general way, much as the word "thing" refers unspecifically to any object whatsoever...(but) not every human being is legally a person (children and idiots are not persons), and not every legal person is a human being (a corporation is considered to be a juridical person).

In this quote we witness the ambiguity that appertains to the concept of *person* - whilst it is commonly assumed that human beings are indeed persons, we observe that, in a technical sense, not *all*, or *only*, human beings are deemed to possess this status. Indeed Macklin

(1984) argues that all attempts to define who or what is a *person* are ultimately prescriptive, not descriptive, in nature.

Historically, the word *person*, in its Latin origins (*persona*), does not in actuality refer to *human being* or indeed anything remotely approaching it; rather, it refers to a mask worn by actors in classical drama, signifying that they are playing a role, the *masks* being the characters who appear in a play (Midgley, 1985a; Singer, 1984; Teichman, 1985), meaning "someone who plays a significant part in the drama of life" (Clark, 1985b:470). Slaves were excluded, and interestingly doubts that women were persons persisted well into the twentieth century (Okin, 1979).

It is Wilkes' (1981) contention that the notion of *respect for the person* is a relative latecomer, replacing the ancient perspective that saw the human being as a composite of body, mind and spirit - what was esteemed above all else was the human being, *not* the person. Whilst the term *person* is often held to be synonymous with *human*, Smuts (1999:108) suggests that it has another quite distinct meaning, referring "to a type of interaction or relationship of some degree of intimacy involving actors who are individually known to one another, as in "personal relationship," knowing someone "personally," or engaging with another "person to person" ", and that this latter expanded sense makes reference to "any animal, human or nonhuman, who has the capacity to participate in personal relationships, with one another, with humans, with both". Once again, we are reminded of the centrality of relationship in our lives, this time not only between humans, but between species.

Notwithstanding, it is Kant's (1964:32) conviction that persons and rational agents are one and the same, and that rational agents *alone* possess absolute value; accordingly one ought "*Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end*". In Kant's universe, rationality is *the* attribute that entitles one to entry into the kingdom of ends. Kant, Midgley (1996a:46) observes, "wants us to respect humanity because it is rational, not because it is conscious", and whilst animals may be conscious, their value rests in their being means to human ends. Nevertheless, we ought not lose sight of the fact that, with all due respect aside, rationality is but one element in morality (Midgley, 1985b), and the Kantian system is inclined to conceptualize persons to the exclusion of considerations of character (Williams, 1981).

In Rawls' (1999:225) view, Kant's moral doctrine leads to "an ethic of mutual respect and self-esteem", whilst Midgley (1983b:96) writes that for Kant *respect* refers to the recognition of "a worth which we did not make and cannot alter; by which we concede the otherness of others". In remarking that Kant is resentful of the hold that history has upon ethics, Murdoch (1997:215) argues that "Kant does not tell us to respect whole particular tangled-up historical individuals, but to respect the universal reason in their breasts. In so far as we are rational and moral we are all the same". To respect individuals for this reason, *in isolation*, is to be "in the thrall of reason, that fool's gold for the bright" (Martel, 2002:5). In contrast to Kant, Murdoch (1997:215-216) sees love, not reason, as encapsulating the essence of morality - "Love is the perception of individuals. Love is the extremely difficult realisation that something other than oneself is real...*Love is the imaginative recognition of, that is respect for, this otherness*" (italics mine). What is needed is a "loving attention to a creature's particularity", for our sense of *otherness* "is the root of love and knowledge" (Clark, 1997a:152). Whilst noting that Kant supposes that rationality assuredly discloses our sense of the absolutely *Other*, Cordner (2002:138) avers that "the basic forms of love of other human beings already implicate us in awe and reverence. This is not because they direct us to another's Rationality, however, but because of their interdependence with an *individualizing sense of another*" (italics mine). At it best, reason, Eagleton (1997:123) observes, "is related to generosity, to being able to acknowledge the truth or justice of another's claim even when it cuts against the grain of one's own interests and desires".

An awareness of the essential *individuality* of others (Fromm, 1995; Gaita, 1995b,1998b; Greene, 1982; Murdoch, 1988,1996), what Gaita (1991:50) terms "our sense of the reality of other people", entails an *I-Thou* relationship in the stead of an *I-It* variety (Buber, 1970; Wood, 1969). Indeed Eagleton (2002) maintains that the true paradigm of objectivity is ethical, not epistemological, for what is required is a selfless attentiveness to the needs of others. It bears emphasizing that Buber conceptualized that *I-Thou* relationship as expressly inclusive of human beings *and* animals (Linzey & Cohn-Sherbok, 1997). The prerequisite of a living a fully human life, Hearne (1987:264) insists, "is to recognize everyone and everything in the universe as both Other and Beloved...but animals are the only non-human Others who answer us".

Respect, and affection, are more often than not dependent upon *unlikeness* (Clark, 1995b). Ponder a moment on Cordner's (2002:6) depiction of adolescent love, which serves to reiterate this point (the import of which is by no means singular nor circumscribed) -

The shock of this experience of another is also the shock of realizing another person as absolutely and ungraspably *other*. The sense of the whole world as suddenly transformed, which this experience can occasion, is a sense of having been jolted out of oneself by a reality one cannot possess but only answer to. It is as if the centre of gravity of the world has shifted elsewhere.

Art, literature, spirituality and the natural world, to name but a quartet, engender similar experiences of self-transcendence, filling us with awe. All the foregoing should in no way be alien to social workers, the reality of others' needs being as demanding as one's own (Brewer, 1980; Peel, 2003); indeed, social workers' faculty for recognizing this is one of the key skills demanded of social work practice.

The conception of personhood in the Western philosophical tradition places paramount emphasis upon the value and importance of rationality, and Regan (1991) argues that Kant is no philosophical Robinson Crusoe, for this attribute is singled out for especial commendation by thinkers as diverse as Hobbes, Mill and Locke - all partake in a paean to rationality. Hobbes considers that it is our capacity for reason that enables human beings to transcend the state of nature; Mill, whilst acknowledging that we share an emotional kinship with animals, maintains a life worth living is ultimately dependent upon the exercise of reason (Regan, 1991). Locke (Singer, 2001) considers that only rational beings possess natural rights, whilst Kant insists that the only individuals to whom we have direct moral duties are rational beings.

It is Regan's (1991) conviction that all these theories about what it is that constitutes a human person serve to obfuscate our very embodiedness and biological and ecological embeddedness – an exaltation of reason over and above emotion and all other non-cognitive capacities, a celebration of the objective over the subjective. All too often the term *person* follows, rather than guides, contemporary morality, and merely *declares* what we have already *resolved* (Midgley, 1985b).

In the Western philosophical tradition it is almost invariably taken for granted that animals, whatever attributes they may be held to hold, nevertheless uniformly fail to meet the criteria of personhood; animals are irrational and instinctual slaves. In a very real sense, they are conceptually and metaphysically mapped as *things*, beings to whom we in all probability owe gentle usage, but things nevertheless, means to human ends, which leaves

Hardy's (1929:11) Jude musing that often they appear "to be living in a world which did not want them". In a legal sense, animals *are* property (Daws, 1983; Francione, 1993,1995a,1996a,1996b,2000; Garner, 1998,1999,2002b; Kelch, 1998; Wise, 2000,2002), and property cannot acquire personhood. This is, however, belied by the fact that corporations are seen as legal persons (Danto, 1967; Francione, 1993,1995a; Midgley, 1985a).

It is not possible to exaggerate the profound and pervasive influence that the exaltation of rationality, and in particular the Kantian paradigm of moral value, has had on subsequent Western thought, and the social contract tradition has likewise validated the contracting, autonomous and rational adult human being as being both constitutive and exhaustive of moral considerability - disabled and disadvantaged humans, and all other animals, are well and truly on the outer (Nussbaum, 2006). The correlation of personhood with rationality serves to severely constrict the scope of our moral concern, but given that we can ascertain no proof that a being *is* a person, we are better to err on the side of caution (Schwartz, 1982).

In making the observation that our central intellectual tradition formed its views of a "crude, extreme, unshaded dichotomy between man and beast" at a time when we were blissfully unaware of existence of any of the more highly developed animals, Midgley (1985a:59-60) contends that such a metaphysic still largely holds sway, *in spite* of Darwin's revelations; even our portrayal of aliens is informative in this context, for

> Science fiction, though sometimes helpful, has far too often sidetracked the problem by making its aliens just scientists with green antennae, beings whose 'intelligence' is of a kind to be accepted instantly at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology - only, of course, a little greater. Since neither dolphins nor gorillas write doctoral theses, this would still let us out as far as terrestrial non-human creatures were concerned. 'Persons' and their appropriate rights could still go on being defined in terms of this sort of intelligence, and we could quietly continue to poison the pigeons in the park any time we felt like it.

This deification of rationality has elevated intelligence at the expense of other attributes, as though it were *all* that ultimately matters. For instance, it is clear to Downie & Telfer (1969,1980) that *respect for persons* refers to human beings who possess the capacity for rationality, rule-following and self-determination, whilst Dennett (1978:267), in claiming

that humans are "*the* deciding mark of personhood" (italics mine), argues that rationality, consciousness, attribution, reciprocity, verbal communication and self-consciousness are the six *necessary* conditions of personhood.

The characteristics that have traditionally been identified as constitutive of the human essence are, Clark (1995b:323) relates, the "capacity to speak a human language, to make choices about one's future, to organize communal actions in accordance with some freshly negotiated plan, to recognize oneself as a creature amongst many, having a history, a character, a hope of change". Among the defining attributes of what he terms *humanhood*, Fletcher (1972) singles out self-awareness, an awareness of both the past and the future, a capacity to be concerned for and to relate to others, self-control, communication and curiosity, whilst Quinton (cited in Timms, 1983) identifies consciousness, capacity for abstract reasoning, will or agency, capacity for moral praise and moral blame, and the capacity for personal relations as constitutive of personhood.

Curiously enough, these attributes are not shared by all humans, and many animals have the capacity to satisfy most, if not all, of these requirements; as Pluhar (1995:57) relates, "No characteristic has yet been found that is *wholly* lacking in nonhumans and wholly present in humans". Is a being's cognitive capacity *the* attribute that makes that creature a fellow being, entitled to moral consideration of their interests? Whilst in no way deprecating the capacity of intellect in human beings, Midgley (1985a:60) asserts that

> *What makes creatures our fellow beings, entitled to basic consideration, is surely not intellectual capacity but emotional fellowship*. And if we ask what powers can justify a higher claim, bringing some creatures nearer to the degree of consideration which is due humans, those that seem to be most relevant are sensibility, social and emotional complexity of the kind which is expressed by the formation of deep, subtle lasting relationships. (italics mine)

Relationships are neither species specific nor exclusive; they exist *in, across and between* the human and non-human worlds (Sharpe, 2005; Smuts, 1999).

Our ethics, Clark (1995b) maintains, rest as much upon sentiment and personal attachment as they do upon reason. We are naturally bond forming, social creatures, not disembodied intellects, and our moral framework *must* respect and honour this reality. However, those anthropocentric souls among us who are inclined to feel immeasurably reassured that

human standing is forever shored up by this demarcation between rational and autonomous humankind on the one hand, *and* irrational and biologically determined (other) animals on the other, ought not feel so certain.

Some people will go to extraordinary lengths, even the extra philosophical mile, in order to exclude other animals from the moral universe, *even* at the expense of certain categories of human beings, those deemed to be *marginal* humans. For instance, Dennett (1978:267) insists that what is of critical import is "not that we are of the same biological species, but that we are both persons...For instance, infant human beings, mentally defective human beings, and human beings declared insane by licensed psychiatrists are denied personhood, or at any rate crucial elements of personhood". In other words, we ought limit personhood to the traditional paradigmatic conception, that being an autonomous, rational human adult. Stipulative definitions of personhood have significant effect upon our moral, metaphysical and political thinking (Teichman, 1985). The notion that *only* the lives of *persons* are lives ultimately worthy of being lived, and "that we should treat creatures better the more that they are 'persons' ", is characterized by Clark (2000a:198) as *personism*; this seems merely a variation of sorts upon the commandment in *Animal Farm* (Orwell, 1976) that whilst all animals are equal, some are *more* equal than others, and belies the humanist creed that we all stand as equals before one another. Interestingly, and surely more than coincidence, those of us able to engage in rational discourse and rule following are atop the moral heap, whilst the rest of humanity are allocated their rightful place and given their rightful dues as *we,* the rational elite, see fit. The latent perils inherent in this moral apartheid ought be readily apparent at a moment's reflection; Clark (1977:140) laments the corruption of our ethical sense, brought about by our eagerness to be masters, "our readiness to think that those unlike ourselves, the poor, the weak, the stupid, have no title to their lives".

Indeed Clark (2000a:192) remarks that there is not an insignificant number of moral thinkers who contend that we ought limit our concern to those human beings deemed to be *rational beings* or *persons*, and that we treat non-rational or non-personal human beings as animals, in order that "the respectably *human* creatures can be distinguished from mere human beings, creatures who are our kin". But this notion of the *chosen*, albeit on rational grounds, is arbitrary in assignation and deceitful in its implications; by way of example, Clark (1977:17) observes that "Lawyers under the pressure of liberal hypocrisy may invent such legal fictions as allow a man to sue for pre-natal injuries which, if they had been more

effective, would have been no wrong at all - pretending that only that is *injury* which is rationally known as such".

It is surely a distorted and insidious conception of what it is to *respect* that demands that the moral arbiter make reference to a form of rational calculus; do we really act, or more to the point, *ought* we encourage the tendency to act, in such ways that make a virtue out of indifference, or worse, to that which befalls those deemed *less* than persons? To suppose that rationality is the *definitive* moral attribute securing supreme moral considerability requires justification, and not merely assertion; in our conceit and arrogance we fail to imagine that other lives, be they different in many ways, may still be valued by the subjects irrespective of their supposed failure to attain our lofty perfectibility. The nefarious moral implications that flow from the creed that only the fully rational are supremely morally considerable are articulated by Frey (1987b,1988), who, whilst not enthusiastic, nevertheless endorses the utilization of putatively marginal humans (along with animals) for medical and scientific research purposes. If we are ill-at-ease with any attempt to utilize marginal humans in such a manner, Frey (1987c,1988) contends that the case for similar usage of animals weakens in direct proportion.

In response, Nelson (1988) argues that marginal humans have suffered a *tragic harm*, and are consequently worse off, whereas animals are not, and it is this tragedy that gives them moral priority over animals. In the case of such humans, Townsend (1979:93) recommends that it is "better to extend moral concern too far than not far enough", it being supposedly *obvious* that such a widening of moral consideration unequivocally excludes all other animals, without any hint of moral inconsistency.

We have seen in the practice examples in Chapter One that *this* is how social workers invariably conceptualize and resolve moral dilemmas involving humans and animals - for instance, the tragedy of child abuse and/or neglect is without exception given exclusive consideration over the interests, welfare and well-being of animals. We ascribe basic rights to our *marginal* kind for metaphysical and speciesist reasons (Wreen, 1984,1986). Because we, as humans, are all subject to such disabilities (Macintyre, 1999), which frustrate human purposes and relationships, Scarlett (1997) contends that our sympathy for *marginal* humans grounds the moral uniqueness of the human animal. But respect for all our human kind does not require, seesaw fashion, or warrant, the moral exclusion of other animals.

In our everyday lives, the restriction of personhood to the paradigmatic model is counter-intuitive; the average lay person is unlikely to carry about a ready moral reckoner to assist

them in their deliberations as to whether or not they ought extend respect to those souls they happen upon. We would fittingly be considered odd by the proud, beaming parents of a toddler were we convey that we thought that, all things being equal, wee Thomas, Jude, Immogen or Mirabehn will one day grow up to be *persons*; one suspects that Mum and Dad, only too well aware that their child has rudimentary attributes (which all parents naturally hope will, in due course of maturation, be greatly enhanced), nevertheless consider their child to *already* be a person, that is, an end in themselves.

Kinship bias aside, the parents, and many more besides, have good reason to be affronted by the suggestion that the toddler in question is but a *potential* or *part person*, or a *receptacle* of value, that we extend respect, not so much for who the child *is*, but for that which, all things being equal, the child will *become*, or that we only extend respect to the child due to the interests of the parents. We value and respect the child, rudimentary rationality and autonomy notwithstanding, because we rightly consider the child to be an end in himself or herself, in the belief that the child has interests in that which befalls him or her, and that can bode good or ill for that individual's well-being and welfare. We also value the child because of the central importance of emotional fellowship, expressed in deep and abiding relationships (Midgley, 1985a). The notion that children are but *potential* persons serves only to establish their *potential* moral rights, leading Melden (1988:70) to assert that "the moral status of the infant is no more to be tied to its particular condition during the human being's infancy than the moral status of one who is asleep or unconscious is tied to its condition at the time it is asleep or unconscious".

The very notion that children are in effect second-rate humans is belied by the fact that we routinely cherish and value them, in ways that confirm that we in actuality consider them to be of inestimable worth; a civil community, rather than a city of the wise, is our ideal (Clark, 1989a). Likewise, those of us who have the good fortune to share our lives and homes with animals find dogmatically blanket assertions that Jayke the cat or Tessa the dog are merely *things* not only insensitive, or in bad taste, but patently nonsensical. This is what comes about through our insistence upon placing ourselves at the absolute centre of everything. It is not anthropomorphic to observe that all animals, if we but take the time and keep an *open* mind, have distinct individualities, and obvious interests and preferences. They are not indifferent to what befalls them, nor are we. Were they mere *things*, we would be advised to water, feed and exercise them in much the same way that we add water and

fuel to (and service) the car we drive, and to feel that we had thereby fulfilled our obligations, such as they are.

The fact that we respond to animals as specific individuals belies the notion that they are merely receptacles of cathood or doghood (Hull, 1976,1978); we take efforts to familiarize ourselves with each animal's character and personality, and we respond to each animal, not as though it were a Platonic Form, but as a unique individual. We routinely enter into deep and abiding relationships with other animals, relationships nurtured and sustained by emotional fellowship (Midgley, 1985a; Sharpe, 2005). In other words, we respect their individuality, and usually do not check, chide and bring ourselves to our senses by recourse to the notion that only rational and autonomous human adults merit respect; ethological studies have also confirmed that animals often recognize their associates as individuals and treat them as such (Griffin, 1984). Indeed Sapontzis (1987) maintains that everyday moral practice identifies *interests*, not rationality, as the attribute that grounds the claim that such a being ought not morally be subjected to exploitation (in day to day matters, social workers likewise attend to interests, not rationality, as constituting the fulcrum of practice). And were we to accord intellectual assent to this elitist conception of moral considerability, our children would surely, and rightly, reproach us.

It is a most peculiar morality that posits epitome of value as autonomous intellect; the obsession with individual freedom and derogation of *any* dependency reflects the atomistic and egoistic tenor of the times in which we live (Bauman, 2001). One cannot help but wonder whether it is the dependency of babies, children, the demented and the senile, and the insane, those whom Downie & Telfer (1980) refer to as *sub-normal humans*, as much as their diminished rationality and autonomy, that is a significant factor in our assignation of lesser value.

Dependency has come to viewed as that which ought be avoided like the plague; we hear it said that couples are afflicted with 'co-dependency', and we take it as a gauge of maturity that individuals stand alone. By way of contrast, many traditional cultures conceive dependency as central to our understanding of society, the core of the social fabric, integral to an understanding of the common good (MacIntyre, 1999). Whilst we pay lip service to the importance of extended family, the contemporary deification of markets forces, which requires and consequently extols unprecedented levels of mobility, views practical commitment to extended family, and place, as archaic millstones. Of course it stands to reason that Gran or Cha would much rather be in the nursing home than surrounded by

loved ones, for they do not want to be a *burden* on anyone, or that they much prefer that their every material need is attended to than the familiar affections, traditions and rhythms of place. But far from guaranteeing freedom (conceived as an atomistic freeing from the ties that bind), a lack of roots and sense of place ensures that our lives are bereft of meaning and prone to despair (Bate, 2003; Bauman, 2003,2004; Beck & Beck-Gernsheim, 2003; Didion, 2003; Flanagan, 2002; Hardy, 1923,1929; Hazlitt, 1946; Heaney, 1980; Hochschild, 2003; Kingsnorth, 2003; Marris, 1974,1980; McDonald, 2001; McKenna, 2002; O'Guiheen, 1992; O'Hagan, 1999; Read, 1996,2000,2004; Steel, 1965; Weil, 2002). *Any* concerns raised as to possible deleterious effects wrought by child care (Biddulph, 2006; Bowlby, 1976,1979,2005) are automatically construed as finding fault with the parents, and we are urged to swallow whole the doctrine that children invariably thrive in care, notwithstanding *any* evidence to the contrary; in spite of the fact that we are naturally bond forming creatures, we are duly informed that *all* that children require is *quality time*. The belief that children ought avoid dependency is highlighted by Greer (1971:236), who advocates an 'organic family' whose point it is "to release the children from the disadvantages of being the extensions of their parents so that they can belong primarily to themselves. They may accept the performances that adults perform for them naturally, *without establishing dependencies*" (italics mine).

It is as though one's biological and social dependence on the outside world represents a cataclysmic affront to human dignity and autonomy (Midgley, 2001a). None of the foregoing ought be construed as an endorsement that responsibility for caring for children, or for our elderly for that matter, should fall overwhelmingly upon one parent or child; indeed the virtue of the extended family is a recognition that care for the young is neither the sole responsibility of the mother nor ought it be restricted to the child's biological parents. The very notion that the bond between mother and child is natural has had the unfortunate effect of denying any moral credit to the woman upon whom falls the responsibility for raising her children on her own (Clark, 1989a). It is merely a recognition that few people sincerely believe that an institutional upbringing is superior to that which a normal family can offer (Midgley & Hughes, 1983).

This dread of dependency is likewise reflected in contemporary attacks upon the welfare state, where a supposed culture of dependency is held to be inherent, and is best redressed by the clarion calls of self-reliance and mutual obligation; the latter contemporarily serves the function of making the age-old distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor

(Rollison, 2001). The inordinate contemporary emphasis upon welfare 'reform' (Saunders, 2004) serves to divert attention from the complicity of structural factors in social ills (Howard, 1954) by the time honoured ploy of victim blaming (Frances, 2001,2003; Ryan, 1971). We are revisiting the belief that poverty and dependency are sure marks of moral failings, where personal value and worth are dependent upon one's ability to function as an economic unit and consumer, and where work is extolled, irrespective of it usefulness or function (Morris, 1962; Orwell, 1975; Tawney, 1930; Terrill, 1974).

The disavowal of the moral responsibility of the state for the maintenance of conditions that are requisite for the exercising and blossoming of human faculties (Green, 1986), ignores the relationship between opportunity on the one hand, and the likelihood of self-fulfillment of *all* human beings on the other (Tawney, 1938). Ethics and dependency are natural correlates, and far from dependency being a parasitic growth on the body social, the very foundation of *all* morality is responsibility for others. Both our biological and social dependency belies the contemporary cult of the splendidly detached and self-interested individual.

A less stringent and exclusive formulation of what the attributes or characteristics are that qualify a being for the status of *personhood* is provided by Feinberg (1986:262) -

> In the commonsense way of thinking, persons are those beings who, among other things, are conscious, have a concept and awareness of themselves, are capable of experiencing emotions, can reason and acquire understanding, can plan ahead, can act on their plans, and can feel pleasure and pain.

This posits a not dissimilar notion to Regan's (1983) *subject-of-a-life criterion* - both transcend the paradigmatic conceptualization that posits human adult rationality as the cornerstone and coinage of personhood and moral status, and both specifically deny species exclusivity.

That human beings and animals inhabit different moral universes is manifestly transparent to Morris (1968:490,493), who writes that

> When we talk of not treating a human being as a person or 'showing no respect for one as a person' what we imply by our words is a contrast between the manner in which one acceptably responds to human beings and the manner in which one responds to animals and

> inanimate objects...to be treated as a person is a fundamental human right belonging to all human beings by virtue of their being human. It is also a natural, inalienable, and absolute right.

A couple of things need briefly to be said in response to the certainty expressed by Morris that animals, like inanimate objects, are merely *things*, and that whilst all, and only, rational human beings are inalienably persons, *all* human beings, persons and non-persons alike, *independent* of their attributes, ought be respected for their biological status. Our worth is derived from our common humanity, inherent in our very being, not contingent upon personal attributes (Gaita, 1999,2002; McLeod & Meyer, 1967; Wilkes, 1981), nor on parochial considerations (Geras, 1995).

Dealing with the latter firstly, we have already noted the tendency of *personists* to dismiss anything *but* rational perfection, as though any putative shortcoming were a moral aberration, resulting in the exclusion of many humans from the fraternity of rational souls (Clark, 2000a; Dombrowski, 1997; Pluhar, 1987,1988a,1993a,1993b,1995). Alternatively, a community constricted in accordance with purely biological criteria, is often adhered to just as tenaciously, one that would have us believe that *all* and *only* human beings are due respect. By virtue of birth into the species *Homo sapiens*, all individuals are considered to possess *the* essential characteristic that confers supreme moral value and standing; as Harris (1968:129) avers, "every human being, however immature or defective, who has any mental capacity at all, is a person and worthy of respect", and Gaita (2002:165) accords, "every human being, whatever their distinctive characteristics or lack of them, is precious and irreplaceable".

But such certainty, that *only* human beings possess inherent value and merit absolute respect, have *inalienable preciousness* (Gaita, 2002), flies in the face of Darwinian insights, and is mistaken; whilst we belong to the species *Homo sapiens*, we are *continuous* with the remainder of creation, we share a common origin. That besides, we, unlike our forbears, can no longer plead ignorance of the fact that numerous animals share various attributes with us, and in many cases sundry animals will possess degrees of rationality and autonomy *at least* at the equivalent level of many human beings.

Why ought species membership *a priori*, and uniformly, be held to legitimately deny all other animals respect, irrespective of any significant attributes and characteristics that animals may be observed to possess? Part of the confusion that surrounds this issue derives

in Sapontzis' (1981,1987) view from a failure to make a distinction between *metaphysical* and *moral* conceptions of personhood, the functions of which are to *describe* and to *evaluate* respectively. The belief that biological status determines personhood, and that biological kinship confers the extension of respect to otherwise human non-persons (Downie & Telfer, 1980) is belied by the fact that humans who don't conform to the physiological norm, for example those with gross deformities and foetuses, are not deemed to be persons in a metaphysical sense unless or until they *look* human - "a human body is as essential a part of being a person (*metaphysical sense*) as is being a rational animal" (Sapontzis, 1987:49).

Our horror of human *monsters* (Bates, 2005; Davidson, 1991; Fudge, Gilbert & Wiseman, 1999), or the dread that as a consequence humanity might readily descend into a bestial condition (Salisbury, 1994), is in no small part derived from our fear of the blurring of the traditional and still pervasive metaphysical dichotomy between man and beast, a fissure which is not supported by Darwinian theory. By way of contrast, Sapontzis (1987:50) maintains that a moral conceptualization of personhood does not *a priori* exclude non-human animals from moral considerability; being *evaluative* rather than *descriptive*, a moral sense of

> "person" denotes a certain status...a being whose interests must be respected; when determining what is morally acceptable and preferable, we are morally obligated to take into account what will dignify or demean, benefit or harm, please or pain, aid or thwart, satisfy or dissatisfy, enrich or impoverish, and so forth any being that is a person (moral) and that is likely to be affected by our actions.

By way of summary, Sapontzis (1987:52) offers the following clarification of the distinction between the meanings of metaphysical and moral personhood:

	Metaphysical **Person**	*Moral Person*
Function:	Describes a certain kind of thing	Assigns a certain moral status
Content:	Denotes all and only human beings	Denotes creatures with rights
Contrast:	Separates persons from	Separates persons from

inanimate objects, machines,   nature and property

plants, animals, and spirits

It is Sapontzis' (1981,1987) belief that beings who have *interests* ought to have those interests respected, and that the community of those beings cannot be restricted *a priori* to membership along species lines, and is paralleled by Pluhar's (1995:xiii) conviction that "if sentient, conative humans are highly morally significant, then many nonhuman animals are so as well...*maximum moral respect is due to any being, human or nonhuman, who is capable of caring about what befalls him or her*" (italics mine).

This thesis adopts the position that supposedly *marginal* humans are due respect in their own right, that is, they are owed respect as a direct duty by all moral agents, for they have the capacity to care about that which befalls them, and as a consequence we are morally obligated to respect those animals who likewise have preferences and care about that which betides them. Both human beings *and* animals are in possession of a structure of deep and abiding preferences (Midgley, 1996a), and all individuals who care about what befalls them ought be treated as ends in themselves. It is Sumner's (1987) view that all beings with interests ought be extended those *prima facie* rights appropriate to them, and amongst whose number he includes babies and children, the severely mentally deficient, sentient foetuses, and many animals. In the practice examples provided in Chapter One, the human beings *and* animals are due our concern - in the third example, for instance, the puppy cares about what happens to it, and has interests and welfare that must be attended to and taken into account.

But not all thinkers are so eager to establish a rational elite or an oligarchy of persons, whereby there exists gradations of value that might as well be chasms in their immediate moral import. There are those who argue that even if it were the case that 'possible people' possess neither rights nor interests, we ought often act *as if* they in fact do (Parfit, 1976). The difficulty remains, however, so long as rationality is stipulated as the moral attribute par excellence, for "The classes to which we belong are not merely descriptive, but normative" (Clark, 1995b:320). It has obvious implications for how we ought treat those classified as such, and by the same token, those assigned non-rational status are rightfully treated in an *unlike* manner.

But moral agency ought not be characterized as exhausting moral considerability, as the *strong personhood view*, defined by Pluhar (1987:24) as entailing that "all and only persons are morally considerable beings", would have us believe. What of moral patients, amongst whom are numbered babies and children, the demented, the senile, the insane, *and* animals? Whilst moral patients can do neither right nor wrong, they have a right to just treatment against moral agents, and the duties we owe them are *direct*, not indirect, because they are individuals who possess inherent value, and as such they are thus owed respect as a matter of justice (Regan, 1983,1991), for "a morally considerable being is a being to whom moral agents have moral obligations" (Pluhar, 1987:24-25). It is the vulnerability and relative weakness of moral patients that accords their interests a greater, not lesser, moral imperative. Those who would maintain that we are justified in treating animal non-persons in exploitative ways, whilst simultaneously insisting that it would be wrong to so treat human non-persons, are required to articulate the nature of the supposed morally relevant difference that is held to pertain between the two groups (Dombrowski, 1997; Pluhar, 1995,1988a).

In a form of moral eugenics, we sift the morally considerable wheat from the marginal chaff, whilst often continuing to pay lip service to catch phrases like 'the dignity of humankind', 'human rights', and 'the sacredness of human life'. However, Clark (2000a:270) observes,

> If people are to be given more or less protection because their lives are judged to be more or less worth living, it is difficult not to suspect that they are valuable only for what they produce. If it is reasonable to kill a child to spare it pain, because its life can never be one that the judges think worth living, why is it reasonable to sustain such lives, at public expense once they are being lived? If abortion or infanticide of the 'disabled' is permissible, can their own later judgement that they choose to live, be granted any reasonable weight? Personists reply that *later* disabled people have their wills, and judgement: earlier they have no wills at all, and therefore are not frustrated. Only those who know what they would be missing have a right, or a capacity, to claim their lives - but no one believes them when they say that lives *like* theirs are worth preserving.

If personhood is merely the product of social ascription, historically and culturally relative (Clark & Asquith, 1985), human rights come properly to be seen as *person's* rights (Clark,

1995b,2000a). The circle of moral considerability is further constricted to house only the rational souls among us, and there is no room at the inn for the less than perfect, as though only *we* are sacred (Clark, 2000e). The stripped, beaten and left-for-dead man taken pity upon by the Good Samaritan ought to have been grateful that his rescuer did not question either his equality, or postpone his solicitude, until such time as he could confirm that the other was a person; rather he was guided by the ideal that "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (Ephesians 2:19).

The Good Samaritan was concerned about, and attentive to, the specific individual (Allen & Springfield, 1994; Winch, 1988), and attentiveness itself is always exercised by virtue of an acceptance of the existence of others (McLellan, 1989; Veto, 1994; Weil, 1952) - it is "The idea of a *patient, loving regard*, directed upon a person, a thing, a situation" (italics mine), and it ensures that will is more like obedience, influencing belief through "a sustained attention to reality" (Murdoch, 1996:40). What one attends to and loves serves to mould one's will, and has a direct bearing upon one's actions (Antonaccio, 2000; Gaita, 1991).

We are faced, Clark (2000a) believes, with a combination of *personism* and a residual love of kin; on the one hand we select and accord preference to a rational elect, whilst on the other we deign consideration to our kin because they are of our kind (whilst simultaneously banishing animal non-persons irrespective of the fact that they possess similar attributes to human non-persons). Whereas we might once have thought this banishment justified by reference to our unique creation or to our unique dignity, neither provides cogent and compelling arguments for morally relevant differences between supposedly marginal human beings and animals. Reliance upon speciesism is particularly flawed in the light of the evolutionary story (Ryder, 1998), which acknowledges difference between human beings and other animals, but insists that it is a difference of degree, not kind. Our preparedness to forswear exclusion allows us to attend in morally respectful ways to the moral claims of all sentient creatures, and this enables social workers in the practice examples in Chapter One to remain cognizant of the fact that moral consideration is demanded of them in respect of human being *and* animals.

Having provided an overview of the philosophical rendering of the concept of personhood in the Western tradition, we shall now turn our attention specifically to its conceptualization in the social work literature. At the heart of any discussion about the concept of *respect for*

persons lies the problem of definition, and this is particularly so for social work (Horne, 1987). It is a moral concept because it infers, imputes and ascribes value or worth. We have already observed that the principle of *respect for persons* not only provides social work's basic moral underpinning (all other values being seen as derivative), but in a more general sense it represents or encapsulates the whole of morality - however, it is one more often presupposed than argued for (Plant, 1970), more often asserted and assumed than subjected to scrutiny and analysis (Timm, 1983), thus reinforcing the perception that, whilst this principle is deemed to be the cornerstone of morality generally, and social work in particular, it offers neither guidance nor illumination. And in practice, it is more often than not accorded a perfunctory and tokenistic value, merely paid lip-service, for its supposed centrality is vitiated by the palpable manner in which not an insignificant number of social workers fail to genuinely *attend* to the individuals in front of them.

In stating that *respect for persons* "resembles the basis of rules or the reason for helping to achieve human purposes rather than a rule or a purpose", Timms (1983:59) declares that it has direct reference to action, for "It extols a range of attitudes, or readiness to act towards people described in morally preferred ways". Concurring with Timms, Downie & Telfer (1969) maintain that *respect for persons* is a principle for action, ultimately explicable in terms of an *attitude*. Indeed Murdoch (1996,1997) suggests that the central concept of morality can be summarized as the *individual knowable by love*, with love, a central concept of morality (bearing in mind that Murdoch avers that Good is sovereign over Love, and all other concepts), itself defined as *knowledge of the individual*. *Love is a respect for otherness*, for "It is in the discovery of a real Other that we begin to awake" (Clark, 1998b:54).

It is Murdoch's (1996:46) conviction that, above all else, "We need a moral philosophy in which the concept of love, so rarely mentioned now by philosophers, can once again be made central". We shall come to observe that social work literature's treatment of the concept of *respect for persons* evidences an ongoing tension between the priority of reason and the virtue of love. In a manner akin to Murdoch, Wilkes (1981:67,69) asserts that "In its highest form good is allied to the notion of love...The individual, rather than any kind of collectivity, is the central focus of morality". Furthermore, Wilkes (1981) contends that Aristotle conceptualizes *respect for the individual* as capturing the essence of what it is to be a person. The principle of *respect for persons* entails working with individuals as

members of a moral community, and as social workers we too, both logically and morally, inhabit the very same community (Ragg, 1980).

The uniqueness of each human being, "the right…to be treated not just as a human being but as this human being with his personal differences" (Biestek, 1976:25) (underscoring in text), is a central and replete article of faith in social work literature - Perlman (quoted in Plant, 1970:9) insists that this recognition "transcends simple pleasantness and sympathy…(and) calls for lending oneself openly to take in the particular uniqueness of this person". This respect for the uniqueness of each human being is not consequential; it is *inherent* in one's humanity, and is independent of attributes, behaviour or social roles (Butrym, 1978; Horne, 1987; Plant, 1970; Timms, 1983), all of which Horne (1987:12) asserts are "morally arbitrary". We respect human beings *because* "of what it is to be human…a precious and irreplaceable individual" (Gray & Stofberg, 2000:58,59), and Wilkes (1981:68) avers that our common humanity "presupposes an equality that admits of no distinctions between human beings of equal value".

It is elsewhere deemed that a sense of our common humanity is itself the expression of full moral fellowship (Cordner, 2002; Gaita, 1999; Weil, 1986), whilst Hubbard (1976) suggests that an awareness and appreciation of our *one-ness*, and the deeper sense of community it imbues, provides a more secure moral foundation than do appeals to our common humanity. Failure to accord due respect to our fellow human beings entails their moral invisibility, their not being reckoned as *full* human beings (Levy, 2002; Murdoch, 1996; Sennett, 2003; Taylor, 1989). Our love of our neighbour is the result of attentiveness to the reality of others (Weil, 1952), a knowledge of the individual (Murdoch, 1996), a respect for their individuality (Hardy, 1954; McEwan, 2001; Robinson, 1980; Toibin, 1993,1999), and as Wilkes (1981:30) insists, "applies to all, not just to the virtuous and the congenial"; would we not consider it rather odd to respond to the question, 'who is my neighbour?', with 'well, a person, of course'? Love is, according to Armstrong (2002:126), a *regulative ideal*, ideals which do not describe how things actually are, "instead they refer us to a point of view from which we can assess ourselves and the world". Moral ideals, Warren (1997:14) claims, effect the creation of the conceptual space necessary for *supererogation*, serving "an important function by reminding us that, however scrupulous we may be in observing our obligations, we could be better people were we to do more than we are obliged to do".

But the inclusive notion of *respect for persons* we have thus far encountered, that we ought value and respect individuals for the inherent worth that resides in them by virtue of their common humanity, irrespective of their attributes and characteristics, is not a uniform view within the literature. It is the exercising of rationality (and the capacities to follow rules and be self-determining), Downie & Telfer (1969,1980) argue, that distinguishes *us* from the non-human, and is deserving of respect. Two things need noting here - firstly, by this stringent criteria it ought be obvious that many humans do not possess the designated prerequisite capacities, and secondly, why value ought reside in *only* one capacity, venerated by philosophers, is puzzling, to say the very least. As for animals, they do not speak in language that most philosophers understand (Coetzee, 1999; Manning, 1996), and as for the animals of our kind, an unexamined life need not uniformly be without virtue (Clark, 1988c; Gaita, 1992; Murdoch, 1987,1996). Paradoxically, within this attitude lie the seeds of destruction of the creed that humankind has unique dignity and value. In our haste to identify those characteristics that set us *apart* from the remainder of the natural world, we invariably ask the wrong question; we search for that which distinguishes us *from*, rather than that which distinguishes us *among*, other animals (Midgley, 1996a), and in so doing hinder our understanding of animals and ourselves (Sharpe, 2005; Shepard, 1998).

The evolution story does not support either the metaphysic that we are ontologically *discontinuous*, for all animals are unique in their own ways, or that the traditional distinguishing marks of humankind are of a qualitatively *different* order. Darwin shows us that we truly are terrestrial beings, and that all other animals are kin. Rationality, language and culture are continuous with and germinate out of our nature (MacIntyre, 1999; Midgley, 1996a), for difference between species, as Darwin (1936,1965) is constantly at pains to remind us, is one of degree, not kind. We would be better served by attending to the complexity of our nature, rather than the mania evident in our desire to identify one supposedly unique characteristic; as Midgley (1996a:207) comments,

> What is special about each creature is not a single, unique quality but a rich and complex arrangement of powers and qualities, some of which it will certainly share with its neighbors. And the more complex the species, the more true this is. To expect a single differentia is absurd. And it is not even effectively flattering to the species, since it obscures our truly characteristic richness and versatility.

The inherent danger in identifying and isolating rationality as the pre-eminent differentia is that in our attempt to guarantee human dignity, value and uniqueness, we accordingly set the moral bar so high that only specific human beings remain in the moral meet.

In an attempt to resolve this dilemma, Horne (1987) suggests that we ought contrast rationality with non-rationality when we are considering what it is that bestows value upon a person, or what Downie & Telfer (1969:29) refer to as "that which is thought valuable", that which makes a human being a person, a proper object of respect or *agape*. Whilst it is a topic not specifically broached by Horne (1987), the obvious implication is that humankind is separated from the non-rational residuum of creation by virtue of rationality. Given the findings of ethology, the notion that animals are invariably non-rational creatures is a discredited one, and this in no way solves the dilemma of supposedly *marginal* human beings, whose attributes and capacities are often matched, if not exceeded, by many animals.

In identifying rationality as the distinctive endowment of human beings and that which makes a being worthy of respect, Downie & Telfer (1969) are firmly ensconced within the Kantian moral paradigm, wherein rational beings inhabit a kingdom of ends. Whilst making make the observation that central to Western moral, political and religious ideals is the idea of the individual person as possessing supreme worth, Downie & Telfer (1969,1976,1980) proceed to argue that *respect for persons* does not refer to human beings in general - rather, it is our ability to exercise rationality in self-determination and rule following that provides human beings with intrinsic value and personhood.

But such a view provides a lopsided and narrow notion of value, banishing emotion and feeling to moral Coventry - Midgley (1996a:260) characterizes this attitude as "the essentially *colonial* picture ...in which an imported governor, named Reason, imposes order on a chaotic tribe of Passions or Instincts", begun by Plato, and utilized by philosophers as diverse as the Stoics, Descartes, Spinoza and Kant. Indeed Kant makes a sharp distinction between the *rational subject* (human beings) and the *non-rational object* (animals), between *people* and *things*, and whilst acknowledging animal sentience, affection and worth, denies that sentience, as opposed to reason, has moral import (Midgley, 1996a), as it contributes nothing to the intrinsic worth of a person (Downie & Telfer, 1969). Better that we conceive the rational aim of life as being concerned with contributing value to individual human beings and other animals (Dombrowski, 1988b).

By way of paraphrasing, Pluhar (1995:266) observes that for Kant "reason without emotion may be impotent, but emotion without reason is blind", but Pluhar (1995) proceeds to make the observation that Hume (1975) is surely correct to insist that feeling plays a central role in moral agency. In analyzing the Kantian conceptualization of the relationship between reason and emotion, Murdoch (1997:367) suggests that "The emotions are allowed to return to the scene as a kind of allowable, rather painful, thrill which is a by-product of our status as dignified rational beings".

Whilst maintaining that the value of the human person, deriving from their capacity to experience emotion, is in no way inconsistent with the exercise of rationality, "for in so far as emotions are characteristically human they necessarily involve rational will", Downie & Telfer (1969:22) posit that animal emotion is of another and non-rational order - "It is true that some animals may be able to experience certain emotions, but the ability to feel and express a wide range of sustained emotions is characteristically human, and it involves the perception and discrimination which only reason can supply". But we are surely mistaken to insist that intellectual capacity be the prerequisite of basic moral consideration; rather it is a being's capacity for emotional fellowship, evidenced in sensibility, as well as social and emotional complexity, that which enables them to form profound and enduring relationships, that is central, and this we share with other animals (Midgley, 1985a; Smuts, 1999; Sharpe, 2005). We are beings of *heart and mind* (Midgley, 1983b) and we need both for wholeness (Birch, 1995; Clark, 1999; Midgley, 1996a; Murdoch, 1993a,1997).

Whereas reason is usually contrasted with feeling, and human beings and other animals accordingly characterized respectively, Midgley (1996a) comments upon the perversity of equating rationality with cleverness and mere intellect. Rationality, Midgley (1996a:256,262) asserts, is "a priority system based on feeling", and not peculiar to animals of our kind, and that

> There are, I think, two distinct elements in rationality: cleverness and integration. By integration I mean having a character, acting as a whole, having a firm and effective priority system. *The second is a condition of the first*, not the other way round. For the full respect that we give to rationality, we need both. But integration alone is something of enormous value, and respect seems a suitable name for the recognition with which we salute. *And integration is not confined to people*. (italics mine)

The concept of personhood, in the opinion of Downie & Telfer (1969,1980), and Clark & Asquith (1985), is evaluative, not descriptive - indeed Macklin (1984) argues that *all* attempts to define *person* are prescriptive - and given that self-determination and the capacity for forming and pursuing ideal values are deemed to be the attributes that confer the status of personhood, and given that not all human beings possess these prerequisites, we are left with the purportedly perennial *problem* of putatively *marginal* human beings. This is where ingenuity is called upon in an attempt to rescue those human beings from the status almost invariably assigned to animals.

In commenting that not all human beings are summoned to the moral high table, as penalty for their failure to meet the designated attributes of personhood, Downie & Telfer (1980:40) maintain that we *ought* nevertheless regard such people as worthy of respect, although respect itself is a *matter of degree* - "It is not true that we think that these categories of people are due *all* the respect accorded to normal adults...it would be reasonable to say that in extreme cases those without the distinctive endowment of a human being are not given the special respect generally thought due to a fellow human being". Behind this thinking lies the belief that (supposedly) marginal human beings, lacking the capacity for self-determination and autonomy, ought be contrasted with rational human beings, as though the latter's capacity is an absolute rather than one also marked by degree. The deification of freedom - "we are denizens of an age in which freedom trounces connection" (Vernon, 2005) - and autonomy in much Western thought is unrealistic and misguided; autonomy cannot be an absolute, for we are a social species with a given nature, not solitary and infinitely malleable creatures. We cannot make freedom the *sovereign* moral ideal (Murdoch, 1996), for freedom is a matter of degree (Byatt, 1994; Murdoch, 1961), "the disciplined overcoming of self" (Murdoch, 1996:95), and "An ideal freedom is connected with goodness and virtue…the liberation of the person from irresponsible motives" (Murdoch, in Dooley, 2003:144,140).

In remarking that the principle of *respect for persons*, the absolute and universal right to *always* be treated as an end, is in all probability the *only* such right, Clark & Asquith (1985) make the observation that the values and rights derivative of *respect for persons* are by their nature qualified or limited, and can, in certain circumstances, be withheld or overridden. The ubiquitous veneration of self-determination by social work (Banks, 1995; Biestek, 1975,1976; Horne, 1987; McDermott, 1975a,1975b; Moffett, 1968; Ragg, 1977; Rothman, 1989; Spicker, 1990), characterized by Perlman (1975:79) as "the expression of

our *innate drive* to experience the self as cause, as master of one's self", is in large part due to its being seen as a bulwark against determinism. *Respect for persons* is perfectly compatible with the fact that an individual's capacity for exercising autonomy and self-determination cannot always reign supreme, as though it were in effect titular monarch rather than ordinary citizen in the realm of values (Bernstein, 1975), but ought always be seen within a context, and at times must be subservient to a person's longer term interests (Horne, 1987).

Notions of absolute or indeterminate freedom are belied by the recognition of *limited* rights; rights talk often assumes a passive attitude toward human life and citizenship by designating *my* rights with scant or nil consideration given to corresponding duties - human rights are less likely to be cogently argued for than gestured at (O'Neill, 2002). Rights, according to Clark (1997a:103), "are those claims and entitlements that can be seen to be preserved without contradiction". We might on occasion decide that an individual foregoes their right to confidentiality or self-determination, for instance, when disclosing suicidal or violent intent - we rightly consider that no individual has an absolute right to treat others in whatever manner they so desire (Berlin, 1986; Biestek, 1975; Hollis, 1940).

All this seems commonsensical enough, and does not entail that the selfsame individual consequently forgoes their right to respectful treatment. We are correct to make the moral judgements that both scenarios demand, and correct to insist that in so doing we are not invalidating the principle of respect. The important point the principle of self-determination seeks to make is that, all thing being equal, we ought respect and indeed value an individual's right to make decisions about their life. In this sense it can be categorized as a negative freedom, a right to non-interference (Berlin, 1986) - those who link self-determination with positive freedom "tend to play down its status as a right, and to emphasize its role as an ideal or end to be pursued in the casework process" (McDermott, 1975a:7), as witnessed by Bernstein's (1975:40) conviction that human worth (what he considers to be the supreme value in social work) "is based only moderately on what people are; much more on what they can be".

Utilitarian in its emphasis upon consequences, and an ideal that dominates social work thinking (Horne, 1987), it is nevertheless one which others fear lends itself to the manipulation of those with whom social workers work (Plant, 1970; Ragg, 1977; Wilkes, 1981,1985), whilst those who accentuate negative freedom characterize it deontologically, as a basic right (Horne, 1987; Plant, 1970), and Wilkes (1981:56) avers that negative

freedom "is freedom from interference, the freedom to be what I am whether anyone likes it, or approves of it, or not". But even this freedom is surely a matter of degree, for what I, or others, do or make of themselves cannot be an inconsequential concern, it being all too easy to mistake indifference for tolerance. If we are not to lose our bearings in our everyday world, and if we are to morally and socially locate ourselves, it is essential that we receive the natural and sincere responses of those about us (Midgley, 1995b). Whereas positive freedom assumes that human nature is mouldable and conceptualizes value as dependent upon the possession of particular attributes, Wilkes (1981) claims that negative freedom posits an essential and unchanging human nature, and that a human being's basic dignity is not dependent upon the possession of particular attributes, but rather it derives from something *inherent* in their being.

What seems obvious is that social work historically has valued positive freedom in the sense that it has sought to attain equality of *outcomes* rather than equality of *opportunity*; the latter has been seen to entail that we all have an equal right to be unequal. Structural factors have been seen to curtail or impinge upon an individual's exercise of self-determination, and non-interference, especially on the grounds that redistribution of income via the welfare system violates the individual's right to non-interference (Nozick, 1995), has been seen as antithetical to social justice and as inculcating indifference. By the same token, the notion that individuals ought be valued for what they can *be*, rather than for what they *are* (Bernstein,1975), can all too readily lead to individuals being manipulated and treated instrumentally, as means to socially engineered ends that in effect ride roughshod over, and fail to accord respect to, the individual. The fancy that we can bestow upon ourselves the omniscience to mould others toward an ideal leads all too readily to hubris, and contempt respectively - as Clark (1998b:54,56) opines,

> Any system that really respects the rights of humankind must make room for people whom the ruling elite, and their subservient intelligentsia, think 'unsophisticated', 'ignorant', or 'behind the times'...Modern humanists are drifting steadily towards respecting only 'rational' creatures - and thereby outlawing many other creatures than the merely 'animal'.

A commitment to social justice or structural transformation must not be secured at the price of failure to respect the individual, for what he or she *is* (often *in spite* of what he or she *does*), for the individual must forever remain an end. Truth to tell, precious few of us are

the finished article. Why we ought to cease to respect an individual once we deem that they are acting in any manner that bespeaks an absence or lack of reason is to treat the principle of *respect for persons* as an instrumental value, as dependent upon consequences.

The greater an individual's capacity for agency, the greater their right to noninterference (Pluhar, 1995). But the reality of the greater dependency that a moral patient may possess, and the greater obligation on moral agents to assist them, does not require a two-tiered or differential moral status. In claiming that the principle of *respect for persons* "provides the 'means' by which the social worker creates and presents a picture of the 'subjective' characteristics of the client as an individual", Horne (1987:94-95) affirms that values in social work

> are basically *instrumental* to the purpose, and appear no more than a 'means to an end'. They are *not* 'absolute' imperatives...A description of social work principally depicting the role of 'respect for persons' as being instrumental in the creation of subjects would appear to fit neatly into a description of social work with a strong utilitarian base, in which the 'end' rather than any moral obligation is the justification for the act. (italics mine)

If, however, *respect for persons* is conceptualized as a basic moral right - by definition "a basic moral right is itself the ground of a moral obligation; it is not a consequence of our having a moral obligation" (Regan, 1982:117) - respect is owed because of the who the individual *is*, and *not* dependent upon consequences, or what he or she may *be*. Drawing upon the work of Philp (1979) and Howe (1979), who both argue that there are limits to subjectivity, Horne (1987) contends that such limits are imposed as the consequence of an individual's objective status overwhelming their subjectivity (Casey, 2002). But to dispense with the notion of a substantial self, to envisage subjectivity as something *created* rather than *attended* to as a reality, inevitably favours an instrumentalist morality that fails to respect the irreducible value of the individual subject. It is to also ignore the fact that there is, of necessity, a reality that transcends *us*; indeed Clark (1992b:964) insists that "our self-conscious humanity rests not on our doing as we please, but on our discovery of a world greater than ourselves".

By way of contrast, both Halmos (1966) and Wilkes (1981) contend that values cannot be conceived as instrumental, but are derived from either a moral imperative or some ultimate conviction. The professed social work article of faith that humans being are ends in

themselves is all too often supplanted by a commitment to effecting change or adjustment (Wilkes,1985). Therein lies the rationale for the current besottedness with *management* that infects and blights what is reductively termed the human resource and services sector; it had to logically follow that not only would '*clients/consumers/customers*' be so treated, but workers also. Indeed the prevailing accent upon *teamwork* entails an emphasis upon task, detachment and superficial cooperativeness, and consequent diminution of respect for the individuals who comprise the *team* (Sennett, 1999) - Wilkes (1985) depicts it as an ideology of *belongingness*, whereby the individual sacrifices herself/himself *and* others for the 'good' of the organization. It is a salutary reminder to remain cognizant of the fact that "individuals justify an institution more than the institution justifies its members" (Friedlander, 1994:99).

Whereas *respect for persons*, when conceptualized as an absolute imperative, requires respect *irrespective* of an individual's attributes or behaviour, subjectivity, as depicted by Horne (1987), Howe (1979) and Philp (1979), has a contingent status. Indeed, Philp (1979:98) contends that "social work is allocated those whose objective status is not too threatening...it cannot operate, it cannot make people when an individual's act has removed him from the right to be perceived as human", whilst Horne (1987:99) argues the creation of the subject "is also limited as it exists only within the boundaries of the extent to which society sanctions it". This is precisely the danger inherent in, and limitation of, a socially constructed concept of self and subjectivity; in the absence of a substantial self and the primacy of consciousness, the individual is all too reducible to impersonal systems (Antonaccio, 2000; Benhabib, 1992; Murdoch, 1993a,1997).

This much said, Philp (1979:91) and Horne (1987) emphasize the centrality of subjectivity - what distinguishes social work from other disciplines, in Horne's (1987) view, is that it *creates* subjects. But this acknowledgement of the significance of subjectivity is quite distinct from the rather mystifying claims that social work somehow *makes* people or *creates* subjects, as though it were in *our* power to do so. And the fact that an individual's subjectivity may be overwhelmed by their objective status, in the eyes of society at least (a point not being contested), to the extent that they are no longer seen as human (the point being specifically challenged) is surely all the more reason that subjectivity be regarded as substantial, as a reality that transcends cultural composition, as something encountered by *loving attention*, not by an act of creation, or construction. The principle of *respect for persons* underscores the moral centrality of subjectivity.

Even when overwhelmed by objective status, we continue to respect subjectivity precisely because we respect the inherent value of the individual subject, even though society may decree that the individual is no longer human (whatever that means), or more likely has acted *like* an animal. When we learn to treat other individual subjects as fellow creatures, we will leave off treating any being 'as an animal' (Clark, 1998b), and discard the furphy that other animals live 'like animals' - "Good animals of any kind (including the human) have some grasp of the physical and social worlds in which they live and prefer the paths of friendship and fidelity to those of war" (Clark, 1985a:51). Human capacity for evil leads Dostoevsky (1952) to remark that if the devil be a human myth, then we have surely created that being in *our* very own image and likeness.

Respect for persons cannot be characterized as a qualified right, or a culturally relativistic principle; it has *universal* relevance (Ragg, 1980). We respect the individual for that which is in their being, not for whatever it is they do or don't do, or may become, and Wilkes (1981) insists that we ought be guided by the maxim that we seek to avoid doing harm, rather than being motivated by a desire to *do* good - Clark (1994c:25) argues that "Negative duties, not directly to cause evil, are more universal and more powerful than the positive ones, to prevent evil or cause good". Indeed, Miller (1968) goes so far as to insist that respect for each individual's dignity dictates that social work ought not concern itself with imposition upon involuntary clients, rather with advocacy upon behalf of those who seek its services.

This said, we ought unceasingly be engaged with the quest to *be* good, to live *morally better* lives (Murdoch, 1993a,1996,1997; Siporin, 1983). We do not *create* subjectivity (indeed subjectivity is what it is, and that *is* the point) any more than we create individuals; to attempt to do so entails a retreat *from* rather than engagement *with* subjectivity. We attend to the otherness of others, we respect their uniqueness and individuality. Perhaps the usage of the term *create* seeks to refer to one and the same thing, or reflects the desire that others will so attend, will not lose sight of the individual *in spite* of their objective status, in which case we would surely be better served by explicitly saying so, and abandoning the clumsiness of 'create'.

A subjective being has value *in and for itself*, irrespective of whether or not that being has the capacity to reflect upon that value (McDaniel, 1989). Respect can thus be seen as an attention to, and contemplation upon, the subjective *other*, and does not require that we

either create that subjectivity (as *if* we could), or that value is dependent upon its ascription by others.

Compassion, Butler (1886:425) suggests, refers to "When we rejoice in the prosperity of others, and compassionate their distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their interest for our own; and have the same kind of pleasure in their prosperity, and sorrow in their distress, as we have from reflection upon our own". Respect, Butler (1886) posits, is owed to those who have *interests*, and is not dependent upon rationality. As Watson (1978:36) observes,

> On Butler's notion of compassion, as substituting others' *interests* for one's own, an attitude of compassion towards human beings entails respect for them as creatures with interests. It does not entail respect for them as creatures with the ability to adopt rules which are held to be binding on oneself and all rational beings.

In other words, ends need not be deemed to be rational beings or moral agents only, but ought encompass those individuals who have *interests*. This position represents the key to the Code of Ethics articulated in this thesis (see Appendix), that we ought attend to *all* creatures with interests - in practice, social workers do not set the bar so as to sequester rational beings and moral agents as solely morally considerable, to the exclusion of all others. The latter may conceivably fall well short of the paradigmatic model of personhood, but if we take their interests into account, suddenly we become aware that the moral landscape is inhabited by myriad other creatures, human and non-human alike, and we are struck by the inadequacy of a model of autonomous and contracting agents to ground our duties and obligations to our fellow creatures.

Consequently, the case for a revised Code of Ethics has been developed in light of this reality, and is underpinned by Regan's (1983:171) *subject-of-a-life* criterion, whereby "A *sufficient* (italics in text) condition of being owed such duties [of justice] is that one have a welfare - that one be the experiencing subject of a life that fares well or ill for one as an individual - *independently* of whether one also has a conception of what this is" (italics mine). On this account, moral considerability is not dependent upon one being a moral agent. We cannot make recourse to the argument that species membership matters in any absolute sense, as distinct from the notion that species membership is an important consideration.

Those, who whilst adamant that only 'full' persons are possessed of rights, have their work cut out to justify preferential or differential treatment of their 'marginal' fellows from that shown toward other animals (Dombrowski, 1997; Pluhar, 1981,1988b,1995). Interestingly enough, proponents of this position make recourse to a characteristic or attribute that they initially and ostensibly disavow. For instance, Clark & Asquith (1985) argue that personhood is not a list of required attributes but ultimately ascribed by social processes, and that the principle of *respect for persons* structures our social relationships in such a way that the individual is accorded unique value.

By way of examination of those attributes that may be advanced to characterize persons (*biological entities, sentient beings, rational beings, self-conscious beings*), Clark & Asquith (1985:16) argue that whilst personhood is not independent of physiological and biological attributes or sentiency, "A (biologically) human individual is not automatically a person". Social ascription entails a form of moral eugenics; *we* decide who is a *fully* human individual, as though it is *our* world, and not *theirs* also; all too often, appeals to the common good entail no-one's good in particular, coercers and managers apart (Clark, 1995e; Wilkes, 1985). Far better that we endeavour "to understand and delight in independent realities" (Clark, 1998b:59).

In their view, biological, physiological and sentient characteristics fail to take account of essential human attributes such as consciousness and rationality, which the authors deem to be a human only affair -

> if we accept the determinist and in particular the biological and physiological position, there is prima facie little reason to respond to human beings whether born or unborn in a manner different from our reaction to other biological organisms. Yet in terms of our ordinary commonsense morality we do conceive of human beings as different from animals. (Clark & Asquith, 1985:16)

But there is a world of difference between difference conceived as an absolute, and difference understood as a matter of degree. We are not the *only* conscious and rational animals inhabiting our planetary home, and to acknowledge this fact does not commit us to determinism, nor does it undermine or besmirch human dignity. In light of the practice examples presented in Chapter One, social workers need to come to the realization that to

pay attention to animals does not preclude their duty to attend to human beings, and vice versa.

Whilst Downie & Telfer (1969) acknowledge that animals can be said to possess personality in a *minimal* sense and to have a *degree* of sentience in common with human beings (indeed they contend that sentience in human beings is the foundation of self-determination and rule-following), no normative implications are held to follow *apart* from "a duty to avoid causing them *unnecessary* suffering" (italics mine) - which calls to mind Clark's (1977:44) rejoinder that "It is of little use claiming that it is wrong to inflict unnecessary suffering if anything at all will do as a context for calculating necessity".

Indeed Clark & Asquith (1985) suggest that if we were to take sentience as an essential attribute of personhood, then we would have to look upon abortion and the slaughter of animals as constituting murder. We ought not reject alternative arguments solely on the grounds that they run on different tracks to contemporary moral sentiment; we once blinked at, and thought it permissible, to enslave people by virtue of their skin colour, to subjugate others because of their gender, and to oppress or exterminate those who were deemed to be racially inferior. The circle of morality has consistently been widened as a result of recognition of inconsistencies and an awareness of the arbitrary nature of much of our prior moral thinking. We can choose to either pull up the drawbridge, or to follow where our considered reflections may lead us.

In the case of abortion, the difference between a morally neutral practice and a morally condemned one is left to the arbitrary discretion of specific societies, and like the difference between a good and bad haircut, may well be a matter of days or weeks. *We*, in our infinite wisdom, may all too readily come to endorse the aborting of all those who are 'imperfect' or 'disabled', and kid ourselves that we are extolling choice, and not eugenics by stealth against supposedly *potential* or *marginal* humans (Reist, 2006). But as Clark (2001a:43) points out, "there is no good reason to doubt that the zygote *I once was* indeed the person that I am", and as he once prophetically observed, "We are already being prepared for experimentation on the aborted 'products of conception', with the vague promise that so we may be saved a few more inconveniences" (Clark, 1977:128). Fears exist that the scientific discovery of growing tissue from the ovaries of aborted foetuses may well lead to a future wherein 'harvesting' of eggs from aborted foetuses and their subsequent fertilization creates children with unborn biological mothers (Tobler,2003).

Elsewhere, Clark (1998d:28) observes that

By selecting different words for what others might call a victim, we are free of blame: call a thing a neonate, an embryo, a pre-embryo; call it an oncomouse, an animal preparation or a walking larder. Those particular evasions are aided by a curious piece of doublethink: *the preferred expressions are chosen as being devoid of any moral force of a contentious kind, but then employed to justify what would have been contentious morals*. First we insist that the moral question must not be begged, and so rule out such words as 'murder' in favour of 'homicide' or 'termination'; then we infer that since the act, so described, lacked *any* moral import, we may properly perform it. If things are only and entirely what '*we*' call them, argument becomes irrefutable, and hence impossible. (italics mine)

And if animals are indeed subjects-of-a-life, and not *things* or walking larders or experimental tools, it behoves us to discard our longstanding metaphysic that they are merely means to human ends. More than we realize, our fate as human beings is inextricably connected with other species (Baier, 1983).

But to return to Clark & Asquith's (1985) contention that we view ourselves as essentially different to other animals, for we alone are rational and self-aware creatures. Of course we tend to show a partiality toward those of our own species, in the same way that we have a tendency to be concerned to a greater degree with the welfare and interests of close kin, and in the general scheme of things this is neither unexpected nor remarkable. But these tendencies are just that; they are not in any way absolute, but remarkably flexible and species non-specific, and difference is no justification for indifference. It would appear that Clark & Asquith (1985) fall prisoner to the dogma that the inclusion of animals in the moral circle is an anathema and antithetical to human dignity and uniqueness, for they are merely determined creatures. It is but a short step from this belief to the existentialist and social constructionist balderdash that humankind can transcend *all* constraints, and that we are at liberty to make of ourselves what we will.

One gets the impression that the constriction of personhood to rational and autonomous human beings is as much a metaphysical dogma aimed at excluding all animals *a priori* and disavowing our evolutionary interconnectedness, as it is an attempt to value human excellences. We prefer to see ourselves as oligarchic despots and cosmic nomads, rather than as interconnected kindred souls inhabiting a shared terrestrial community. It does not do to acknowledge our biological status, but then adhere to an ontological creed of

fundamental discontinuity; we need to be reminded time and again, or so it seems, that "We are not just rather like animals; we *are* animals" (Midgley, 1996a:xxxiv). The evolution story tells us that consciousness and rationality have a physical basis, and that the differences we readily observe are differences in degree, not kind. But the notion that kinship is a sufficient justification for the inclusion of *all* human beings and the exclusion of *all* other animals is profoundly misguided and ill-considered.

By way of examining the belief that *all* and *only* those regarded as full persons are morally considerable, Pluhar (1995) considers the argument that those deemed to be *marginal* humans can be included in the circle of moral considerability, *by virtue* of their membership in the species characterized as possessing the capacity for personhood. In response, Pluhar (1995:166) writes that

> Kinship, broadly construed, warrants preferential treatment of one being in comparison to another because we have *acquired duties* to one and not the other. However, one can only have duties, acquired or unacquired, to beings who are *already morally considerable*. To be morally considerable is to be the sort of being to whom others can have duties. Kinship interpreted in terms of closeness can be used to justify the favoring of one morally considerable being over another, without violating the other's basic rights, but it cannot be used to show that a being *is* morally considerable...We construe our duty to respect others' lives as a "natural" or *unacquired* duty, holding regardless of our relation to those others.

But where does this emphasis upon *essential* human attributes leave those of our own kind who fail to meet the elitist criteria? Neither sentiency, nor biological or physical endowment, of themselves, Clark & Asquith (1985) argue, confer personhood upon *all* human beings. This said, they nevertheless acknowledge that the singling out of rationality as the supreme characteristic of personhood is problematic for social work. Because they conceptualize the concept of person as "culturally and historically relative" and as endowing a moral status, Clark & Asquith (1985:18,20) contend that even those human beings who lack the traditional prerequisites of personhood can nevertheless be accorded respect, presumably, given earlier arguments, *because* of species membership - "once an entity is established as the possessor of the moral status of personhood it is entitled to treatment on certain principles, *even if* its possession of the usual attributes of personhood is questionable or incomplete" (italics mine).

But this does not answer the fundamental question as to what it is that makes a being morally considerable; to argue *against* specific attributes for human beings, whilst simultaneously excluding animals *because* they supposedly lack those very same attributes, is to apply double standards. It is no argument to dismiss the interests of animals on the grounds that they are *unlike* us (indeed their *unlikeness* ought awaken us to their *independent reality*, and deliver us from the solipsistic and narcissistic metaphysic that *we* alone are real), or that, as social workers, we ought attend to *more deserving* cases -

> Moving from the exalted to dangerously near the banal, it is possible that personhood is extended to domestic pets. When people say their dog is one of the family they may be speaking more literally than metaphorically. The pet may well receive every possible care and comfort, denied to arguably more deserving persons away from the family orbit. (Clark & Asquith, 1985:18)

Why 'more deserving'? Are affection, compassion and love such rare commodities that we are obliged to limit them to more deserving cases which *always* happen to be human? The implication is that solicitude for animals is at best misguided, and at worst fosters an indifference to human beings and merely conceals a latent misanthropy. But having made the observation that animals are indeed often considered as kin or as members of the familial household, Clark & Asquith (1985) proceed to place the shackles upon any widening of the circle of moral considerability via a caveat against straying from tradition (which is a little odd given their argument that the concept of personhood is culturally and historically *relative*).

The argument that one *becomes* a person, essentially via a social process, that "a human creature reared in isolation from human contact...could not conceivably be a person" (Clark & Asquith, 1985) ignores the fact that moral considerability holds regardless of our relationship to others (Pluhar, 1995); whilst such a creature, reared in isolation, would undoubtedly be stunted in so many ways (for we are, unquestionably, a social species), he or she is no *tabula rasa*. What is of value in us can be neither culturally nor historically relative, for else we may awake to a new morning only to find that the goalposts have been moved yet again. What is identified as important for our species (and the same holds for all other species) must correspond to the needs and range of our nature, and what is of value in us cannot merely be a matter of social ascription. Our value, and the value of all subjects-

of-a-life, is *inherent*, not acquired. But this much said, we ought be reminded that we are not a social island; many other species are comprised of social creatures and lead socially complex lives.

Indifference, Watson (1978) argues, is only an attitude and constitutes a failure to show respect, whereas compassion can signify either emotion or attitude toward others. Thus on an account of *respect for persons* based upon compassion - literally a "suffering with...a name for this realization of another" (Cordner, 2002:81) - as opposed to rationality, all human beings are owed respect because they are alive and have interests (Tilley, in Ragg, 1977). And, truth to tell, it is not only the human animal that as an interest in life (Johnson, L., 1983). Unless one adopts an arbitrary and speciesist position, it needs be shown why other animals, who patently have interests also, ought not be accorded, indeed owed, respect, or why animals, who are obviously alive, are not proper subjects of respect.

Whilst Horne (1987:98) admits that "respect for persons is essential to the creation of subjects", he contends that "it does not provide the individual as client any rights within the client/social worker relationship". It *surely* entails the right to be treated with respect, for whilst all other values provide qualified rights, the right to respect is an absolute universal right; as Clark & Asquith (1985:77) observe, "if respect for persons is more than an empty professional formula, it seems to commit social work to a deontological morality". And as Wilkes (1981:123) correctly avers, "The need is for a framework of social work practice that enables practitioners to treat *all* individuals as human beings of *equal value* and makes it impossible for them to discriminate against groups of people for *any* reason whatsoever".

We have seen that attempts to identify supposedly unique human attributes, and to then insist that they are discontinuous, as well the prerequisite of moral considerability, are, from an evolutionary perspective, fundamentally misguided. Likewise, the veneration of rationality has been seen to be extremely problematic for the moral standing of many human beings, and all too likely to generate monsters (Clark, 1977), or madmen (Chesterton, in Gaita, 1996). As if that hurdle was not in itself a substantial obstacle, Ragg (1977) contends that language possession is the prerequisite of personhood, maintaining that without language we would be incapable of becoming acquainted with either the world or reality, and that consciousness itself is dependent upon language. Why I, should I suddenly be struck dumb, and by added misfortune lose my ability to use my hands to converse via the mediums of written or sign language, would cease to be a person, even though I might satisfy the rationality lottery so beloved of many philosophers, is a tad

mystifying to say the least. Would I also forfeit my consciousness (or ought I to be reasonably fearful that I would) for want of linguistic practice? If my child never acquires the gift of speech, ought I correctly assume that, despite all evidence to the contrary, the child is, and more to the point, will always be, an unconscious creature? But this notion that language *precedes* consciousness is to grant it a metaphysical status that greatly flatters it, and places the cart before the horse, for, pray tell, how can I begin to talk *before* I think?(Clark, 1997a) Indeed the lack of human language or speech does not preclude intentional states in human infants and many animals, for "Only someone in the grip of a philosophical theory would deny that small babies can literally be said to want milk and that dogs want to be let out or believe that their master is at the door" (Searle, 1983).

In contending that it would be anthropomorphic to attribute consciousness to animals, Ragg (1977) fails to make a distinction between *perceptual consciousness* and *reflective awareness* (McDaniel, 1989). In the Raggian scheme of things, animals are denied personhood (read *moral considerability, standing or status*) because they do not engage in the highly *evolved* linguistic practices of human beings. The argument may be summarized as follows:

> a) human language is the prerequisite attribute necessary for personhood
>
> b) animals do not possess human language
>
> c) therefore, animals cannot be persons.

But tongue in cheek or no, Ragg (1977), in a twist on the Wittgensteinian (1953:223) aphorism that "if a lion could talk, we would not understand him", in effect supporting the time-honoured prejudice that they can therefore *neither* think *nor* feel (Clark, 1988d), declares that "it would be fair to say that any animal that could speak would be a person". But all this presupposes that human language is a unique evolutionary development, and a late one at that, which is not borne out by the evolutionary story; a too abstract notion of language serves to obscure the continuity of language with other forms of communication (Midgley, 1996a), and its dependence upon our animal nature and inheritance (McIntyre, 1999). Likewise, it is anthropocentric and unevolutionary, to suppose that animals, in the absence of human language, can never acquaint themselves with the world or reality; if that were the case, we would soon find ourselves with the world to ourselves. Animals are not

blind, deaf, dumb or senseless automatons; they are intimately acquainted with their world and their reality, for, like us, their lives depend upon it.

Now by Ragg's own criteria, it is obvious that many human beings, most notably infants, the senile and demented, and the insane, are not language users (or, at least, language users at a sufficiently abstract or coherent level beloved of linguists and linguistic philosophers), therefore they cannot be conscious (or, at least, able to engage in the abstract and reflective variety), and as a consequence cannot be persons (at least in the full sense so beloved by moral personists). But Ragg (1977) also requires that those who would be persons also meet the rationalist criteria of the paradigmatic person, and be fully paid up moral agents. However, no mention is made of the moral obligations due to moral patients, although Ragg (1977) lowers the bar somewhat by contending that personhood is an attribute that can be *learned* (thereby holding out the promise of personhoodinal salvation to human non-persons), and linguistic inability may be compensated for by gestures and non-verbal communicative expressions (perhaps thereby offering an escape route for supposedly marginal humans and morally differentiating them from non-human non-persons).

But the ingenuity employed fails to articulate why it is that we ought treat characteristically similar individuals in morally different ways. Expressions of concern for other beings, be they human or non-human, are dependent upon a raft of other considerations (most notably consciousness, sentience, and emotional fellowship) besides rationality or language possession, and cannot be reduced to one cardinal or supreme moral attribute that by coincidence is deemed to be an exclusively human characteristic. Even Kant does not suppose that language *must* be present for us to have any degree of concern in the first instance (Midgley, 1996a).

Given the levels of qualification and prevarication that punctuate discussions as to the nature of personhood, it is not in the least surprising that there are expressions of grave concern that the principle of *respect for persons* either actively promotes discrimination against those who are deemed to not be persons (Timms, 1983), or engenders discrimination against supposedly marginal humans (Watson, 1978,1980). This much we have already observed, and we will now turn our attention to the ingenious and somewhat disingenuous attempts to rescue marginal humans whilst at the same time excluding all other animals. Once we embark upon either/or conceptualizations, exclusions have somewhat of a life of their own, gathering and sequestering willy-nilly - all in all, such endeavours gainsay social work principles.

By way of exemplification, Downie & Telfer (1980:40) argue for three levels of concern -

> On the lowest level are the animals, who are regarded as having a presumptive right not to suffer...Next we have what we may call 'sub-normal' humans, who are not accorded full respect but are not treated like animals either...Finally we have the normal humans who are accorded full respect. We may describe the distinction between the sub-normal and normal human beings by employing the evaluative concept of a *person* to mark off those human beings who are worthy of full respect for the individual.

Were this to be the moral lay of the land, it would assuredly be a fact of grim portent for many of those with whom social workers work. By good fortune, the reality is that social work does not operate as though humanness, in spite of its wide range, can be categorized in a hierarchical or pecking order fashion - individuals are respected *ipso facto*, not accorded differential degrees by some as yet to be revealed manner of moral reckoning.

At this point the accentuation of rationality as the distinctive all-or-nothing attribute appears as a moral absolute, but on closer inspection it rapidly becomes clear that in practice there exists one rule for human beings (*marginals* included), and another for *all* other animals. In Downie & Telfer's (1980) opinion animals, whilst they ought be treated with kindness - Coetzee's (1999:61) Elizabeth Costello reminds us that in its *full* sense kindness refers to "an acceptance that we are of one kind, one nature" - and compassion, cannot be considered or regarded as having value *in and of themselves*. It is Downie & Telfer's (1980:40) observation that there are certain ways in which animals are routinely treated which we would not tolerate were they done to *any* human being -

> Leaving aside the questions of using animals for food and for experimentation, one may simply consider the question of transplant organs. If there is a chance that an organ from an ape, say, might do for a man, a doctor will not hesitate to kill the ape. But no one would kill a mental defective for transplant material, even if it were certain that his organs could save several people.

Given that the human poor have historically been subjected to any manner of medical experimentation in attempts to validate *theories* (Canovan, 1977; Lansbury, 1985; Pearce, 1997; Shaw, 1928,1949), and given subsequent developments since the publication of their book, Downie & Telfer's certitude seems patently misplaced - it has become all too obvious

that the 'farming' of humans for their organs, especially in Third world nations, has become a thriving trade, and, rightly, a human rights outrage, and contemporarily we are witnessing all manner of speculation as to the promise held out by cloning and embryonic research (Uren, 2002a,2002b), ushering in what Clark (1990c,1998b) terms a technocracy. As already noted, Frey (1987b,1988) suggests that logic decrees that, so long as we consider such practices ethically permissible, we ought treat like beings in a like manner, and that to the extent that we find it morally repugnant to treat 'defective' humans in this manner, then the case against treating animals in such ways is likewise strengthened. The equating of those deemed to be *marginal* humans with animals runs the very real danger that the former are somehow seen as being 'treated like or as animals', without due acknowledgement as to why this comparison holds force in the first instance, and obfuscates the question as to whether the manner in which we currently treat animals is itself problematic. Were we to treat other beings, both human *and* non-human, as fellow beings, we would assuredly safeguard against treating *any* being *like* an animal (Clark, 1998b).

In no small part human resistance toward, and reluctance to accede to, the extension of moral equality across the species barrier is due recognition that such augmentation would of necessity entail a restriction of sorts on human interests as morally obligatory (Jamieson, 1993). Contrary to Downie & Telfer's (1980) certitude, we ought not consider it a virtue that we would *automatically*, without hesitation, sacrifice a primate as though that creature were nothing more than means to human ends. It will seem rather obvious that there exist differences between ourselves and fellow animals, but we need to identify a *morally* relevant difference that would justify the treatment of animals in ways that would be prohibited with human subjects. A not insignificant problem with ethics is that it tends toward an absolute homocentrism; we take it for granted that human ends *always* justify the means and must *invariably* prevail, so that when we are confronted with the aforementioned transplant of ape organs, it seems *obvious* that this is morally permissible, and just as obvious to castigate all ethical objections to the said practice as undeniably misanthropic. Animals do not intrude into our ethical space; we seem more concerned with the maintenance of a healthy specimen, or the *idea* of the animal in question, than we ever are with the wellbeing of the animal *in and for itself* (Coetzee, 1999). But any attempt to explicate that the life of a *full* person is of more value than that of an ape inevitably entails that the life and rights of a supposedly *marginal* human are cancelled out by the needs of *full* persons (Pluhar, 1995).

It is incontrovertible that the great apes manifest emotion, individuality, personality, as well as intelligence and reason, and have mental capacities and emotional lives similar and approximate to those of our own (Bekoff, 1993,2003a,2005; Clark, 1993c; de Waal, 1996a,1996b,1997,1998,2001; de Waal & Tyack, 2003; Fossey, 1983; Hayry & Hayry, 1993; Peterson & Goodall, 1993; Teleki, 1993; van Lawick-Goodall, 1971). An awareness and recognition of our biological kinship entails an acknowledgement of our moral kinship (Clark, 1997a,1999; Rachels, 1993,1999; Rollin, 1993; Ryder, 1981,1993; Sapontzis, 1993), and the continued exclusion of the great apes from the community of equals, given their mental capabilities and emotional life, is arbitrary and irrational (Franscione, 1993). Indeed Teleki (1993) maintains that chimpanzees, like us, are individuals, with a right to freedom and self-determination. Repudiation of the utilization of animals as organ donors is not because it never leads to benefits for human beings, but rather that such gains are always *ill-gotten* (Regan, 1989), for they invariably fail to show respect to the individual animals involved. Ethology has but confirmed Darwin's conviction that the difference is one of degree, not kind, and "What remains is that we take its moral implications equally seriously" (Rachels, 1993:156).

The implication flowing from Downie & Telfer's (1980) position is that the duties owed to animals are indirect, and to treat them harshly is not to harm them but to run the risk of hardening our hearts against our fellow human beings, and despoiling our character. Animals serve as moral barometers or trial runs for the real thing; this attitude is but a reiteration of Aquinas' doctrine, and a recapitulation of the Kantian distinction between subjects (people) and things (animals and the natural world). Given the premium placed upon rationality, does their lack of this attribute consign those deemed to be *marginal* humans to a fate akin to that currently befalling animals? *Marginal* humans, or in Downie & Telfer's (1980) terminology, *sub-normal* humans, are, it turns out, to be treated differently to animals because they are *kin*. Those humans who fail to satisfy the requirements of personhood

> are nevertheless given the courtesy title of 'human'. This extension of respect is not strictly rational, though it may be a likeable and attractive sort of irrationality, and in any case is probably ineradicable, the result of a biologically determined sense of kinship with other members of one's biological species. (Downie & Telfer, 1980:48)

However, we have already seen that kinship arguments cannot be utilized to show that an individual is morally considerable (Pluhar, 1995), and to conceptualize respect for our human fellows as a 'likeable and attractive sort of irrationality' only confirms Chesterton's (Gaita, 1996) aforementioned observation that madness is not an absence of reason, rather the exclusion of everything else. Far better that we 'irrationally' respect our fellows, as independent realities, than establish a rational card-carrying elite that extends them a modicum of discretionary respect, like scraps from the moral high table. Respect for other realities, other centres of being, ought not be deemed supererogatory, rather indispensable to *our* remaining moral beings.

In a bid to ground our obligations to supposedly marginal humans, it is variously argued that we ought view babies and children as *potential persons* - and that we ought respect them for the persons they will *become* (Carruthers, 1989) - the demented and the senile as *lapsed persons*, the mentally ill as *temporarily lapsed persons*, and the insane and those with profound and irreversible mental deficiencies as *permanently potential persons* (Budgen, cited in Horne, 1987; Downie & Telfer, 1969). However, it is Harris' (1968:127) conviction that "we ought always to take them with their welfare in mind...If we can treat persons with one sort of deficiency as expendable, why not those with other sorts of capacity*?*"

It is also Downie & Telfer's (1969) contention that there exists sufficient *resemblances* between 'normal' and 'marginal' human beings to warrant the latter's inclusion under the umbrella that is the principle of *respect for persons*, and that the attitudes of *affection* and *pity* also serve to ensure the extension of respect; whilst affection and pity are not moral attitudes, they are in essence consistent with *agape*. Elsewhere, Downie & Telfer (1980) contend that the notion that human beings possess equal worth is not a factual statement, rather a normative moral principle, and that this equality is derivative of the principle of respect for the individual. It hardly needs articulating that there exists a world of difference between respect for a *person*, and respect for an *individual*; the former, at least by the lights of traditional philosophy, is restricted to abstracted centres of rationality, whilst the latter is attentive to the independent reality of the other, where *unlikeness* provides all the *more* reason to accord respect. As Murdoch (in Dooley, 2003:8) muses, "God, if He exists, is good because He delights in the existence of something other than Himself".

However, to speak of individuals in terms of their potential or lapsed personhood, or to extend respect due to resemblances, are all in effect to respect *indirectly*; we are attentive to

what the individual may become, or that which they once upon a time were, or that they are morphologically similar (given that certain individuals neither were, nor ever will, acquire personhood). On this reading, perhaps *respect for persons* is little more than an expression of *pity*, and can all too readily lead to an attitude of contempt (Simpkin, 1979) - "Contempt is the contrary of attention" (Weil, 1952:94) - for the reason that whereas pity largely *self-*centred, respect is *other*-centred. Respect can been conceptualized as *beneficence*, as something extended out of courtesy or as a favour or concession, rather than as *recipience*, a right to be treated in ways that are constitutive of respect. It is Downie & Telfer's (1969:35;1980) conviction that the principle of *respect for persons* can be *extended* so as to grant respect to human beings who are otherwise deemed to be non-persons, and "it would not be possible to adopt such an attitude to them *unless* we first knew what it was to adopt it towards *normal* persons" (italics mine). But to conceive normality as the ground of moral obligation and respect as its consequence is mistaken, for a basic moral right, in this case, respect, is not the consequence of our having a moral obligation, rather it is the *ground* of moral obligation (Regan, 1982).

The certitude displayed by Downie & Telfer (1969) is ultimately dependent upon the depiction of what it is that constitutes normality. If what Downie & Telfer (1969) aver is so, why ought we feel so outraged at the contention that it is only possible to extend respect to, say, women, children or non-whites, because we initially know what it is to adopt an attitude of respect toward white adult males? Or would it not be infinitely preferable to suggest that we respect others for their *individuality* (in all its hues and manifestations), and desire that we treat others (*independently* of their attributes) as we ourselves wish (or might wish, were we to lose even that faculty) to be treated (*especially* were *we* to be in *their* shoes), but for the grace of God, or Fate, or chance, or what you will.

We ought not treat those whom others suggest are *marginal* with respect only on the grounds that I know what it is to respect you as a 'normal' human being, and you in turn are polite enough to return the favour; direct respect must not in essence be a demand for perfection, with a moral trickle down effect. Respect is neither charity nor supererogation, rather an obligation upon all moral agents, due to all creatures who, as subjects-of-a-life have inherent value. It is little wonder then that there are those who argue that modern day social work, for all its pronouncements to the contrary, pays mere lip service to the notion of the sanctity of the individual, its platitudes masking the tendency to view the individual as a case for treatment, rather than respect. As a consequence, the principle of *respect for*

persons is alternately considered as providing scant guide to action and as engendering and actively promoting discrimination against those deemed to be *marginal* human beings (Timms, 1983; Watson, 1978,1980), whilst Azmi (1997) alleges that the concept of personhood is intrinsically ethnocentric. The traditional conceptualization of personhood is problematic, not because of its alleged ethnocentricity, which is debatable - indeed Browne (1995) argues that *respect for persons* is a ubiquitous principle which *transcends* cultures - but for its explicit personism and anthropocentrism. Whilst no universally agreed upon definition of the human person is readily at hand, nevertheless "it does not follow that we cannot recognize one, or deal well by her. It isn't absurd to suggest that 'being a person' is simply, for practical purposes, being someone whom the speaker urges us to respect" (Clark, 1998d:8).

It is Watson's (1980:59-60) belief that the principle of *respect for persons*, centering upon the capacities of rationality and rule following,

> must stigmatise individuals not exercising these capacities, though, so long as they are still possessed, though not exercised, the profession has some moral reason to care for these individuals…However, given that the capacities…are hardly possessed at all by some severely mentally handicapped individuals, 'respect for persons' provides little and no moral reason, respectively, for the *care* of these individuals. We are only obliged to *control* them. Caring professions working with these individuals must find another principle if talk of 'caring' is to be taken seriously. (italics mine)

Otherwise, Wilkes (1981:3) argues that social work invariably ascribes higher status to certain groups, with the consequence being that the notion of caring has been replaced in social work by caring for those deemed *important* - there exists a predilection for undervaluing those without specific problems, as opposed to the experiencing of life's general misfortunes, "namely the old, the crippled, the sick, the dying, and all those who are afflicted with the sorrows of suffering and death". Our shared vulnerabilities, and mutual dependency, are part and parcel of our animal natures (MacIntyre, 1999).

A significant part of the problem, to Watson's (1978,1980) way of thinking, is that the relevant categories of characteristics that warrant respect are *unnecessarily restrictive* - this parallels Warren's observation (1997) that morally relevant considerations are often conceived in a *uni-criterial* rather *multi-criterial* manner. It is a truism that what each of us

sees is ultimately dependent upon our metaphysical frame of reference. If we, *a priori*, declare that rationality is *all* that matters (or as good as, or to all intents and purposes), then our range of vision will of necessity be myopic, and the more so the more that we *insist* that rationality must conform to a particular abstract conceptualization of it. It is a relatively short step from identifying, isolating and venerating a particular attribute, to endowing it with the mantle of the *prerequisite* for moral considerability.

Often we are condemned to seeing what we want to see, heedless of the fact that there are more things in heaven and on earth than we can dream of - the world is not *ours*, and exhausts our descriptions of what *we* say it *is*. Love demands of us that we come to appreciate and gain insight into the fact that something other than ourselves is real, that we perceive and attend to individuals (Cordner, 2002; Murdoch, 1959a), an acknowledgement of the moral momentousness of the world outside the self that prevents moral claims from being synonymous with the human will (Antonaccio, 2000).

In arguing that ends need *not* be rational, but may correspond to the *interests* of an individual, Watson (1978,1980) proposes to circumvent the constricted notion of value by expanding the relevant range of characteristics that go toward ensuring that an individual is accorded moral consideration and standing. In place of Downie & Telfer's (1969:25) interpretation that showing active sympathy for people entails "making their ends our own" and commits us to the paradigmatic model of personhood, Watson (1978:43-44), by contrast, suggests a far more inclusive criterion for moral considerability that embraces those deemed *marginal*; that

> if we understand 'making their ends our own' to mean 'aiming at what they might *reasonably* be expected to aim at', the second component does not imply that the formal object of respect is a 'person'. Human beings who are neither self-determining nor rule-following may have ends in this sense; they might have ends at which someone might reasonably be expected to aim *even if* he is in fact unable to choose these ends for himself, formulate purposes, plans and policies of his own, or govern his conduct by rules...we may show respect even for such human beings because it is in *their* interest that certain ends be attained; in that sense we may make *their* ends *our* own…it is false that 'respect' 'has been defined to fit the concept of person' and that ' "a person" is the formal object of *agape*' (italics in text). (all other italics mine)

Such a conceptualization that respect is due to those creatures in whose interest it is that certain ends be attained, irrespective of their capacity to formulate purposes, plans and policies of their own, or to govern their conduct by reference to rules, cannot *a priori* exclude those numerous other animals who can, without equivocation, be said to meet these very same criteria. Accordingly, it is incorrect to insist that *respect* is cut so as to fit the conceptual cloth of human beings, or that *only* human beings are fitting objects of *agape*; respect is surely due to all those individuals who have interests and ends. It must be shown that there exists a morally relevant difference if creatures with similar attributes and characteristics are to be treated in morally differential ways, or else we fall hostage to the speciesist assumption (Pluhar, 1995).

What Watson (1980:61) proposes is a revamped notion of that which constitutes or indicates value in a human being, there being "a logical connection between attitudes and principles of action". Our *moral attention* is of ultimate significance, for as Plato observes, we truly come to resemble that which we *love* (Gaita, 1991); our ability to act well is largely contingent "upon the quality of our habitual objects of attention...The direction of attention is, contrary to nature, outward, away from self which reduces all to a false unity, towards the great surprising variety of the world, and the ability so to direct attention is love" (Murdoch, 1996:56,66).

It is Watson's (1980) conviction that the *wider* the range of characteristics that are deemed as having relevance and significance, the *greater* the number of individuals that we thereby have some moral reason to care for, and be concerned with. Rather than identifying and isolating the *person* as *a* moral reason for caring and considerability, Watson (1978,1980) argues that we ought replace the principle of *respect for persons* with the more inclusive and expansive principle of *respect for human beings*, for

> The wider the range of characteristics our social morality recognises as relevant, the more individuals we have some moral reason to care for. If our client possesses the capacities of a *person* we have one moral reason; if he possesses this distinctive endowment of a human being and other valued capacities, we have more than one moral reason to care. And if our other valued characteristics include some possessed by the severely mentally handicapped, we have moral reason to care for clients whom mere respecters of persons have no moral reason to help. (Watson, 1980:60)

It is Watson's (1978,1980) belief that the attitude of compassion entails the adopting of the principle of *respect for human beings*, but "Compassion *alone* cannot be sufficient for care of such individuals because such compassion entails adopting a moral principle recognising them as worthy of care in virtue of their possession of certain valued characteristics *other* than those distinctive of a person" (Watson, 1980:61). *Respect for human beings*, Watson (1978,1980) argues, is just such a principle; it acknowledges that many individuals fail to meet the stringent prerequisites demanded by the traditional exposition of personhood, but seeks to ground respect for *all* human beings without recourse to the notion that respect may be extended to *potential* or *lapsed* persons, and to those bearing *sufficient resemblances* to full persons. But as Watson (1980) argues, such a conceptualization, i.e., *respect for persons*, provides negligible or nil moral reason for the care of those non-persons, and is an unacceptable and deficient moral principle for social work.

It is to be noted that certain social work writers do not make a practical distinction between the principle of *respect for persons* and that of *respect for human beings* (Biestek, 1976; Biestek & Gehrig, 1978; Butrym, 1979; Horne, 1987; Moffett, 1968; Plant, 1970; Ragg, 1980). The principle of *respect for human beings* grounds respect for non-persons by virtue of reference to a wider range of characteristics of value; as Watson (1978:41) observes, "Respect for human beings allows, but respect for persons strictly does not allow respect for human beings who are not persons". The latter allows extension of respect for what the individual may *become*, or for what they once *were*, or out of respect for the interests of *others* (e.g., relatives), or because there exists morphological *resemblance*, *not* for what the individual *is*. In truth, our respect is therefore qualified and derivative, and is ultimately contingent. There is nothing inherently valuable in *this* or *that* individual, rather we condescend to extend or ascribe value, supposedly *only* because *we* know what it is to value ourselves and others of our kind who are pre-eminently estimable. When Clark & Asquith (1985:11) make the observation that "In some senses the notion of respecting the person is tautological since the concept of a person, it could be argued, necessarily entails respect", they draw attention to the problem of so-called *marginal* cases for social work given the primacy accorded to rationality by the orthodox conceptualization of personhood. Jesus (John 13:34) does not direct us to love and respect only those who satisfy a paradigmatic model of personhood, or suggest that our love for those who fail to so suffice is to be extended as a concession or augmentation - "Believe me, when you did it to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40).

A respect for human beings, deriving from our common humanity, is borne out by Gaita's (1999:17-20) recounting of a story about a nun who cared for incurably mentally ill individuals, who *in spite* of their afflictions nevertheless remained, in her eyes, as *fully* our fellow human beings. The nun, in her own person, incarnates a respect for, and love of, human beings that is *transcendent* of attributes or characteristics - Gaita (1999:20) insists that "her behaviour was striking not for the virtues it expressed, or even for the good it achieved, but for its power to reveal the full humanity of those whose affliction had made their humanity invisible. Love is the name we give to such behaviour".

Love of another is not dependent upon whether one meets the paradigmatic requirements, rather, as Murdoch (1996) reminds us, it is *knowledge of the individual*. Those deemed to be *marginal* humans, or moral patients (and that includes *other* animals), cannot be treated as though they are nothing more than mere receptacles (Cole, 1997) - these creatures possess inherent value, are beings who have value in and of themselves. It is Johnson's (1984:337) conviction that "*Moral patients* are those beings who are members of the moral community, who deserve, or are owed, direct moral consideration", whilst Regan (1983:261) asserts that "We *owe them* respectful treatment, not out of kindness, nor because of the "sentimental interests" of others, but because justice requires it". By contrast, the paradigmatic model of personhood, which excludes non-persons from the moral community (Fox, 1997), singularly fails to explain why it is that we ought not treat those human beings merely as means (Regan, 2001a). Their vulnerability and innocence, their capacity for consciousness and sentience, is morally significant; after all, they but differ from moral agents in *degree* of consciousness (Pluhar, 1981). Rather than identifying and isolating the capacity to be self-determining and rule-following as being the characteristics constitutive of value in human beings, Watson (1978:45) nominates "the capacities to be emotionally secure, to give and receive love and affection, to be content and free from worry, to be healthy". However, Watson (1978) adds the disclaimer that these capacities are neither definitive, nor is any particular capacity an essential condition of being owed respect.

Two things need be said at this juncture, which are important for the reader to understand given the Code of Ethics developed in this thesis, which argues for the moral inclusion and moral considerability of all species. Firstly, such an expansion of characteristics enables us to respect *all* human beings without recourse to either indirect arguments or condescension; secondly, such widening cannot be constricted so as to apply *exclusively* to human beings,

unless one makes recourse to arbitrary or anthropocentric arguments. We can dispense with the arbitrariness and moral elitism that is part and parcel of the traditional conceptualization of personhood (DeGrazia, 1997,2006), entailing *personism*, and respond with *loving attention* to our fellow human beings as fellow creatures, engaged in the odyssey that is life, likewise possessed of inherent value. We can awaken to the realization that we inhabit a moral democracy, and that it is only our arrogance and pretensions to uniqueness (in kind) and moral elitism that deludes us otherwise.

The principle of *respect for human beings* succeeds in grounding the moral considerability of *all* human beings where the alternative principle of *respect for persons*, as traditionally conceived, so obviously and portentously fails. It is exceedingly perplexing then, given the clear delineation made by Watson, that Horne (1987:16) should claim that

> The distinction which Watson makes between 'respect for persons' and 'respect for human beings' appears to be arbitrary. There is no logical disjunction (or at least not one explained by Watson) between the quality of, or needs of 'persons' and the quality of, or needs of 'human beings'.

Unless we are to radically revise and revamp the traditional characterization of the attributes that go toward defining who it is that can correctly be identified as being a person, the distinction made by Watson seems anything *but* arbitrary, unless one opts for the position that rational characteristics have absolute primacy and sole legitimacy. It seems more apposite to lay the charge of arbitrariness against those who would seek to constrict supreme moral considerability and value, indeed that which renders all humans morally equal (Arneson, 1999), to those autonomous moral agents able to engage in contractual bargaining - why is it that rationality or capacity for rule-following exclude affection, altruism, attachment, compassion, dependency, emotional fellowship, love, reciprocity, relationship, to name but a random selection? It is also evidently more arbitrary to suggest that our duties to non-persons are a matter of discretion (indeed, is not *resemblance* essentially arbitrary?) than something due as a matter of strict justice to all human beings. Indeed reference to human needs bespeaks a commonality that is specifically denied by the traditional regal formulation of personhood, and transcends cultural variants.

Vulnerability and weakness warrant a moral priority - the reason why we ought not mistreat, rather care for and respect, supposedly *marginal* human beings is, Clark (1978:149) avers, *because*

> they are weak, defenceless, at our mercy. They can be hurt, injured, frustrated. We *ought* to consider their wishes and feelings, not because *we* will be hurt if we don't, but because *they* will be hurt. And the *same* goes for those creatures who are of our kind though not of our species...not that it offends us but that it injures sentient, appetitive, partially communicative beings.

It is rather nonsensical to suppose that one *particular* capacity is a necessary condition of being a human being, as though all other capacities were no more than means to a particular end. It is far better to conceive our capacities in terms of parts and wholes. Our Western tradition has a long history of identifying and isolating rationality as being constitutive of the human essence and excellence, to the exclusion of emotion (Midgley, 1983b), or of decreeing that will, rather than goodness, is transcendent and sovereign (Murdoch, 1993a,1996). In contrast to the traditional conceptualization, Rawls (1999) argues that rationality is a *morally arbitrary property*, a property that is *bequeathed* by nature and for which we can claim no responsibility or moral credit. In a very real sense, it is the luck of the draw, and we have *no* moral entitlement to any benefits that may fall naturally to us from the possession of the said property (Rowlands, 1998).

In the human sphere it is commonly asserted that justice is an entitlement *independent* of one's capacities or excellences, and Rowlands (1998), along with Elliot (1984) and Rachels (1978), contends that our human status is also a morally arbitrary property, in the sense that it too is *undeserved*. Thus moral status ought be linked to the being that one is, and not dependent upon one's origin (Pluhar, 1995), and we ought attend, not to an individual's group membership, but rather to an individual's specific characteristics (Rachels, 1999). Therefore, a Code of Ethics cannot exclusively refer to *only* human beings, and it is imperative that an individual has an entitlement to be treated, by the light of a Code of Ethics, in a manner that acknowledges the being that one *is*, and not contingent upon one's origin.

It is Watson's (1980) argument that if we are to care for those human beings who cannot be considered, by the traditional criteria, to be persons, then it is obvious that the

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characteristics they do possess must of necessity be considered to be meritorious. As Gaita (1999,2002) reminds us, we are moved by the *preciousness* of others, and that sense is occasioned not primarily by rationality, nor by merit, *but by love, and a responsiveness and attentiveness to the individuality of the other*. Even insanity need not entail that an individual is any *less* human, for in truth there are many forms of human life (Gaita, 1998a; Harris, 1968).

In Watson's (1978:47) own words,

> We may now say that if respect for human beings implies valuing at the least the human capacities listed, including the capacities of a person, then respect for human beings is an importantly different principle from respect for persons. Respect for human beings permits respect to be directed towards children and the senile for other characteristics than their relation to the capacities of a person, which they do not possess. Respect for human beings permits respect to be directed towards congenital idiots in virtue of their possession of at least some of the valued capacities. Respect for persons does neither.

If we are to expand the range of characteristics in the manner that Watson (1978,1980) commends, it is evident that we cannot restrict respect, so conceptualized, as being the exclusive domain of human beings without recourse to blatant anthropocentrism. For as Singer (1976:265) points out, "The catch is that any such characteristic that is possessed by *all* human beings will not be possessed by *only* human beings". Animals, without any fear of anthropomorphism, can be said to value many of the same capacities that we ourselves find desirable; they can be said to have *interests* in being emotionally secure, for contentment and absence of anxiety, to be healthy, and to give and receive love and affection. Attentiveness to the capabilities and capacities of humans *and* animals is essential for their *flourishing* (Nussbaum, 2006).

We can also have an *active sympathy* for animals if by this we understand it to mean that we aim at that which *they* themselves might, for good reason, be expected to aim at. Indeed Watson (1978) admits as much, and whilst his argument allows for extrapolation to other animals in principle, his emphasis remains resolutely humanocentric. Although acknowledging that his expanded characteristics of value for human beings may also be possessed by animals, for "They are not *distinctive* of human beings", Watson (1978:47)

suggests that we overcome this dilemma by reference to the principle of *respect for human beings*, for "human beings ought to be respected for what is valuable in them".

In a practical sense, Watson's position is reflective of social work on two distinct levels. Firstly, the notion that we respect *all* human beings is a principle that can be said to inform social work practice to a far greater extent then its more abstract counterpart of *respect for persons* (as traditionally conceived), and for which it would be difficult to identify any dissenting voices; secondly, it is reflective of social work's pervasive anthropocentricity.

There is something counter-intuitive about the notion that we view humankind as demarcated into persons and non-persons, as reflecting a hierarchy of value; indeed the respect we extend to human beings is not dependent upon their satisfying philosophical definitions of rational substances (Teichman, 1985). But as in the general population, this is a value that is more often confessed as an article of faith, accorded mere lip service, rather than given embodiment or incarnated in the course of daily social work practice. This notwithstanding, Ife (2001) makes the observation that the notion of human rights, though often conceptualized in other language, assumes a common humanity and transcends religious and cultural divides. It is one thing to mentally assent to the equality of all humans, but another to *believe* it (Chesterton, 1949; Clark, 2000a), to make the connection between philosophical doctrine and psychological experience (Chesterton, 1925), and still another to *treat* others in ways that reflect a genuine embodiment of such a conviction.

But the fact that not many currently *really* believe this ideal does not determine that we ought not; *personism* goes awry in identifying cognitive capacities as the normative basis of human equality (Arneson, 1999), and in extolling a human *elite* (Cook, 2002; Mackay, 2001; Teichman, 1992,1994) or *moral elitism* (Regan, 2001a); it is but another form of discrimination (Mackay, 2001; Preece, 2002a,2002b; Wilkes, 1981,1985). Far better that we view innocence as something which *demands* respect (Laing, 1997; Pluhar, 1981), that in acknowledging our inability to know an individual *speculatively*, we commit to *caring* (Preece, 2002b), for we truly are "beings-in-relationships" (Sloane, 2002:90). In making the observation that the criteria for personhood is more often than not a function of other people's interests, Williams (1985:137) contends that "Certainly there is no slippery slope more perilous than that extended by a concept which is falsely supposed not to be slippery". We are sorely mistaken to deduce that lack of cognitive capacities or moral agency entails that we owe such individuals *nothing* (Clark, 1999), for to conceive *moral otherness* as

contingent upon the possession of specific attributes, be they rational or biological, is decidedly counterintuitive (Williams, 2000).

We shall briefly attend to the vexed moral issue that is abortion, for the reason that it goes to the heart of deliberations as to which beings we might rightly term *human*, or where human life begins. Given our tradition's penchant for rationality as the moral *summum bonum*, the unborn might rightly be characterized as the most marginal of marginal humans. Therefore we ought not be overly surprised when we read that the procedure termed 'foetal reduction', a euphemism for the poisoning of a foetus by means of needle injection, is advocated as an option in the case of multiple pregnancies because it *may* enhance the health of remaining children (Stock, 2001), or that abortion ought be a matter of *absolute* choice (Adams, 1991,1994a; Gordon, 1977; Harrison, 1983) and morally *neutral* (Warren, 1973), and justified in terms of ridding ourselves of the unborn disabled (Lawson, 1995). If we are to subscribe to a utilitarian calculus, perhaps we ought not to stop there - it may well be the case that our family may be benefited by the removal of the burden of a severely disabled child, or a demented or senile grandparent, so why should not *our* interests, and more likely *our* rights, be appealed to as likewise decisive? If we deem it morally permissible to abort the unborn disabled, or endorse their infanticide once among us, why ought we be exhorted, or be expected to, respect the lives of the disabled, or why ought their wishes *to live* be accorded weight, once they are in the land of the living? - "medical or moral experts...even when they say they will respect the judgement of those who think their own 'disabled' lives are still worth living, routinely insist that the lives in prospect for disabled embryos are *not* worth living. The disabled, in other words, are not acknowledged as good witnesses" (Clark, 2000a:271). If we accede to the proposition that abortion is legally and morally permissible for any number of health and social reasons, why ought we forbid it when the parent or parents decide that they have a *right* to choose the preferred gender, or perhaps eye colour, of a child for the reason that they allege it is no one else's business? Why ought a mother not have the right to abort her foetus right up until the moment of birth if that is her *choice*? It is Francione's (1995a) belief that even *if* we assign rights to the foetus, those rights are of necessity subservient to the primary rights of the woman. However, appeals to an absolute right over one's own body (Adams, 1991; Francione, 1995b; Warren, 1973) cannot be utilized when another body is as deeply involved as one's own (English, 1975), and in the case of abortion such absolutism decrees that foetuses are not people in *any* sense, which is belied by the fact that they are *so*

conceived from the moment that they are born (Midgley & Hughes, 1983), or that many woman experience post-abortion grief (Reist, 2000), and by the fact that "there is intense *clinical* pressure to identify the foetus as a quasi-child whose welfare the mother is obliged to foster" (Williams, 2000:46).

Self-determination and autonomy are not absolutes, but must be balanced against competing claims and interests; and where those claims and interests are those of the vulnerable, they are normally held to have *greater*, rather than lesser or nil, moral force and obligation. As Singer (1997a:85-86) observes,

> Advocates of legal abortion cannot remain neutral about when the developing human being acquires a right to life. If they advocate abortion on request, they are implicitly valuing the claim to life of a fetus as less important than the claim of a pregnant woman to choose the size of here family, pursue an uninterrupted career, or avoid bringing up a disabled child. This may be justifiable, but it is a substantive moral position because it rejects the idea that all human life is equally sacrosanct.

Advocates of abortion make a clear distinction between persons and non-persons; for instance, Petchesky (1984) argues that the corollary of foetuses being accorded personhood is *forced motherhood*, Adams (1994a) contends that foetuses inhabit a state of *nonbeing*, whilst Francione (1995b) rejects the notion that the foetus is a *discrete individual*. But there exists no substantial objection to the reality that the zygote I once *was* is indeed the person I now *am* (Clark, 2000b,2001a).

Are we likewise to view respect for the severely disabled, the senile and insane as forced responsibility, and is it inapt to speak of them as discrete individuals? Indeed the fact that we rightly exhibit an instinctive respect for the body of the deceased (Rayner, 2001), *including* foetuses, belies the notion that it is inane to respect the life of the unborn, unless we wish to maintain that respect for the former is merely out of deference to the sensibilities of the deceased's loved ones. Abortion has been singled out (our treatment of the severely disabled, the senile and the insane could have likewise been addressed) for the reason that it highlights the pervasiveness of what Clark (2000a) terms *personism*, and exemplifies the contentiousness that surrounds the criteria as to what it is to be *fully* human. Indeed Singer (1997a) argues that the moral standing of a new born child lies somewhere between that of a foetus and that of an older child or adult, and that

If there were to be legislation on this matter, it probably should deny a full legal right to life to babies only for a short period after birth - perhaps a month...the newborn baby is on the same footing as the fetus, and hence fewer reasons exist against killing both babies and fetuses than exist against killing those who are capable of seeing themselves as distinct entities, existing over time. (Singer, 1984:125,124)

Which begs the question, do fewer reasons also exist against killing the severely disabled, and the profoundly and irreversibly senile and demented, who *we* may decide lack the capacity to view themselves as distinct entities? Who or what gives *us* such a right to play God, for in so doing we may have good reason to be alarmed that the composition of the future citizenship of the city of the wise will be determined by whatever contemporary human elite holds sway, and who thereby will take it upon themselves to pontificate *which* lives are *worth* preserving, and what perfection entails. Once we acquiesce to the moral priority of the strong, we are all liable to be deemed (all too readily) to be expendable (Brophy, 1972; Clark, 1977). Little wonder then that Chesterton (quoted in Clark, 1998b:57) opines that "nobody could pretend that the affectionate mother of a rather backward child *deserves* to be punished by having all the happiness taken out of her life. But anybody can pretend that the act is needed for the happiness of the community". Interestingly enough, even those human beings who are severely brain damaged, senile or in irreversible comas (categories commonly referred to as 'human vegetables'), are nevertheless understood to still be legally and medically persons (in the metaphysical sense), but as Sapontzis (1987:50) relates,

Fetuses that do not yet *look* (italics mine) human constitute the only significant group of *Homo sapiens* widely not considered persons [in the metaphysical sense]…since those who object to calling such fetuses "persons" [ditto] also often object to calling them "humans", these fetuses cannot provide clear counterexamples to the thesis that "person" [ditto] is just another name for human beings.

And those inclined to assign the foetus an other-than-human status, confident that it removes these beings from the moral sphere, ought think again, for as Kerr (quoted in Preece, 2002a:58) observes, "Paradoxically enough, the more animal we remember

ourselves to be, the weightier the theological objections to abortion and embryo experimentation might become".

There are those who argue that abortion represents a distinct threat to the notion of the sanctity of human life, averring that "If a person's right to life is violated at the moment in which he is first conceived in his mother's womb, an indirect blow is struck also at the whole of the moral order, which serves to ensure the inviolable goods of man. Among these goods, life occupies the first place" (John Paul II, quoted in Singer, 1997a:83). But it also needs stating that almost invariably the sanctity of human life is conceived in inverse proportion to the instrumentality of animal life; *we* are all *ends*, *they* are mere *means*. It is not the sacrosanct nature of life, but *human* life, that we are exhorted to respect.

But that which firstly befalls animals tends in due course, in a trickle-down-sort-of-way, to be the lot of certain human beings; should the human embryo be considered to be surplus to requirements, it is deemed that it is morally permissible to utilize and destroy it in the name of research (Singer & Kuhse & Buckle & Dawson & Kasimba, 1990; Linzey, 1987), especially if the carrot of a cure for all our ills (you can take people out of religion, but you can't take the religious spirit out of the people, or so it seems) - indeed, one is likely be castigated as a misanthropist if one raises *any* substantial objections. *Who* in their right mind would not agree? Where we were once exhorted to conceptualize the dilemma as one demanding that we must choose between the puppy/guinea pig *or* the baby (or more likely, *your* baby) - the social workers in the practice examples in Chapter One are captive to such a worldview - we are now being asked to choose between the embryo (which we are told is, after all, *only* a collection of cells), and the future health of those of our kind now on *terra firma* Few of us in the run-of-the-mill world inhabit lifeboats, and such analogies, by definition, apply to extreme and rare situations (Francione, 2000; Regan, 1983).

Well may we ask, what if we found that 'marginal' or 'inferior' or less than 'fully' human beings could be effectively utilized as research tools for the rest of *us*, *especially* if it were ascertained that the benefits that would thereby accrue to the rest of us would be jeopardized were we to refrain from utilizing them? We are increasingly urged to justify everything in terms of ends. For what reason then are we to respect *all* human life, and treat *all* human beings as warranting equal moral consideration? We have already seen that there exists a belief that this conviction ought be grounded our common humanity, in the *inalienable preciousness* that is inherent in each and every human life, and social work literature is replete with assertions about the uniqueness and inherent worth of the

individual. In making the observation that the traditional Western philosophical and religious conception of human life as being invested with unique and irreplaceable value has been slowly but surely eroded and dispensed with by many in the contemporary world, leading to an ever-increasing instrumentalism that seeks to mould, change or conform individuals to a socially sanctioned reality, Wilkes (1981:11) cautions that "When ethical judgements are based on nothing higher than human opinion then nothing is forbidden".

When values are conceived as disavowing a transcendent reality, human will moves into the void, and *choice*, as opposed to *attention*, is installed as being constitutive of our mode of being (Murdoch, 1996), undermining both the unity and objectivity of morals, as well the dependability of knowledge (Murdoch, 1977). By contrast, moral life, is lived in the light of the Good (Gaita, 1991; Murdoch, 1977,1993a,1996), and Murdoch's (1987:108,101) Plato observes that "We can think everything else away out of life, but not value, that's in the very - ground of things", and "Truth isn't just *facts*, it's *a mode of being*. It's finding out what's real and responding to it - like when we really see other people and know they exist". When human opinion, or will, is accorded sovereign value, we invariably lose sight of the fact that " 'Good as transcendent reality' means that virtue is the attempt to pierce the veil of selfish consciousness and join the world as it really is" (Murdoch, 1996:93). Virtue, sadly, suffers a similar fate to morality, in that both terms are often conflated with negative religious connotations or priggishness, and thought best dispensed with. This is most unfortunate (Aristotle, 1952; Gordon, 2003; Hursthouse, 2001; MacIntyre, 1981,1999), for as Murdoch (1996:87) avers "nothing in life is of any value *except* the attempt to be virtuous" (italics mine).

If our value resides in our *common humanity* (Biestek, 1976; Butrym, 1979; Cordner, 2002; Gaita, 1999; Gray & Stofberg, 2000; Ife, 2001; Morley & Ife, 2002; Watson, 1978,1980; Weil, 1986; Wilkes, 1981), in our *common nature* (Midgley,V1996a), in our *common origins* (Clark, 1997a,1999,2000a; also the Christian mystics such as St. Francis and St. John Chrysostom), or in our *one-ness* (Hubbard, 1986), then we may well say that whilst there be vast difference in degree between us and our fellow brothers and sisters, we are not talking about difference of *kind*. In Clark's (2000a) opinion, we ought respect and value our kin because they are kin, independent and irrespective of character or talent (and kin does not refer only to creatures of *our* kind). What is sacred and of value is the *whole* human, not specific attributes or capacities (Weil, 1986). As my grandmother never tires of observing, it takes *all* types to make a world; even the *least* among us have their rightful place in the

sun, and it may well be that the last shall be the *first* (Mark 10:31), for the meek *shall* inherit the earth (Psalms 37:11).

John Paul II (quoted in Clark, 2000a:193) deplores

> the mentality which tends to *equate personal dignity with the capacity for verbal and explicit*, or at the least perceptible, *communication*. It is clear that on the basis of these presuppositions there is no place in the world for anyone who, like the unborn or the dying, is a weak element in the social structure, or for anyone who appears completely at the mercy of others and radically dependent on them, and can only communicate through the silent language of a profound sharing of affection.

Such language suggests that we ought delight "in the actual, present properties of creatures without ordinary human speech" (Clark, 2000a:271), and belies the notion that language possession is a necessary capacity for the valuing of a creature. But if we are to value '*the silent language of a profound sharing of affection*' for such human creatures, why ought we not extend such consideration to animals, as is being argued in the Code of Ethics presented in this thesis? If animals *at the very least* match the capacities possessed by such human beings, only anthropocentrism, be that of a religious or secular variety, can serve to justify non-consideration of like interests.

The second way in which Watson's (1978,1980) position is reflective of social work thinking is that it remains thoroughly anthropocentric. The principle of *respect for human beings*, laudable as it is in guaranteeing the moral considerability of *all* human beings, is, by definition, exclusive of all other animals *irrespective* of their capacities or interests. The paradox is that whereas the principle of *respect for persons* does not *a priori* exclude beings other than humans from its scope (they must however meet the paradigmatic model of personhood, which it is *assumed* that all other animals *fail* to do), the principle of *respect for human beings* does *precisely* this. Whereas *respect for persons* extols the sanctity of rationality, *respect for human beings* adheres to the notion of the sanctity of *human* life, which explicitly excludes all non-human animals. In effect, both principles exclude animals from the circle of moral considerability, albeit for differing reasons. Indeed Singer (1997a) argues that the Western tradition is unusual, not in its assumption that human life is sacrosanct, but in its conviction that *only* human life has sanctity, given that the differences that hold between ourselves and other animals are of degree, *not* kind.

Despite the enormous changes wrought by the Darwinian revolution, social work remains deeply entrenched and ensconced in, and resolutely wedded to, an anthropocentric worldview. It is as though the reality of our kinship with other animals is a mere blip on the screen of life, as though it is a fact completely unrelated to moral matters. Where it is conceded that we evolved from a common lineage, it is rarely acknowledged that we *are* animals, and that other animals are our kin. Even when it is admitted that we share capacities in common, the consequences are not pursued or seen as having normative implications for our dealing with other animals. Social work has a long and admirable history of continually reiterating that we have a *special* duty to the weak and the vulnerable, a duty that is morally obligatory, neither supererogatory nor optional. Such a view concurs with what is a longstanding and central theme in our tradition, for "we are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality" (Costello, 2001:11).

As noted in the opening chapter, the solicitude of nineteenth century social reformers in Britain and America for the vulnerable transcended species barriers, and amongst some early social workers concern for non-human animals was seen as perfectly compatible with regard for members of our own species. Remarkably, this ready recognition of the universality of compassion was at its zenith; it is hard to imagine many contemporary social workers having the intrepidity or moral imagination to run the risk of losing the respect of their fellows by concerning themselves with the welfare and well-being of animals; as the contemporary social worker Lynn Loar (1999:120) observes, "Sensitive, thoughtful, and caring people seem rarely, if ever, to have considered the problem of cruelty to animals and its ramifications for human interaction".

And yet slowly but surely awareness of the interrelationship between human and animal welfare is coming full circle; animal welfare and human welfare are coming be understood as *mutually inclusive* concerns (Arkow, 1999; Lacroix, 1999). It has been shown that there is a strong correlation between children who have shared their lives with companion animals in childhood and later adult concern for the welfare and well-being of animals (domestic and non-domestic) *and* human beings (Paul & Serpell, 1993; Serpell, 1981; Serpell & Paul, 1994), that there exists a correlation between feeling empathy for humans and animals (Paul, 2000), an unambiguous linkage between animal abuse and later aggression against human beings (Ascione, 1993; Felthouse & Kellert, 1998; Flynn, 1999; Garbarino, 1999), particularly violence against women and children (Adams, 1990,1994a,1994b,1995; Arkow, 1996; Ascione, 1998; Ascione & Arkow, 1999; Barnard,

1999; Boat, 1999; DeViney, Dickert, & Lockwood, 1983; Flynn, 2000a,2000b,2001; Hall, 1999; Hutton, 1983; Jorgensen & Maloney, 1999; Loar, 1999; Loar & White, 1998; Lockwood & Ascione, 1998; Lockwood & Hodge, 1986; McKay, 1994; Quinlisk, 1999; Rosen, 1998). Notwithstanding Hutton's (1983) suggestion that animal abuse might well be efficacious as a diagnostic approach in social work, there nevertheless remains resistance to the linkage between animal abuse and domestic violence (Grant, 1999), and Ascione & Arkow (1999) conceptualize the overlapping domains for those experiencing child abuse, domestic violence, and animal abuse as three interlinking circles of compassion.

The importance of animal companionship is likewise acknowledged (Anderson, Hart & Hart, 1984; Beck & Katcher, 1996; Beck & Rowan, 1994; Garrity, Stallones, Marx & Johnson, 1989; Hart, 1995; Katcher & Beck, 1983; Kowalski, 1997; Podberscek, Paul & Serpell, 2000; Robin & ten Bensel, 1998; Sanders, 2000; Serpell, 1986,1991), especially for the elderly (Anderson, Hart & Hart, 1984; Francis, Turner & Johnson, 1985; Hart & Mader, 1986; Hendy, 1987; Lago, Knight & Connell, 1983; Lago, Connell & Knight, 1985) with specific benefits for human health, particularly for cardiovascular health (Friedmann, Thomas & Eddy, 2000) and human mental health (Bustad, 1980), as is the salient role that animals play in the emotional and moral development of children (George, 1999), and in work done with children from violent and/or sexually abusive backgrounds (Rathmann, 1999; Roseberry & Rovin, 1999; Ross, 1999).

And in the light of the evolution story, this makes perfect sense. When all is said and done, we are all, the human animal and all other animals, *terrestrial kin*, and since Darwin's revelations the notion that human beings inhabit an essentially distinct moral order is a flawed and self-deceiving metaphysic. In remarking that the theory of evolution represents probably the most important revelation since the Galilean and Copernican revolutions, Moore (1992:319) makes the observation that "The doctrine of organic evolution, which forever established the common genesis of all animals, sealed the doom of anthropocentrism". But such awareness tends to be seen as having no direct bearing upon our ethics or moral framework (Hardy, 1930a; Moore, 1907,1992; Rachels, 1999; Salt, 1894,1921,1935).

Whilst the biology of evolution receives almost universal assent, the psychology and ethics of the Darwinian narrative is but rarely affirmed or recognized, and although "Men no longer believe that other races and other worlds were really made for them... they continue to act in about the same manner as they did when they did believe it" (Moore, 1992:322).

Rather than encouraging fellow-feeling and compassion, Clark (1977:30) laments that "Unfortunately, the symbolic use to which Darwinism has been put is to exalt Man as heir of the ages, and depress the non-human animals as errors, or backslidings, or material".

It cannot be a matter of moral indifference as to what befalls other creatures, nor can it be that human interests invariably override those of other animals. Aquinas' (1989a,1989b) notion that we ought not be cruel to beasts or else we are likely to treat our fellow humans hard-heartedly and in a beast-like manner was premised on the assumption that, in Kantian terms, human beings are always ends, whilst animals, essentially irrational creatures - and as Clark (1977:36) notes, "therefore contemptible" - are invariably means to human ends. The notion that we owe animals *no* direct duties was always nonsensical (Nelson, 1971); if it could be conclusively proven that cruelty to animals *never* precipitated like treatment of my human fellows, I would then be at complete liberty to make the lives of my animals (since I would therein not be offending against anyone else's property rights) a living hell, should I so desire, and still be considered a perfect gentleman in all manner of human affairs.

The kernel of truth in Aquinas' argument is that if we act towards sentient creatures in ways that either cause avoidable suffering or ride roughshod over their interests, then there is good reason to believe, nay fear, that we will become desensitized in our dealings with other sentient beings - indeed Henry Salt (1935:51) is convinced that "we may take it for granted that, in the long run, as we treat our fellow beings "the animals," so shall we treat our fellow-men", whilst Porphyry (1965:140) makes the observation that "he who abstains from every thing animated…will be much more careful not to injure those of his own species". For this reason it was widely believed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that butchers were debarred from jury service in capital cases for the reason that it was thought that their familiarity with the taking of life would thereby serve to impair their judgement (Loar, 1999; Locke, 1990; Thomas, 1983), and it was thought that one's compassion was invariably corroded by such an occupation (More, 1937).

One's attitude and behaviour, compassionate or otherwise, towards humans *and* animals, the philosopher John Locke (1990:119) argues, has its foundation in childhood, and whilst cruelty is *not* natural, he avers that "the custom of tormenting and killing of beasts will, by degrees, harden their minds even towards men; and they who delight in the suffering and destruction of inferior creatures, will not be apt to be very compassionate or benign to those of their own kind". It is indeed remarkable that we should have ever thought that we might

do as we please with our animal kin, and to suppose that it will have no direct bearing upon either our moral character or demeanour towards our fellow human beings; such an attitude assumes a psychological discontinuity that is an extraordinary piece of metaphysics.

Truth to tell, animals are our *neighbours* and *fellows*. But it is just as odd to suppose that the way in which we treat all other animals is nothing more than an exercise (or trial run) in human moral development, or a matter of aesthetics, and that our own fate is independent of that of all other creatures; Albert Schweitzer (quoted in Wynne-Tyson, 1985:316) is keenly aware of the interdependence of human and animal concerns, averring that "Until he extends the circle of his compassion to all living things, man will not himself find peace".

We are a remarkable species, with truly wondrous qualities and excellences, but then the very same can be said about other species. Unfortunately, the reality that the capacities of those deemed to be *marginal* humans are often, at the least, matched by other animals often leads either to a reversion to a resolute anthropocentrism, or else to a deprecation of the value of certain forms of human life. Either human life has an absolute and exclusive value, with morality a human-*only* affair (Willard, 1982), or else only *persons* possess supreme moral considerability. Either way, there exists an almost invariable tendency to conceive humankind as essentially isolated from all other creatures, and the belief that all I see about me is mine to command - "for what use can they possibly be, but for the good of me*?*" (Gompertz, 1992:52)

But, to be sure, we are not isolated or disconnected beings, except of our choosing; the evolution story teaches us that we are all kin, and that we are all terrestrial creatures, embedded within the natural world, kindred souls in the evolutionary tapestry, and "as beings forming a small part of the fauna of this planet, we also exist in relation to the whole, and its fate cannot be a matter of moral indifference to us" (Midgley, 1983c:91). To suppose otherwise, post-Darwin, is to subscribe to a flawed metaphysic - our dignity arises from and rests *within* our terrestrial status as animals, and it is way past time that we rejected the equating of *animal* as an inherently derogative epithet. And for the spiritually inclined, perhaps the notion that we are all creatures of God, and that our dignity (human and animal alike) lies in the fact of our *common origin* (a point accentuated by St. Francis of Assisi and St. John Chrysostom, among others), ought serve to correct the notion that God is somehow made in *our* image. And indeed those of a secular persuasion, in the aftermath of the much heralded and vaunted death of God, cannot suppose that rationalism permits any absolute dichotomy between human beings and other animals, and it will not

do to imagine ourselves at war with the beasts in order to give ourselves a sense of our own identity as human beings (Clark, 1977). Perhaps, as Hoban's (1977) George muses, "It's almost as if we're put on earth to show how silly they aren't".

In acknowledging our true status, and recognizing that it does not diminish our dignity or uniqueness (indeed, *how* could it?), we also rehabilitate the moral standing of our animal kin. In asking the question, '*who is my neighbour?'*, we come to realize that the species barrier is neither hermetically sealed nor morally important; all animals are our neighbours, far better that we acknowledge what Moore (1992) refers to as the *universal kinship*, to admit our commonality and unity with all creatures (Carpenter, 1913), that "pain to all upon it, tongued or dumb, shall be kept down to a minimum by loving-kindness" (Hardy, 1976:558). Unless we demand *a priori* that human life has supreme moral importance and value, any sentient being, human or animal, whatever characteristics or capacities they possess, has a right to be treated as an end in itself, and as having a *prima facie* right to life. The very concept of human rights, Ife (2001:15) argues, is by definition anthropocentric, but he insists that concern for the rights of animals is fully consistent with a commitment to the rights of human beings, and that the latter ought not be construed as having perpetual right of way -

> where there is a conflict of claims of rights, the rights of the weak and vulnerable should prevail over the rights of the more powerful, and this can readily be applied to our obligations to non-human species as well. It is therefore simplistic to set up anthropocentric human rights and an ecocentric view of animal rights as necessarily in competition.

Whilst it is true that human rights are by definition concerned with human beings, it is mistaken and clumsy to term such interests *anthropocentric*. By definition, anthropocentrism *precludes* an equal consideration of equal interests, committing us to "viewing and interpreting *everything* in terms of human experience and values…assuming man to be the final aim and end of the universe" (Macquarie Dictionary, 1990:113) (italics mine). Unless the rights of human beings are to be formulated and articulated in isolation from the rest of creation - and this would seem to be specifically contrary to Ife's (2001) intentions - we would be better served to speak the language of moral rights as relating to different needs and interests but necessarily inclusive in its scope. Indeed, Feinberg (1974:43-44) maintains that "To have a right is to have a claim *to* something and *against*

someone, the recognition of which is called for by legal rules or, in the case of moral rights, by the principles of an enlightened conscience", whilst Eagleton (1998a:296-297) comments that "assigning a right implies the capacity protected by it should be positively nurtured, since it would be odd to protect a capacity and then be blithely indifferent as to whether or not it flourished". It is Rowlands' (1998) conviction that rights can be understood as *moral entitlements*, and are applicable to both human beings *and* animals.

Ife's (2001) differentiation between *anthropocentric* human rights and *ecocentric* animal rights evokes Nozick's (1995:39) observation of "utilitarianism for animals, Kantianism for people". There exists, Brophy (1979b:72) avers, "a necessary continuity between the rights of all animals, *as animals*, including human animals in with the others" (italics mine). And as Salt (1894:7) observes,

> It is of little use to claim "rights" for animals in a vague and general way, if with the same breath we explicitly show our determination to subordinate those rights to anything and everything that can be construed into human "want"; nor will it be possible to obtain full justice for the lower races so long as we continue to regard them as beings of a wholly different order, and to ignore the significance of their numberless points of kinship with mankind.

The idea of human rights has come to be increasingly seen as being indispensable for talking about the world we inhabit, indeed Midgley (2001a:164) avers that it has an "implacable force", and as a concept it has served to expand our sense of responsibility to encompass all humankind, thereby immeasurably widening the scope of morality; nevertheless, we often ignore the fact that duties "formulate the requirements towards which declarations of rights gesture" (O'Neill, 2002:29). But we have also come to realize, albeit gradually, that we have duties and obligations that *transcend* consideration of the interests of our own species, but because the language of rights has traditionally been seen as the sole preserve of humanity, attempts to utilize 'rights' and 'animals' in the same breath have met with both incredulity and resistance, often obfuscating the substantiality of the inherent moral issues, despite the fact that the emphasis accorded to human claims was not originally intended to preclude concern for other terrestrial creatures; Midgley (2001a:161) observes that the

idea of dismissing them as mere disposable instruments now strikes many of us as immoral and repulsive. Yet the rationalist half of the tradition is deeply committed to claiming that only rational beings of a strictly human kind can have the kind of value or importance that would bring them within the scope of morality at all.

As we have already seen, rights by nature are most often qualified; for instance Clark & Asquith (1985), in observing that the content of human rights is to all intents and purposes the same thing as that encapsulated by the notion of natural rights, contend that human rights are qualified in nature precisely because there are generally agreed upon grounds for their withholding or curtailment. What we are concerned with in this thesis is *moral*, as opposed to legal, rights. Moral rights can be conceptualized as *valid claims* (Mill, 1901; Regan, 1983), differing from legal rights in their universality, equality, and the fact that they are not created by any one individual or any group (Regan, 1983), and moral considerability *entitles* the moral subject to consideration or respect (Rowlands, 2002). As Regan (1983:273) comments,

> To establish one's rights is to establish *their moral relevance* in the determination of what, in any actual case, morally ought to be done. Whatever ought to be done, in other words, cannot be determined independently of considering the rights of those involved, even though what ought to be done cannot be determined just by citing this or that right possessed by this or that individual.

We have also argued that the traditional conceptualization of personhood is unnecessarily restrictive, and has odious implications for certain categories of human beings, as well as for all animals. Likewise, to limit respect to *all* and *only* human beings is arbitrary and speciesist. Moral rights ought be extended to all beings who have interests (Godlovitch, Godlovitch & Harris, 1972), and this entails a respect for individuals *independent* of their species membership. With regard to the language of rights, Clark (1977:34) makes the observation that "Within an absolute context it is difficult to see how any of us, men or beasts, have any rights at all: and we certainly therefore have no rights upon them. In less absolute terms any principle, or prince, that accords rights to the weak of our own species must also accord them to animals".

Moral rights are valid claims, and all moral agents and moral patients possess certain basic moral rights - Regan (1983:327) avers that the "principal basic moral right possessed by all moral agents and patients is the right to *respectful treatment*...all moral agents and patients are intelligibly and non-arbitrarily viewed as having a distinctive kind of value (*inherent value*) and as having this value *equally*" (italics mine).

We can jettison the principles of *respect for persons* (at least as traditionally conceived), and *respect for human beings*, in favour of the more morally inclusive and biologically sound *respect for individuals*. As Clark (1988b:240-241) observes, it is not only rationality that is deserving of our respect, rather the individual dignity of each *subject-of-a-life*, and "we treat such creatures wrongly when we systematically deny to them the sort of respect and care that we are so eager to have lavished on ourselves". We assuredly wrong other creatures when we deny that their lives are *theirs*, when we *cause* them pain and distress, deny them the lives they would otherwise lead, and treat them as though they were nothing more than our *things* - "If human imbeciles ought so far as is possible be assisted to live their own lives, why should not nonhuman creatures be allowed or assisted so to do?" (Clark, 1988b:239).

Moral patients, humans *and* animals alike, are owed a right of *recipience*, which Clark & Asquith (1985:28) define as "a right against someone to receive something, or claim a right", and a right to respectful treatment is universalizable for both moral agents and moral patients - both possess inherent value, both possess it equally, and as a consequence *both* are owed respectful treatment as a matter of strict justice (Regan, 1983). It is for such reasons that Regan (2004:38) avers that "Moral rights breathe equality".

We earlier noted that Ife (2001) maintains that a human rights perspective necessitates that where conflict of claims of rights exist, then the rights of the weak and vulnerable should prevail, and furthermore he asserts that this principle can be readily extrapolated to animals, and that human rights need not take precedence over the rights of animals. Given Ife's (2001) conviction that the weak and vulnerable have a moral priority, it can be argued that the claims of animals ought thereby be accorded precedence when they conflict with the rights of human beings. This notion that we might owe animals *more* than equal consideration derives from the fact that "the weak and the oppressed constitute a special moral category of moral obligation based on our special relationship of power over them" (Linzey, 1994:36). As DeGrazia (1996:274) avers, "*special relationships* with animals, as with humans, are a basis of positive obligations".

Indeed, Linzey (1994:41-42) contends that the historic language of justice, and its related ideas of equality and rights, indispensable as they are,

> fall short of meeting the moral claim that animals make on us...It is quite possible for a parent to respect all the rights of a child and still be less than what a parent should be. He or she may not beat the child, provide as far as possible for its education, even care for it in times of sickness and need, and yet may still fall short of being the loving, forgiving parent that all children actually need for their growth into adult personhood. We should certainly speak of the rights of children - as we should speak of the rights of animals - but what parents owe children - as human owe animals - goes beyond the respecting of their rights.

Rather than human excellences or supposed uniquely possessed capacities, or human species membership *per se*, having the definitive say in moral deliberations, it is the individual (human *or* animal) that takes central stage; the greater our capacities the greater *our* obligation to all that lives (not the greater *our* rights) and the greater the weakness and vulnerability of those human and non-human animals who go to make up what Clark (1997a) terms the *earth household*, the greater *their* claims to moral priority. According to Rowlands (1998:98), "To speak of a moral right is always an elliptical way of referring to the individual against whom the right is claimed; it *presupposes* such an individual or individuals. And we can only have rights against moral agents" (italics mine).

Membership of the terrestrial community cannot be restrictively narrowed to being the exclusive preserve of rational adult human beings, and this contractual model of moral considerability was always elitist and counter-intuitive -

> What rights there are, in short, are to be found by discovering what all creatures might, without self-contradiction, be required to do or refrain from doing...If we abandon the arbitrary line that has been drawn around the human species and understand that all creatures are members of the one community, the terrestrial biosphere, we can ask what rules might obtain in that system. (Clark, 1985d:21)

If we desire to persevere with the language of personhood, then perhaps we ought conceive it in much the same manner as Darwin (1936:99-100) conceives evolution, more like a radiating bush or tree than as an escalator (Midgley, 1986), a continuum marked by difference in degree, rather than as a rare and exclusive attribute that differs in kind - and

mote-like separates the non-human animal chaff from the human (stipulatively, the paradigmatically rational elite) wheat. Personhood, Smuts' (1999:118) insists, is not contingent upon the attribution of human characteristics to other animals, rather the recognition

> that they are social subjects, *like us*, whose idiosyncratic, subjective experience of us plays the same role in their relations with us that our subjective experience of them plays in our relations with them. If they relate to us as individuals, and we relate to them as individuals, it is possible for us to have a *personal* relationship. If either party fails to take into account the other's social subjectivity, such a relationship is precluded…personhood connotes a way of being *in relation to others*, and thus no one other than the subject can give it or take it away. In other words, when a human being relates to an individual nonhuman being as an anonymous object, rather than as a being with its own subjectivity, it is the human, and not the other animal, who relinquishes personhood.

Ultimately, our own moral wellbeing is dependent upon our capacity to acknowledge selfhood in others (Lowry, 1999). Persons are not Cartesian selves, but exist in relationship with others, and as beings in the world (Clark, 1982). Such experiences are not uncommon, but are borne out by familiarity and attentive observation, with Clark (1985a) observing that primates recognize each other as individuals, and have personal relationships with their fellows, whilst Smuts (1999) relates that baboons recognize human beings as individuals, and that intersubjectivity *transcends* the species boundary. Likewise, Griffin (1984:165) relates that

> Learning to recognize individual animals under natural conditions, a very important advance in ethology, has led to the discovery of previously unsuspected patterns of behavior that could not be appreciated when the animals were treated as interchangeable units. One discovery has been that not only the ethologist but the animals themselves often recognize their companions as individuals and treat them accordingly.

The aversion that many feel toward any meaningful comparison of humankind with the animal universe continues to hold sway, in the way that we *act* in spite of what we might *profess*. We need a more holistic model of moral rights that transcends an exclusive, or primary, focus upon humankind. Our reluctance or disinclination to acknowledge the moral

implications of Darwinian theory derives in no small part from the assumption that any meaningful expansion of the circle of moral considerability *beyond* the boundaries of human beings invariably threatens not only the dignity, but sanctity, of human life. As Midgley (quoted in Wynne-Tyson, 1985:203) observes, "Someone who has buttressed his sense of his own dignity by allowing no dignity at all to anybody else, naturally feels any suggestion of a relationship with those others as intolerably degrading".

But the fact that all life forms represent a part of the same continuum entails that one ought extend substantial consideration to the consequences of one's actions (Chapple, 1993). If one conceives the self as essentially interconnected with all other selves ('Bhaskar', 2002; Chapple, 1986,1993; Rosen, 2004; Tobias, 1991), then the very notion that we limit our respect and compassion to creatures of our own species is a moral and metaphysical delusion; as Tatia (2002) observes, Jainism (along with Buddhism and Hinduism) reveres *life* rather than the *human* person. Similarly, Clark (1982:46) conceptualizes self as "a being in the world". Indeed Chapple (1993:19) goes so far as to suggest that our understanding of violence and nonviolence can be intrinsically conceptualized as the interplay between self and otherness; if we conceive the self as standing in opposition to others, violence can proceed, but when we understand others *as* self then nonviolence can prevail - "It serves to free one from the restricted notions of self and to open one more fully to an awareness of and sensitivity toward the wants and needs of other persons, animals, and the world of the elements, all of which exist in reciprocal dependence".

Similarly, the seeming need to establish a hierarchical structure of human value bespeaks a like aversion to acknowledge as *fully* human those who are not perfect in *our* eyes, as seeing the 'imperfect' other as essentially distinct from and as inhabiting a disparate moral order. But if the central concept of morality is *not* respect for rational, adult human beings, but, as Murdoch (1996:38) suggests, *the individual knowable by love*, "which connects morality to *individuals, human individuals or individual realities of other kinds*" (italics mine), then the notion that we should favour a moral apartheid ought strike us as morally repugnant. The Golden Rule specifically forbids us to see others as anything other than oneself. If anything, the future, what with biotechnological fetishism and the headlong and seemingly unstoppable rush toward genetic engineering and cloning, promises *more*, and *worse*, of the same (Appleyard, 1998; Clark, 1990c,1994b,1997b,2000b,2001b,2001c,2003a; Cook, 2002; Fukuyama, 2002; Galton, 2001; Garreau, 2005; Habermas, 2003; Hindmarsh & Lawrence, 2004; Huxley, 1938;

Midgley, 2000a,2000b; Nussbaum & Sunstein, 1998; Rifkin, 1998; Rollin, 1995; Tobler, 2003; Uren, 2002a,2002b).

The evolution story continually reminds us that we are terrestrial creatures with natural needs and a given nature, and that all other animals are our neighbours. We ought respect them for this reason, that they are *kin*, and reject notions that human beings are essentially *other*, for we truly inhabit a community of kindred spirits. Indeed, Gandhi (1959,1984) conceptualizes *sarvodaya*, or the welfare of all, as being inclusive of human beings *and* animals. The self is seen as fundamentally interconnected with other selves, and consequently the welfare and well-being of all sentient creatures is a moral imperative. The greatness of Kantian philosophy lies in Kant's dictum that no person ought be treated as a means to others' ends, for *we are all ends*. This precept forbids utilitarian calculations whereby individuals can be sacrificed to further the common good (Fromm, 2005); the end does not justify the means. The implications of the view that ends have primacy over means is borne out by Singer's (1984) observation that a utilitarian *must* (in spite of his condemnation of animal experimentation) endorse the position that possibly painful experiments conducted upon animals might, under certain conditions, be justified were a *majority* of others to be benefited as a consequence. For those animals who are, as far as we can ascertain, neither rational nor self-conscious beings, Singer (1984:104) believes that "it is at least arguable that no wrong is done if the animal killed will, as a result of the killing, be replaced by another animal living an equally pleasant life. Taking this view involves holding that a wrong done to an existing being can be made up for by a benefit conferred on an as yet non-existent being".

This conclusion reflects the inherent conflict that is a consequence of the fundamental incompatibility of the principles of equal consideration and the principle of aggregation of interests (Rowlands, 1998). The utilitarian calculus conflicts with the rights perspective, which, whilst not immune to consideration of consequences, nevertheless insists that they cannot be the *only* basis on which moral decisions are to be reached. The rights view rejects the notion that individuals can be considered as *receptacles of value*, which is what they are reduced to when appeals to aggregate consequences are made. Appeals to aggregate considerations ride roughshod over the notion that each individual has inherent value, a value that one can have neither more nor less of in comparison with others. Animals are *not* receptacles of value, rather their *uniqueness* grounds their irreplaceability (Cave, 1982;

Pluhar, 1982; White, 1982). As Regan (1982,1983) avers, to have inherent value is to possess it *equally*.

In Regan's (1983:305,308) view, the *miniride principle* and the *worse-off principle* can be appealed to in conflicts; the miniride principle rules that

> Special considerations aside, when we must choose between overriding the rights of the many who are innocent or the rights of a few who are innocent, and when each affected individual will be harmed in a prima facie comparable way, then we ought choose to override the rights of the few in preference to overriding the rights of the many

whilst the worse-off principle entails that

> Special considerations aside, when we must choose to override the rights of the many or the few who are innocent, and when the harm faced by the few would make them worse-off than any of the many would be if any other option were chosen, then we ought to override the rights of the many.

By way of summation, Regan (1983) characterizes the miniride principle, *special considerations aside*, as entailing that numbers count, whilst the worse-off principle implies that, *special considerations aside*, numbers don't count.

It is Linzey's (1987) belief that it is *always* possible to justify the utilization of animals for experimental purposes on the grounds of utility, if for no more substantive reason than the fact that *nothing* can be conclusively proven to be useless, whilst George Bernard Shaw (1928,1949) warns that if we accede to the sacrifice of one guinea pig on the grounds that it may offer up a very little knowledge, it is very likely that we shall come to sacrifice a human should such an oblation to science also hold out the promise of a greater acquirement of knowledge. This will especially be the case if we deem *some* humans to be of *inferior* quality (Canovan, 1977; Clark, 2000a; Lewis, 1947; Neill, 2002; Pearce, 1997; Shanahan, 2000); Chesterton (1962:70) cautions,

> Don't you see that that dreadful dry light shed on things must at last wither up the moral mysteries as illusions, respect for age, respect for property, and the sanctity of life will be a superstition? The men in the street are only organisms...For such a one there is no longer

any terror in the touch of human flesh, nor does he see God watching him out of the eyes of a man.

In making the observation that a sharp dichotomy between means and ends is deeply embedded in the Western ethical, political and psychological vocabulary, Iyer (1973:361) comments that "the dangerous dogma that the end entirely justifies the means is merely an extreme version of the commonly uncriticized belief that moral considerations cannot apply to the means except in relation to ends, or that the latter have a moral priority". There is a school of thought that argues that radical social work theories are guilty of treating individuals as means to collective ends, focusing less upon the here-and-now needs of flesh and blood individuals than with the creation of a future better society (Banks, 1995); social justice as a rallying cry often obfuscates and fails to extend respect to individuals, for time and time again *'clients'* serve agency ends or cause. The motivation of Graham Greene's (1957:12) Alden Pyle could just as easily be seen as encapsulating that of many contemporary social workers - "he was determined - I learnt that very soon - to do good, not to any individual person but to a country, a continent, a world. Well, he was in his element now with the whole universe to improve".

 It is Gandhi's conviction that there exists a inviolable continuity between means and ends (Chatterjee, 1985; Dhawan, 1990; Erikson, 1969; Gandhi, 1970,1987; Iyer 1973; Murphy, 1990; Rolland, 1990; Wolpert, 2001), and he writes that "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree", and "I have often said that if one takes care of the means, the end will take care of itself" (Gandhi, quoted in Iyer, 1973:361,215). The individual subject is an end in himself/herself, and ought never be treated as a means to any human end (Fowler, 1975); this, in Weber's (1991) opinion, is the essence of the Buber's (1970) distinction between an *I-It* and an *I-Thou* relationship. The violence inherent in any I-Thou relationship can be transformed via respect, admiration or affection, "or one of the countless attitudes that men call love" (Buber, 1970:17). In the Gandhian scheme of things, *ahimsa* is the means, whilst Truth is the end (Gandhi, 1987); the two are inseparable. And we ought bear in mind that ahimsa is not merely negative in its normative import, for it entails that we act in ways that enhance the welfare and well-being of all lives (Altman, 1980,1988; Barkas, 1975; Chapple, 1993,2002a; Dinshah, 1973; Dundas, 1992; Jain, 1974; Jaini, 1979; Koller, 2002; Laidlaw, 1995; Lodrick, 1981; Moran,

1985; Rosen, 1987; Singhvi, 2002; Tahtinen, 1983; Tobias, 1991; Walli, 1974), as well as the natural world (Chapple, 2002b; Shilapi, 2002; Wiley, 2002); indeed Gandhi exegetically characterizes ahimsa as *love* (Jesudasan, 1984; Weber, 1991), a love not merely of the human community, but of the community of all living organisms (Koller, 2002), whilst Bondurant (1965) draws our attention to the conceptual parallels between ahimsa, Christian charity and *agape*.

The Jain maxim *ahimsa paramo dharmah* translates as non-injury to all living beings, in thought, word or deed, and represents the highest religion or good, with commensurate emphasis accorded to action *and* intention (Cort, 2002). We should never, according to Kant, treat a fellow human being as a *thing*, for to do so violates that human being's dignity and value. For as Simone Weil (1986:168) observes, "The idea of a person's being a thing is a logical contradiction. Yet what is impossible in logic becomes true in life, and the contradiction lodged within the soul tears it to shreds". The limitations of the Kantian conceptualization of the kingdom of ends are all too obvious; no animal (other than ourselves) can ever be conceived as a subject, as an end - animals are forever condemned to be means, are nothing more than *things*.

In conclusion, we have already seen that there exists no morally relevant characteristic that is possessed by *all* human beings, and *only* by human beings - for this reason we cannot rationally, let alone morally, justify differential treatment of human beings and other animals. Respect ought be extended to all sentient creatures as a moral duty, and all sentient beings ought be included in the kingdom of ends. To do so recognizes the fact of our ontological and moral continuity with all other species, so that we may, in time, come to approximate Gandhi's (quoted in Wynne-Tyson, 1985:92) goal, that "I want to recognize brotherhood or identity not merely with the beings called human, but I want to realize identity with all life, even with such things as crawl upon earth". Respect for individuals, which enjoins and entails respect for all sentient creatures, and a loving attention to the individual, is a principle that ought inform social work's moral framework if it is to have any pretension to being a holistic discipline.

As the Qur'an (quoted in Wynne-Tyson, 1985:139) reminds us

> There is not an animal on the earth, nor a flying creature on two wings, *but they are people like unto you*. (italics mine)

CHAPTER FIVE

NEW BEGINNINGS, OTHER ENDS.

> **a just and loving gaze directed upon an individual reality. I believe this to be the characteristic and proper mark of the active moral agent.**
> *- Iris Murdoch* (1996:34)

It may well be that our treating animals *like* animals in the traditional instrumental sense predisposes us, as Aquinas (1989a) and Kant (1989) warn, to be cruel to our fellow humans. Interestingly Aquinas, and subsequent theologians, have not issued a parallel admonition that treating machines or non-sentient nature as things will increase the likelihood of humans being so treated. The analogy and metaphor does not hold precisely because animals are like us in ways that machines and non-sentient nature are *not*, that sane people consider it evil to inflict unnecessary pain or harm. For as Clark (1994c:19) observes, "it has never been easy to explain quite why such cruelty or negligence is wrong, if only human interests matter to the rational mind. If humans matter so much more than non-humans it must be that they are of so radically different a kind that it is hard to see that 'hurting animals' is of the same kind as 'hurting humans' ".

We would consider it peculiar were we exhorted to regard animals as mere property or moral templates, and to view kindness to them as no more than kindness to fellow humans or God (Dombrowski, 1985). The notion that whilst we ought be kind to animals, we owe them only indirect duties, leads Salt (1980:133) to remark that "kindness is, so to speak, the water, and the duty is the tap; and the convenience of this arrangement is that the man can shut off the kindness whenever it suits him to do so". Too many of us have extended families and wider households which include myriad animals for such arguments to completely hold water.

If our much loved dog Tessa, for instance, is set upon by a human neighbour, we would be considered rather odd, to say the least, if we were to view it solely as an infringement and abuse of our property rights, or to interpret the action solely as, in all likelihood, enhancing the prospect of the assault of fellow humans, perhaps, a little understandably, ourselves. We

would primarily be affronted because of the harm and hurt visited upon Tessa - we respond to the *particular individual*. Even were it categorically ascertained that this action would not lead to fellow humans being so treated, or even if it were not *our* dog but *yours* that was harmed, we ought still to feel aggrieved for the animal's sake. We would undoubtedly sympathize and empathize with our neighbour, but once more this would be the consequence of a shared outrage at what happened to the animal first and foremost.

To treat an animal as an end in itself does not as a matter of course diminish human beings or destroy human worth, and it does not logically follow that human beings will be treated as less than human. To reiterate an earlier point, this fear holds force *precisely* because of the way in which we currently treat animals as means to human ends; were acknowledgement of a difference in degree, not kind, to have no moral bearing upon our treatment of them as subjects, then indeed we would quite rightly feel trepidation as to the treatment of human beings. We are in that boat only as a matter of our own choosing. In moving beyond such unfounded fears and misgivings, and in duly acknowledging that difference is a matter of degree, not kind, we leave the way open for a moral consideration of other animals. A social work code of ethics worthy of the name ought stress, Wilkes (1985:45) avers, "the law of general beneficence - of never doing to others what you would not like them to do to you", and *others* cannot be only those of *our* kind.

We have now arrived at a position whereby, given the arguments advanced thus far in this thesis, a substantial case has been mounted for the adoption of the species *inclusive* Code of Ethics articulated in the Appendix. We have canvassed the traditional claims that have been put forward to warrant either the absolute or relative dismissal (Midgley, 1983c) of the moral claims and standing of other animals (consciousness, language, moral agency, rationality, sentience, soul, and species membership), and to have found them to be variously arbitrary, erroneous, or irrelevant in excluding other animals from the circle of moral considerability. These arguments have been seen to be incommensurate with, and an inadequate basis upon which to construct, the edifice that is social work's ethical and moral framework. Having argued this, the thesis then undertook an exploration of rationale that might better ground and secure the moral considerability of all animals (including us), and how we might better formulate a Code of Ethics so that it respects the interests and well-being of all sentient creatures. This Chapter will now proceed to present an exposition as to how this revised or revamped Code of Ethics can serve to guide social workers to what Weil (1952) terms a *creative attention* to what Murdoch (1996) designates as *individual*

realities of all kinds, and to a satisfactory resolution of the practice dilemmas enunciated in Chapter One.

The rationalist and humanist discourse serves to circumscribe the boundaries of morality within the confines of the human species. However, to either contend explicitly, or assume implicitly, that animals fall outside the scope of morality results in an unworkably narrow conception of duty. The absence of *any* discussion of the moral nature of human dealings with animals leaves social workers manifestly ill-equipped to respond to animal neglect or abuse, let alone to accord consideration to the interests of other animals. In reality, Loar (1999:120) characterizes this pervasive attitude within social work as "I'll only help you *if* you have two legs" (italics mine).

Whilst we have seen in the previous chapter that the principle of *respect for persons* is deemed to be constitutive of morality and to underpin social work's ethics, it has also been highlighted that this principle, as traditionally conceptualized, is exceedingly problematic for many human beings, and is in effect counter-intuitive to the way in which social workers would like to *think* that they view and treat people. For this reason, it was argued that Watson's (1978,1980) principle of *respect for human beings* is more reflective of social work's commitment to the inherent dignity and value of each and every human being, irrespective of their capacities or characteristics. However, we also observed that definitions of human status are by no means biologically all-inclusive or consensual, and given that many animals possess similar attributes to certain supposedly *marginal* humans, it is therefore merely arbitrary and speciesist to suppose that there is a morally relevant difference where, in point of fact, no such difference exists. For this reason it was argued that we ought *respect the individual*, and that such respect cannot be exclusive of all other animals. Basically, all individuals should be treated in ways that are respectful of their being ends in themselves.

But this much reaffirmed, it bears reiterating that social work invariably views the notion of respect as relating exclusively to human beings, and for this reason it has immense difficulties in grappling with how it is that we are able to speak of our responsibilities for, and duties toward, other creatures. Our social workers in the case studies were at a downright loss to know *what* or *how* to think or act, with the consequence that they invariably sat on their collective hands and did neither. When Banks (1995) asserts that the very nature of moral judgements are *human centred*, she is effectively speaking for social work *as a discipline*. It is little wonder then that social workers lack the basic conceptual

understanding and wherewithal that might enable them to respond to the interests of an individual of another species, or that they interpret this neglect or absence of attention as confirmation that animals do not matter. As such it makes it seem impossible for us to speak about our duties or responsibilities to animals and the natural world, what Midgley (2001b) refers to as a retreat to some kind of *moral minimalism* - Coetzee's (2000:73) Lucy makes the pointed observation that "On the list of the nation's priorities, animals come nowhere".

This is belied by the reality that human beings and domestic animals form a genuine community (Beck & Katcher, 1996; Callicott, 1992b; Clark, 1995b,1995c; Hearne, 1987; Katcher & Beck, 1983; Manning & Serpell, 1994; Midgley, 1983c; Podberscek, Paul, & Serpell, 2000; Rodd, 1990,1996; Serpell, 1986; Sharpe, 2005), and that a concern for animals is an inherent feature of human moral sensibility (Rodd, 1990; Serpell, 1999), as is sensitivity to the suffering of other animals (Everett, 2004).

We pay attention to what we deem to possess value, but Midgley (2001a:184) argues that Western secular thought has so constricted our understanding of *intrinsic value* that it is contemporarily assumed to be the exclusive preserve of the *human* individual - "it uses words such as *sacred* and *sanctity* readily to describe human life, but becomes embarrassed if they are used for anything else". The elevation of humankind has been paralleled by the contemporaneous demotion of the non-human - "the slogan has, precisely, been that humans should not be treated *like animals* - and by implication animals *may be* - that is, they may be starved, evicted, imprisoned, tortured, killed whenever it is convenient to "*us*" " (Clark, 2000d:55-56)(italics mine).

Given that neo-Darwinian theory posits that human beings and animals can no longer be considered to be essentially different creatures, Clark (2000d) concludes that it is mystifying that we should continue to promulgate dogged assertions that respect is owed *only* to human beings. And at its most basic level, Regan (2004:9) argues that the notion of animal rights "means only that animals have a right to be treated with respect", whilst Salt (1900:209,210) maintains that "To live one's own natural life, to realize one's self, is the true moral purpose of man and animals equally… (both are entitled to) a space in which to live their own lives - in a word, Rights".

This much said, one can but ask, and speculate, as to what the early twentieth century social worker Maria Dickin might have to say to us about contemporary social work's bifurcation of human beings and animals into morally disparate categories? Dickin, in common with

celebrated humanitarian reformers, both her predecessors and contemporaries, would surely be dismayed at present-day social work's moral myopia in relation to other animals. Faced with the privation and penury that constituted her work with the poor, Dickin, by contemporary lights, could well have been excused, nay, more likely commended, had she channeled her energies and finite resources into seeking to alleviate the conditions of the working class poor with whom she worked. She might well have prioritized the needs of human beings, might well (most probably, the more the likely) have been seen as justified (indeed commended), were she to have concerned herself *exclusively* with her fellow humans.

An individual like Maria Dickin could be seen as little more than a Victorian relic, at best an eccentric, but more likely than not as representative of those animal *'lovers'* who place higher value upon non-human animals, and who are either lacking or unappreciative of human companionship (Clark, 1996c). The notion that Dickin's concern for the animals of the poor could be seen as a case of misplaced priorities, is itself, at worst, the consequence of an exclusive humanism, or at best, the product of thinking that compassion is a finite and irreplaceable resource that ought be rationed to more deserving and worthy cases - in actuality compassion is best conceived as a habit or power of the mind which is *augmented* by use (Midgley, 1983c). Consequently social work exhibits a routine tendency to view the interests of human beings and those of other species as being essentially competitive, and conceptualizes the reality of conflict as a lifeboat model of morality. As Midgley (1983c:19) notes,

> The problem of competition presents itself to many people in a form more or less like this: Must we really acknowledge all our long-lost cousins and heave them into the humanitarian lifeboat, which is already foundering under the human race? Or can we take another look at the rule-book and declare the relationship too distant, so that we are justified in letting the whole lot sink?

A lifeboat model of morality makes it difficult for us to make sense of our responsibilities and duties, not only to other animals and the natural world, but to distant or indigent human beings (Gaita, 1999,2001; Hardin, 1979; Kamin, 1999; McGinn, 1999; Midgley, 1983c,2001a; Singer, 1972) - notions of human rights are increasingly understood as relative, and limited to members of one's *own* society (Midgley, 2001a). This is not to deny

that we do have special responsibilities to kin and those socially near to us, but this is distinct from the notion that closeness entails those distant are forever out of sight or reach. There are, in Midgley's (1983c) opinion, two reasons for this - instances of sharp competition are not ever present, the more so in the prosperous West where it is indeed a rarity, whilst the validity of other claims, especially those of justice and compassion, can often outweigh those of nearness. If one conceives compassion and moral considerability as being exclusively a matter of competition, then it becomes all the easier to refuse to grant consideration to the interests of those who are not socially near and dear to us. As regards distant peoples, Midgley (1983c:20) contends that

> nearly all such people (in life, as opposed to imaginary lifeboats) are not only competitors, but also possible allies, friends and helpers, on whom our wider interests may at any time depend. It is a confused notion of prudence which treats them simply as blind mouths, and limits self-interest to the purely defensive business of hanging on to our existing resources. Using those resources to make friends is in general a far better investment. In the end, we are all in the same boat.

But when it comes to the good ship Earth, social work, whilst averring that all human beings are in the same boat, conceptualizes humankind not only as first class passengers, but as the *sole* occupants upon the moral high sea. Social work employs a lifeboat model that divvies up humankind and all other species into disparate moral realms, a model of *us* and *them*. But as Midgley (1983c) observes, it is but a small step from this model to the Hobbesian one the posits *me* and *them*, and to conceive of morality as a matter of concentric circles that separates *us* from *them* has the practical implication that concern for animals - beyond a certain minimal point, it is an optional or discretional affair, merely a matter of emotion and consequently frivolous or trivial.

Being kind to animals, or more likely refraining from cruelty, are injunctions unlikely to elicit or broker any meaningful objection or opposition; but the notions of kindness and cruelty are themselves problematic. For as Regan (1982:69) argues both have

> conceptual connections with "the mind of the agent" - namely, with the agent's motives and intentions… (But) the morality of what persons do (the rightness or wrongness of their

actions) is logically distinct from, and should not be confused with, their "mental states", including the motives or intentions from which their acts proceed.

The moral rightness or otherwise of an individual's actions is separate from how that individual *feels* about the suffering of an animal or a human being; for example, we rightly condemn cruelty to children, but do not limit our condemnation *only* to those cases where it can be ascertained, beyond all reasonable doubt, that the perpetrator obtains enjoyment or pleasure from either causing pain or harming children. It is, however, unfortunate that our relations with animals are more often than not framed in terms of cruelty; sadists and psychopaths aside, the overwhelming majority of people who cause suffering in animals do not do so because they enjoy causing pain or harm.

To return to our first casework example, the beleaguered mother of four does not keep the family's two dogs restrained in such sub-standard conditions because by so doing it provides her with one of the few remaining pleasures in her otherwise impoverished, joyless and wearisome existence. Even so, the very fact that the woman is not cruel does not in itself relegate the treatment of the dogs to moral insignificance; the need for moral judgement is not less necessary because of the absence of any ill intent. The point of the matter is that we *owe* it to animals to treat them in certain ways, as something *due* to them, because we ought treat them in ways that *respect* their inherent value, individuality and subjectivity.

By way of explicating this observation, we might consider the following - if we were to examine a social worker's response to children who were neglected, but not through any premeditated or ostensible intent to cruelty on behalf of their parent/parents, we would nevertheless trust that the social worker would quite rightly feel that the neglect was still an issue which had to be attended to, irrespective of the absence of any ill-intent. We would *expect* this to be the case, not merely because of statutory requirements (after all, we don't always need to be *told* to do what is right), but because it is morally incumbent upon us to act in the interests of the children's welfare and well-being. Failure to do so is to fail to accord them the respect they are entitled to as subjects.

The following argument is based upon Regan's (1991) examination of why child pornography is always wrong. This moral imperative derives from the Kantian notion that all individuals are to be treated in ways that respect their standing as ends in and of themselves - "*Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own*

person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant, 1964:91). Neglect clearly violates the individual's right to be so treated, and it is to this that the social worker attends; we *owe* it to children to treat them in ways that are respectful of their inherent value, and this respect is *due* to them.

In Regan's (1983,1991) terms, children are *subjects-of-a-life*, and to treat them in ways that reduce them to being means to our own or others' ends is to fail to accord them the respect they are owed and due as a matter of strict justice; the interests of any individual are morally relevant only to the extent that acting upon those interests does not in any way conflict with treating subjects-of-a-life with respect. But as we have noted in the preceding chapter, the Kantian conception of personhood assumes that personhood is limited to rational, autonomous and rule-following adults, and whilst moral consideration can be extended to other non-person human beings by various ingenious means, the reality is that the strict Kantian formulation cannot be directly applied to the ways in which we treat young children or other marginal cases (Regan, 1991). It cannot be that certain individuals are deemed to have less value than their paradigmatic fellows, for inherent value admits of no degrees; such value is not reducible to capacities or characteristics. That the children in question are not *persons* in the strict paradigmatic sense does not mean that they are ends in themselves, *only* when those ends are not in conflict with those of *full persons*. Kant's (1964:84) first formulation of the categorical imperative, "*Act only on that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law*" would appear to ensure that we always act in ways that are universalizable, but as Regan (1991) observes, whilst children are deemed to be indubitably human, they nevertheless are not persons in the Kantian sense. I cannot acquiesce to the neglectful treatment of all other children and expect that an exception be made in the case of my own children. But *if* I am prepared to assent to my own children being treated as mere means, and every other parent in the world accedes likewise, the universal law would apparently see this as permissible because it is universalizable. Were this so, Kantianism fails to be able to show why such behaviour or treatment is morally wrong.

The utilitarian framework, in all its variations and guises, also, at least in theory if not always in practice, seeks an aggregation of interests (exactly how this is to be achieved is rather unclear); by this calculus, the suffering and pain of an individual may well be outweighed by the pleasures and benefits that are experienced by others. Consequences are of importance, but they can not be the *only*, and definitive, guide to moral behaviour.

Inherent value is possessed equally by all subjects-of-a-life, that is all beings who are "experiencing subjects of a life that fares well or ill for them over time, those who have an individual experiential welfare, logically independent of their utility relative to the interests or welfare of others" (Regan, 1991:57). Otherwise, it may well be that the pleasures and enjoyment obtained by neglectful parents outweigh the suffering and harm experienced by their children, and if this is so, utilitarianism cannot, unless in contravention of the aggregation of interests and recourse to the principle of utility, tell us why the neglect is morally wrong - indeed it sees no difference between acts of *commission* and *omission* (Clark, 1994c). Those beings who possess inherent value are not to be treated as receptacles, but must always be treated an ends in themselves. As Wilkes (1985:49) comments, "The moral ideal of the greatest happiness of the greatness number is defensible when considered in light of basic necessities common to us all but hard to defend when considered in the light of good and evil".

When we turn to the social contract model, or contractarianism, we discover that the paradigmatic model discriminates against all who are not rational, adult contracting agents. Precisely because children (the more so the younger they be) are not in a position to be aware of what is in their best interests or possess the capacity to enter into contracts, their welfare and protection is dependent upon what contracting adults deem is in *their* self-interest - if neglect serves the self-interest of contracting adults then it receives the seal of contractual approval (Regan, 1991).

Those who would seek to justify concern for those termed *marginal* human beings on species ground (we are all, after all, human, though not everyone thinks *equally* so) fail for the reason that species memberships is not a morally relevant characteristic. If we seek to identify the reasons why treating children in a neglectful manner is wrong, recourse to the argument that children are human beings fails to enlighten us; as Regan (1991:75) observes, "Species membership does not inform us of anything that is either morally relevant or decisive in judging what is right or wrong".

For these varied reasons, these philosophies are found wanting in accounting for why it is that certain treatment is always wrong, *independent* of personhood, consequences, self-interest or species membership. In the case of our scenario of parental neglect, what makes neglect wrong, and always wrong, is not dependent upon children satisfying the personhood criteria, nor upon consequential or self-interested calculations, nor the fact that children are members of the species *Homo sapiens.*

The principles of *respect for persons* (as traditionally conceived) and *respect for human beings* are evidently inadequate in grounding our moral obligations to other subjects-of-a-life, and the Code of Ethics presented in this thesis is based upon the central principle that emanates from the *subject-of-a-life criterion* (Regan, 1983), whereby what matters is not whether a being is a *person*, nor whether a being is a *human* being, but rather whether one is a creature who is sentient, has interests, is an experiential subject with an individual welfare, and for whom life can fare ill or well for them over period of time. Such individuals, moral agents and patients alike, possess inherent value, and are owed respect as a matter of strict justice. The *respect principle*, Regan (1983:248) contends, entails that "We are to treat those individuals who have inherent value in ways that respect their inherent value".

Now, as we have already noted earlier in this thesis, unless one makes arbitrary and morally irrelevant distinctions based upon either religious or humanist assumptions, then the principle of *respect for individuals* cannot be characterized as being inherently anthropocentric in its moral scope. We are not being called upon to respect individuals because they are rational, autonomous and rule-following creatures, nor because they are contracting agents, nor because they are human beings; respect is due *independent* of such attributes or characteristics, and is owed to *all* subjects-of-a-life, be they the human *or* non-human animal.

For this reason, we are mistaken if we contend that the reason we attend to the neglect of children is *solely* because they are human beings. Truth to tell, we do respond to their neglect in part because we acknowledge our biological kinship, but often such recognition is dependent upon morphological likeness, or at least upon a metaphysical concept of personhood. In addition, much religious and almost all humanist thought pointedly ignores or dismisses our evolutionary continuity, as though it were fallacy, a *non sequitur*, or an irrelevance. If the essence of the philosophical debate around the notion of personhood can be seen as an attempt to identify those beings who are supremely morally considerable, then social work can be seen as embracing the metaphysical, as opposed to the moral, concept of personhood. Whereas the latter assigns a certain moral status, and in so doing identifies those beings who possess moral rights, the metaphysical concept of a person describes a certain kind of being, identifying *all* and *only* human beings (Sapontzis, 1987). Whilst the latter is inclusive of human beings and animals, the former specifically excludes all beings *bar* the human variety.

Social work had it roots in both religious and humanist traditions that tended to almost invariably posit an irrevocable chasm or divide between human beings and all other animals. However, we have noted that this was by no means an exclusive social work position, but in time that came to be the case. The problem is not that social work has, from its genesis, sought to champion and defend the dignity and worth of each and every human being, but that it has done so as though *only* human beings matter; early social work can be seen as having been imbued with a moral passion to accord moral priority to the weak and the vulnerable. Individuals like Maria Dickin saw nothing inherently contradictory or demeaning in making linkage between our treatment of human beings and our fellow animals.

The notion that animals are only *stuff* (Clark, 1998d), little more than a backdrop to human existence, and an unconscious, insentient and meaningless one at that, was always a difficult metaphysic to swallow, but in light of the evolutionary story it looks increasingly nonsensical and a self-serving delusion. Even within theistic circles, this metaphysic is viewed as implausible - as Kohak (quoted in Clark, 1991a:115), in observing that, in truth, we are but one of many species, muses,

> what justifies the totally disproportionate cost of our presence? Ask it for once *without* presupposing the answer of the egotism of our species, as God might ask it about his creatures: why should a dog or a guinea pig die an agonizing death in a laboratory experiment so that some human need not suffer just such a fate? (italics mine)

But *this* is precisely how social work thinks, or more accurately, *fails* to think about our place in the world, and the place of other animals. Social workers have worked in health and medical settings for almost the entire duration of the discipline's existence - in the Australian context, McCormack (2001) reports that health and community services employ approximately three quarters of all social workers - and yet one will search in vain for *any* mention of the moral propriety or otherwise of the routine utilization and exploitation of animals in all manner of medical research - 6,489,005 animals were used for experiments in Australia in 2004 alone, and increase of 67.2 percent over the previous year (AAHR, 2006). It is routinely assumed that the potential benefits for human beings ensuing from such research invariably overrides questions of moral probity; not all knowledge or benefits are worth the price that they exact from our moral sensibilities.

Ethical guidelines and ethical bodies quite rightly insist upon the highest ethical standards in our dealings with our fellow humans, but this much done, social workers rest upon their laurels, content in the belief that they have done their moral duty. Whilst there exists substantial consensus on the ethical guidelines involving human subjects of research, that involving other animals is still at an embryonic stage (DeGrazia, 1991a). The very fact that untold numbers of animals are routinely sacrificed in the pursuit of human health and wellbeing rates nary, or not so much as, a mention in social work literature, and no social work code of ethics, or ethics groups within social work, even acknowledge, let alone debate the morality of the issue. A commitment to animal alternatives is rightly considered an index of our scientific *and* moral advancement (Coleman, 1991,1993; Dixon, 1979; Dowding, 1971; Goldman, 1979; Hampson, 1989; Hegarty, 1971; Jamieson & Regan, 1982; Langley, 1989; North, 1983; Regan, 1989; Remfry, 1979; Ryder, 1971,1983,1985; Ruesch, 1982,1983; Sharpe, 1988,1989,1991; Sperlinger, 1979; Stephens, 1989; Vyvyan, 1988,1989).

Social workers would be outraged, and rightly so, were it to be suggested that we might consider utilizing the comatose, the senile and those with dementia, the irreversibly brain damaged, newborn but orphaned infants or anencephalic babies in the ways in which we currently utilize animals, if by so doing it might be proven that it might benefit the health of the rest of *us* - utilitarian ethics might well *insist* that this was morally obligatory, Kantian ethics could only be extended as a *courtesy*, and contractarian ethics could not assist this pool of non-contractors unless we make recourse to what Rawls (1999) terms a *veil of ignorance*; the latter device, designed to ensure impartiality, cannot *a priori* exclude other species from moral consideration (Elliot, 1984; Garner, 2002a; Pritchard & Robison, 1981; Rowlands, 1997,1998,2002; Vandeveer, 1979), and as rational agents are themselves the products of evolutionary processes, Rodd (1996) argues that they might well be compelled to extend moral consideration to all other conscious beings.

Social workers, given their oft-stated penchant for practicality above all else would be apt to riposte that such philosophical minefields are neither here nor there, for we ought respect all these individuals along species lines, as fellow human beings. But this will not suffice; apart from the fact that species membership is an arbitrary and morally irrelevant characteristic, it must be pointed out that those animals routinely employed in research (with not so much as a social work whimper raised in protest) possess *at least* the capacities of the human beings mentioned - outrage is indeed selective. The essence of inhumanity,

George Bernard Shaw (1934a) reminds us, lies not in our hating our fellow creatures, but in our *indifference* to them.

Animals are conspicuous by their total absence, inhabiting a moral vacuum in an exclusively humanocentric discipline. There is absolutely nothing in the curriculum or education of social workers that prepares them to be able to resolve the conflicts, or to negotiate their way through the moral dilemmas, posed at the commencement of this thesis, for there is no linkage made between the maltreatment of human beings and other animals. Indeed the very suggestion is seen as intrinsically demeaning to human beings, and concern for animals in the midst of human travails is often seen as evidence of misplaced priorities and misuse of limited time, energy and resources. This in spite of the fact that there exists a symbiotic relationship between the abuse of human beings and animals - studies consistently show a correlation between the maltreatment of children and the abuse and neglect of animals, for the abuse of animals places humans at risk, and when humans are subjected to abuse, then animals are at risk. The killing of animals serves only to increase the hardness of our hearts, whereby we assuredly come to practice on our human fellows that which we first do to other animals (Milward, 1995).

A not insignificant factor in the reluctance to grant animals entrance into the circle of moral considerability is that it demands a revolution in thinking and in practice in so many areas of our lives that we most likely take for granted - not least in the claim that vegetarianism is morally obligatory (Braunstein, 1983; Clark, 1977,2004; Dombrowski, 1984,2004; Engel, 2003; Fox, 1999; Gandhi, 1988; Gruzalski, 2004; Plotinus, 1952; Pluhar, 1992,2004; Porphyry, 1965; Rachels, 2004; Regan, 1975,1985,1991,n.d.; Salt, 1886,1899,1914; Spencer, 1993; Tolstoy, n.d; Walters & Portmess, 1999; Williams, 1896), not to mention the health and environmental arguments supporting its adoption (Akers, 1989; Barnard & Kieswer, 2004; Gold, 1983; Mason & Singer, 1980; Maxwell, 1991; Penman, 1996; Rifkin, 1992; Robbins, 1987; Rudd, n.d.; Singer, 1976; Singer & Mason, 2006; Sussman, 1978; Wynne-Tyson, 1979). But such demands have been the case throughout the history of moral thought generally, and social work moral thinking specifically; there were those who thought that the world would cease spinning (it was indeed the end of the world as *then* known) when the colour of a person's skin ceased to be a justification for enslaving and exploiting them, or one's gender no longer precluded one from engaging in society and enjoying the legal, political, social and cultural rights that hitherto had been partaken of by the majority of males.

Whilst the evolution story is at this time widely accepted as plausibly explicating our origins from a common ancestry, old habits and newer prejudices die slowly - we no longer have reason to believe in any metaphysic that demands human uniqueness and value to the exclusion of all other forms of life, and yet we continue to *act* as thought this were the case, whatever else we may *profess* to believe to the contrary. We largely accept that we are the products of evolution - perhaps God, if God exists, chooses to employ the medium of evolution - as are all other species, but we consistently fail or refuse to reflect upon the moral implications that other species are truly kin (Moore, 1907,1992; Rachels, 1999; Salt, 1894,1921,1935). Animals are seen as standing in metaphysical and moral opposition to self, but to do violence to another, human or animal, is to do violence to oneself (Chapple, 1993). As Salt (1921:243-244) contends, "The cause of each and all of the evils that afflict the world is the same - the general lack of humanity, the lack of the knowledge that all sentient life is akin, and that he who injures a fellow-being is in fact doing injury to himself". This notion of a universal kinship is something that Darwin (1936:494) thought inevitable, that all sentient creatures would, in the goodness of time (and the widening of the circle of compassion and morality), come to be included in the sphere of moral concern as ethics progressively evolved - in his own words, we shall come "*to acknowledge that disinterested love for all living creatures*" (italics mine).

It is mistaken to assume that human beings alone are the fitting subjects of love and compassion; our rationality not only makes such extension to other animals possible, but morally obligatory. So long as we adhere to a dichotomous metaphysic that posits that human beings and all other animals inhabit disparate moral realms, we shall struggle to come to terms with the nature of our responsibilities to other life forms. So long as we see ourselves as inhabiting a kingdom of ends which specifically excludes all other animals, and consigns them to the status of means, we shall attempt to bolster our own sense of dignity and value by demeaning that of other animals. The revolution required in social work's moral and intellectual framework is one that acknowledges that we are part of the fabric of the natural world; social work needs to take to heart Midgley's (1996a:xxxiv) certitude that "We are not just rather like animals; we *are* animals", and Porphyry's (1965:140) reflection that "He, therefore, who admits that he is allied to all animals, will not injure any animal".

In conclusion, this thesis has argued for a recognition and acceptance of our *animality*, that we are not singularly unique beings, that it better serves us to ponder upon what

distinguishes us *among* rather than *from* other animals (Midgley, 1996a), and that where we differ (that is not *the* issue), the difference is one of degree, not kind. What follows may well be seen to be a sweeping generalization, but it will be ventured nevertheless. Social workers (apologies to those who beg to differ) do not conceive human beings in this way, and do not conceive animals to be kindred beings. And it is *this* metaphysic that makes *all* the difference in our response to practice situations and dilemmas of the kind related at the commencement of Chapter One. We may feel unease, we may feel alarmed, we may even feel guilt, but so long as we conceptualize other animals and their interests as disparate, peripheral and invariably secondary to those of their human counterparts, we shall remain in the thrall of a moral paralysis. So long as we remain blinkered about the scope of moral relationships, and the reality of moral identities that exist between individuals (Watson, 1980), human *and* non-human, that morality is an awareness of other individuals, and that we act morally *when* we take account of the interests of individuals (Todorov, 2000), we shall continue to be beholden and wedded to an instrumental and anthropocentric worldview. So long as we ignore this reality we shall invariably consider other animals to be means to human ends, and will fail to attend to them with the respect they are due.

A case study will serve to highlight this phenomenon; the social worker Lynn Loar (1999:120) relates that

In 1992, 12-year-old Eric Smith killed a neighbor's cat. He was made to apologize and do some yard work for the wronged neighbor. In 1993, Eric Smith killed a four-year-old boy. He was convicted of second-degree murder for that offence the following year. Shortly after Eric Smith's trial, I attended a workshop given by the child psychiatrist affiliated with Yale University who testified on the child's behalf at his trial. I was impressed by the psychiatrist's compassionate yet objective assessment of the boy. At the end of the workshop he took questions, and I asked if anyone had bothered to report the killing of the cat to the local humane society, or municipal animal control agency. He replied that although that had not been done, consequences had been imposed on the child, namely the apology and yard work. I responded that the consequences addressed the property damage the neighbor experienced in the loss of his cat, but not the boy's taking the life of a sentient creature. Indeed, had the crime been reported, the child would likely have been required to undergo counseling and to have supervision when around defenseless living creatures. The psychiatrist replied that nothing more than the restitution and apologizing were done and he agreed that something important had been missed. The response of this prominent and

competent psychiatrist demonstrates the lack of awareness of the significance of cruelty to animals common among both human service professionals and the general public.

In such a scenario, it would be all too easy to *completely* overlook the death of the cat in light of the fact that a child was also killed. Indeed the child's death could be seen to be trivialized or demeaned by even raising concerns about the cat's death. As Loar (1999) relates, the infliction of injury or harm to animals, including death, is consistently seen as *chattel damage*, because in the eyes of the law animals are considered as *property*. This tendency to view animals as *things* (and disposable at that) is borne out by the fact that in Australia, during the 2000-2001 financial year, the RSPCA reports that 135,000 companion animals were abandoned, and almost 60 percent of those were euthanized, or in popular parlance, were 'put down' (Hodge, 2001). Nevertheless, Garner (2002b) argues that moral convictions are more critical than legal compulsion.

What is often missed in the linkage between violence to animals and violence to human beings is the fact that a fellow sentient creature has been directly harmed; violence toward or neglect of animals is conceptualized *indirectly* (befitting their status as *things*), whilst violence toward, or neglect of, human beings, is conceived *directly* (befitting their status as *persons*). In this sense Aquinas (and all his latter acolytes) is half right, half wrong, but the latter fact makes *all* the difference. It treats animals as mere receptacles of value, whilst at the same time decreeing that human beings, and human beings *alone*, possess inherent value.

If we return to a consideration of the four case studies in Chapter One, it is as well to note that a significant factor in the reluctance of social workers to include non-human animals in their moral judgements (apart from the metaphysical dogma that *only* humans are persons, and moral judgements are *exclusively* concerned with human welfare) rests upon their anxiety that to voice concern for the animals involved is to add further to the burdens which these families and individuals are already labouring under. But would a social worker who overlooked the domestic violence directed against a woman, and/or the physical abuse and/or neglect visited upon her children by her husband and the children's father, on the grounds that his retrenchment and subsequent unemployment, and consequent depression, ought not be compounded by the adding to his woes, be seen as acting properly or indeed ethically? Hardly; we might wish that the social worker, presumably working with this

man, would extend respect whilst also challenging those behaviours that violate the inherent value of the individuals who go to make up the family.

When social workers make the moral judgement (for that is what they invariably *do*) that they will *not* speak out about animal abuse or neglect, they routinely minimize this reality, and by inference deny that animals have any meaningful moral value. But as Moore (1992:324) avers, "*All* beings are *ends*; *no* creatures are *means*. All beings have not equal rights, neither have all men; but *all have rights*". Given that social work has a long and proud history of speaking out on behalf of, or with, and of giving *moral priority* to, the weak and the vulnerable in human society, it is incumbent that social workers speak out and accord moral priority to animals, the most weak and vulnerable members of our community. The social workers in each of the moral dilemmas posed can go a long way toward their resolution if they acknowledge that animals are our *neighbours* (and much more besides). We have a special responsibility for those animals with whom we share our lives, for morality is indubitably connected with *attention to individuals*, not only human, but "*individual realities of other kinds...towards the great surprising variety of the world*"`(Murdoch, 1996:38,66)(italics mine).

At the risk of stating what might seem blindingly obvious, all the animals in the four case studies are dependent upon their human companions in profound ways. And it is this very dependency that demands human responsibility, for their membership in the *mixed community* (Midgley, 1983c) and of the *wider Household* (Clark, 1997a) imposes upon us acquired and positive duties (Rowlands, 2002), and upon which our claims to be moral agents either stands or falls. It is argued that social workers have a special responsibility to the weak and vulnerable of all species, and that we ought take responsibility for this responsibility.

Once social workers acknowledge that animals are part and parcel of the moral fabric, and jettison the prejudicial notion that human beings and their value require that we attend only to humankind (as though we can only be concerned either with two legs *or* four legged individuals), in effect that we inhabit disparate moral spheres or realms (such a position is belied by both Darwinian theory *and* mystical traditions' notions of our common origin), the sooner we shall come to see that we have duties that extend beyond the confines of our own species. Indeed social workers of a century hence may well come to view with incredulity the fact that their predecessors ever failed to extend respect to sentient creatures, or chose to remain morally indifferent to their plight. As the social work writer Ruth Wilkes

(1981:106) avers, we would be better served by seeing reality as "the whole of creation". Love of neighbour includes love of all individuals irrespective of species membership, and we ought take it as the cardinal value informing social work that we *respect the individual*, and rather than an individual's group membership guiding or circumscribing the scope of our moral deliberations, we ought instead attend to an individual's specific characteristics (Rachels, 1999). And as Midgley (1985a) points out, it is not a being's intellectual capacity that entitles it to moral consideration, rather a creature's capacity for emotional fellowship, whilst everyday, run-of-the-mill morality singles out the centrality of interests, not rationality (Sapontzis, 1987). If we do so, we cannot go far wrong. Social work is essentially concerned with, and engaged in, acquiring knowledge of the individual, knowledge understood as *loving union* (Midgley, 1995). And as Murdoch (1996:30) reminds us, "*the* central concept of morality is 'the individual' thought of as *knowable by love*" (italics mine). The central concept of morality that ought inform social work is *the individual, knowable through love and loving union*.

And as William James (quoted in Sapontzis, 1985:256) entreats,

> Take any demand, however slight, which any creature, however weak, may make. Ought it not, for its own sake, to be satisfied? If not, prove why not.

A NEW CODE OF ETHICS: AS IF ANIMALS AND THE NATURAL WORLD MATTERED.

I am he as you are he as you are me as we are all together.
- *John Lennon* (n.d.:93)

The substantively revised AASW Code of Ethics (1999) which follows provides a moral frame of reference or compass to enable social workers to respond or attend to individuals irrespective of their species membership. It furnishes practitioners with the conceptual wherewithal whereby moral value or moral considerability is seen to reside in all individual realities, all subjects-of-a-life, sentient beings with interests and needs, for whom life matters. By way of contrast to the existing Code (and by implication, *all* contemporaneous Codes), its change in emphasis has profound consequences for social work thinking and practice, grounded as it is in a moral democracy. It expands social work's moral and ethical sphere, and this widening in no way detracts from nor enervates social work's core mission, nor does it represent an affront to human dignity - rather, it acknowledges our terrestriality and our ontological continuity and kinship, and the moral and ethical implications that issue from such recognition. Indeed it grounds *respect for the individual* as the bedrock of social work thinking and practice, and provides holistic direction and guidance in our dealings with human beings *and* our fellow animals. This Code will assist our four aforementioned social workers to the realization that we are our brother's and sister's keeper, be they human or non-human animals.

We now turn our attention to articulating what a social work Code of Ethics, one that conceived that animals and the natural world mattered morally, would look like. Such a Code of Ethics would offer a social work practitioner the moral compass needed to determine who is worthy of social work attention, that being all sentient individuals, and thereby providing a framework for practice action.

1 *PURPOSE OF SOCIAL WORK*

1.1 *COMMITMENT AND AIMS*

The discipline of social work is committed to the pursuit and maintenance of the well-being of the human and non-human animal, and the integrity of the natural world.

Social work aims to maximize the flourishing of human and non-human individuals, by way of attending to and respecting their needs and interests, and through an equal commitment to:

- working with and enabling human and non-human individuals to achieve the best possible levels of personal, social and species well-being
- working to achieve social justice through social development and social change, and attention to the moral value of individual subjects.

This involves:

- respecting and upholding the interests and rights of human and non-human individuals, and the natural world
- working with individuals, groups and communities in the pursuit and achievement of equitable access to social, economic and political resources
- providing assistance to enhance the well-being of the human non-human animal, including entities such as individuals, families, groups, communities, organizations, societies and species, especially those who are neglected, vulnerable, disadvantaged or have exceptional needs
- raising awareness of structural and species inequities
- promoting policies and practices that achieve a fair and appropriate allocation of social resources respective to needs and interests of all species
- acting to bring about social change to reduce social barriers, inequality, injustice, and speciesism

To accomplish its aims, the social work profession pursues:

- the development and application of knowledge, theory and skills regarding human and non-human animal behaviour, interests and needs, as well as social processes and social structures

- the development and redistribution of resources to meet the needs of individuals, communities, species and the integrity of the natural world.

3 *VALUES and PRINCIPLES*

In the determination and pursuit of its aims, social work is committed to five basic values:
- Respect for the dignity and worth of human and non-human individuals
- Social justice and moral consideration for all individual realities
- Service to humanity, animality and the natural world
- Integrity in relation to moral practice towards human and non-human individuals
- Competence in all actions towards human and non-human individuals

In carrying out their professional tasks and duties, social workers strive to act in ways that give equal priority to respect for the dignity and worth of all human and non-human individuals, and the pursuit of social and species justice. This commitment is demonstrated through service to human beings and non-human animals, integrity and competence, which characterize professional social work practice.

Social work principles are derived from the values; together they underpin ethical social work practice.

3.1 *VALUE: HUMAN AND NON-HUMAN ANIMAL INHERENT VALUE, DIGNITY AND WORTH*

The social work profession holds that:
- every human and non-human individual has inherent value, dignity and worth, and is owed respect as a moral right
- each human and non-human individual has a right to well-being, self-fulfillment, self-determination and flourishing, consistent with the rights of others.

3.1.1 Principles

a) Social workers respect the inherent value, dignity and worth of every human and non- human individual.

b) Social workers respect the basic interests, needs and rights of human and non-human individuals, as well as the rights of families, groups, communities, societies and species, and the natural world.

c) Social workers foster individual well-being, autonomy and personal/social responsibility, with due consideration for the rights of others.

d) Social workers recognize and respect group identity and interdependence and the collective needs of particular communities.

3.2   *VALUE: SOCIAL JUSTICE*

The social work profession holds that each society has a moral obligation to pursue social justice, to provide maximum benefit for all its members, irrespective of species membership, and to afford them protection from harm.

The profession understands social justice and moral consideration to encompass:

- the satisfaction of the basic needs and interests of human and non-human individuals

- the equitable distribution of resources to meet these needs and interests

- fair access to public services and benefits to achieve human and non-human potential and   flourishing, and to respect the needs and interests of human and non-human individuals

- recognition of individual, community, species and biosphere rights and duties

- equal treatment and protection under the law, an equal moral consideration of interests

- social development and environmental management in the interests of human and non- human animal welfare and well-being, and consistent with the integrity of the natural world.

3.2.1   *Principles*

a) Social workers promote distributive justice and social fairness, acting to reduce barriers and enhance the flourishing of all individual realities, with special regard for those who are disadvantaged, vulnerable, oppressed, or have exceptional needs, irrespective of species membership.

b) Social workers act to change social structures that preserve inequalities and injustice.

c) Social workers meet their responsibilities to society and the natural world by engaging in action to: promote societal, species and biosphere well-being, advocate for equitable distribution of resources relative to needs and interests; and effect positive social and moral change in the interests of social justice, and the flourishing of human and non-human individuals.

d) Social workers espouse the cause of human and non-human animal rights, affirming that civil and political rights must be accompanied by cultural, economic, moral, and social rights.

e) Social workers oppose and work to eliminate all violations of the rights, needs and interests of all human and non-human individuals.

f) Social workers oppose prejudice and negative discrimination against any human or non-human individual, on any grounds. Social workers challenge views and actions that vilify or stereotype and human or non-human animal.

g) Social workers recognize and respect the racial, cultural and species diversity of society, taking into account the further diversity that exists among individuals, families, groups and communities within indigenous and other cultures.

h) Social workers reject the abuse of power for exploitation or suppression. They support anti-oppressive anti-speciesist policies and practices that aim to empower human beings, and respect the needs and interests of all individual realities.

i) Social workers contribute disciplined knowledge and skill to aid individuals, groups, communities, societies and species in their development and in the management of conflicts and their consequences.

j) Social workers promote public participation in societal processes and decisions and in the development and implementation of social policies and services.

3.3 *VALUE: SERVICE TO HUMANITY AND ANIMALITY*

The social work discipline holds service in the interests of human and non-human well-being and social justice as a primary objective. The fundamental goals of social work service are:

- to attend to the interests and needs of human and non-human individuals
- to enable human and non-human individuals to flourish

3.3.1   Principles

a) In their practice, social workers place the objective of service before

b) personal aims, views or advantage.

c) Social workers work with, on behalf of, or in the interests of individuals, to enable them to deal with personal and social difficulties and to obtain essential resources and services. This work may include, but is not limited to, interpersonal practice, groupwork, community work, social development, social action, policy development and research.

d) In providing service, social workers apply their knowledge and skill in ways that maximize the benefit of their involvement.

e) Social workers recognize and respect individual and collective goals, responsibilities and differences.

f) Social workers are responsible for using their power and authority in ways that serve and respect human and non-human individuals, and the natural world.

g) Social workers make morally and ethically accountable decisions based on their national and international codes of ethics.

Animals, our fellow brethren in pain, disease, and suffering…they may partake of our origin in one common ancestor; we may be all netted together.
- *Charles Darwin* (quoted in Phipps, 2002:36)

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