'What have animals to do with social work?': A Sociological Reflection on Species and Social Work

Kay Peggs

Introduction

Social work is a struggle over ideas and one of the ideas that is fought over, if it has not already been side-lined, is the position of nonhuman animals within its remit. This issue is addressed by Thomas Ryan (2014) in his most recent edited collection of essays on the subject of animals in social work The quotation in the title of this paper is taken from his introduction to this collection (2014a, p. xv). In his previous book Ryan (2011) argued that social work needs to address its systematic moral indifference to the needs and wellbeing of nonhuman animals. The problem he identified in that book is that social work labours under the 'current assumption that anthropocentrism is a valid and non-negotiable given' (Ryan, 2011, p. 2). Together with contributors to his new edited collection he offers a challenge to this assumption. But this challenge to anthropocentrism has been resisted because, unlike other struggles in the field, the discussion about the position of nonhuman animals in social work is often marginalised or excluded completely, like nonhuman animal subjects themselves. Even Kieron Hatton's thought-provoking text *New Directions in Social Work Practice* (2008) which, as the title shows, centres on innovative developments in social work, does not include mention of nonhuman animals, this despite the fact that one of

Hatton's key considerations is inclusion. For Hatton, as for many others in the field, inclusion *excludes* nonhuman animals. Hatton's book is not unusual and I am not intending to single it out – the cannon of the discipline is anthropocentric, as is the practice (Ryan, 2011). On the rare occasions when nonhuman animals are included in social work the focus is usually utility-based, the aims being to consider the ways in which they can be useful to humans (e.g. in animal assisted therapy - see Grandgeorge and Hausberger, 2011) or how to instigate improvements to social work service providers by exploring the effects of nonhuman animals on individual humans and families (e.g. see Risley-Curtiss, Rogge and Kawam, 2013). The exclusion of, or the utility-based inclusion of, nonhuman animals in social work perspectives and practice, and the battles in relation to the position of nonhuman animals in such work, are organised in relation to two broad themes of the *Philosophical and Theoretical Explorations* and the *Practical Applications* in Ryan's (2014) latest collection of essays. The discussion is grounded in a number of issues that I want to explore in relation to Ryan's principal argument that nonhuman animals are as central to social work as humans. Some of the chapters in the volume do take a utility-based approach, though usually a critical one, but a thread running through much of the book, and the focus of a number of the early chapters, is the challenge to anthropocentrism that Ryan seeks, a challenge that is established through the lens of a critical approach to social work.

In this essay I offer a sociological perspective on the issues presented by the range of contributors to Ryan's book and in doing so engage with some of the related binaries and ideas that I see as being central to the work. Thus, this essay takes the form of an engagement with the issues while providing a consideration of Ryan's excellent and

thought-provoking edited collection. Because, in my own work, I continue to challenge the anthropocentric focus that is the stuff of much sociology I begin this paper with the resonances that I see there being between notions of the human 'animal' binary that is central to the established cannons of social work and sociology.

The Human Animal Binary in Social Work and Sociology

Although they are very different fields of study and practice, sociology and social work share many theoretical concerns. Like Ryan I have been troubled for some years about the anthropocentric focus of my discipline. The disciplines of social work and sociology, as they have been commonly constituted, historically have largely accepted uncritically the problematic binary human 'animal', and thus share a delimiting scrutiny that centres on humans. This binary is, of course, central to most notions of human 'animal' difference and is rooted in the Cartesian conceptualisation of cognition as being the province of humans alone (Dupre, 2002). Most obviously this binary occludes an enormous complexity among 'animals', which led Jacques Derrida to criticise the construction of the binary for '[t]here is no animal in the general singular, separated from man (sic) by a single indivisible limit' (2004, p. 125). The category 'animal' is simply a convenient all-encompassing label based in assumptions about the 'natural' shared characteristics of this designated group and the shared group identification 'human' (Peggs, 2009). Yet this convenient label forms the basis of exclusion from many areas of social thought. Regarding sociology, Janet Alger and Steven Alger are critical of 'the hard line that sociology has always drawn between humans and other species' (2003, p. 69) which has served to construct incorrectly nonhuman animals as

inferior, in order to construct humans as superior (Alger and Alger, 2003, pp. 74-5). Social

work has been criticised for similar failings by Ryan. In his previous book he noted that

'Social work's dogmatic anthropocentrism is metaphysical, conceptualising ourselves as

different in *kind* from all other animals, and it serves to obscure our understanding of the

human animal' (Ryan, 2011, p. 5). Scholars in the multidisciplinary field of Animal Studies

have sought to encourage the drawing-in of nonhuman animals into areas such as sociology

and social work, but the field itself has often excluded many living beings from its purview.

As Fred H. Besthorn makes clear in his chapter in Ryan's book, Animal Studies has largely

excluded insects. Noting how 'insects transformed my perceptions of life' (2014, p. 14),

Besthorn provides a fascinating opening argument in favour of the 'insectification' of social

work (2014, p. 13) which centres on a recognition that the world as one of *all* beings.

The intrinsic hostility of humans to insects (Besthorn, 2014) demonstrates clearly the

hierarchical distinction that humans have constructed between humans and 'others'. For

example, insects are often excluded from the limited consideration of moral value that is

granted to other nonhumans (for brief discussion see Peggs, 2010). Hierarchical distinction

is a major element of the binary human 'animal', as Derrida suggests (Laclau, 1990). He

argues that the formation of identity is exclusion established in hierarchy because in binary

oppositions, such as 'human'/'animal', the first category is defined as superior to the

excluded, subordinate, second category (Laclau, 1990, p. 33).   This hierarchical

construction is fundamental to sociology and social work as both disciplines centre almost

exclusively on humans. As a justification for this the sociologist George Herbert Mead

(1863-1931) offers an argument about the uniqueness of humans and why this 'unqiueness'

singles humans out for sociological study. Accepting the notion of the human-exclusive

imaginative use of language, Mead saw this as central to the development of shared

meanings and the human sense of self which, he argued, is the distinctive feature of human

societies (1934, p. 74). Social work acts within the same remit, as contributors to Ryan's

recent volume make clear. Atsuko Matsuoka and John Sorenson note how, in social work,

'humans have defined themselves in opposition to other animals, constructing themselves

superior and possessed of qualities that distinguish them from other beings in fundamental

ways' (2014, p. 74). This is a form of speciesism, an oppressive structural system that allows

the interests of one species (human) to override the greater interests of members of other

species (Ryder, 1983 [1975]; Singer P. , 1990). Because it is a structural system, Matsuoka

and Sorenson emphasize that speciesism is characterised by the institutionalisation of

nonhuman animal exploitation in which nonhuman animals are considered as property

(2014, p. 69). Speciesism has been compared to racism and sexism and as an ideology like

other –isms works as 'a set of socially shared beliefs that legitimates an existing or desired

social order' (Nibert, 2002, p. 8). But unlike sexism and racism, speciesism has been hardly

recognised by, let alone rebuked in, sociology or social work and this has many

consequences for both disciplines. This is evidenced by assumptions about what is seen as

legitimate research (e.g. regarding social work see Fook 2014) and the scorn that is directed

at academics and practitioners who have tried to challenge speciesism in their discipline.

In his introduction to his latest edited collection, Ryan notes the 'ridicule and knee-jerk

dismissal' (2014a, p. xv) that has attended attempts to address the neglect of nonhuman

animals in social work, and this echoes the derisory treatment that has been meted out in

the past to sociologists who tried to introduce nonhuman animals into the field of sociology

(see Kruse, 2002). Although nonhuman animals are still seen as marginal to sociology there

has been a great deal of progress (for discussion see Peggs, 2012). For example in 2001,

after considerable debate, the American Sociological Association granted section-in-

formation status to a new Animals and Society section, which was campaigned for by

sociologists whose research was in the field. Although not all sociologists were content

with this development (Kruse 2002) there have been others who have followed suit and

there is a burgeoning literature in the field of sociology. This acceptance is nascent in social

work. For example, the Canada-based grouping 'Social Workers for Animals' (2015) is most

likely the first grouping of its kind in the field. The group promotes compassion for all

individuals, human and nonhuman, but they know the struggle is ahead as like in sociology

and many other fields, the tradition in social work does not recognise nonhumans as

individuals or persons, and consequently they are seen as outside its remit.

Personhood, Selfhood and Nonhuman Animals

Personhood is based in the right to equal recognition and consideration and the right not to

be treated as property. If nonhuman animals were granted personhood they would benefit

equally with humans in this regard (Francione 2008). Because 'respect for persons' is the

underpinning principle of social work (Ryan , 2014a, p. xvi) the importance recognising

nonhuman animals as persons is reviewed by contributors to Ryan's (2014) collection. But,

as Cassandra Hanrahan laments in her chapter, nonhuman animals are seen as part of

nature and 'person' and 'nature' are socially constructed as ontologically separate (2014, p.

44). In consequence, nonhuman animals are denied the maximum moral standing that

recognition of personhood bestows on a being (Arneson, 1999) and thus they have little or

no recognition in social work (or elsewhere). This has many ramifications for social work

and for human and nonhuman animals as, the contributors Maureen MacNamara and

Jeannine Moga argue, 'social workers [have] failed to recognise the many places where

human and animal needs, experiences and rights intersect" (2014, p. 151).   They offer

guidelines on how social work practice might move towards 'fully integrating human

relationships with animals into micro –, mezzo –, and macro – level social work practice'

(MacNamara and Moga, 2014, p. 152). Through reference to the 'matrix of opportunity'

they envisage a change in social work practice so that it incorporates nonhuman animals as

'chattels, companions, or working agents, [who are] firmly embedded in all levels of our

communities" (MacNamara and Moga, 2014, p. 159). But in order to achieve this social

work must move beyond anthropocentric notions of social justice (Matsuoka and Sorenson,

2014) and commit itself to all human and nonhuman beings who are vulnerable and

dependent (Ryan, 2014b, p. 97). Rather than embracing personhood, in his own substantive

chapter Ryan argues for a rejection of 'personism', contending that social work should have

a commitment to the vulnerable and the dependent – whether they look like humans or not

(Ryan, 2014b, p. 97). This rejection of 'personism' resonates with some philosophical

responses to the argument for granting personhood to nonhuman animals.

Personhood is seen as a problematical anthropocentric label by Sue Donaldson and Will

Kymlicka, who maintain that it leads to a questionable 'patchwork quilt of variable and

insecure moral status' for a range of beings who are considered to be outside its remit

(2011, p. 29).   One of the main problems with the notion of personhood is that it is often a

'more cognitively demanding conception' which is centred in attributes and capacities that relate to the human (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 30). Anthropocentric assumptions about personhood are clear in campaigns that have sought to grant personhood to specific nonhumans. Perhaps the most familiar is the Great Ape Project, which proposes a United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Great Apes that would confer basic legal rights on nonhuman great apes (bonobos, chimpanzees, gorillas and orangutans) (Singer and Cavalieri, 1993). Because nonhuman hominids are regarded as having cognitive abilities similar to those of humans the campaign urges that they should be given the rights to their lives and be included as equals with humans in the moral community (Singer and Cavalieri, 1993). This underlines a number of problems. Obviously there are many 'marginal' humans (e.g. babies) who do have the cognitive abilities referred to as being essential to personhood (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011).   Most important for the discussion here, the project of personhood for some species excludes many so-called 'lower' nonhuman animals (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011). Although the release of any nonhuman animal from the subjection, suffering and lack of self-determination that is fundamental to being used as a human resource is very welcome, the problems with centring only on those who are considered to have minds that are similar to humans as a condition for not treating them as tools 'reinforces and perpetuates an unjustifiable speciesist hierarchy' (Francione, 2008, p. 20). The commodification and objectification of millions of other nonhuman animal subjects who are not seen as having human-like minds, and thus who are not 'persons', persists.

In answer to the problems associated with personhood Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that selfhood rather than personhood should be the defining feature because

'conscious/sentient beings are selves - that is, they have a distinctive subjective experiences of their own lives and of the world which demands a specific kind of protection in the form of inviolable rights' (2011, p. 24). I cannot recall selfhood or the self being referred to in Ryan's (2014) collection but selfhood has a place in social work theory. For example, elsewhere Denise Tanner (2013) argues that recognising and preserving a sense of self in humans who have Alzheimer's disease requires social workers to ensure the active involvement of those patients in the management of their identities. In proposing that these patients can retain a sense of self Tanner presents a critique of the position of Daniel H.J. Davis (and others) who claims that dementia brings 'a very real dismantling of the self' (Davis, 2004, p. 378). The implication is that the recognition of selfhood is essential to dignity and equal treatment in social work practice. But the notion of the 'self' can be anthropocentric, as an engagement with sociology shows (see Peggs, 2012). The phenomenon of selfhood has been constructed anthropocentrically by many influential sociologists. For example Mead (1863-1931) limited selfhood to humans alone. Mead's belief in the unique human use of language (discussed above) is essential to his position on the development of the self as uniquely human (1934, p. 74). This is crucial to the absolute distinction that Mead made between humans and nonhuman animals as he argued that humans are unlike nonhuman animals because, through interaction with others, humans develop a self which is different to the purely biological being that defines nonhuman animals (1934, p. 74). The sociologist Leslie Irvine (2007) offers a critique of Mead's position. Her approach to selfhood centres on the self as 'an image (or images) of ourselves (as an object) that appears in consciousness, around which we adapt our behavior' (Irvine, 2007, p. 7). Irvine argues that there is a good deal of evidence that shows that many species adapt their behaviour according to expectations. She refers to Clinton Sanders's (1999)

observations that dogs modify their behaviour according to human expectations when they are involved in dog-training. Sanders's work reveals that dogs define situations, adapt their behaviour and select courses of action. Observations of interactions between cats and humans reveal similar behaviours. Janet Alger and Stephen Alger's research shows that the behaviour of cats is 'strongly linked to social goals' in that they seek out affection, and 'engage in greeting rituals' (1997, p. 79). Unfortunately many sociologists remain unconvinced and selfhood, like personhood, largely remains speciesist in conceptualisation as it favours humans. In addition to his rejection of 'personism' the adoption of a non-anthropocentric conceptualisation of selfhood might be a way forward for Ryan (2014). But, unhappily, as things stand at present in social work as in other areas of social life nonhuman animals are not seen as persons or as selves, they are seen as little more than a 'means to human ends' (Ryan, 2014a, p. xvi).

Nonhuman Animals as property and social work

The using of nonhuman animals as 'means to human ends' is explored by a number of contributors to Ryan's collection. In the main they offer critical engagement with the ways in which nonhuman animal subjects are used to help improve the lives of humans. These 'therapeutic and service roles of animals' (Burke and Iannuzzi, 2014, p. 124) take on number of forms. For example, Shanna L. Burke and Dorothea Iannuzzi (2014) focus on the utility of Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) for autism spectrum disorders. They argue that nonhuman animals can and do deliver positive benefits to humans who have a range of needs because, as living beings they are able to communicate and participate (unlike toys) and are also non-

judgemental (unlike humans). In their contribution to Ryan's volume Eileen Bona and Gail

Courtnage focus on 'incorporating animals into the therapeutic milieu' of treatment offered

to young people who have suffered trauma (2014, p. 107).   They argue that 'animal nature

assisted therapy is life changing from many' (Bona and Courtnage, 2014, p. 117) as there are

'neurobiological benefits of interacting with animals' (Bona and Courtnage, 2014, p. 107).

The wellbeing of the nonhuman animal subjects involved is also considered and although

Burke and Iannuzzi argue that most AAT seems to have a 'benign effect' on the nonhuman

animals involved (2014, p. 130) they also note that in social work as well as elsewhere, 'for

liberationists, using animals to treat humans is potentially unethical in five distinct ways,

including limitations of freedom, life determination, training, social disconnection, and the

potential for injury' (2014, p. 129).

Nonhuman animals have been recognised for many years as having beneficial effects for

humans, benefits that are often based in the companion-based relationships that humans

can establish with individual nonhuman animal subjects. Adrienne Elizabeth Thomas (2014)

engages with these benefits and associated emotions in her chapter on 'liquid grief'.

Leaving aside the omission of reference to the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman, who is well-

known for originating the conceptualisation of a range of phenomena in modernity in terms

of liquidity (e.g. see Bauman, 2000; Bauman, 2006), Thomas (2014) specifies the wide-

ranging character of human nonhuman animal bonds that includes attachment, proximity,

sanctuary and grief. She focuses mainly on the grief that follows the death of a companion

nonhuman animal and proposes that social work should offer assistance to such grief-

stricken humans by recognising and supporting the 'special remarkable bond that exists

between people and their companion animals' (Thomas, 2014, p. 210). The positive human

benefits of nonhuman human animal engagement is taken up by Nina Papazian, who

focuses on companion nonhuman animals and the possible effect 'that the human –

companion animal bond has on quality-of-life' for humans who are ill (2014, p. 168). Basing

her conclusions in a pilot study, Papazian found that four fifths of a small sample of human

patients who were suffering from renal disease and renal failure said their quality of life was

enhanced by the presence of companion nonhuman animals because they provide

connections, loyalty, reciprocity of purpose and responsibility, and comfort and relaxation

(2014, pp 173-6). Papazian concludes that 'comprehensive human health research demands

a place for companion animals' (2014, p. 179).   This special bond between humans and

companion nonhumans is emphasized by Jan Fook who, in her chapter, gives examples of

the beneficial effects of living with companion nonhuman animals (2014, p. 25) and of

connections with horses who act as human-protectors or guardians (2014, p. 27).   But,

despite the meaningfulness of these relationships, Fook notes that the position of

companions has often been relegated to their being overlooked as mere 'hobbies' and in

this she finds resonances with the devaluing of women's role in the domestic sphere (2014,

p. 19). Fook wants to see more attention being paid by social workers to the wellbeing of

the occluded, such as nonhuman animals who live as companions.

Irrespective of the humans benefits of their relations with nonhuman animals the

contributors to Ryan's volume note the problems for the nonhuman animal subjects

involved. Drawing on the work of Tzachi Zamir (2006), Burke and Iannuzzi note how in all

human nonhuman animal relations the 'balance of power is that the human is always

dominant' (2014, p. 130). This is true even for those nonhuman animals who live as human companions (for discussion see Peggs, Forthcoming). In the sociological context, Arnold Arluke and Clinton Sanders (1996) suggest that this means that nonhuman animals can never be treated as true companions. Although companion nonhuman humans are invited into human family spaces there are what Lucy Jen Huang Hickrod and Raymond L. Schmitt (1982) refer to as pervasive 'frame breaks' that call into question the footing of the companion as a member of the family. Obvious examples are signs in restaurants that say 'no dogs allowed' and signs in parks that tell humans to 'keep dogs on leads' (e.g. see Arluke and Sanders, 1996, p. 12). Christine H. Kim and Emma K. Newton (2014) note these exclusionary practices in inter-species homelessness in their chapter, in which they reflect on the effects of the lack of recognition of interspecies families. In considering homelessness, domestic violence and disasters they note that nonhuman animals are often not counted by or admitted to rescue services and refuges even though this is devastating and deleterious for the humans and nonhuman animals involved. Deborah Walsh (2014) focuses on domestic violence in her chapter. She argues for a more all-embracing meaning of domestic violence so that nonhuman animal victims and survivors are acknowledged (2014, p. 219) not only because women's attachment to companion nonhuman animals can render them vulnerable (2014, p. 222) but also because of the impact on the companion nonhuman animal subjects involved (2014, p. 223).

Despite the love that humans often feel for companion nonhumans the incidence of abuse and neglect among companion animals is very high (Burke and Iannuzzi, 2014). In her chapter Lynn Loar considers how such neglect or abuse can reveal much about what is going

on in a family situation, which affects all human and nonhuman family members (2014, p. 135). She argues that risky and abusive behaviour towards nonhumans endangers all of those who live together and thus social workers have a duty to intervene to protect the safety of those beings who are at greatest risk in the home (Loar, 2014, p. 149). By asking questions about nonhuman companions she argues that the social worker can glean a great deal of information and can build up a rapport 'even with hostile clients' (Loar, 2014, p. 149). But, thinking back to Burke and Iannuzzi's points about the ways in which using nonhuman animal subjects at all is unethical (2014, p. 129) (discussed above), even in a loving home the intrinsically unequal power relations that exists between humans and companion nonhuman animals remains intact (Tuan, 1984).

In the late 1970s John Berger (1977) made the observation that the lives of companion nonhuman animals are constrained enormously .   He sums up their lives as follows:

> The small family living unit lacks space, earth, other animals, seasons, natural temperatures, and so on. The pet is either sterilised or sexually isolated, extremely limited in its exercise, deprived of almost all other animal contact, and fed with artificial foods. This is the material process which lies behind the truism that pets come to resemble their masters and mistresses. They are creatures of their owner's way of life. (Berger, 1977, p. 665)

Many nonhuman companions live in this way even though they are loved and cherished. When loved they are incorporated into human lives, but at any moment they can be

demoted and moved outside of the family (Shir-Vertesh, 2013). Many lose their homes

because they become unwanted or because they are replaced and many are abused and

killed (Peggs, Forthcoming).   The contributors to Ryan's volume explain that the welfare of

human and nonhuman animals, whether they are in companionship or in other

relationships, should be central to social work as 'The welfare of animals is a moral concept,

questioning what human beings owe to animals, and the extent and nature of our

obligations" (Rambaree, 2014, p. 188).

Social Work, Ethics and Nonhuman Animal Welfare

In her contribution to Ryan's volume, Komalsingh Rambaree points out that 'social work is

underpinned by the philosophy of welfare – which in its broad terms encompasses

physiological, emotional, and psychological well-being' (2014, p. 188). Rambaree centres

her discussion on the welfare of dogs in Mautritius, who are left to try to survive acts of

terrible cruelty, and she argues that social workers have a role in addressing these terrible

problems. In suggesting that social workers should be 'guided by their professional ethics'

to take such a role (Rambaree, 2014, p. 188), she adopts a commitment to 'deep justice'

which 'recognises all things in the cosmos as nested in a complex web of interconnections

between human and nonhuman' (Rambaree, 2014, p. 190). This commitment to deep

justice would entail giving, to use Ryan's (2014b) words, 'moral priority' to those who are

vulnerable and dependent, a position that must pertain to humans and nonhuman animals

equally. But, argues Ryan, social work disregards nonhuman animal welfare by focusing

almost exclusively on 'human welfare' with little recognition being given to the deep

relational significance of nonhuman animals in humans societies (2014b, p. 80). This indifference is evidenced in social work's codes of ethics as only a single one out of many codes refers to nonhuman animals (Ryan, 2014b, p. 81). Ryan argues that what is needed is an approach that is based in moral consistency that recognises that humans and nonhumans animals can suffer. This would entail consideration of individual welfare being based in sentience which, Ryan suggests, 'is common to all humans and nonhuman animal personal experience' (Ryan, 2014b, p. 90).

I understand the argument being made here but the notion that 'animal welfare' benefits nonhuman animals is not straightforward and is open to critique. Notwithstanding a range of Acts and Directives that are designed to protect the welfare of nonhuman animals, the notion of welfare seems to centre mainly on effecting exploitation that is more bearable to the nonhuman animals and therefore more acceptable to humans (Francione, 2008). Although some organisations (e.g. the RSPCA in the UK) argue that the 'welfare' approach is a move towards ending the oppression of nonhuman animals, social thinkers, such as sociologist Geertrui Cazaux (2007) and philosophers Donaldson and Kymlicka (2011), argue that improvements to the welfare of nonhuman animals is limited as welfare improvements usually do not seek to challenge the institutionalised exploitation of nonhuman animals. Rather, Cazaux reasons, arguments for 'animal welfare' conform to the 'anthropocentric distinction [that] is made between animal abuse and animal use' (2007, p. 103). Thus, Donaldson and Kymlicka argues, the approach is problematic because it accepts that nonhuman animal welfare matters, but only secondarily as it is subordinated to 'the interests of human beings' (2011, p.3).

Focussing on the welfare of companion nonhuman animals and nonhuman animal subjects who are used in AAT provide evidence of the ways in which the 'animal welfare' approach can uphold rather than challenges the exploitation of nonhuman animals for human benefits. This is voiced by Besthorn (2014). I agree with his wariness 'that the emergence of animal assisted practices may simply represent another iteration of human exploitation of animals for their own ends' (Besthorn, 2014, p. 10).   Moreover, considerations of welfare often rely in notions of who is sentient, which means that many beings are excluded from consideration. Placing beings who are deemed to be sentient at the centre of moral concern that gives these individuals intrinsic value, as opposed to the instrumental value that is granted to the rest, is referred to as 'sentiocentrism' by Marc Bekoff and Carron. A Meaney (2013). Their criticism is that although this 'ruptures the boundary of the traditional human-only moral club…it extends moral concern beyond humans only to our closest cousins, the sentient animals, and denies direct moral concern to 99% of living beings on the planet' (Bekoff and Meaney, 2013, p. 159). Few invertebrate nonhuman animals are granted sentience and thus most are not covered by welfare policies.   Besthorn has this on mind as the 'insectification' of social work would recognise that 'the world is not just a human world… It is a world of all beings – human and nonhuman in interrelated and reciprocal interaction' (2014, p. 10).

Concluding Comments: the Zoological Connection in Social Work

Criticism of one's own discipline is a commendable exercise (Bierstedt, 1960, p. 3). Ryan seeks to move the challenge of including nonhuman animals in social work beyond dismissal by the discipline to discussion within the discipline (Ryan, 2014a, p. xxi). The contributors to Ryan's (2014) edited volume offer a curative to the invisibility of nonhuman animals in social work. It is relatively early days for social work in this regard, the challenge to sociology has a longer history. As early as 1979 the sociologist Clifton Bryant stressed that 'Our social enterprise is not composed of humans alone' (1979, p. 417) as, he observed, nonhuman animals are everywhere in our lives. Because human societies are infused with nonhuman animals, he argued that sociology could gain a great deal from investigating this observable reality. But, he commented,

> 'In spite of the evident prominence of zoological influences in our culture and the subsequent import for our social lives, the sociological literature is largely silent on animal-related human behaviour. This is an unfortunate oversight which handicaps our acquisition of a comprehensive understanding of our social enterprise' (1979, p. 404).

Of course the world is a very different place these days and Animal Studies is a burgeoning field of study. In the late 1970s Bryant was a lonely voice, today there are hundreds of scholars who would back Ryan's appeal. I count myself among them. Ryan's volume makes clear that there is a 'zoological connection' (to use Bryant's (1979) terminology) in social work. As with sociologists, the full zoological connection in social work will demand a change in behaviour on the part of social workers, not only in their social work theory and practice but also in their lives. In their chapter Matsuoka and Sorenson ask 'Will social workers who believe in social justice continue to think that clothing ourselves with animal's

skins, fur, and hair or feeding ourselves by exploiting and harming other animals have nothing to do with social work and issues of social welfare?' (2014, p. 76).   This question echoes the words of the sociologist David Nibert, who asks that sociologists stop partaking in 'the privileges derived from entangled oppressions' such as consuming nonhuman animals and products made from them (2003, pp. 20-21). Nonhuman animals matter to many sociologists (though not enough) and they ought to matter to increasing social work and to increasing numbers of social workers. Ryan anticipates that one day social workers will be incredulous that social work could have overlooked nonhuman animals for so long (2014a, p. xxi). I hope that day will come sooner rather than later.

References

Alger, J. M. and Alger, S. F. (1997). Beyond Mead: Symbolic Interaction betweem Humans and Felines. *Society and Animals. 5 (1)*, 65-81.

Alger, J. M. and Alger, S. F. (2003). Drawing the Line. *International Jounral of Sociology and Social Policy: 23 (3)*, 69- 93.

Arluke, A. and Sanders, C. (1996). *Regarding Animals.* Philadelphia: Temple University.

Arneson, R. J. (1999). What, If Anything, Renders all Humans Morally Equal? In D. Jamieson, *Peter Singer and His Critics* (p. Blackwell). Oxford: 103-128.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity.* Cambridge: Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid Fear.* Cambridge: Polity.

Bekoff, M. and Meaney, C. A. (2013). *Encyclopedia of Animal Rights and Animal Welfare.* Oxon: Routledge.

Berger, J. (1977). Vanishing Animals. *New Society, 39* (756), 664.

Besthorn, F. H. (2014). Deep Ecological 'Insectification': Integrating Small Friends with Social Work. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 3-17). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bierstedt, R. (1960). Sociology and Humane Learning. *American Sociological Review. 25 (1)*, 3-9.

Bona, E. and Courtnage, G. (2014). 7. The Impact of Animals and Nature for Children and Youth with Trauma Histories: A Neurodevelopmental Theory. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 105-20). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bryant, C. D. (1979). The Zoological Connection: Animal-Related Human Behavior. *Social Forces. 58 (2)*, 399-421.

Burke, S. and Iannuzzi, D. (2014). Animal-Assisted Therapy for Children and Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorders. I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 120-34). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cazaux, G. (2007). Labelling Animals: Non-speciest Criminology and techniques to Identify Other Animals. In P. a. Beirne, *Issues in Green Criminology: Confronting Harms Against Environments, Humanity and Other Animals* (pp. 87-113). Cullompton, UK: Willan.

Davis, D. (2004). Dementia: Sociological and philosophical constructions. *Social Science and Medicine. 58*.

Derrida, J. (2004). The Animal That Therefore I am (More to Follow). In P. a. Atterton, *Animal Philosophy: Essential Readings in Continental Thought* (pp. 113-128). London: Continuum.

Donaldson, S. and Kymlicka, W. (2011). *Zoopolis: A Political Theory fo Animal Rights.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dupre, J. (2002). *Humans and Other Animals.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fook, J. (2014). The Meaning of Animals in Women's Lives: The Importance of the "Domestic" realm to Social Work. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 18-31). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Francione, G. L. (2008). *Animals as Persons: Essays on the Abolition of Animal Exploitation (Critical Perspectives on Animals).* New York: Columbia University Press.

Grandgeorge M. and Hausberger, M. (2011). Human-animal relationships: from daily life to animal-assisted therapies. *Annali dell'Istituto Superiore di Sanità 47(4)*, 397-408.

Hanrahan, C. (2014). Integrative Health Thinking and the New One Health Concept: All for 'One' or 'One' for All?; .

Hatton, K. (2008). *New Directions in Social Work.* London: SAGE.

Hickrod, L. and Schmitt, R. (1982). A Naturalistic Study of Interaction and frame: The Pet as a 'Family Member'. *Urban Life 11*, 55-77.

Irvine, L. (2007). The question of animal selves: Implications for sociological knowledge and practice. *Qualitative Sociology Review. 3(1)*, 5-22.

Kim, C. H. and Newton, E. K. (2014). My Dog is My Home: Increasing Awareness of Inter-Species Homelessness in Theory and Practice. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 48-63). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kruse, C. R. (2002). Social Animals: Animal Studies and Sociology. *Soceity and Animals, 10 (4)*, 375-379.

Laclau, E. (1990). *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time.* London: Verso.

Loar, L. (2014). 'How is Fido?': What the Family's Companion Animal Can Tell You Ab out Risk Assessment and Effective Interventions – If Only You Would Ask!;. n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 135-50). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

MacNamara, M. and Moga, J. (2014). The Place and Consequence of Animals in Contemporary Social Work Practice; . I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 151-66). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Matsuoka, A. and Sorenson, J. (2014). Social Justice beyond Human Beings: Trans-Species Social Justice. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 64-79). Houndsmills: Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Mead, G. H. (1934). *Mind, Self and Society. From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist. ed Charles W. Morriss.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nibert, D. (2002). *Animal Rights/Human Rights: Entanglement of Oppression and Liberation.* Rowna and Littlefild: Plymouth.

Nibert, D. (2003). Humans and Other Animals: Sociology's Moral and Intellectual Challenge. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy 23 (3)*, 5-25.

Papazian, N. (2014). No One Ever Asked Me That: The Value of Social Work Inquiry into the Human-Animal Bond;. I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 167-81). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Peggs, K. (2009). A hostile world for nonhuman animals: human identification and the oppression of nonhuman animals for human good. *Sociology 43 (1)*, 85-102.

Peggs, K. (2010). Nonhuman animal experiments in the European Community: human values and rational choice. *Society and Animals18 (1)*, 1-20.

Peggs, K. (2012). *Animals and Sociology.* Houndsmill: Palgrave: Macmillan.

Peggs, K. (Forthcoming). Animals Suffering Matters. In A. Linzey and C. Linzey, *Practical Animal Ethics.*

Rambaree, K. (2014). Stray Dogs and Social Work in Mauritius: An Analysis of Some Concerns and Challenges;. I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 182-98). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Risley-Curtiss C. R., Rogge M. E and Kawam, E. (2013). Factors affecting social workers' inclusion of animals in practice. *Social Work. 58(2)*, 153-61.

Ryan, T. (2011). *Animals and Social Work: A Moral Introduction.* Houndsmills: Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryan, T. (2014). *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter.* Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryan, T. (2014a). Introduction. In T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. xv-xxii). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryan, T. (2014b). The Moral Priority of Vulnerability and Dependency: Why Social Work Should Respect Both Humans and Animals. I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 80-104). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ryder, R. D. (1983 [1975]). *Victims of Science: The Use of Animals in Research. Revised edn.* London: National Anit-Vivisection Society.

Social Workers for Animals. (2015, December 1). Retrieved from Social Workers for Animals: http://www.socialworkersforanimals.com/

Sanders, C. (1999). *Understanding Dogs.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Shir-Vertesh, D. (2013). Flexible Personhood': Loving Animals as Family Members in Israel. *American Anthropologist, 114, no. 3*, 420–32.

Singer, P. (1990). *Animal Libration. 2nd edtion.* New York: New York Review of Books.

Singer, P. and Cavalieri, P. (1993). *The Great Ape Project: Equality beyond humanity.* London: Fourth Estate.

Tanner, D. (2013). Identity, Selfhood and Dementia: Messages for Social Work. *European Journal of Social Work 16:2*, 155-170.

Thomas, A. E. (2014). Liquid Love – Grief, Loss, Animal Companions and the Social Worker; . I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 199-214). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Tuan, Y. (1984). *Dominance and Affection: The Making of Pets.* New Haven:: Yale University Press.

Walsh, D. (2014). Domestic Violence and Companion Animal Welfare: The Issues, Risks and Implications for Practice. I n T. Ryan, *Animals in Social Work: Why and How They Matter* (pp. 215-28). Houndsmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Zamir, T. (2006). The Moral Basis of Animal-Assisted Therapy. *Society and Animals 14(2)*, 179-199.