

Into the Breach: Toward an Interspecies Politics

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Abstract

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Do non-human animals have the potential to augment power relations? Are they, or, can they be, subjects of justice? This dissertation takes a critical and nuanced dive into the historical and contemporary relationship between human dog handlers and military working dogs in order to track the flow of interspecies power relations to explore these questions. Through a close examination of this interspecies relationship, I document how the divergence in political consideration between dogs and humans reveals how power relations operate between and within species. Although some non-human animals possess the ability to augment power relations, they rarely achieve a political status that is equivalent to the most dominant humans, making them vulnerable to oppression.

In light of this reality, I argue that interspecies justice, when it comes to our relationships with non-human animals, is not a universalisable set of principles. In fact, under-differentiated responses risk doing more violence to non-human worlds despite promising justice. Instead, our obligations to other non-human animals need to be understood as deeply contextual and informed by analyzing asymmetric relationships that foreclose the opportunity for some beings to pursue

flourishing. An interspecies justice demonstrates in the first place the necessary mutual recognition of dependence between living beings; the recognition of our dependence and need of others in the construction of our world demands greater relations of respect. And second, the promise of an interspecies politics recognizes the multitude and diversity of entanglements any particular being shares with others that mutually uplifts and stimulates co-species flourishing. This is perhaps the most insightful contribution of an interspecies justice. Rather than enhancing our power as humans to shape and control, to objectify the ability of others, the recognition of mutual dependence and difference shows us just how fragile the pursuit of an interspecies justice is. The hope for an interspecies politics, then, becomes more respectful reciprocal interspecies relationships that value difference and lead to the creation of social institutions that socialize care and consideration beyond our immediate relationships.

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about interspecies relationships and that is reflective of the imprints you both figuratively and literally leave on my being every day.

Mathieu Dubeau
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Introduction

This soldier, I realized, must have had friends at home and in his regiment; yet he lay there deserted by all except his dog. I looked on, unmoved, at battles which decided the future of nations. Tearless, I had given orders which brought death to thousands. Yet here I was stirred, profoundly stirred, stirred to tears. And by what? By the grief of one dog.

Napoleon Bonaparte

Napoleon, perhaps one of the most effective military commanders of the modern era, seemingly never thought twice about sending men to their deaths. The conquering of nations and the expansion of France represented, for him, the promise of a better future worthy of life's sacrifice. More striking, perhaps, is the interspecies encounter that frames Napoleon's reflection. For the first time, Napoleon realizes the actual costs of war, the impact and profound loss that's imposed on a wide variety of subjects, both human and non-human alike. It was not the death of a human soldier that left Napoleon reeling in a sea of doubt for the remainder of his years in exile; it was an interspecies encounter between a dead human and a grieving canine. While Napoleon was accustomed to breaching fortified enemy lines in war, he had just perhaps breached another type of fortification. A fortification that, until very recently, presumed that humans and non-human animals existed within separate existential spheres and domains. That assumption has come under fire as a result of scholarship that engages with non-human animals as beings who matter.

What I argue throughout this dissertation is that non-human animals have always been "speaking" to and with "us." The fragmentary moment above suggests that non-human animals, a dog, in this case, make gestures and communicate in ways that await our recognition. While they do not "speak" in the traditional sense, their gestures and actions can have profound meaning and impact on our shared lived reality and political relations. Some non-human animals take action, labor, and augment power relations within our communities – we have just too often been blind to

these processes. The recognition of these non-human interactions requires the cultivation of new sensibilities and understandings that, I will argue, mandates a corresponding transformation in our social and political institutions.

This dissertation is primarily a work of political theory that is grounded in field research and interviews that were collected over a time span of two years, from October 2018 – October 2020. I chose to pair ethnographic participant observations with political theory to understand the real-world implications of interspecies relationships. Ethnographic approaches are acutely suited to “revealing the meanings people attribute to the world they inhabit” (Schatz, 2009, p. 6). The “data” gathered for the empirical components of this dissertation take the shape of 27 transcribed interviews, daily field notes, and anonymized records of text conversations and emails. In order to reflect on how we ought to structure our relations with non-human animals, I argue we must proceed from the present fact and structure of interspecies relationships.

Contemporary academic disciplines are turning their attention to the long-neglected topic of non-human animals. Philosophers, political theorists, and anthropologists like Rosi Braidotti (2013), Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka (2011), Robert Garner (2013), Radhika Govindrajana (2018), Donna Haraway (2008, 2016), Claire Kim (2015), Mary Midgley (1984), Martha Nussbaum (2006), Timothy Pachirat (2011), Tom Regan (1983), Peter Singer (1975), Kimberly Smith (2012), Kim TallBear (2013), and Anna Tsing (2015) have all contributed to a growing awareness of the need for the moral and political consideration of non-human animals. Yet, fortified scholarly battle lines exist between animal rights and relational approaches to non-human animals, particularly in philosophy and political theory. Animal rights theorists place primary value on animal sentience in prescribing protections through legal rights. Here, a being’s subjectivity is what beckons for and extends our moral and political obligations. Alternatively, relational scholars argue that we must begin our consideration of non-human animals by attending to the social and historical contexts that shape our

relationships with them. It is within these existing contexts that the possibility of injustice and oppression arises and appropriately where our normative reflection on the moral and political consideration of non-human animals begins.

This dissertation argues that an interspecies politics concerned with justice mandates that we recognize differences within species to properly attend to the diverse needs that arise in different spaces of interspecies relationships. Current animal rights approaches treat the category of species monolithically and do not adequately wrestle with intraspecies differences that should inform how we treat and relate to non-human animals. I argue that a relational approach grounded in Iris Marion Young's Five Faces of Oppression, rather than a rights-based approach, is more capable of recognizing oppression which is the necessary precondition for the pursuit of interspecies flourishing. This relational approach, which borrows heavily from Marxist, feminist care ethics, and environmental political theory, will demonstrate that our obligations to other non-human animals are generated by both intra- and interspecies differences and co-produced within contexts of relationships, not reducible to some a priori essentialization that conforms to species boundaries.

Canines are an excellent case in point. Their status within society is highly diversified. They live lives as glamorous pets, as feral dogs living at city margins, as personal home security and active military personnel, and are also routinely used as test subjects for our drugs and cosmetics. An animal rights approach, which treats every member of a species as a separate being with irrevocable rights, may be able to offer baseline protection in all cases mentioned above; but, it is unable to differentiate between a stray dog and a pet, much less a dog who bears the weight of six deployments to Afghanistan. Scholarly approaches that treat species monolithically consequently treat all dogs uniformly. A relational approach that attends to the specific differences between canines (as well as members of other species) in society is better able to identify the different, and yet necessary, obligations that arise from the interspecies relationships themselves.

Dogs are ideal subjects for this study, they have recently gained much attention, and the research on their co-evolution, psychology, and place within our society is burgeoning. The New York Times suggests that there are more books written about dogs than any subject thus far in the 21st century (Woods & Hare, 2019). Thomas Ricks, the Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist who writes on military and national security issues for Foreign Policy, frequently posts about dogs of war (Ricks, 2017). Foreign Policy even dedicates an entire weekly section of the journal to war dogs, titled Rebecca's War Dog of the Week (Frankel, 2015). Home Box Office (HBO) produced a documentary titled "War Dog: A Soldier's Best Friend" that follows dog handlers and their canine partners' post-military service. There are a handful of books written for popular audiences that document the heroism of canines in war, but very few, if any, scholarly works that investigate the use of dogs in combat, their ability to augment power relations, and generate an understanding of interspecies justice.

Chapter one begins this dissertation by disentangling important threads that run through scholarly discourses regarding the moral and political consideration of non-human animals. First, I distinguish approaches concerned with normative ethics on the one hand and justice on the other. Second, I sort approaches that justify moral and political recognition through sentience compared to capabilities. Third, I distinguish approaches by their political means of recognition – rights and welfare. Fourth, I argue that while critical theory has largely remained absent from discussions regarding non-human animals, I contend that critical theory as a method and form of inquiry has the tools necessary to take interspecies relationships seriously. Moreover, contrary to other forms of normative political theorizing, critical theory begins by investigating concrete historical and societal relationships that frame current ethical and political responses, which is necessary when considering contemporary interspecies justice.

By situating my contribution within these existing literatures, I argue that by historicizing our current lived reality, we can attend to and “listen” to claims made by the historically otherized, excluded, and silenced. The identification and feeling of a lack as a foreclosing of one’s desires become the beginnings of oppression. The resistance to this oppression and the resulting action that comes from its recognition is captured through the relationship between military working dogs and their human handlers explored throughout this dissertation.

The purpose of chapter one is to identify a missing link that my dissertation fills by crafting a historical materialist relational theory of interspecies justice. I argue that identifying group-level differences within species is the appropriate place to begin disentangling interspecies oppression and, alternatively, theorize the possibility of interspecies flourishing. Unlike rights approaches that presuppose distinct subjects with rights that offer individual protection from oppression regardless of context, this project rather begins by assuming that our relationships with non-human animals are messy tangles constantly being reworked and refashioned through our interrelation. By understanding these social and historical contexts, we can attend to injustice and oppression and transform relations of domination into more emancipatory forms of interspecies flourishing.

Chapter two historicizes the relationship between military working dogs and their human handlers by showing how this interspecies relationship has augmented power relations within and between human communities over time. Often, dogs that fought alongside humans were humanized to such an extent that they received payment and heightened forms of moral and political consideration. Alternatively, the humans being conquered were animalized and treated as beings hardly deserving of life.

From ancient to modern warfare, canines have played important roles in military engagements. In fact, our relationship with canines, some have argued, may have been the catalyst for our species’ success. In *The Invaders*, Pat Shipman (2015) argues that the extinction of

Neanderthals may not have been due to climate change – a theory typically used to explain their disappearance. Instead, Shipman (2015) argues, it was the ability of homo-sapiens and early dogs to form interspecies relationships that gave us the competitive advantage to out-compete Neanderthals for scarce resources. Neanderthals had a larger cranial capacity and were physically much stronger than homo-sapiens. What then explains our dominance? Perhaps, what makes us human is our capacity for interspecies relationships. Chapter two begins as an origin story of the human/canine relationship but quickly moves to more contemporary times, focusing on the beginnings of the military working dog program in the United States.

The United States officially began using dogs during World War II. With no previous expertise in developing dogs and the European continent in chaos due to the hostility of Nazi Germany, dog procurement and training were largely experimental. A citizen group named Dogs for Defense was commissioned with procuring dogs for the war effort. Most of the military working dog bloodlines up until this point had roots in Europe, with a large concentration in the Eastern regions. The Russians and Germans, in particular, have a much longer history of employing canines in war, and it's estimated that they used 250,000 dogs during World War II. With European bloodlines cutoff, Dogs for Defense needed to get creative in procuring canines. The majority of dogs used during WWII by the U.S. were donated pets (Waller, 1958). Only after WWII did the U.S. Army move to professionalize the use of canines in war. The U.S. used dogs again in Korea and Vietnam, although the dog program was temporarily suspended after Vietnam. It's estimated that the U.S. military left behind between 2,000 – 3,000 dogs that fought in the war at the war's end (Hesse, 2015). They were categorized as surplus equipment and left to fend for themselves in the Vietnamese jungle – one can only begin to speculate what happened to them.

Chapter three looks more closely at the contemporary relationship between military working dogs and their handlers. The dogs and their capabilities to detect explosives, trek miles to a target,

and apprehend foes with non-lethal force are not replicable by either technology or their human counterparts. They are an irreplaceable asset to military operations. During the ongoing war in Afghanistan, thousands of dogs have been used to supplement military operations; they are typically the first members of their platoons through breaches of fortified enemy lines, leading their human counterparts into hostile territory. Not only are they active on the front lines, but “behind the lines, they serve as therapy dogs, service dogs, and loyal companions” (Taylor, 2014). There are currently 1,600 MWDs in the field; that is approximately one dog for every three U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan (Stock, 2017). While the dogs are described as central members of the military units they are a part of; the hierarchical and secretive nature of military institutions combined with the confluence of the dogs’ species membership, the profit motive in the procurement process, costs of medical care and rehabilitation, and the transient categorization of the dogs as workers and soldiers makes them especially vulnerable to violence and neglect by state actors and private persons.

Chapter three explores our relational duties to military working dogs by following the arc of their career: dog breeding, procurement cycle, the military’s acquisition of the canines, handler/canine pairing, deployment, and lastly, the return home and retirement (or death in combat, in some cases). Each of these spaces of relation presents unique opportunities to explore both flourishing and its opposite, oppression. This project employs empirical participant observations and interviews of military working dog units across the four branches of the U.S. military. From these observations and interviews, I argue that military working dogs and their handlers share a distinct relationship defined by their work. The work is a central component of how handler and canine view, co-produce, and pursue their individual and shared flourishing, often resisting oppressive institutions and relations.

Canine and handler in this context are dependent on one another for their lives, a circumstance not replicated in other forms of human/canine interaction. Their work relationship

also takes place within the broader context of the military and war, which places additional strains on their relationship and forces them to work in exceptionally hostile terrain. My work reveals that humans who work with animals typically already reflect upon their obligations to them. Yet, because they work within larger humanist institutions, serious barriers exist to reconsidering and enacting those obligations. This means that human workers often resist and subvert those institutions, which make them - and their animal counterparts - vulnerable to violence. I argue that a relational interspecies justice must recognize differences in our relationships with other non-human animals in order to resist oppression. To argue that our obligations to the stray dog are identical to the obligations we have toward the MWD would efface a fundamental difference between them, with significant bearing on the question of our obligations to each.

Chapter four, reflecting on the case of MWDs captured in the preceding chapters, argues that focusing on social groups is the appropriate place to begin our inquiry of interspecies justice if our interest lies in identifying oppression and theorizing its opposite, flourishing. As Iris Marion Young argues, “Oppression happens to social groups... While groups do not exist apart from individuals, they are socially prior to individuals, because people’s identities are partly constituted by their group affinities. Social groups reflect ways that people identify themselves and others, which lead them to associate with some people more than others, and to treat others as different” (Young, 2011, p. 9). In this case, handlers and canines become attuned to one another, learn to communicate (develop a language, so to speak), and care for one another – they blur the lines of species boundaries. Yet, they are confronted by different forms of oppression due to their species membership, legal recognition, hierarchy within the military, and their proximity to dangerous work.

I argue that canines are the perfect beginning for applying the concept of social groups to other species because of their readily recognizable differences within contemporary society. Moreover, they are in close proximity to the human experience and have been co-evolving with humans for the

past 35,000 years. What is also interesting about dogs is that they “may be the only creatures ever to have domesticated themselves” (Safina, 2015, p. 222). That is not to say that our relationships with other species are of less importance or consequence, but I take our relationships with dogs as a justifiable starting place. This proximity, diverse status within society, and demonstrated ability to augment power relations within and between human communities make canines the perfect partners in thinking through and constructing a relational theory of interspecies justice.

Chapter five, also the concluding chapter of this dissertation, distinguishes between the possibility of an interspecies politics and individualized interspecies practices. Framed by the recent Capitol insurrection, I question whether interspecies relationships make humans, Americans in particular, more likely to widen their sphere of moral and political concern. It seems that despite our ability to include some non-human animals within our sphere of moral and political consideration, without the social institutions to socialize that care and consideration beyond those relationships we may inadvertently promote problematic individualized practices. Again, I rely on Young (2011) to distinguish between a politics of assimilation, which extends value and consideration on like values and experience, and a politics of difference. I argue that a politics of difference represents the possibility of an interspecies politics because it promotes the cultivation and socialization of abilities that identify and value differences between and within other species. In this vein, all beings involved become more attuned to those they are in community with, creating interspecies spaces of interaction that bring forward new opportunities for flourishing. Ultimately, the promise of an interspecies politics holds the potential to resist and overcome reactionary, racist, xenophobic, exclusionary, and anti-democratic politics.

Interspecies justice, when it comes to our relationships with non-human animals, is not a universalisable set of principles. In fact, under-differentiated responses risk doing more violence to non-human worlds despite promising justice. Instead, our obligations to other non-human animals

need to be understood as deeply contextual and informed by analyzing asymmetric relationships that foreclose the opportunity for some beings to pursue flourishing. An interspecies justice demonstrates in the first place the necessary mutual recognition of dependence between living beings; the recognition of our dependence and need of others in the construction of our world demands greater relations of respect. And second, the promise of an interspecies politics recognizes the multitude and diversity of entanglements any particular being shares with others that mutually uplifts and stimulates co-species flourishing.

This process of recognizing our dependence on others presents to us our fundamental vulnerability. We are all, humans and non-human animals, alike, both objects and subjects in the world. Instrumentalization is rarely absolute, although there are better and worse ways that we can be used as repositories, or objects, for others' purposes. Complete liberation is similarly not possible and, maybe, not even desirable. The idea or goal of complete liberation assumes an ideal of a completely autonomous being which no longer faces the constraints or antagonisms of society. Rather, what ought to be reconsidered, and better understood, in our relationships with human and non-human animals, is that the pursuit of flourishing and risk of oppression are born out of the same dialectical relationship - the relationship between subjects and objects. This is perhaps the most insightful contribution of an interspecies justice. Rather than enhancing our power as humans to shape and control, to objectify the ability of others, the recognition of mutual dependence and difference shows us just how fragile the pursuit of an interspecies justice is. The hope for an interspecies politics, then, becomes more respectful reciprocal interspecies relationships that value difference and lead to the creation of social institutions that socialize care and consideration beyond our immediate relationships.

Chapter 1:

The Grounds of Examining Difference: Non-human Animals in Political Theory

I. Introduction

With the advances in the human understanding of animal cognition, the 21st century represents an unprecedented time to reevaluate what political consideration means and for whom it exists. This dissertation takes up the question of interspecies political consideration by examining the working relationship between military working dogs and their handlers. Interspecies political consideration is a process by which humans incorporate and consider non-human animals' interests through human political institutions, like the economy and the law. I argue that by understanding social, political, and economic interspecies interactions, we can attend to injustice and oppression and transform relations of oppression into more emancipatory forms of interspecies flourishing. In the process of defending a moral-political order that a priori includes rather than excludes non-human animals, I will develop and then deploy four inter-related concepts as they apply to and emerge from the discursive action-context of interspecies relations: consideration, flourishing, emancipation, and justice.

I do so by crafting a historical materialist, relational theory of interspecies justice. I begin this process by extending the work of Iris Marion Young to interspecies relationships. I first argue that Young correctly identifies the obstacles to flourishing, what she famously calls the “five faces of oppression:” exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. Second, I argue that by extending Young’s concept of the social group to non-human animals, we become more attuned to differences between and among species. Identifying group-level differences is the appropriate place to begin investigating interspecies oppression and, alternatively, theorize the possibility of interspecies flourishing.

The dilemma-ridden nature of many interspecies relationships renders rights frameworks unhelpful without more attuned consideration of existing social, political, and economic relations. Second, in contrast to existing theories of animal rights and justice, I argue that differences between and within species bear significantly on moral and political considerations and generate different responses dependent on relationships. It is precisely the relationship that matters when it comes to the political consideration of non-human animals. For instance, should we not treat a profit-related relationship between a human master and non-human animal differently from one not dependent on the profit-motive. I argue that these differences matter to all beings involved. By ignoring these differences, we risk perpetuating more violence on human and non-human populations alike. The better we understand the differences and similarities between and within species, the less likely it becomes that all relationships and individuals deserve the same type of political consideration.

Many authors who broach the question of *our*, meaning human, moral and political consideration of non-human animals do so by attempting to extend the circle of concern by doubling down on possessive individualism. Possessive individualism atomizes individuality and locates self-development within a presupposed apolitical private sphere. The individual is a self-created artifact who owns his/her skills and owes nothing to society for them. These capabilities are subsequently treated as commodities to be bought and sold on the open market (Macpherson, 1962, p. 3). Because we possess our individuality, individuals must also claim their rights when others violate their freedom. Lastly, possessive individualism creates a universal self-interested political subject who begrudgingly partakes in political life instrumentally for private gain. This vision of the universal individualized political subject depoliticizes identity, lived experience, and contexts, which, I argue, ought to be central in our interrogations of interspecies justice.

By extending this vision of individuality to non-human animals, many authors attempt to theorize away differences that have historically been used to other potential political subjects. In

other words, the arguments take the form of showing that animals deserve political consideration because they are conscious, like us (humans); they suffer, like us, or are rational and self-interested, like us. These works, while essential for bringing human-animal studies to the mainstream, do so by reproducing and extending the image of the rights-bearing, rational, independent, value-maximizing, economic man to non-human animals. What I conclude by the end of this chapter is that too many authors extend political consideration to non-human animals by theorizing away differences and positing sameness both between and among species. While this type of ontological flattening may at first glance seem desirable, its effects may, in practice, lead to more and greater forms of interspecies oppression.

Paying close attention to difference unveils how identity, beginning with species-membership, has historically functioned to exclude non-human animals and other humans from political consideration. Identity and difference are constructed categories dependent on arbitrarily selected criteria that mark some as not belonging and fitting within a defined ethnocentric “we”. Criteria for exclusion are often connected to systems of government, nation-state boundaries, race, class, sex, gender, ability, and, perhaps, most importantly, for this dissertation, species. All are human-created political categories that express the desire to define who belongs and who does not, excluding based on arbitrarily picked criteria chosen by those in power. The history of non-human animals in political theory mirrors how identity and difference are operationalized to exclude some human beings and non-human animals from political recognition. This often comes in the privileging of the human experience at the expense of the animal – otherwise known as humanism. Whether in the form of biological reductionism, biblical sanctioning, capabilities, or racialization – demarcating difference has functioned as the source of exclusion that inferiorizes some while favoring others. As William Connolly argues,

identity is established in relation to a series of differences that have become socially recognized. These differences are essential to its being. If they did not coexist as differences,

it would not exist in its distinctness and solidity. Entrenched in this indispensable relation is a second set of tendencies ... to congeal established identities into fixed forms, thought and lived as if their structure expressed the true order of things. ... Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty. (Connolly, 1991, p. xiv)

In Connolly's definition, identity and difference are fundamentally connected; the first is defined by what it is not. The resulting action that comes from expressing a definitive identity as the true order of things turns itself into violence in the process of othering. Identity and difference, in this light, harm by rendering the life of some not worthy of political recognition, leading to a state of ambiguity and political insecurity.

For instance, I identify myself as human, white, North American, and male. All features of this identity are privileged and prioritized in our current society and shaped by a history of power relations that have excluded and marginalized differences necessary to define and specify those identities. Thus, as Connolly describes it, a paradox arises within the politics of identity. Connolly argues that "you need identity to act and to be ethical, but there is a drive to diminish difference to complete itself inside the pursuit of identity...The depth grammar of political theory is shaped, first by the way in which it either acknowledges or suppresses this paradox, and, second, by whether it negotiates it pluralistically or translates it into an aggressive politics of exclusive universality" (Connolly, 1991, p. xv). This paradox bears significantly on questions related to all living creatures. Just as the power relations of race, gender, nationality, and ability have been challenged when it comes to identity, now too, the category of species has come under fire as the most basic contrast to the "human."

While identity and difference can be used to exclude and marginalize, they need not be thought of in this way. As the paradox above demonstrates, the tension between identity and difference can also be viewed as a cradle for change. Instead, difference can be considered a source of creativity that promotes flourishing. Environmental, feminist, Marxist, indigenous, and some

liberal political theorists have, at times, focused on difference as being vital to the cultivation and development of the self. Instead of focusing on universal attributes that define a central ethnocentric “we,” difference can be a source of resilience that promotes the cultivation of various capabilities, sensibilities, and subjectivities that together mix to encourage a broader range of lived possibilities. Thought of in this way, difference becomes the dynamic force that opens up the possibility for things and relationships that were previously made unimaginable. Differences thus are also essential to redefining identity. Within this back and forth lies the possibility of change for interspecies relations.

This view of difference has deep analogs to ecology, where the resiliency of an ecosystem is frequently attributed to the diversity of its members. This dissertation takes on questions of identity and difference between and within species, referred to as interspecies relations. I argue that questions of difference are often dilemma-ridden and resist universalizing logic often put forward by animal rights theorists. Only by attending to the particularity of context and relationships can we begin to understand interspecies flourishing and oppression.

This chapter begins by disentangling three threads that run through contemporary scholarly discourses regarding the moral and political consideration of non-human animals. First, I disentangle normative ethical theories from theories concerned with justice. Second, I unravel how authors have extended moral and political recognition through sentience compared to capabilities. Third, I separate approaches by their political means of recognition – rights and welfare. This categorization documents how the human-animal studies literature has used arguments of difference and sameness to operationalize different political tools to extend the realm of moral and political consideration to some non-human animals.

In the second part of this chapter, I turn away from the existing human-animal studies literature and turn to possible alternatives. Critical theory and indigenous scholarship have yet to

enter the mainstream of the human-animal studies literature. Yet, I argue that these perspectives have something vital to contribute when considering interspecies relationships.

Critical theory, contrary to other forms of political theorizing, begins by investigating historical and societal power relationships through the lens of oppression - a necessity when considering contemporary interspecies justice. Indigenous scholarship typically situates humans and other non-human animals as parts of a larger interconnected ecological whole. Both critical theory and indigenous scholarship ground their analyses in a relational ontology, something that I will say more about later in this dissertation.

By situating my contribution within these existing literatures, I make the argument that by historicizing our current relationships with non-human animals, we can attend to and “listen” to claims made by the historically otherized, excluded, and silenced. This methodological commitment begins with the identification of a lack as a foreclosing of one’s desires. This, according to Young, is oppression. The resistance to this oppression and the resulting action that comes from its recognition and subsequent negation becomes the realm and possibility of becoming Marx’s species-being - otherwise known as the realm of flourishing pursued through interspecies labor.

II. Accessing the Terrain in Contemporary Human-Animal Studies

While relatively new to political science, human-animal studies began its formation as a field of study in the late 1970s with *Animal Liberation*, Peter Singer’s utilitarian approach to animal ethics. Early pioneers within human-animal studies, like Singer and Tom Regan, established two dominant approaches to non-human animals – the animal welfare model and the abolitionist, animal rights model. While these early approaches rebuked dominant narratives used to exclude non-humans from moral consideration, both turn to normative ethics to answer how humans ought to treat non-human animals. They focus their attention on demonstrating that non-human animals feel pain and

deserve equal consideration, in the case of Singer, or have the potential to be subjects-of-a-life, in the case of Regan.

For Singer, abolition means the abolition of *speciesism*: the preferential treatment of one species over another. Singer's prescriptions "flow from the principle of minimizing suffering alone...As long as we remember that we should give the same respect to the lives of animals as we give the lives of those humans at a similar mental level, we shall not go far wrong" (Singer, 1995, p. 21). Singer believes that there may exist significant differences between "normal" human beings and other animals. Still, because we already extend equal consideration to humans who aren't capable of making moral choices, the question is not can they choose, but rather, can they suffer (Singer, 1995, p. 225). Singer argues that "the extension of the basic principle of equality from one group to another does not imply that we should treat both groups in exactly the same way, or grant exactly the same rights to both groups" (Singer, 1995, p. 2). He cites the example of extending the right to vote to animals. Of course, my dog is incapable of comprehending what the right to vote means. Thus, it would be ludicrous to extend the right to vote to non-human animals who can't make use of the right. As Singer illustrates, it would be equally absurd to promise abortion rights to men since men cannot get pregnant. Thus, Singer's principle of equality requires equal consideration, which "may lead to different treatment and different rights" and is not identical to equal treatment (Singer, 1995, p. 2).

Singer's approach is classically utilitarian. Pain and suffering are harmful and, thus, should be avoided or minimized. How does one then decipher, or calculate, the badness of the pain or suffering inflicted? For Singer (1995, p. 19), the badness of a pain "depends on how intense it is and how long it lasts, but pains of the same intensity and duration are equally bad, whether felt by humans or animals."

Singer argues that the rejection of speciesism “does not imply that all lives are of equal worth.” This means that to be consistently anti-speciesist, one has to conclude that some self-aware animals that can plan for the future and have hopes and aspirations deserve enhanced consideration when compared to others without these capacities - including human beings. Singer is an animal welfarist. That means that he does not adhere to the sanctity of life view, which would extend the right to life to all animals capable of suffering. Singer (1995, p. 19) argues that killing can’t be completely excluded, doing so might inadvertently impose more suffering on those beings that are old and senile whom we could potentially put out of their misery. Thus, the prohibition of killing is not a part of Singer’s theory.

Singer’s utilitarian animal ethic theorizes that the shared capacity for suffering ought to inform our ethical responses to the plight of humans and animals alike. Although he relies on this similar capacity to suffer, he acknowledges that suffering may be experienced differently both within and across species. Subsequently, our consideration of both humans and animals ought to link consideration of suffering along with self-awareness. Thus, an anti-speciesist approach may put the lives of some non-humans ahead of humans who lack self-awareness.

Singer’s theory is a theory about avoiding pain. Many scholars have pointed out that the criteria for pain and suffering do not adequately capture what it means to live a good life. Many life experiences may cause pain and temporary suffering, like training and running a marathon or pursuing a Ph.D. Yet, we recognize that the process of both these trainings aspires to a higher form of achievement and personal development – what may be called the pursuit of flourishing. The criteria of suffering are not interested in enhancing or recognizing flourishing but are simply interested in reducing pain for the self-aware. While Singer’s welfarist position attempts to reduce the pain and suffering of some non-human animals, others believe that the welfarist position does not go nearly far enough.

Regan, unlike Singer, is an animal rights theorist (ART) who calls for the abolition of killing and instrumental use of all animals. Regan begins his argument by challenging Descartes' human/animal binary. He argues:

Like us, they possess a variety of sensory, cognitive, conative, and volitional capacities. They see and hear, believe and desire, remember and anticipate, plan and intend. Moreover, what happens to them matters to them. Physical pleasure and pain – these they share with us. But also fear and contentment, anger and loneliness, frustration and satisfaction, cunning and impudence. These and a host of other psychological states and dispositions collectively help define the mental life and relative well-being of those subjects-of-a-life we know better as raccoons and rabbits, beaver and bison, chipmunks and chimpanzees, you and I (Regan, 2004, p. xvi).

Regan claims that some non-human animals are conscious. He generates five criteria, what he calls the Cumulative Argument, to justify viewing some animals as conscious. Justifications for consciousness can be made if

(1) doing so accords with the commonsense view of the world; (2) speaking of them in mentalistic terms is in harmony with ordinary language; (3) viewing them thus does not commit us to attributing an immaterial mind (soul) to them; (4) their behavior is consistent with the attribution of consciousness to them; and (5) both the commonsense beliefs about these animals and our ordinary way of talking about them and their behavior can be given a principled defense in terms of evolutionary theory (Regan, 2004, p. 29).

Yet, even for Regan, there are essential differences between humans and other conscious animals.

Animals, according to Regan, are not fully autonomous in the Kantian sense, like humans. If that were the case, then animals would be able to reflect on their behavior and assess normatively whether other comparable animals would partake in similar behavior. His theory of autonomy mandates the capacity for reflectivity. Although there are a few difficulties when it comes to these criteria of reflectivity, Regan admits that even if animals could reason in this way, proving it would be next to impossible.

Alternatively, Regan points out that while Kantian autonomy might elude non-human animals, some might possess preference autonomy. Preference autonomy means that some animals

are capable of making preferential choices based on their interests. This is ultimately what differentiates between moral agents and moral patients. Moral agency, defined through Kantian autonomy, is reserved for human beings with reflective capacities on right and wrong. Alternatively, while having interests, moral patients are incapable of this reflection and are rather subjects of right and wrong actions of moral agents and other moral patients (Regan, 2004, p. 154).

Traditionally, the difference between moral agents and moral patients determines which beings have intrinsic value and should not be used instrumentally. Moral patients, for Kant, are therefore not treated as subjects at all. Thus, any duty that is owed to animals takes the form of an indirect duty and is done for the sake of humanity. According to Kant, we have these indirect duties because the behavior in question (the treatment of non-human animals) may have spillover effects into the realm of direct duties that we have towards other humans.

Regan finds the indirect duty view of traditional deontologists and the direct duty view of utilitarians inadequate for considering the moral status of subjects-of-a-life. Contrary to previous Kantian interpretations, Regan (2004, p. 280) argues that while subjects-of-a-life may be moral patients, we should nevertheless extend the concept of intrinsic value to them because of their shared characteristics with moral agents. He argues that “the myth of the privileged moral status of moral agents has no clothes.” Most mammals are so much like us, anatomically and physiologically, that attributing consciousness to them is well-founded. Their lives have meaning to them, they can be better or worse off, and thus, the only morally permissible and consistent approach is attributing intrinsic value to them. This translates into complete abolition for Regan, which means no killing or instrumental use.

Like Gary Francione, Regan believes that animal domestication must come to an end. Francione makes the case by arguing that domestication is simply a gratuitous process that forces the submission of non-human animals to their human masters:

Domesticated animals are dependent on us for everything that is important in their lives: when and whether they eat or drink, when and where they sleep or relieve themselves, whether they get affection or exercise, etc.... Domestic animals are neither a real or full part of our world or of the non-human world. They exist forever in a netherworld of vulnerability, dependent on us for everything and at risk of harm from an environment that they do not really understand. We have bred them to be compliant and servile, or to have characteristics that are actually harmful to them but are pleasing to us. We may make them happy in one sense, but the relationship can never be “natural” or “normal.” They do not belong stuck in our world irrespective of how well we treat them (Francione, 2014).

Many abolitionist authors argue that the process of domestication is violent and exploitative and that our relations with domesticated animals must come to an end, which means that domesticated animals must become extinct.

Some non-human animals, according to Regan, are subjects-of-a-life because of how closely their physiology mirrors that of humans. This entitles them to equal treatment as ends in and of themselves. The apparent benefit of Regan’s rights-based approach is that subjects-of-a-life are extended rights of inviolability and respect. They may not be sacrificed or instrumentally used for the collective good or nefarious purposes contrary to their interests. For Regan, theorizing sameness between subjects-of-a-life is the justification that paves the way for the extension of rights. Unlike Singer’s previous welfare model, Regan does not attend to differences among and between subjects-of-a-life. His primary interest lies in theorizing sameness through the capability of consciousness.

As I will be arguing throughout this dissertation, this extension of rights may inadvertently cause more harm than good. Inviolable rights are such sharp political tools that they provide very little room for maneuvering the often complex and dilemma-ridden nature of our relationships with non-human animals. As the human-animal studies literature has matured, a rupture between rights and relational approaches to non-human animals has developed.

Singer and Regan’s early introduction lays the foundation for many works to come in human-animal studies. Their primary concern is with ethical treatment, or rather, how individuals and institutions treat non-human animals. Their primary justification for extending moral

consideration is forms of sentience, and their politics vary between animal welfare, on the one hand, and animal rights, on the other.

While Singer and Regan's introduction centers primarily on ethics, political scientists, along with some philosophers have historically concerned themselves with questions of justice – which is entirely missing from both accounts. More recent work at the intersection of political theory and philosophy, written by Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka, Robert Garner, Martha Nussbaum, and Alasdair Cochrane has brought justice to the foreground. What justice means varies wildly among these authors. For some, like Nussbaum, justice is concerned with flourishing.

III. Justice in Human-Animal Studies

Nussbaum's central thesis in *Frontiers of Justice* questions the usefulness of the social contract tradition for several collective subjects of justice. The social contract tradition rests on assumptions that might not immediately strike us as problematic, for example, the notion of reciprocity between equally capable rational individuals. These individuals come together and agree to a contract of mutual advantage and thus form political society. But if the agents to the contract are 'equally capable rational' individuals, then we have already excluded the physically and mentally disabled from forming and consenting to the contract. According to Nussbaum, there has been confusion about the scope of the political project:

The primary subjects of justice are the same ones who choose the principles. Thus when the tradition specifies certain abilities (rationality, language, roughly equal physical and mental capacity) as prerequisites for participation in the procedure that chooses principles, these requirements also have large consequences for the treatment of people with impairments and disabilities as recipients of justice in the resulting society (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 16).

Here, Nussbaum criticizes the use of particular capacities that demarcate who the subjects of justice are, which thus define who has 'dignity and deserves to be treated with respect on a basis of equality with others' (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 20). Obviously, a similar problem exists with non-human animals.

If the contracting agents are equally capable rational human individuals, then non-human animals, like the mentally and physically disabled, are also excluded from the contract. Nussbaum points out that specifying certain criteria for inclusion are almost always, ironically, exclusionary claims. In the case of non-human animals, she argues that ‘animals are not simply part of the furniture of the world; they are active beings trying to live their lives; and we often stand in their way. That looks like a problem of justice, not simply an occasion of charity’ (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 22). How then does Nussbaum include those who have been historically excluded from the contract? And how is that justice pursued?

Nussbaum argues that the capabilities approach is better able to address the historically excluded when compared to a contractarian approach because it “concerns the dignity of a form of life that possesses both abilities and deep needs. Its basic goal is to address the need for a rich plurality of life activities” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 346). Nussbaum (2006, p. 82) argues that the capabilities approach is more analogous to the criminal trial - we have an outcome in mind: the dignity of a particular form of life. From that outcome, we then structure our procedures and institutions to facilitate that selected result. What is left up to the political community then is to figure out what obligations will ensure that individuals' needs are fulfilled so they can then develop their capabilities in their own unique way.

Unlike Singer’s welfare model, Nussbaum’s contribution upends utilitarianism. Her justice-centered approach “takes an interest not just in pleasure and pain, but in complex forms of life and functioning. It wants to see each thing flourish as the sort of thing it is” (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 349). Nussbaum also resists the universalizing logic put forth by earlier authors. She admits that there are plural ‘good lives’ to be pursued, and each sentient being deserves consideration as it relates to the ‘norm of that species.’ Nussbaum’s contribution takes us in an auspicious direction, one that is not explored in the earlier accounts of inviolability proposed by Regan and the pain and suffering criteria

of Singer. While these earlier accounts focused on normative ethics, Nussbaum identifies justice as the central concern of our relationships with non-human animals and flourishing as the primary justification for their political consideration.

However, while Nussbaum's theory turns our attention in the direction of justice and the needs of beings in relation to their flourishing, her account is articulated at the species-level. While she recognizes pluralism between species, her account treats species monolithically. As our human understanding of non-human animals enlarges, we become more aware of the vast differences within species themselves. It becomes less likely that we should limit our understanding of difference, identity, and flourishing to the species-level. We do not treat the "human" species monolithically. Why impose such a rigid structure on other non-human animals?

Sue Donaldson and Will Kymlicka criticize Nussbaum's 'species norm' approach for upholding the traditional human-animal binary by neglecting to recognize already existing interspecies communities. Instead of focusing on the needs of each species and their ability to flourish within their distinct, intraspecies communities, Donaldson and Kymlicka argue that we should instead construct a "theory of capabilities that is premised on enabling humans and domesticated animals to flourish in mixed communities" (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 97). This important recognition of mixed, interspecies, communities complicates Nussbaum's "species-norm" approach and begins to wrestle with the many different types of relationships shared between human and non-human animals.

While Donaldson and Kymlicka turn to the topic of justice, rather than normative ethics, they return to animal rights as the appropriate vehicle for protecting non-human animals. They argue that "there are certain 'invariant' ethical prescriptions – certain universal negative rights owed to all beings with a subjective experience of the world"; thus, they mostly agree with animal rights theorists. Yet, they believe that 'there are also variable ethical prescriptions based on the nature of

our relationships” (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 12). Donaldson and Kymlicka’s approach is more attuned to the particular differences that exist in our relationships with non-humans. They argue that our positive obligations ought to reflect these differences. Not all non-human animals ought to receive the same *positive* relational duties, although all are extended the negative rights of inviolability.

Should your companion animal receive the same type of positive obligations as a wild wolf? Hardly anyone would say yes. Of course, you are more directly duty-bound to your companion animal than a wild wolf; your obligations also take a different form. For instance, I might have a duty to seek veterinary care for my sick dog, but I do not have that obligation for a wild animal – at least not in Donaldson and Kymlicka’s relational theory of animal rights. Donaldson and Kymlicka supplement Regan, Singer, and Nussbaum by factoring in the complexities of interspecies relationships and enrich the debate on what kinds of positive consideration we owe to other beings in relation to ourselves. While I might not have a positive duty to bring a wolf to a veterinarian, we may be collectively duty-bound to respect and not encroach upon wolf habitat.

Donaldson and Kymlicka’s relational theory makes two essential contributions to the human-animal studies literature. The first is updating animal rights theory by considering negative rights and positive duties as equally important. And second, they attach a theory of citizenship to the idea of universal animal rights, which distinguishes the types of obligations we owe to non-human animals dependent on an animal’s relationship to human communities. They argue that we must become more attuned to communal, spatial and temporal differences and how they structure our relations with non-human animals (Donaldson and Kymlicka 2011, p. 13).

Donaldson and Kymlicka’s theory of citizenship rests on the categorical distinctions of co-citizens who are considered full citizens because of their historical relations of interdependence with humans; denizens (liminal) who are more like migrants that move in and out of human habitats; and

wild animals - which are similar to foreign nations and need protection *from* human interaction. This is a significant difference when compared to Nussbaum's capabilities approach. Our positive obligations to these animals may differ significantly based on our relation to them, but ultimately the goal of a citizenship-based relational theory of animal rights "presupposes that animals and humans will inevitably be linked through diverse relations of interaction and interdependency, and the task of citizenship theory is to evaluate the justice of these relations and to reconstruct them on fairer terms" (Donaldson and Kymlicka, 2011, p. 62). Historically, non-human animals have been categorized as either domesticated or wild animals. Donaldson and Kymlicka's relational theory of animal rights, crafted in *Zoopolis*, casts aside the binary – domesticated/wild - in favor of a tripartite relational animal rights approach that more appropriately considers the complexity of time and space in our interspecies relationships. Donaldson and Kymlicka have crafted a relational theory of animal rights through the primary justification of sentience, whose primary concern is justice, achieved through a theory of animal rights that hinges on the criteria of citizenship.

Robert Garner's *A Theory of Justice for Animals* can be categorized similarly to Donaldson and Kymlicka's work and consolidates the earlier theories of justice defined above. Yet, instead of turning to relationships and citizenship, Garner supplants an interest theory within a Rawlsian theory of justice in pursuit of an interspecies justice as fairness. Garner (2013) redeems Rawls for non-human animals by turning away from contractarianism and adding a "free-standing equal consideration of interest principle", which qualifies non-human animals as recipients of justice because they have interests. He then appends a non-species egalitarian theory of animal rights to the traditionally welfarist "interest" approach but rejects the aggregative character of utilitarianism. It is non-species egalitarian in the sense that "we should consider all interests equally... not that these interests should be regarded as of equal moral weight" (Garner 2013, p. 116). Instead, Garner argues that the interest principle paired with the equality principles seeks to "treat like cases alike" – thus,

returning to the primary basis of Rawls' *Theory of Justice*, justice as fairness (Garner 2013, p. 110).

When cases are the same, then they should be treated similarly. When circumstances differ qualitatively, those differences must be considered, and our responses tailored to the circumstance so that justice as fairness can be achieved.

From this point, Garner then asks: what are animals owed as a matter of justice? Garner (2013, p. 1) suggests that there's a "need to reconcile desirable ethical principles concerning the moral status of animals with the constraints that limit what is socially, politically, and economically possible to achieve, at least at the present time." His primary concern here is with Rawls' political feasibility criterion.

Like Rawls, Garner's contribution argues that justice enjoys particularly high esteem within political theory and often acts as the gatekeeper to the moral community. If one is a recipient of justice, then one is a "morally considerable entity deserving of respectful treatment" (Garner 2013, p. 1). Garner points out that justice is yet to be central when considering non-human animals. There's no reference to justice in *Animal Liberation*, and, Garner argues, Regan's animal rights approach inappropriately assumes that justice and morality are identical concepts. Garner's (2013, p. 93) contribution creates a theory of justice for animals that merges the benefits of a rights-based theory, an interest-based theory, and a capacity-oriented theory.

Garner settles on political rights as his vehicle of political protection because rights focus on the individual. Like Regan and Donaldson and Kymlicka, Garner argues that rights protect individuals from arbitrary interference and act as trump cards when interests are in danger of being traded off (Garner 2013, p. 93). An individual's interests should not be traded for an increase in the aggregate social welfare of the community. His theory is also an interest-based theory because it "maintains that the function of rights is to uphold individual well-being. The possession of an interest, therefore, leads to a duty on others to ensure that this right – following directly from the

possession of an interest – is upheld” (Garner 2013, p. 94). The use of an interest theory is necessary to confront the alternative rights claiming “will” theory. Non-human animals and marginal humans can’t claim their rights in the traditional sense and are thus excluded from consideration by proponents of the will theory of rights. Therefore, for Garner, rights are vital vehicles to protect individuals from social welfare arguments that might instrumentalize some lives for the sake of the collective. Furthermore, it is justified to extend rights to non-human animals and marginal humans even if they can’t claim those rights themselves because they have interests. Interests, the fact the one’s life can be made better or worse, confers a direct duty on others to respect the lives of other interest-bearing individuals.

Lastly, Garner’s theory appends a capacities-oriented approach to rights and interests described above. Garner (2013) argues that “moral status or worth is granted on the basis of the possession of some ability or other, whether it be mere sentience or greater cognitive capacities.” He contrasts this with a relational approach, where value and worth are recognized based on a non-human animal’s relation to a human being. A relational approach, according to Garner, might leave wild animals with little to no, protections. Garner admits that relational theories might be important insofar as they supplement baseline protections generated by the capacities-oriented approach but, by themselves, foster inadequate protections.

Garner’s theory has practical outcomes that differ significantly from other authors mentioned above. Garner’s approach is not abolitionist like traditional rights approaches. His theory of justice for animals is concerned with Rawls’ political feasibility and justice as fairness criterion. Thus, Garner opts for a theory that takes the limitations of our current social and political arrangements seriously.

Garner compares two possible versions of animal rights that flow from his interest and political feasibility criteria, what he calls the sentience, and the enhanced sentience, position. He

identifies the enhanced sentience position as the ideal alternative to his non-ideal sentience position. The enhanced sentience position places more severe (although not absolute) limits on the use and killing of non-human animals. Garner clarifies that these limits bring us very close to the species-egalitarian position (Regan's argument) without the sanctity of life criteria. Thus, in the enhanced sentience position, "the lives of animals can only be sacrificed if very significant human benefits accrue" (Garner 2013, p. 133). Yet, Garner admits, if we take Rawls' political feasibility criterion seriously, the enhanced sentience position may be too demanding. We may only be left, practically, with the sentience position. As long as "suffering is, at the very least, minimized, we are morally permitted to use animals in whatever way we see fit" (Garner 2013, p. 133). For Garner, then, the goal for the advocate of justice is to use the sentience position with the hopes of achieving the enhanced sentience position at a later point in time.

While this might seem all well and good, it's difficult to logically reconcile Garner's invocation of rights with his statement that we might be "morally permitted to use animals in whatever way we see fit... so long as suffering is, at the very least, minimized." The purpose of rights is to create inviolable boundaries around individuals that cannot be traded off. It seems that the political feasibility criteria inadvertently undermines the very purpose of Garner's chosen political vehicle for protection. And here lies the rub: most animal rights theorists theorize a level of sameness to extend political rights to non-human animals but also recognize that serious differences between and among animals may exist that make identical treatment almost impossible. The point and purpose of rights is to universalize treatment of all individuals. Unfortunately, the dilemma-ridden nature of intra- and interspecies difference, especially when it comes to our relationships with non-human animals, makes it especially difficult to universalize treatment. Attending to vast differences that exist at the individual, collective, and ecological level resists universalizing logic. Because some of the differences both within and between species can be so vast, no universal

treatment can be equated to justice. As the field of human-animal studies has matured, recognition of these differences is generating serious doubt that our current humanist liberal institutions can adequately take on the animal question. And yet, authors like Kimberly Smith (2012) and Alasdair Cochrane (2018) continue to breathe life in the possibility of an interspecies liberal state.

In *Governing Animals*, Smith (2012, p. xiii) argues that the liberal state has the necessary tools to “recognize the moral status and social meaning of animals” and, thus, enforce animal welfare laws that go beyond any protection currently provided by any nation. Smith reworks the traditional liberal categories of people and things by theorizing a third relevant category, what she calls fellow creatures. Fellow creatures for Smith (2012, p. xiv) are “co-inhabitants of our ecological and social spaces. They form a wildly diverse set, differing among themselves in terms of physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and, accordingly, moral characteristics.” The goal of the political community is to craft laws and practices that are attuned to particular differences from and similarities to human beings. All we need, argues Smith, is a Rawlsian overlapping consensus “that some animals are part of the social contract”, nothing more (Smith 2012, p. xiv). Like Regan (2005) and Garner (2013), Smith (2012, p. xiv) argues that, at the very least, animals are moral patients that have interests and that humans can readily understand those interests. This, according to Smith (2012, p. xvii), makes animals “distinctive subjects of political duties and political concern.” An interspecies justice, for Smith, resembles Nussbaum’s capabilities approach but is enhanced by the way she reworks longstanding categories of the liberal state to include fellow creatures.

Like others, Smith begins her argument by turning to the social contract. The social contract is an important device for Smith and other liberals because it defines the *political* obligations that individuals owe one another. The social contract traditionally confers legitimacy on government through the consent of the governed. As has been pointed out by some of our previous authors,

non-human animals and marginal humans typically cannot consent in the traditional sense. Smith bypasses the conventional underpinnings of consent by turning to relations:

The social contract, as it is used in political theory and practical politics, usually includes *everyone* in a political society, even those incapable of consenting. You don't have to sign-up; you don't have to give actual consent, either explicit or implicit. If you have significant social relations with other members of the community, you're a member (Smith 2012, p. 48).

Thus, Smith's framework articulates a relational account of the social contract. The social contract includes your traditional moral agents and extends membership to other beings whose welfare is inextricably connected to those moral agents. Here, Smith defines the political community as a series of relationships. Most obviously, pets are part of the political community because their welfare and close relations of interdependence are easily accommodated with our own interests. In comparison, pests are not members; it is nearly impossible to harmonize their interests with our own, and thus, their consideration falls outside our political scope. Livestock, a tricky example, do fall within the confines of the political community because they live in close relationship to us and have historically received the highest level of government protection (Smith 2012, p. 63). Like Garner, Smith is not an abolitionist. Abolitionism mandates no instrumental use, yet Smith cites various historical relationships, like animal husbandry, that for many people have been and, continue to be, central to their personal development. Thus, according to Smith (2012, p. 65), "fulfilling the conditions of a reasonable domesticated animal contract asks a great deal more from us than simply ceasing to eat meat." In fact, meat-eating may still be permissible, although the treatment of those domesticated animals would be radically different.

One of the ways that Smith pushes her readers to rethink our practices when it comes to non-human animals is through the concept of property. Property is central in the liberal tradition. People have property in themselves and form their identities through the ways that they appropriate material objects. Animals, historically, have been treated by liberal theory as things that can be

owned and exchanged as commodities.¹ Smith admits this and suggests that classical property rights are inadequate if we are to consider the well-being of non-human animals. While classical property rights have been oppressive towards both humans and non-human animals, Smith suggests there's an intermediary position between abolition and ownership. The intermediary position should respect "their moral status, biological and social natures, and role in the mixed human/animal community" (Smith 2012, pg. 97). The important distinction within this intermediary position is that the right to property in Smith's theory protects beneficial human/animal relationships; yet, it does not excuse exploitative relationships that prioritize human autonomy and economic freedom above the welfare of non-human animals. With the social contract defined and property rights reclaimed, Smith's final contribution turns toward representation.

A liberal theory would hardly be complete if it didn't consider the particularly tricky function of non-human animal representation. Smith turns to Hannah Pitkin, who argues that even good care can't simply be equated with representative government. Beneficent sovereigns exist; but, what makes for representative government "generally means that the citizens have some control over what the government does" (Smith 2012, p. 104). Animals do have a sort of agency, but we can't ask them to "participate in debates about public policy and express their grievance. Nor can we ask them to choose representatives and to hold those representatives responsible" (Smith 2012, p. 104). Alternative models to direct participation must be considered. Smith points out that most democracies use the trustee model of representation over direct forms of democracy, anyway. Smith argues that it is wrong to construe democratic representation as the simple transmitting of preferences to the legislature. Instead, the aim of democratic representation is to enhance "the overall quality of democratic decision making by making animal interests visible or readable to policy

¹ This doesn't need to strike us as surprising. The advent of the liberal tradition had strong ties with neoclassical economics. Early proponents of liberal theory often reduced social life to economic terms. See Sheldon Wolin's *Politics and Vision*, Pg. 301.

makers” (Smith 2012, p. 107). Accordingly, Smith argues that she has rescued liberalism from its most egregiously human-centric concepts. Liberalism, in this sense, can be transformed into an interspecies liberalism if it “respects the moral status of non-humans, recognizes important differences among animals, and is sensitive to the varying kind of relationships that humans have with animals” (Smith 2012, p. 162). Smith’s primary concern is justice, justified through the concept of flourishing, which results in a politics of animal welfare. This is distinct from the majority of our previous scholars, whose primary politics have been animal rights.

The latest development in human-animal scholarship has been Cochrane’s *Sentientist Politics* (2018). Cochrane argues that the quality of sentience ought to confer equal worth to all sentient creatures. Sentient rights, argues Cochrane, ought to replace human rights as the moral rights that guide our action, and sentience ought to replace the ‘human’ as the quality that implies moral and political consideration. Cochrane intends to build a universal cosmopolitan global theory of interspecies justice that uses sentience as its primary characteristic of value. He argues that moral rights are not enough to protect the interest of all sentient creatures. Thus, political rights, legislated within domestic and international law, are necessary to protect the interests of all sentient creatures. Like other ART’s, Cochrane believes that rights are the only political vehicles capable of protecting individuals from the value-maximizing logic of communal welfare.

Human-animal studies scholarship began with the recognition that some non-human animals are conscious. Early scholarship argued that sentience and the ability to suffer bestowed moral obligations upon human beings. Singer and Regan made arguments that brought to light the shared characteristics between humans and some animals. These similarities became defining characteristics for the extension of rights and the reconsideration of welfare. As the human-animal studies literature matured, authors like Nussbaum, Donaldson and Kymlicka, Garner, and Smith began contemplating differences between species. Some argued that the varying nature of our relationships with non-

human animals not only implied moral obligations upon fellow humans but are, rather, a concern of collective justice. While most of these contemporary scholars argue that political rights are the best way to protect the interests of non-human animals, many recognize that differences in sentience across the animal kingdom make implementation problematic. Unlike these previous authors, Cochrane (2018) argues that sentience itself is the sole criterion of importance when we think about rights. Sentience, writ large, implies the same political rights to all beings that have it in an effort to protect individuals from oppression. This definition of a universal sentience theorizes sameness without recognizing or attending to differences that may exist.

While many authors have attempted to extend the political tool of rights to non-human animals, challenges surfaced in their application. Considering that much of our lived history involves being in relationship with many non-human animals, a paradox arises in applying rights to many non-human animals. Political rights require a baseline of sameness that may not be achieved across the entire animal kingdom. In fact, what the maturing literature now suggests is that instead of theorizing sameness, we must better attend to difference if the pursuit of interspecies justice is our goal.

IV. Alternative Approaches to Non-Human Animals

My foray thus far has focused on diverse revitalizations of liberal theory that seek to include non-human animals within the human sphere of moral and political consideration. While it has not been my intention to focus solely on liberal approaches, many political theorists since the publication of *A Theory of Justice*, rightly or wrongly, have focused their efforts on revitalizing liberalism. It seems strange, at the very least, that Continental philosophy, critical theory in particular, which has historically prided itself on uncovering relations of exploitation and oppression,

has had less to say on the animal question. What is more, indigenous approaches to non-human animals have, for the most part, not penetrated the mainstream.

While critical theory and indigenous approaches differ and vary in important ways, I will argue that they represent important alternatives to the dominant liberal approaches to non-human animals. Many critical and indigenous scholars jointly criticize the hyper-individualism and atomistic rationality that frames much of the liberal commentary. Instead, critical and indigenous scholars turn to the web of relations as the appropriate path to investigate our moral and political obligations to non-human animals. This reversal in ontology provides an important alternative vantage point to reconsider our relationships with non-human animals. It becomes less likely that just relations look the same in different situations. Thus, our responses must become attuned to the histories and contexts of our interrelations – we must, in other words, become aware of the web of life. I will argue that a critical theory of interspecies politics can appropriately capture and historicize modes of interspecies relationality – what I call an interspecies historical materialism. Subsequently, how the interacting subjects, through their interrelations, come to contest their current lived experience and act to change oppressive material relations is the promise of an interspecies historical materialism.

This methodology, as one could call it, is captured by Herbert Marcuse as he discusses dialectical thought in the introduction to *Reason and Revolution*:

Dialectical thought starts with the experience that the world is unfree; that is to say, man and nature exist in conditions of alienation, exist as ‘other than they are.’ Any mode of thought which excludes this contradiction from its form of logic is a faulty logic. Thought ‘corresponds’ to reality only as it transforms reality by comprehending its contradictory structure...philosophical thought leads from the immediate experience of *existence* to its historical structure: the principle of freedom (Marcuse 1968, p. ix).

Freedom’s possibility in this critical theory of interspecies politics is a *potential*. Subjects, first, exist and interact with one another, which spurs the feeling of a lack that is identified as oppression. This feeling of oppression stimulates a response that culminates in negation, through action, of their current lived experiences as alienated beings. Once the interspecies subjects communally act to

negate the existing mode of being, then the possibility of change to the material conditions becomes actual. This possibility for change is appropriately the realm of interspecies freedom and, as I have argued previously, the realm of species-being (Dubeau, 2018).

This process of existence, negation, action, and change has its analog in all of nature. In fact, evolutionary biology, in many respects, mirrors this theory of change. As Marcuse (1968, p. ix) argues through Hegel, freedom “means not being a mere object, but the subject of one’s existence; not succumbing to external conditions, but transforming factuality into realization. This transformation is, according to Hegel, the energy of nature and history, the inner structure of all being.” Freedom, for critical theorists, becomes the ability to resist the current organization of things and transform them into something qualitatively different. While I have just perhaps given a very favorable reading of critical theory and its potential for cultivating an interspecies politics, it must be pointed out that even for critical theorists, distinctions of difference typically took a humanist turn. The passages above differentiate between subjects and objects of the world, human beings often belonging to the former and animals usually relegated to the latter.

While non-human animals have not received direct attention from critical theorists, the concept of “nature” is often invoked to point out the unforeseen consequences created by the uncritical pairing of Enlightenment thought and capitalism. Horkheimer and Adorno, in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, argue that modernity required the sacrifice of our human connection to nature. This sacrifice, the denial of human beings as part of nature, became the necessary precondition to fulfill the demands of the modern value-maximizing rationality at the center of the capitalist mode of development (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, p. 42). Thus, the creation of surplus-value, or profits, became internally connected to the instrumentalization of the natural world (which includes non-human animals) and human labor. This sacrifice, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, traded human subjectivity for instrumental rationality. They argue that at the

moment when human beings cut themselves off from the consciousness of themselves as nature, all the purpose for which they keep themselves alive – social progress, the heightening of material and intellectual forces, indeed, consciousness itself – became void, and the enthronement of the means as the end, which in late capitalism is taking on the character of overt madness, is already detectable in the earliest history of subjectivity (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2002, pp. 42-43).

Once human subjectivity was severed from nature by the Enlightenment's desire to master nature and capitalism's instrumental rationality, all actions became instrumental for the sake of its domination. The instrumentalization of nature, labor, and the sacrifice of the natural self, culminates in what Marcuse later calls one-dimensional man and one-dimensional society.

As Marcuse (1964) argues, one-dimensional man is created by the confluence of instrumental rationality, scientific domination, the loss of democratic character, and the turn towards technocratic authoritarianism. The instrumentalization of human labor for the purposes of capital accumulation changes the potential of labor from one of self-creation to one of domination. Labor is not an activity that is enjoyed or pursued for its own sake but rather done out of a need to satisfy other basic and "false" needs. Our advances in technology have, in one sense, given humans the power to objectify and exploit nature and other beings to a greater degree, demonstrating that labor and nature, in this system, are treated as inferior and instrumental to the purpose of capital accumulation. Combined with the loss of our democratic character and institutions, Marcuse (1964) argues, contemporary one-dimensional society withers away our differences and our ability to recognize them, which subsequently leads to the homogenization of both man and nature.

This homogenization produces hyper-individualized persons that are unable to place themselves within larger webs of relations. Individuals are isolated, disconnected, and alienated from other individuals, from nature, and from themselves. They engage in action for the sake of reproducing their biological lives and are forced to engage in activities that they otherwise would avoid like the plague. Instead of being the source and wellspring of their action, the cultivation of their individual identity takes a back seat, and instead, individual identities become defined by

consumptive practices. Their “reason” is an instrumental one, instrumental to the wages needed to satisfy their biological and “false” needs generated by the profit-maximizing logic of the capitalist economic system.

This causes an isolating effect between subjects that otherwise interconnect in overlapping webs of relations. While not many critical theorists since the Frankfurt school have directly engaged with the question of non-human animals, the consistent engagement with capitalism’s instrumentalization of both labor and nature shows serious contemplation of the interconnections between humans and other non-human beings.

One contemporary critical theorist who has paid close attention to non-human animals is Claire Kim. Kim’s work concentrates on how the interrelations of race, gender, ability, and species exhibit taxonomies of power that often confront us as complex and contradictory. Her contribution seeks to push us past traditional dualistic understandings – white/black, human/animal – toward a more fluid approach attuned to “relationality, positionality, and multidimensionality” (Kim, 2015, p. 30). Kim argues that because intra- and interspecies relations are messy and dilemma-ridden, it is problematic to universalize treatment of both humans and animals without further context.

Kim’s (2015, p. 31) first theoretical move is to denaturalize species difference. She argues that “categories of difference – race, species, culture, sex – are historically and socially constructed rather than given by nature.” Her second theoretical move asks us to think about domination synergistically instead of through some standardized medium. This means that instead of thinking about power as standardized, we ought to think of it as messy interactions that “merge and overdetermine... in intricate and often contradictory ways” (Kim, 2015, p. 32). By changing this assumption, we become more “attuned to the unevenness, messiness, complexity, fluidity, and unpredictability that actually mark the dynamics of difference production” (Kim, 2015, p. 32). Kim’s project is particularly interested in the intersection of race and species as it relates to power. She first

traces the long history within the United States of articulating race through animalization and, more recently, animalization through race. Her cases explore colliding justice struggles, racial justice v. animal justice.

Her three cases – the Chinatown case, the Makah case, and the Michael Vick dogfighting case – all investigate the highly uneven distributions of power that operate within struggles for justice (Kim, 2015, p. 34). The Chinatown and Makah cases exhibit many different dimensions of power that collide in ways that pit humans v. animals and humans v. humans.

In the Chinatown case, the Chinese merchants are masters; they are in complete control over the animals they keep and kill. Alternatively, the Makah tribe sees animals as respect-worthy but still edible. While both groups are advantaged in relation to the animals by being human, they are disadvantaged socially by race, nativity, language, indigeneity, and class. The Michael Vick case has power flowing and clashing in different directions. Vick is a black man in America where race and configurations of animality have a long history. Many of the predominantly white “animal advocates talked about Vick’s dogs in human terms... even as other critics called for Vick to be caged, neutered, or placed in a fighting pit...the message to Vick was that he needed to discipline the bestial aspect of himself or it would be done for him, violently” (Kim, 2015, p. 312). These frames abut stiffly against the “mindless pluralism” that treats all forms of oppression as ubiquitous and equivalent. Rather, Kim’s case selection tears asunder the frequently unfractured renderings of these struggles. Kim’s contribution demonstrates the intimately related taxonomies of power between race and species. What do we do when the justice aspirations of opposing groups are incommensurate with one another? Perhaps, as Donna Haraway suggests in her most recent book, we must stay with the trouble.

In the past decade, some scholars branding themselves as New Materialists use Continental philosophy in a way that completely bypasses the animal question. Jane Bennett’s *Vibrant Matter* has

explored network assemblages and the agency of matter. Bruno Latour, and his actor-network theory, seeks to flatten the ontological distinctions between human and non-human matter. The New Materialism literature, in this respect, provides an overcorrection to the way we think about the extra-human world. A more promising turn for our purposes in Continental philosophy is post-humanism.

Post-humanists are particularly attuned to various forms of exploitation and domination. Often they begin by problematizing human subjectivity itself and draw attention to how historical configurations of subjectivity are implicated in existing power relations that dominate some for the benefit of others. Rosi Braidotti begins *The Posthuman* by problematizing the categories of the “human” and “animal”. Braidotti, similarly to Haraway, wants to abandon the Enlightenment vision of humanism as mastery and control. Haraway (2016, p. 1) argues the case in her latest work, *Staying with the Trouble*: “staying with trouble requires learning to be truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or Edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal creatures entwined in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, and meanings.” Post-humanists attempt to distance themselves from exceptionalist renderings of human experience and move toward an “enlarged sense of inter-connection between self and others, including the non-human or ‘earth’ others, by removing the obstacle of self-centered individualism...the posthuman recomposition of human interaction that I propose is not the same as the reactive bond of vulnerability, but is an affirmative bond that locates the subject in the flow of relations with multiple others” (Braidotti, 2013, p. 50). This pos-thuman ontology seeks to displace the category of the individual as the primary category of value and rather embeds all subjects and objects within broader webs of relationships. That is not to say that all relationships are symmetrical or all hold the same value, but viewing things as part of interconnected relationships rather than individual atomized parts changes the way we think through moral and political consideration.

Haraway demonstrates this more redemptive, less human-centered vision of relating by problematizing domestication as a strictly human form of agency. Unlike Francione, Haraway argues that the domestication process itself is not simply a story of human domination, although many times it was, but also an agential choice by various individuals of various species to join together in reciprocal symbiotic relationships. She argues that viewing domestication as a dynamic, historically-situated process of interspecies relationships is a more productive and redemptive way of viewing companion species (and possibly others). Domestication ought to be viewed as “practices in which animals and people become available to each other, become attuned to each other, in such a way that both parties become more interesting to each other, more open to surprises, smarter, more “polite”, more inventive” (Haraway, 2016, p. 207). In other words, “we relate, know, think, world, and tell stories through and with other stories, worlds, knowledges, thinkings, yearnings. So do all the other critters of Terra, in all our bumptious diversity and category-breaking speciations and knotting” (Haraway, 2016, p. 97). The value and consideration of the world and other non-humans in it changes radically when we place our human action and subjectivity within preexisting webs of relations that implicate other life. It becomes much less likely that the instrumental rationality that underlies contemporary life can survive this phenomenological re-description.

Authors like Braidotti and Haraway are at the forefront of recognizing the complexity of our relationships with non-human animals from a post-humanist perspective; their contributions may be thought of as radical phenomenological redescrptions of our lived realities. Neither author refers to justice or ethics; their concern, rather, is redescrbing our lived reality to include non-human animals. While these post-humanist scholars don’t mention justice, it can be argued that justice is a central topic for political and critical theorists. Thus, critical theorists have an opportunity to contribute a justice-centered theory of interspecies politics that reconciles this redescrbed interconnected reality that recognizes non-human animals as beings that matter.

Post-humanist scholars' phenomenological redescriptions bear a similarity to indigenous scholarship that engages with non-human animals. In a recent article, Kim TallBear (2013) argues that the relational turn in human-animal studies is an articulation of some indigenous thought. TallBear argues that many indigenous scholars have long held and spoken about the deep connectivity between human and non-human others. She argues that for too long, western scholars have ignored how indigenous scholars and communities have spoken and written about non-human animals relations and compares some human-animal studies discourses to indigenous scholarship to make her point.

TallBear shows clear similarities between a recently published article by Dorian Sagan, who argues that we (humans) “are crisscrossed and cohabited by stranger beings, intimate visitors who affect our behavior, appreciate our warmth, and are in no rush to leave. Like all visible life forms, we are composites” (Sagan 2011). TallBear (2013) argues that this interconnected web of being closely resembles an argument made by Vine Deloria in the “American Indian Metaphysic.” Deloria argues that “the realization that the world, and all its possible experiences, constituted a social reality, a fabric of life in which everything had the possibility of intimate knowing relationships because, ultimately everything was related.” While the order of words is different, the point is the same. The hyper-individualism that permeates our political, economic, ecological, and interspecies lives incorrectly defines our material reality.

This line of argumentation has become popular within human-animal studies. It is often used to combat the possessive individualism that pervades liberal theory, which instrumentalizes political rights to protect non-human others. As TallBear (2013) points out, this more relational approach has deep historical roots within indigenous scholarship and has been ignored by mainstream scholarship. That’s not to say that other theories cannot build relational approaches to

non-human animals. However, it is to say that indigenous scholarship offers a rich set of resources for the human-animal studies literature that should be acknowledged and respectfully utilized.

This dissertation crafts an interspecies historical materialism that takes lessons from post-humanism and the indigenous standpoint in order to break from the narratives of humanism and the Enlightenment. Recognizing indigenous scholars' contributions in this regard takes a small step in undermining the structural racism that keeps these voices outside of the mainstream. Also, the indigenous standpoint makes distinct contributions that are not part of post-humanist and critical theory—a point captured by Glen Coulthard in his latest book *Red Skins White Masks*. Coulthard (2014) builds bridges between indigenous thought and Marxist theory, showing that the pairing productively engages the concepts of exploitation, domination, and the dialectic.²

V. Conclusion

This chapter began with the recognition of the advances made in our human understanding of animal cognition and how it changes what political consideration means and for whom it exists. Throughout this chapter, I problematized current theories for being too universalistic, for doubling down on a problematic possessive individualism, and erasing important differences that exist both between and within species that, I argue, ought to inform how we attend to our interspecies relationships. Rather, I call our attention to the dilemma-ridden nature of many interspecies relationships and argue that alternative approaches to liberal theory, like critical theory, post-humanism, and indigenous thought, give us a better way to think through and relate with non-human animals. I argue that we should not shy away from these dilemmas and erase them but stay with them, interrogate them, and think critically through them. Inspired by Haraway's notion of

² Like Coulthard (2014, p. 8), while I turn to Marx's relational ontology, I do so critically to correct Marx's misunderstandings about non-human life and reclaim species-being from its humanist past (Dubeau, 2018).

“staying with the trouble,” this dissertation aims to investigate the dilemma-ridden case of the interspecies relationship between military working dogs and their human handlers.

In the two chapters that follow, I investigate this interspecies relationship both historically and contemporarily. Beginning with early domestication, traveling through ancient times, and concluding with the modern usages of the military working dog, I track the dilemma-ridden nature of their use in combat with the formidable relationships they create with their human counterparts – they effectively craft an interspecies identity. Throughout these chapters, I uncover that their efficacy within war relies on a carefully cultivated interspecies bond that emerges through the challenges and hardships of training and overseas deployments. While their success in war depends on this bond, the pursuit of interspecies flourishing is riddled with the possibility of oppression. The dogs and their capabilities to detect explosives, trek miles to a target, and apprehend foes with non-lethal force are not replicable by either technology or their human counterparts; they are an irreplaceable asset to military operations. While they are described as central members of their military units, they face heightened vulnerabilities exacerbated by their species membership, proximity to dangerous work, and existing military hierarchies. During the ongoing wars in the Middle East, thousands of dogs have been used to supplement military operations; they are typically the first members of their platoons through breaches of fortified enemy lines, leading their human counterparts into hostile territory.

Chapter 2

Humans, Canines, and Warfare: An Alchemy that Revolutionized Interspecies Power Relations

“Man in his arrogance thinks himself a great work, worthy of the interposition of a deity. More humble and I think truer to consider him created from animals.”

- Charles Darwin

“Dogs are domesticated to, and into, us, and we are domesticated to, and into, them.”

- Vicki Hearne

I. Introduction

On October 26th, 2019, United States Army special operation forces raided a compound said to be the location of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the leader of the terrorist group ISIS. The next day, as President Trump announced al-Baghdadi's death to the U.S. citizenry, he stated that al-Baghdadi had taken three of his young children into a dead-end tunnel as he was chased by military working dogs (MWDs) (Transcript, 2019). President Trump, describing the moments leading up to al-Baghdadi's death, compared him to an animal, stating that al-Baghdadi was “whimpering and suffering [like an] animal” and ultimately “died like a dog” (Transcript, 2019). Al-Baghdadi ultimately took his own life and the lives of his three children by detonating a suicide vest. Mr. Trump's description of the raid and his depiction of al-Baghdadi's moments before death illustrate a widely used tactic in war, the animalization of human beings and the humanization of animals that fight alongside military forces.

Ironically, and all too frequently, Mr. Trump alternated between his reverence for the military working dogs used in the raid, one of whom was harmed by the explosion of the suicide vest, and using the word “dog” as a slur in his attempt to dehumanize adversaries in war. This

speech, in essence, captures the varying nature of moral and political consideration that humans confer upon other human beings and some non-human animals. As we see in this case, U.S. MWDs are given greater consideration than their human adversaries in war. For example, Conan, a dog used in the raid, was invited to the White House to meet the President and his staff and given a hero's welcome. Mr. Trump praised Conan and his capabilities, saying, "The dog is incredible. Actually incredible... So brilliant and so smart" (Oprysko, 2019). Mr. Trump even presented Conan with a medal and certificate for his efforts and concluded his statements by saying that "Conan is a tough cookie – nobody is going to mess with Conan" (Oprysko, 2019). MWDs, in this space, are included within the definition of a political "we" from which other humans, a terrorist leader in this case, are excluded. The generals, commanders, team leaders, and handlers who work alongside MWDs consider them central members of the platoons they are a part of and give them greater consideration than their human adversaries. Some may argue that the case of MWDs in war is so unique that there are probably no other analogs in the world. Perhaps, counterintuitively, I show that this type of fluidity in moral and political consideration is commonplace when we investigate our relationships with non-human animals.

In my investigation, we will find that dogs often occupy this interesting and revealing place of ambivalence, the liminal space between "almost human or superhuman" and "hardly deserving of life." Some dogs are glamorous pets, treated to spa days and fancy foods, while others are seen as feral pests living at city margins. Some dogs are kept for personal home security, while others are active members of our military. Dogs are also routinely used as sacrificial test subjects for potentially dangerous human drugs and cosmetics.³ Others are trained to provide a plethora of services: from

³ The Humane Society reports that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has 67,000 dogs in their care for the purposes of research and testing. Six thousand five hundred of these dogs are used for breeding purposes to keep the testing population intact. According to the Humane Society, "Dogs used for testing are fed quantities of the test substance—such as a weed killer or a new medicine under development—on a daily basis for months and observed for harmful effects." They are then killed so that their organs can be examined for damage (Dogs used in research and testing FAQ).

guiding the blind to notifying at-risk persons of incoming diabetic attacks and seizures. One and a half million dogs are euthanized in shelters every year, either because they are unwanted or because they are seen as a threat to human families and communities. In several new programs, dogs are bringing relief to veterans experiencing PTSD. Still, others are now being trained as autistic support animals – providing a more immediate and comforting presence that other humans, or technology, cannot match. The point is, dogs exist along a broad continuum of varying social and political status within human society. They exist as workers, soldiers, family members but also as pests and test subjects.

I argue that the relationships between humans, dogs, and warfare – while just one aspect of complex interspecies dynamics - is an appropriate place to begin our political consideration of non-human others. First, the intersection of humans, dogs, and warfare brings the dilemma-ridden nature of interspecies relationships into sharp relief. And second, the alchemy of humans, dogs, and warfare clearly shows how interspecies relationships have and continue to augment power relations within and between human communities.

Dogs have been used in most major wars dating back to ancient times and are currently fighting on the frontlines of most modern militaries. The ability of humans to use dogs for the purposes of waging war may even be one of the very first fruits of canine domestication. Dogs were the first, and perhaps the only, species to have self-domesticated, which means that their initial relationship with homo-sapiens was a product of choice on their part (Cummins, 2013; Haraway, 2013). They have been in close contact with us for perhaps as long as a quarter of our evolutionary history and are now the second most populous mammal on Earth, second only to us. This interspecies bond has effectively led to the colonization of most of the Earth. Where you find humans, you typically find dogs (Coppinger and Coppinger, 2016).

In this chapter, I capture the long, historical consideration that humans across space and time give to their canine counterparts, with a particular eye towards their use in war. I will argue that this relationship is and has been a political relationship from the very beginning demonstrating that the relationship between dogs and humans has historically augmented power relations between and within our species in significant ways. Unlike the evolutionary biologists, anthropologists, and animal behaviorists who write about dogs, I am particularly interested in this interspecies relationship's ability to augment power relations within and between our human and interspecies communities. Through my retelling of human and canine evolution and historical examination of canines used in warfare, I challenge ideas related to human superiority that place humans at the top of a great chain being.

As I will show throughout this chapter, humans owe a great debt to dogs for our interspecies success. Historically, dogs have served as fellow hunters, protectors, herders, workers, companions, and family members. They are also one of the few species that have joined with us in warfare. In many ways, our relationship with canines is a unique one – not replicated by our relationships with other species. But, because canines hold such highly diverse roles in and out of human society, it makes them the ideal subject for theorizing interspecies political consideration, justice, and power relations writ large.

What makes the interspecies relationship between humans and dogs so interesting and relevant for contemporary human-animal studies and political science is the heightened value individuals and societies place on canines compared to the human adversaries militaries fight. As was shown in Mr. Trump's recounting of the al-Baghdadi raid and Conan's visit to the White House, humans routinely portray their canine counterparts as superhuman and, rightly or wrongly, confer greater political consideration upon them than their human adversaries. As will be shown, this is not an aberrant case; throughout human history, humans being conquered were and currently are

routinely animalized as the dogs fighting alongside conquerors were and currently are humanized and glorified.⁴ It seems that the distinction of species has not historically been the decisive factor in deciding political value or consideration. Other variables - like interspecies bonds, shared traumatic experiences, working relationships, and belonging to a particular social group - seem to be more critical in determining which individuals are defined as members of our communities and receive that value and consideration. This, admittedly quick, historical overview shows how humans and dogs have related to one another through warfare and how human communities have valued those canine counterparts.

I argue throughout that this interspecies relationship revolutionized our power as homo-sapiens and transformed power relations both between and within human communities. Often the dogs who aligned themselves with conquerors and more powerful nations were given special consideration and achieved a status that placed them above those humans being conquered. As was seen in the introduction to this chapter, the animalization of human adversaries and the humanization of our canine counterparts display how other species can attain higher political value compared to some humans. Although MWDs often receive heightened political and social consideration compared to the human adversaries being fought, they never achieve status on par with the most dominant humans.

Unfortunately, contemporary professionalized military institutions still treat the war dog, as they also do the human soldier, as a commodity or tool. The tragedy and betrayal that occurred at

⁴ War dogs are not the only canines for which this is true. The glamorized contemporary pet is another example of some canine companions receiving better treatment than some humans. The pet industry was worth over 225 billion dollars in 2018 in the United States alone. Alternatively, poor treatment of the domesticated dog also abounds. Some societies have utilized dogs as test subjects for human cosmetics and drugs. Some cultures have also eaten dogs throughout their history. Dogs have been part of ancient creation mythologies and cultural rituals. Dogs have represented everything from fertility to filth. There is now no doubt that the domesticated dog is a good beginning for our inquiry into interspecies political consideration, justice, and power relations precisely because they inhabit so many different roles in our societies.

the close of the Vietnam War show just how vulnerable even war dogs are to the violence of the state. At the end of the war, MWDs were itemized as military surplus and left behind or euthanized. While interpersonal bonds formed between dog and handler can be extremely meaningful and have deep impacts across species lines, violence can still be exacted by overarching institutions. Military institutions, in particular, are deeply influenced by hierarchical traditions and customs that regularly devalue individuals for the sake of making war. Militaries regularly objectify friendly soldiers regardless of their species membership and animalize enemy soldiers in an attempt to make them killable.

II. Dog Domestication: The Rise of Interspecies Power Relations

Beginning this analysis with canine domestication provides the building blocks to understanding how important interspecies relations were and currently are to the success of our human political communities. As I argue in this proceeding section, the expansion of the human species corresponds so neatly with dog domestication that alternative explanations of our species' success are rendered unconvincing. Second, I show that the rise of interspecies power between humans and canines acts as the initial breach that later opens the floodgates to a cascade of other interspecies encounters. The varying degrees to which humans encountered and were augmented by other species then led to significant divergences between human populations that resulted in the domination of some societies for the benefit of others. Thirdly, our interspecies relationships bear a significant resemblance to and operate much like our definitions of a human political community. Interspecies relations are often framed and operate in the manner of pursuing some higher good that cannot be achieved individually, which, according to Aristotle, is the point and purpose of families, city-states, and, more broadly, political communities. Lastly, interspecies relationships often occur and perhaps reach their zenith when they develop at the expense of relationships that we have

with members of our species. These realities, I argue, make exclusions of political consideration based on species membership difficult to justify because they do not appropriately capture how human individuals and communities have historically given consideration and value to their non-human messmates.

Fifty thousand years ago, dogs were not yet domesticated, and homo-sapiens were not the only hominid species on the planet. We know that homo-sapiens shared the Earth with Neanderthals in Europe and the Denisovans in Asia. Fast-forward to the present-day and homo-sapiens are the only hominid species left. What explains the disappearance of other hominid species? What role did dog domestication play in the prosperity of homo-sapiens compared to other hominids? These historical questions are relevant when it comes to interspecies consideration, justice, and power relations. Perhaps, as Pat Shipman argues in *The Invaders*, it was our sociality and ability to form bonds with other species that led to our competitive advantage over Neanderthals. Today, 96 percent of all mammalian life on Earth includes humans and their domesticated animals; it seems that there has never been a more successful evolutionary capability than the ability to form interspecies relationships, at least in evolutionary terms.

We will never fully know exactly what took place during the long process of canine domestication, but many authors hypothesize that domestication began with some highly social wolves that overcame their fear of human settlements and began to scavenge human refuse (Coppinger & Coppinger, 2001; Cummins, 2013; Francis, 2015; and Serpell, 2017). Initially, through natural selection, these wolves bred together with the results of creating tamer offspring. What began as scavenging soon turned into a more reciprocal relationship. Because wolves are social and territorial, they began alerting human encampments when outsiders came into their proximity. This was very valuable to early homo-sapiens. In a world with scarce resources that may have been red in

tooth and claw, if we are to believe Thomas Hobbes' ideas about the state of nature, an early security system proved an invaluable asset.

As proto-dogs became tamer, first through natural selection and then later through artificial selection (breeding selection done by humans), their roles in human societies diversified and increased.⁵ Domesticated dogs are genetically indistinct from wolves. Yet, their behavior differs significantly from wolves. Dogs are more able, even better than great apes, to look to humans for guidance (Cummins, 2013, p. 7). Dogs, unlike wolves, follow our gaze and have the ability to coordinate their actions with our intentions - albeit somewhat imperfectly. These social capabilities permitted primitive dogs and humans to hunt together in common cause, guard villages from outsiders, and, later on, fight alongside humans with the ability to decipher friend from foe.

Today, this sociality and ability to "read" humans make them capable of living in our homes, most of the time with very little to no, difficulty and employable in diverse roles as soldiers and caretakers. Vickie Hearne captures this sociability that is often also couched within a dog's formidable capacity to decipher friend from foe. Hearne argues that

A good police dog has not only a large vocabulary but also extraordinary social skills. He understands many forms of human culture and has his being within them. He can be taken to the scene of a liquor-store robbery and asked to search, with the handler trusting that he won't molest the customers or other police officers or the clerk behind the counter. He knows what belongs and what doesn't, sharing our community and our xenophobia as well. He can take down a criminal who is attacking his handler on Monday and on Tuesday play with the patients at the children's hospital. (Hearne, 2016, p. 21)

⁵ Notable physical characteristics began to change as the domesticated dog developed – like their size and coat color. Most domesticated dogs, when compared to wolves, can be distinguished by their shorter and wider muzzles. Their coats vary from the Mexican hairless, which has no hair, to the Alaskan Malamute that has a double coat, which insulates it from weather as cold as forty below zero. These morphological changes today form the basis of what we have come to know as breeds. Historically, the differences in size, coat type and color, and behavior changed for functional reasons – for instance, it makes little sense to have a hairless dog in the arctic. Today, many of these characteristics are being bred for by breed fanciers with detrimental health effects on the dogs. Through artificial selection, the human selection of breeding individuals, dogs have been bred for particular capabilities and attributes, which has resulted in some of the widest physical and behavioral diversity within a species. Yet, all domesticated dogs, today, retain their capacity for tameness even if individual sociality varies. This tameness, otherwise known as the dampening of fear and aggression towards human beings, was perhaps the single most important development in dog evolution. That and their ability to integrate within our human hierarchies makes them the ideal interspecies messmate.

While Hearne is speaking directly about a highly trained police dog, many of the dogs in our homes, those that work with the disabled, as well as those serving as soldiers, regularly use these senses and abilities to enhance the power of their human counterparts. Dogs throughout society are regularly augmenting our human capabilities, uplifting some, like the disabled, soldiers, policemen, and pet owners, while making others more vulnerable to violence – like the “criminal” and the “enemy combatant.” This interspecies combination is persistently affecting and changing power relations within human society.

It is the combination of a dog’s sociality along with their ability to integrate so neatly into our human hierarchies that grant them the ability to use these prodigious social discriminatory powers. Dog people often say, “I’m suspicious of people who don’t like dogs... But I totally trust a dog when it doesn’t like a person.”⁶ Like wolves, humans’ first form of social organization is known as the family or pack – in wolf terms.⁷ According to L. David Mech (1970), a biologist who studied wolves across the North American continent, there are two factors necessary for groups of animals to live together. First, there must be a system of order; and second, a system of communication that promotes that order (p. 68). Mech argues that “order in wolf packs results from a well-developed social system. This system establishes orderly relations among the members of each pack and provides the means by which activities of the entire pack - such as traveling, hunting, and resting - can be *governed*” (p. 68).⁸ Not incidentally, this social system closely resembles how scholars have defined the functions of family, government, and, more broadly, the political community. Because

⁶ Credit is due to the actor Bill Murray who posted this tweet on Twitter back in 2014.

⁷ When I say family, I don’t mean the heteronormative family, necessarily. Families can be constructed in a variety of different ways – for both humans and wolves. They can be biological or non-biological, gay or straight, strictly human or interspecies, there is no strict definition here.

⁸ Italics added

human and wolf social structures resemble each other so closely, the integration of the domesticated dog into our human communities was accomplished relatively easily.

Aristotle begins Book 1 of *The Politics* by defining the type of social organization that he calls political community:

We see that every city-state is a community of some sort, and that every community is established for the sake of some good (for everyone performs every action for the sake of what he takes to be good). Clearly, then, while every community aims at some good, the community that has the most authority of all and encompasses all the others aims highest, that is to say, at the good that has the most authority of all. This community is the one called a city-state, the community that is political. (p. 1)

Notwithstanding Aristotle's error of relegating the private sphere to political irrelevance, his definition of the city-state mirrors, in many ways, Mech's definition of the pack, the military's definition of the platoon, and common understandings of the family. They all aim toward the highest good of their members, and that good is achieved and communicated through a particular social structure. Thus, the compatibility of human and wolf social systems, initially, made the possibility of interspecies relations more likely.

The result of our interspecies relationship with canines may have provided the social augmentation necessary for homo-sapiens' colonization of Eurasia (Shipman, 2015). Many scholars argue that climate change was the leading culprit that led to the extinction of the Neanderthals (Finlayson, 2004). But recent scholarship suggests that perhaps that history is a bit more complex. Neanderthals survived several climatic changes over the 400,000 years that they inhabited Europe. While climatic changes can and do differ, there may be another explanation for their sudden disappearance. Compared to Homo-sapiens, Neanderthals were stockier of build and had a larger braincase (Shipman, 2015). Despite this larger braincase, evolutionary anthropologists suggest that their increased brain size functioned to enhance their senses and motor skills, not their sociability. Many hypothesize that they were stronger than modern humans and well-adapted to hunt and kill

large ice-age mammals. In terms of physical fitness, homo-sapiens were ill-adapted to compete against Neanderthals.

Of course, physical fitness is not the only attribute that matters when considering evolutionary success. It appears that as homo-sapiens migrated into the European continent, a type of primitive technological innovation, a symbiotic, interspecies relationship with dogs, enhanced our capabilities to hunt and prosper (Shipman, 2015, p.181). This interspecies relationship created the opportunity to displace and eventually wipe out Neanderthals - a sort of proto-political economic warfare and a significant change to the balance of power between two hominid species.⁹

Intentionally, or not, the origins of our relationship with the domesticated canine represent an important turning point in human evolution – one marked by the alteration of two species that came together to form a mutual evolutionary advantage that upset the existing distribution of other species on the European continent. For perhaps the first time, this interspecies relationship trumped relations between hominids, a phenomenon we continue to see as the bond between military dog and soldier is often valued over human-to-human relationships in war. Shipman (2015, pg. 228) argues that the relationship humans have formed with dogs turned us into the most successful invasive species the Earth has ever seen. This evolutionary advantage contributed to the decimation of other hominid species and readied homo-sapiens for the intraspecies warfare that riddled Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas in proceeding centuries.

In *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, Jared Diamond asks two questions related to the different rates of development between homo-sapiens. First: why did some humans come to dominate others? And second, what explains the different rates of human development on different continents (Diamond, 1998, p. 15)? Diamond argues that the answer to these questions lies in environmental geography.

⁹ I say political-economic warfare rather than simply warfare because there are no signs of homo-sapiens and dogs fighting Neanderthals, although the possibility cannot be discarded entirely.

Different geographical locations differ in climate and resources, resulting in various types of development for human communities. For Diamond, what gave Europeans the upper hand in conquest from the 16th century onward was the rather large number of domesticable animals on the European continent, a historically developed immunity to germs as a result of living in highly populated cities, and the development of advanced weaponry (Diamond, 1999). Almost all human societies that migrated out from Europe following the extinction of Neanderthals and the Denisovans did so with dogs. The differing climates and resources not only changed human cultures and abilities around the world but also significantly altered the size, shape, and social standing of dogs themselves.

It seems that canine domestication was the initial breach necessary that opened the flood gates for other interspecies encounters. According to Diamond (1998), a similar process of interspecies domestication of both plants and animals is what explains the divergence between human communities after the extinction of other hominid species. Diamond argues:

In short, plant and animal domestication meant much more food and hence much denser human population. The resulting food surpluses, and (in some areas) the animal-based means of transporting those surpluses, were a prerequisite for the development of settled, politically centralized, socially stratified, economically complex, technologically innovative societies. Hence the availability of domestic plants and animals ultimately explains why empires, literacy, and steel weapons developed earliest in Eurasia and later, or not at all, on other continents. The military use of horses and camels, and the killing power of animal-derived germs, complete the list of major links between food production and conquest (Diamond, 1998, p. 92).

As human populations expanded and began to inhabit different parts of the globe, various interspecies encounters changed the course of human development. The domestication of dogs represents the initial breaching of a barrier that had, until this point in our evolutionary history, never been crossed. The formation of interspecies relationships between homo-sapiens and other animals represents one of the most significant augmentations in human evolution. These relationships have altered everything from our families to the food we eat to the way we conduct

warfare. As Anna Tsing remarks, “human nature is an interspecies relationship” (Tsing, 2012, p. 141). While interspecies relationships have perhaps had some of the most significant effects on human development, they have not received the type of attention from political scientists that their importance merits.

This dissertation examines one interspecies relationship – between dogs and humans – as it relates to warfare. Before exploring contemporary bonds between soldiers and dogs, I use the remainder of this chapter to ground my work in the history of this relationship. I begin with an exploration of dogs, humans, and warfare in Ancient times, pass through the colonial era and examine the role of dogs in conquest before moving to the wars of the 20th century and the changing use of dogs in war. Throughout this historical retelling, close attention will be paid to the value and consideration attributed to the dogs in comparison to the human adversaries being fought.

Documenting the divergence in political consideration of dogs and humans begins to unveil how power relations operate between and within species. Throughout history, dogs that have been aligned with conquering nations have been humanized and valorized, while those being conquered were inferiorized and animalized. With the continued growth of international insecurity abroad and the special consideration given to the asymmetric nature of current and future engagements, canine teams continue to be vital to military applications. Unlike their Ancient and colonial counterparts, modern canine teams are perhaps even better situated to enhance the efficacy of our military units and reduce casualties on all sides. This increase in efficacy and reduction in fatalities makes the modern military working dog one of the military’s most valuable assets. How these changes in use affect power relations between and within species on and beyond the modern battlefield will be the subject of Chapter Three.

III. Dogs and Warfare: From Ancient to Colonial Times

Why, a dog, whenever he sees a stranger, is angry; when an acquaintance, he welcomes him, although the one has never done him any harm, nor the other any good. Did this never strike you as curious?... And surely this instinct of the dog is very charming; - your dog is a true philosopher... He distinguishes the face of friend and of an enemy only by the criterion of knowing and not knowing. And must not an animal be a lover of learning who determines what he likes and dislikes by the test of knowledge and ignorance?... And is not the love of learning the love of wisdom, which is philosophy?

- Plato, *The Republic*

For Plato, good dogs, like good citizens, know, through an inherent capacity for good judgment, the difference between right and wrong, justice and injustice, and friend or foe. The desire to pursue knowledge and the capability for good judgment is Plato's conception of a "really good and noble guardian of the State" and, subsequently, a really good dog. This idea of the virtuous citizen with the inherent capacity of good judgment not only led to disparate treatment of humans in Ancient Greece and Rome but, as we will see, dogs as well. Ideas of the good citizen, good soldier, and good dog in Ancient times became synonymous. These ideas of an individual's fitness were connected to the possession of "valuable" capacities that operate similarly to modes of racialization and otherization that we see in the modern day.

The process of rendering some lives more valuable than others seeks to make some inferior for purposes and justification of oppression. Like humans during these times, dogs that held these good and noble characteristics were valorized. Those that showed fear, cowardice, and proved to be "unskilled" were often discarded, used as beasts of burden, or as bait in gladiatorial contests – just as humans were (Villavicencio, 2007). Again, species membership does not seem to be the most important variable when we think through power relations both within and between our human communities. As will be shown throughout this section, some dogs, like some humans, can move

fluidly through and augment power relations - acquiring higher standing and consideration than some humans. This is particularly true of military working dogs.

Dogs have worked as sentries for human communities since the very beginnings of our interspecies relationship. There is evidence from the writing of the Ancients that dogs were routinely used for herding other domesticated animals and for household protection. As was shown in the previous section, having an early and effective alarm system that warned of intruders proved to be extremely useful for human communities. When, precisely, dogs started being used offensively against other human societies is a bit more clouded. While it is acknowledged that both the Assyrians and the Babylonians used mastiff-like dogs in war, Cummins (2013, p. 192) argues that the Romans are generally credited with training and using the first MWDs, both defensively as sentries and offensively as attack dogs. Attack dogs were trained to be highly protective of their human handlers. To train the dogs to attack other enemy soldiers, handlers would engage in mock combat and release the dogs to attack the assailants (Cummins, 2013, p. 193). This training reinforced the dog's protectiveness over their handlers and ensured that while in combat, enemies that came near friendly soldiers would be attacked.

Admittedly, not much is written about dogs in Ancient texts. Aristotle briefly writes about the biology of dogs in *The History of Animals*. Plato references them in *The Republic* as models of the characteristics necessary for good citizens. Plutarch is the only Ancient writer to mention a particular dog, and it happened to be Alexander the Great's dog, Peritas. Mythology and legend surround Peritas. One myth worth mentioning details Peritas saving Alexander's life. As an elephant charged Alexander, it is said that Peritas leapt at the elephant, grabbing and tearing at his lip. While Peritas's actions turned back the elephant and purportedly saved Alexander's life, it was at the expense of his own. Whether or not the story is true matters not. What is written later by Plutarch (2004, p.128) shows just how highly Alexander thought of this particular dog by naming a city after him.

Not all treatment of dogs during Ancient times attains the level of naming cities after them. What we do see is that the wildly diverse treatment of dogs, in many ways, mirrors the diversity of their consideration in contemporary society. Some dogs, like Peritas, were valorized and held in very high regard. Others were used instrumentally, treated poorly, and often sent to their deaths for human entertainment.

Much like the Ancient era, the medieval period does not mention the use of dogs in war with much detail. Although multiple sources relay that dogs fought alongside knights and often wore plated armor, that is generally the extent of their mention. It is not until the colonial era that a more descriptive account of dogs in warfare becomes available to us.

Christopher Columbus is credited with enlisting the first European dogs in Spain's colonizing project (Varner & Varner, 1983, p. 3). In *Dogs of the Conquest*, Varner and Varner document the introduction and use of European dogs by Spanish colonizers. They argue that European "conquests inevitably involve evil; in that of the Indies, brutality expanded, sometimes into grotesque fiendishness, and contributing to certain of its most awesome aspects was the European dog" (Varner & Varner, 1983, p. xiii). Tales from the colonial era depict a violent, gruesome reality – the interspecies bond between humans and dogs in warfare often uplifts the value of some of our canine counterparts at the expense of other humans and animals. The colonizer's dogs become revered members of the units they fought alongside while simultaneously operationalizing fear and terror in those being conquered.

The dogs used in colonial conquest were war dogs. They were trained to hunt down natives and often "gorged on the bodies of the victims. Not only was this destruction permitted, it was encouraged, both as an effective maneuver in the cruel process of subjugation and as an economy of war; also, it was an easy means of providing them food. Sometimes noncombatant Indians, even children, were handed over, simply as tasty morsels, to voracious hounds" (Varner & Varner, 1983,

p. 13). Power relations during Spanish colonization operated by dehumanizing and animalizing natives to such an extent that they could be viewed as food for dogs of war.

The grotesque practice of feeding humans to dogs is discussed matter-of-factly by Bartolomé de las Casas in *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies* (1542, p. 125). He describes a kind of human meat market that followed colonial units around for the purposes of keeping war dogs well fed. He explains that this practice shows “who are the real Christians and who are not when one learns that, to feed these dogs, they ensure that whenever they travel they always have a ready supply of natives, chained and herded like so many calves on the hoof. These they kill and butcher as the need arises. Indeed, they run a kind of human abattoir, or flesh market where a dog-owner can casually ask, not for a quarter of pork or mutton, but for a quarter of one of those likely lads over there for my dog.” How interspecies power functioned during colonization is made clear. Colonizer and war dog, combined with religious authority, augmented power between and within species in order to humiliate, dehumanize, and eventually destroy those categorized as “other.” Again, it seems that species membership is not the most important factor in the determination of political value and consideration.

While natives were routinely dehumanized during colonization, the dogs were frequently, in contrast, humanized and glorified. Well-regarded dogs received salaries and were often adorned with golden collars (Varner & Varner, 1983, p. 46). The dogs that proved to be loyal companions to their masters “were greatly esteemed, well cared for, and adequately compensated (Varner & Varner, 1983, p. 155). Dogs of conquest were highly valued because of their utility. They instilled fear in those being conquered while enhancing the powers of the conquerors. These dogs of conquest proved to be excellent hunters of both human and prey animals – they not only fought alongside the conquerors but also fed them. These European dogs were so efficient at hunting in the New World that they often left ecological desolation in their wake, extirpating the conquered natives and most

prey animals along with them.¹⁰ This efficacy did come at a cost to the dogs themselves; once the local prey had been consumed, the dogs were the only ones left and, in dire times, were eaten by the Spanish colonialists.

The relationship between humans, dogs, and warfare puts in sharp relief the fluidity of power relations between humans, their communities, and non-human animals. It is not the case that species membership itself is the most relevant factor in explaining the diversity of treatment dogs and humans received in historical times. As was shown during the Ancient and colonial eras, dogs enhanced the powers of human conquerors over those being conquered. In this process, dogs that fought alongside conquerors received higher consideration and were raised to a level above their conquered adversaries. Although some dogs were able to augment their social standing because of the capabilities they possessed, their social standing never rose to the status enjoyed by Ancient or Spanish conquerors.

IV. War Dogs and the 20th Century: The Changing Nature of Warfare

The capability they (Military Working Dogs) bring to the fight cannot be replicated by man or machine. By all measures of performance their yield outperforms any asset we have in our inventory. Our Army (and military) would be remiss if we failed to invest more in this incredibly valuable resource.

- General David Petraeus

Throughout this chapter, I have emphasized that dogs, particularly those that fight alongside us in war, have the ability to augment the fabric of power relations in favor of those who share an

¹⁰ It is often thought that Natives in the western hemisphere did not have dogs of their own - this was not the case. Natives in the Americas certainly did have dogs, although they were often smaller and more wolf-like in appearance than dogs brought over by the Europeans (Schwartz, 1998). Glover Allen suggests that as many as 17 distinct types of dogs lived among native groups at the beginning of colonization. Today, none remain. The genocide that took place against Native Americans by colonizing Europeans also led to the extermination of indigenous dogs (Gorman, 2018). It seems that a similar combination of foreign disease and overt persecution led to the indigenous dogs' destruction. According to recently compared DNA from living dogs, no contemporary breeds, nor mixed breeds for that matter, share a significant part of their DNA with the now extinct indigenous dogs.

interspecies relationship with them. Because they are often considered a central part of the platoons and battalions they fight alongside, MWDs receive greater consideration and care than the adversaries we fight. They are often humanized, while the human adversaries being fought are animalized. Again, species-membership here might not be the most salient variable when we take a deeper look at interspecies power relations. But, as was shown with the use of dogs during colonization, the type of consideration that even MWDs receive rarely reaches a level comparable to that of another friendly human soldier. As will be shown through an investigation of wars in the 20th century, the military working dog's social and political standing varies significantly throughout this time period.

Warfare changed drastically during the 20th century. As technology evolved, so did our methods of conducting warfare. Prior to the invention of the gas engine, horses were our primary method of transportation and played a significant role in the colonization of North America. By the time of the Second World War, horses had all but disappeared from the military frontlines. Developments in communication technology rendered carrier pigeons, a primary way of sending messages back and forth from the frontlines, obsolete, the last of which was retired by the U.S. Army in 1957. While changes in the technology landscape can explain the disappearance of some non-human animals from the war scene, the military working dog today remains a central force of most modern militaries.

As is captured by General Petraeus above, MWDs and their capabilities to detect explosives, trek miles to a target, and apprehend foes with nonlethal force are not replicable by either technology or their human counterparts. They are an irreplaceable asset to military operations. Canines retain their ability in contemporary military applications to augment power relations between fighting units. As in Ancient and colonial times, those dogs that fight alongside friendly forces, like Conan – the dog used during the al-Baghdadi raid - are often thought of more highly

than the adversaries we fight and are revered for the abilities they possess by the handlers that fight alongside them. Perhaps another reason why dogs continue to be used in combat is their ability to distance, both physically and emotionally, the violent acts undertaken in war by the human soldier.

Lieutenant Colonel Dave Grossman argues in *On Killing* that humans have an aversion to killing members of our own species (Grossman, 2009, p. 4). Prior to the 20th century, most warfare consisted of two opposing sides lining up and fighting until one side overtook the other. Grossman shows that in many of these wars, soldiers purposefully avoided the act of killing, particularly at close range. The more proximate an enemy soldier is, the more difficult they become to kill. Grossman (2009, p. 86) argues that “the resistance to the close-range killing of one’s own species is so great that it is often sufficient to overcome the cumulative influence of the instinct for self-protection, the coercive forces of leadership, the expectancy of peers, and the obligation to preserve the lives of comrades.” The type of warfare that emerges during the 20th century becomes much more distant in nature. Chemical weapons, weapons of mass destruction, and aerial bombings – to name a few, all distance the act of killing an enemy. This distancing is what made World War II the deadliest war in all of human history. But it is not just physical distance that is important when considering one’s willingness to kill. Grossman (2009) argues that “emotional and empathic” distance is also central in alleviating the resistance to killing our own species.

Our relationship with dogs in war may achieve both feats simultaneously. When the dogs are sent out to attack an enemy adversary, the violent act is distanced considerably from the otherwise proximate range of the initial encounter. In addition, our interspecies relationship with dogs, through the humanization of the dog and animalization of the enemy, creates the emotional and empathic distance that then undermines our resistance to killing other human soldiers. Alternatively, dogs may also reduce the act of killing on both sides. If physical proximity has such sway on our willingness to kill other humans, perhaps the proximate nature of employing canine teams actually

has the effect of reducing casualties on all sides. While this may not have been a central reason behind the United States military's decision to procure and train canines, it may be an inadvertent effect of dogs in war and will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Three.

World War II marked the beginning of the United States' official use of dogs in war. Since the Department of War had never procured or trained dogs for a war effort before, it outsourced that responsibility to a private but affiliated agency which called itself Dogs for Defense. Initially, the dog program was to train only sentry dogs, which had the function of guarding military bases. Through partnerships with the American Kennel Club and other dog fanciers, Dogs for Defense began procuring and training dogs for the war effort in January 1942. By July of 1942, interest in the dog program had skyrocketed. The Army identified three other training categories they believed could serve other tactical purposes, and before the first year was up, the military was training dogs in four categories: roving patrol, sentry, messenger, and sled dogs (Waller, 1958, p. 6). Each type of training required the dogs and human handlers to have a particular skill set with the ability to build rapport quickly. Two difficulties arose in creating the program; first, finding enough suitable dogs to fulfill the needs of the military; and second, finding enough human handlers capable of both training and handling the dogs.

Dog trainers volunteered their services without pay, and the dogs themselves were donations from families who believed that their dogs could be useful to the war effort. Initially, due to the great demand for the dogs, very few restrictions existed when it came to acceptable breeds. The dogs simply had to have an inconspicuous looking and neutral coat color, be younger than the age of 5, and be large enough to take down an adult. By the end of 1944, the dog program limited their number of preferred breeds to German Shepherds, Belgian sheepdogs, Doberman-Pinchers, farm Collies, Siberian Huskies, Alaskan Malamutes, and Eskimo dogs (Waller, 1958, p. 11). Hunting breeds proved to be too unreliable and distractible by animal scents, and mastiff size dogs, like Great

Danes, were too large, making them difficult to train. By 1944, the military had procured over 20,000 dogs through family donations. Of those 20,000, only about 10,000 dogs completed their training for the war effort, most of them sentry dogs to guard bases and coastlines. 1944 also marks a shift in the military's interest in using dogs. While most dogs were previously trained to guard bases, the military now showed an increased interest in the tactical use of dogs, or the dog's ability to fight alongside fighting units.

Tactical dogs had to “exhibit exceptional qualifications,” making the previously procured family dogs somewhat unfit to carry out that duty. To develop the program, the U.S. Army sought assistance from foreign allies in Europe who had a long history of using dogs in war and a larger dog sporting community. These tactical dogs became patrol or scout dogs and were attached to infantry units. The dogs were particularly advantageous in mountainous areas, river bottoms, and heavily wooded terrain – all types of terrain that later become central features of the 20th century's asymmetric warfare (O'Sullivan, 1983).¹¹ Reports from the field also reveal another advantage of the dogs, “the presence of the animals with patrols greatly lessened the danger of ambush and tended to boost the morale of soldiers. Personnel who used the dogs stated that they saved many lives and were enthusiastic over their value. It was noted that where a dog was present on patrol, there was a feeling of security and relief from the nervous tension caused by the fear of an ambush” (Waller, 1958, p. 37). The use of these tactical dogs was particularly effective against the Japanese.

Unlike the geography and terrain of the European continent, which was more open, making the dogs more conspicuous, the fight against the Japanese presented perfect conditions for the employment of dogs. They were so effective on the Pacific front that the Commander of the 155th Infantry Regiment reported that when a dog was used, not a single American casualty was suffered.

¹¹ Asymmetric warfare refers to a war between nations or groups whose military power, strategy, or tactics differs significantly (Grange, 2000).

Because the dogs were so effective at recognizing the position of the enemy, U.S. troops were able to “achieve surprise and inflict heavy casualties on the Japanese” (Waller, 1958, p. 38). The dogs proved early on that their capabilities in the right situations multiplied the effectiveness of U.S. forces significantly.

Some dogs even received silver stars and purple hearts for their exceptional service. Unfortunately, these commendations were later revoked because Army policy prohibited the commendation of service done by animals (Waller, 1958, p. 40). This distinction between the service of humans and animals in war still reverberates today and remains a central problem in affording MWDs political consideration. Military hierarchies and a pervasive humanism permeate military institutions, while those individuals who fight alongside the dogs consistently recognize and fight for their canine partner’s consideration. Reports from the field consistently validate the effectiveness of dogs in the war and the high regard with which they are held by the soldiers they fought alongside.

Conversely, while MWDs were often humanized by the soldiers they fought alongside, the enemy combatants, particularly the Japanese, were animalized in an effort to make them more killable. While many authors comment on the dehumanization of the Jewish people by the Nazis, the United States was simultaneously engaged in the racialized dehumanization of African Americans at home and the Japanese abroad. Racialization and dehumanization continue to be central parts of military strategy to make enemies more killable. In *War Without Mercy*, citing the reflections of journalist Ernie Pyle, John Dower documents how racialization operated in the Pacific Theater. Dower writes that according to Pyle, “the enemy in Asia was different. In Europe we felt that our enemies, horrible and deadly as they were, were still people. But out here I soon gathered that the Japanese were looked upon as something subhuman and repulsive; the way some people feel about cockroaches or mice” (Dower, 2012, p. 78). As with the history of colonization, skin color was the primary occasion for this political tactic of dehumanization. No doubt, the

dehumanization of the Japanese influenced everything from domestic internment camps to the decision of U.S. forces to drop two atom bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima and not on Berlin. Again, species membership may not be the most relevant category to consider when analyzing power relations.

As World War II came to an end, the 10,000 dogs that had been used in the war needed to be returned to the families that originally donated them. The U.S. Army Quartermaster Corps determined that before the dogs could be returned, they needed to complete a demilitarization program. The demilitarization process was an attempt to resocialize the dogs and ensure that once they were returned to civilian life that they did not pose a threat to strangers (Waller, 1958, p. 46). The final test the dogs needed to pass before being returned to their families was the surprise stranger test. The dog began the test walking on a leash, then an “aggravator jumped at him from behind, waving a sack and shouting. If the dog showed no unusual alarm and readily tried to make friends with the aggravator, it was felt that he had earned the right to return to civilian life” (Waller, 1958, p. 46). This type of concern for the well-being of the World War II dogs after their military service is perhaps due to the fact the dogs already belonged to families. As the procurement of dogs for future wars transitioned from pet donations to professional breeding and training, this seems to have led to the depersonalization of the dogs, further rendering them into commodities and tools for making war.

By 1945, U.S. Army officials had already made trips to Europe to buy “foundational stock” dogs to begin a breeding program in the United States. This all but fell apart, as the United States was no longer at war, and the justification for spending government dollars on a largely experimental dog breeding program was untenable. As a result, very few dogs continued to be trained between the end of World War II and the Korean War.

When the Korean War began in 1951, there was only one trained scout dog platoon. Again, as reports from the field came in indicating how successful the dogs were in combat, the Army immediately began to train more dogs. By the time these dogs were trained and ready to be deployed, the Peace Talks had already begun (Waller, 1958, p. 56). While only one scout dog platoon served in Korea, their efficacy and performance during the war demonstrate just how valuable these highly trained dogs were to the combat mission. In a General Orders report dated 18 January 1953, the Department of the Army credits the dog teams with the exceptional performance of hundreds of patrols, which resulted in a significant reduction in American casualties:

The 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon is cited for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in direct support of combat operations in Korea during the period 12 June 1951 to 15 January 1953. The 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon, during its service in Korea, has participated in hundreds of combat patrol actions by supporting the patrols with the services of an expert scout dog handler and his highly trained scout dog. The members of the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon, while participating in these patrols were invariably located at the most vulnerable points in the patrol formation in order that the special aptitudes of the trained dog could be most advantageously used to give warning of the presence of the enemy. The unbroken record of faithful and gallant performance of these missions by the individual handlers and their dogs in support of patrols has saved countless casualties through giving early warning to the friendly patrol of threats to its insecurity. The full value of the services rendered by the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon is nowhere better understood and more highly recognized than among the members of the patrols with whom the scout dog handlers and their dogs operated. When not committed to action, the soldiers of the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon have given unfailing efforts to further developing their personal skills as well as that of their dogs in order to better perform the rigorous duties which are required of them while on patrol. Throughout its long period of difficult and hazardous service, the 26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon has never failed those with whom it served, has consistently shown outstanding devotion to duty in the performance of all of its other duties, and has won on the battlefield a degree of respect and admiration which has established it as a unit of the greatest importance to the Eighth United States Army. The outstanding performance of duty, proficiency, and esprit de corps invariably exhibited by the personnel of this platoon reflect the greatest credit on themselves and the military service of the United States. (General Orders 114, Headquarters, Eighth United States Army, Korea, 18 January 1953)

At the conclusion of the war, most of the dogs that were used in Korea were reassigned to the protection of different bases or were allowed to come home and retire. While the United States was

beginning to mobilize its capabilities in Vietnam beginning in 1954 – MWDs did not make an entry into the war until 1965.

It is estimated that 4,000 dogs served during the war in Vietnam. About a thousand of those dogs died in combat.¹² As in Korea, the dogs were exceptionally effective at alerting potential ambushes, sniffing out booby-traps laid by the Vietcong, and identifying hidden mines. In fact, the dogs were so effective in combat that the Vietcong placed bounties on the dogs and their handlers (Hesse, 2015). Dog handlers had the third highest mortality rate during the war, only after snipers and helicopter pilots (Hesse, 2015). As was stated in the General Orders 114 above, dog handlers are typically located at the front of the platoons – making them the most vulnerable to ambush, mines, and booby-traps. As was the case in Korea, dogs and their handlers in Vietnam were often the first to identify and engage the enemy – making their work particularly dangerous (Special Operations Forces and the Military Working Dog Manual).

After 19 years of fighting the Vietcong, the United States abruptly left South Vietnam in March of 1973. Many of the dog handlers that were in Vietnam at the time attempted to bring their dogs home with them, but between the rush to get out of the country and the military's decision to classify the dogs as surplus equipment, there really was not much the handlers could do. The result was that dogs were either handed over to the South Vietnamese or euthanized. One dog handler from the Vietnam war recounts a conversation he had with a few veterinary technicians following the war who told him that the “toughest thing they ever had to do in their life was stick that needle into a healthy dog, who did nothing more than try to save our lives and protect us” (Hesse, 2015). Clearly, while the handlers who worked with the dogs thought very highly of them and, at times, went to extraordinary lengths to protect their dogs, they could not resist the power of the United

¹² No exact numbers exist regarding the dogs that were killed in action. Poor record-keeping makes it difficult to find credible counts.

States military. A decision had been made; the dogs were to be left behind. To resist might mean delaying your exit from the conflict or perhaps facing discipline for disobeying orders. This left the MWDs in a highly precarious situation. Again, while their interpersonal relationships with their handlers were strong, military hierarchies and the lack of consideration due to the military working dog's species membership made them susceptible to violence by the state.

V. Conclusion

This chapter began by showing how contemporary United States leaders routinely animalize enemies of the state in an effort to make those adversaries killable subjects. Alternatively, those same leaders humanize MWDs that fight alongside friendly troops. The MWDs that fight alongside our contemporary militaries routinely heighten their social and political status, which means they typically receive higher political consideration than the adversaries we fight. The dogs are valorized for their capabilities and celebrated for their feats in battle.

This chapter's argument proceeds in three interconnected steps that show how power flows and operates through this interspecies relationship. First, I argue that our historical interspecies relationship with dogs profoundly altered power relations between humans. In fact, the origin of canine domestication correlates so closely with the expansion of our species that it is very likely that interspecies relationships themselves are the reason for our and their evolutionary success.

Second, the interspecies relationship between humans and dogs in warfare enhances the powers of humans in ways that are not replicable by humans or technology, which makes MWDs an invaluable asset to military operations. What is uncovered through my retelling of the dog's use in war is the alchemy that takes place between the dog's ability to enhance the powers of the humans they fight alongside while simultaneously enlarging their own value and consideration in relation to

the human enemies they face in combat. Again, species membership does not seem to be the most important variable when we think through power relations and political consideration both within and between our interspecies communities. As was shown throughout our history fighting alongside canines, some dogs, like some humans, move fluidly through and augment power relations - acquiring higher standing and consideration than some humans.

Lastly, while dogs, in a sense, become more esteemed than enemy combatants in war – they never quite reach the same level of social and political standing as the friendly soldiers they fight alongside. This makes them vulnerable to violence by the state, individual humans, and other institutions that subvert their value due to their species membership. This dynamic is what led to the betrayal of the Vietnam dogs and, to this day, remains and creates the possibility for violence against MWDs that sacrifice it all for their human handlers and nation. What this means for the dogs is that they require their human handlers and others to stand up to the forces that undermine their political value for instrumental purposes. Handlers and platoons routinely fight for their dog's recognition. Despite the military's policy not to recognize the feats of working dogs in World War II, units continued to acknowledge the dog's efforts unofficially.

Chapter three explores the contemporary bond that emerges between human handlers and their military working dogs. By capturing the depth of the relationship that develops through the hardships of training and overseas deployments, I shed light on the great lengths that human handlers go to protect and care for their canine counterparts. As will be unveiled in chapter three, even as those handlers take action on behalf of their canine counterparts, limitations arise in their ability to resist military hierarchies and other institutions that prioritize human interests over canine lives.

A parting retelling of the career of a World War II dog captures the tripartite argument laid out in chapter two. As can be shown from the narrative below, Chips was an exceptional dog that

enhanced the power of his unit against enemy adversaries. Although the military revoked his awarded silver star and purple heart, his platoon kept unofficially recognizing his efforts - directly subverting official military policy. The dog fought through the entire war and performed valiantly throughout; this is the story of Chips:

CHIPS, Branded Number 11A. CHIPS was a member of a War Dog Detachment, the first to be sent overseas from the United States. He was donated by Edward J. Wren of Pleasantville, New York. CHIPS was received at the War Dog Training Center, Front Royal, Virginia early in 1942. He was returned to Front Royal on 20 October 1945, from which point he was discharged on 10 December 1945.

CHIPS was assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division at Camp Pickett, Virginia, in October 1942, then staging for overseas and served with it for the duration. Leaving this country, serving through the Algerian-Moroccan and Tunisian Campaigns, his assignments included sentry duty at the Roosevelt-Churchill Conference.

He went with his Division to Sicily, arriving there on 10 July 1943. Following the Sicilian Campaign, he moved with his unit to Italy, arriving there on 18 September 1943 and served through the Naples-Foggia and the Rome-Arno Campaigns; he moved with his unit to Southern France, Arriving there on 15 August 1944 and served through the French, Rhineland, and Central European Campaigns.

During these campaigns he served with the following units of the 3rd Division: Company I, 30th Infantry; Headquarters, and Military Police.

Although trained for and served on sentry duty, while in Sicily he was reported by Company I as having attacked an enemy machine gun crew in a pillbox after he had broken away from his handler, seizing one man and forcing the entire crew of four to surrender. Also, he was credited by his units with having been directly responsible for the capture of numerous enemy soldiers by alerting to their presence.

In recognition of his service, the Theater Forces awarded him the Silver Star and the Purple Heart, both later revoked as contrary Army policy. His Unit unofficially awarded him the Theater Ribbon with the arrowhead for an assault landing and a Battle Star for each of the eight campaigns in which he participated. (Waller 1958, pgs. 38-39)

Chapter 3

The Contemporary Military Working Dog: Born to Serve, Serve to Survive, Survive to Thrive

My eyes are your eyes,
To watch and protect you and yours.
My ears are your ears,
To hear and detect evil minds in the dark.
My nose is your nose,
To scent the invader of your domain.
And so you may live,
My life is also yours.¹³

I. Introduction:

Chips returned home from World War II, a national hero. His combat story is often retold with heroic bravado and funny remanences of him biting General Dwight D. Eisenhower, during an award ceremony. The retelling often neglects to mention that Chips was originally donated to the military because he had bitten the mailman, and the family thought he was a financial liability. It also ends with his combat service, allowing the audience to assume that Chips lived out his days happily ever after on a hundred-acre farm in upstate New York. His days, however, were limited. Seven months after WWII, Chips died of kidney problems and heart failure at the relatively young age of seven (Cawthorne 2012). Too often, military working dogs, like the human soldiers they fight alongside, are spoken of and thought about at the pinnacle of their military careers. The pictures we see of them evoke strength and health, eliciting feelings of security. What is often missing from these imaginings are the cumulative hardships of training that produce the capable soldier and the subsequent costs of war that degrade, harm, and sometimes maim the individuals that partake in combat. Like the human soldier who participates in war, MWDs are formed and deeply affected by

¹³ I found this credo posted in almost all military working dog kennels I visited.

the physical and emotional toll of war. For the many celebrated soldiers who return home from war, the real fight is often just beginning when they land back in their home countries.

This chapter provides an account of the contemporary interspecies relationships between humans and dogs in warfare. It does so to provoke reflection on the relationship between interspecies oppression and its opposite, interspecies flourishing. Navigating the often complex and dilemma-ridden nature of this particular interspecies relationships also incites consideration of intra and interspecies justice and power writ large. Through retellings of the trials and tribulations that arise in the procurement, training, and use of canine teams in war, the complexity and contradictions of interspecies relationships are revealed. On the one hand, the cultivation of this relationship between humans and dogs shows the ability of interspecies bonds to resist objectification in a highly commodified space (i.e., the military), promote intersubjective understanding, and cultivate empathic capabilities that enable interspecies bonds and care. On the other, I uncover a troubling contemporary military-industrial complex that protects a profit-seeking apparatus contingent on objectifying and degrading dogs. In conjunction, I investigate the hierarchical and secretive military institutions that treat both human and canine soldiers as tools for making war.

While contemporary society reveres the active-duty soldier, veterans, of the human and canine variety, frequently face hardships finding and attaining care for the wounds acquired in war. This transition from civilian to exploitable soldier to disposable veteran captures the changing and variable nature of social and political value experienced both by humans and canines alike. While human and canine both experience this variability in social and political consideration as they transition in and out of the military, canines face the added pressure of not belonging to the dominant species. Their species membership, operating similarly, yet not identically, to race, gender, ethnic difference, or any other differentiating social category distinguishes the dogs from society's dominant group, and is used as the justification to absolve human society from providing social and

political consideration to canines before their military service and in retirement.¹⁴ As the dogs approach and enter retirement, their comparative species vulnerability is exposed, and their dependence on human representatives for continued care and advocacy is revealed.

Active-duty soldiers are often valorized for their sacrifice to their home nations. Similarly, military working dogs, like Chips and Conan, are revered for their capabilities and feats during combat and their insatiable drive and tireless spirit on behalf of the nations they work for. In contemporary society, where work has become an unassailable good, the valorization of the "working" dog is proof that full social and political consideration necessitates the work requirement – even for individuals of other species.¹⁵ While working dogs are exploited through their work, it is also their categorization as workers and soldiers that grants them the few protections they enjoy, even if they are legally defined as equipment. Perhaps more perniciously, the dogs that are bred for working purposes, yet are deemed unfit to carry out service work, are treated as marginals and possibly face the greatest danger and potential for violence. Of course, other factors also complicate the protections offered to working canines related to their species membership and their dependence on humans for their political advocacy. The "career" of a military working dog, just like the majority of human soldiers, is relatively short – maybe four to six years. This means that the dogs will only hold the title of "working" dog for a third to a half of their lifetime. The transient social and political status of the dogs, combined with the work requirement makes life before,

¹⁴ Like many authors working at the intersection of human-animal studies and injustice, see Adams & Gruen (2014), Boisseron (2018), and Kim (2015). I want to emphasize that while the effects of species membership work similarly to race or gender they are not the same and should not be treated as equivalents. Doing so runs the risk of trivializing the experience of humans who have historically been subjected to violence at the hands of interspecies relationships.

¹⁵ Two recent works, in particular, have challenged the dangers of the work requirement: *The Problem with Work* by Kathi Weeks and *Undoing Work, Rethinking Community* by James Chamberlain. Chamberlain argues that contemporary society valorizes work to such a degree that the work requirement becomes the precondition to full citizenship. The logic of the work society, I argue, can and often is extended to individuals of other species. In contemporary society, Chamberlain argues work has become an unassailable good and the answer to why our communities are just, stable, and harmonious. Unfortunately, the work requirement also excludes many individuals who cannot satisfy it. What this means for the unemployed or unemployable is exclusion from political consideration and the possibility of facing violence.

during, and after their service rife with precarity, and makes the dogs, just like the human soldier or veteran, vulnerable to mistreatment. Nevertheless, it is also within these confines that human handlers and canine soldiers form deeply meaningful interspecies relationships; at times, thriving and flourishing despite the oppressive systems that surround them.

To shed light on the human handler and canine soldier relationship, I conducted participant observations of the training cycle that is required of canine teams before deploying overseas. I paired those participant observations with in-depth interviews of active-duty canine handlers, civilian trainers, and veterans across all four branches of the United States military. The interviews explored their experiences procuring, working with canines in combat, and living with their dogs in retirement.¹⁶ Over two years, I witnessed trainings and the subsequent deployments of canine teams, the retirements of both humans and dogs from the military, and heard of the deaths of both humans and dogs in and out of warfare. I witnessed the excitement of acquiring new dogs and the sheer happiness of new canine team pairings. I saw the overcoming of frustrations and difficulties in interspecies communication as canine teams built bonds, cultivated understanding with one another, and grew as distinct yet connected individuals. I also witnessed the sadness, disappointment, and frustration that followed. In addition to the participant observations and interviews, I searched online archives and other public documents produced and published by government agencies and private contractors to uncover the more secretive and sinister processes that involve using canines in war.¹⁷

¹⁶ Throughout the text, whenever I use testimony from an interview given by a handler, trainer, or veteran I will cite and reference the broad category of “Handler Interviews” to protect the anonymity of the participants. The names of all humans and dogs being referenced have been changed, again, for the sake of anonymizing the participants of this study.

¹⁷ Anthropologists Eben Kirksey and Stefan Helmreich (2010), pioneers in multispecies ethnography, argue that “Multispecies ethnographers are studying the host of organisms whose lives and deaths are linked to human social worlds. A project allied with Eduardo Kohn’s “anthropology of life”—“an anthropology that is not just confined to the human but is concerned with the effects of our entanglements with other kinds of living selves” (2007:4)—multispecies ethnography centers on how a multitude of organisms’ livelihoods shape and are shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces.” Studying “how a multitude of organisms’ livelihoods shape and are shaped by political, economic, and cultural forces” is what this dissertation unveils as it relates to humans, canines, and warfare. While I do not believe that

The hierarchical and secretive nature of military institutions, combined with the confluence of the dogs' species membership, the profit motive in the procurement process, costs of medical care and rehabilitation, and the transient categorization of the dogs as workers and soldiers makes them especially vulnerable to violence and neglect by state actors and private persons. While dogs like Conan are revered for their successes in combat, it is estimated by many people in the industry that for every one Conan that is produced, six to seven dogs will fail out and never make it as military working dogs. What happens to those dogs that don't make the cut and are deemed unfit to work? And what do those figures say about the amount of breeding that is required to satisfy the ever-growing demand for military working dogs? The answer is shrouded in secrecy. The closest I ever came to receiving an explanation about what is done with the dogs that are not selected was always redirected in the form of a question: "Why do you think most of the dogs are brought in from Eastern Europe?" Some dogs are bred for service at Lackland Air Force base in San Antonio, but the military itself does not produce most of the dogs that are purchased and used in combat. Most special operations forces and special forces dogs, like Conan, are bought from a single private contractor out of Denver, Indiana, Von Liche Kennels.

This dissertation takes an in-depth dive into the complexity of the particular interspecies relationships between humans and dogs in warfare to provoke reflection on how power flows through interspecies relationships. In chapter two, I documented how this relationship has historically augmented power relations both between and within our human communities through the routine animalization of humans and the humanization of canines. Throughout the second chapter, I challenge oversimplified ideas related to human superiority that place humans at the top of a great chain being. What emerges from the second chapter is that dogs, particularly military

this work can be classified as a pure ethnography, I rather classify it as a study based on participant observations and interviews conducted with an ethnographic sensibility.

working dogs, at times occupy "superhuman" space, while their human adversaries are reduced to beings barely deserving of life. While chapter two told this story historically, this chapter examines the contemporary relationship between human handler and canine soldier more completely. I investigate how human and canine in this particularly hostile environment form meaningful and lifelong bonds that deepen through their shared lived experience in training and combat. I also capture more disturbing processes and practices that unveil how commodification and the profit-motive undermine the treatment and consideration of both human handlers and canine soldiers.

II. An Interspecies Military-Industrial Complex: Social Reproduction as Capital Extraction

In the councils of government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist. We must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes. We should take nothing for granted. Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together.

- President Dwight D. Eisenhower

The military-industrial complex is a system of private-sector profiteering that necessitates the constant buying and selling of weapons to nation-states that foment perpetual war. Dogs, like tomahawk missiles, drones, and fighter jets, have become part and parcel of the United States war machine and especially important in the "War on Terror." While the sacrifices made by humans and animals in WWII were for the sake of democracy, today, that "sacrifice," if one can call it that, seems to be for the sake of an instrumental rationality, ever-increasing corporate profits at the expense of living beings.

As the military-industrial complex developed through the 60s, 70s, and 80s, and military institutions became more professionalized over the 20th century, so did the breeding and

procurement of canines. Unlike their WWII predecessors, today's military working dogs are specially bred to make war and enrich those that procure the dogs on behalf of the military. Just like other segments of the contemporary military-industrial complex, private defense contractors profit by supplying an ever-increasing arsenal of weapons to the United States military. The 21st century saw the military-industrial complex expand to include selling weapons of war to civilian markets, i.e., police departments. The profit motive has subsequently led to the militarization of civilian police forces, while enriching private for-profit firms through the transfer of taxpayer dollars. This expansion of military and civilian police forces has exploded the demand for working canines and has made them more vulnerable to violence by the State and private contractors.

During World War II, dogs like Chips were donated by civilian families for the war effort. the totalitarian threat of Nazi Germany mandated an interspecies sacrifice to preserve democracy – one that was felt by civilians and active-duty service members, alike. As Steven Johnston argues (2015, p. 97):

Ironically, the very love of dogs (and other animals) enabling humans to take decisive action on their behalf, to make sacrifices for them, governs the sacrifice that people make of these self-same dogs in wartime...Not surprisingly, then, dog owners in the United States, Great Britain, and elsewhere have rushed to volunteer their pets for war. Democracy at war presumes the reinstatement of the human/animal boundary transcended by pet love, even as it seems to erase it. People love their dogs. They also love democracy. These two loves prove compatible. If people sacrifice whatever is needed to win a war, including their political principles and the people they love, why not their dogs, too?

This pursuit of a higher purpose, in this case, democracy and the preservation of the nation, opens individuals up to oppression through the justification of sacrifice and structural coercion caused by war. Presumably, that sacrifice and structural coercion during WWII was for the sake and preservation of democracy at home and abroad and "worth" it. The point and purpose of wars following the second world war are more clouded. Questions about the justice of these wars align closely with the development of the United States' military-industrial complex, a term coined by

President Dwight D. Eisenhower in his presidential farewell address. As will be shown in this section, throughout the breeding and procuring process, the military-industrial complex commodifies canines to such an extent that their social reproduction becomes the basis of capital extraction, which makes them vulnerable to oppression and violence.

Interspecies bonds, shared traumatic experiences, working relationships, and belonging to a particular social group (i.e., workers and soldiers) - seem to be critical in the formation of meaningful interspecies relationships between canine and handler. Yet, the distinction of species membership and the dog's categorization as tools for making war that can be bought and sold, makes dogs caught up in breeding and procurement especially vulnerable to oppression and violence. The first year and half of a military working dog's life is rife with precarity. The dogs are bred, often overseas, and individuals with high working potential are selected and begin their formal training. While some in the dog community breed the dogs for conformation shows and dog sporting events, the capabilities required of MWDs render many of the dogs unfit for pet life. The dogs are highly intelligent and possess such large amounts of energy that a typical household cannot meet their needs. Once a baseline of training is established, the dogs are bought and sold by kennels that hold procurement contracts with police agencies and the military.

One of these procurement contractors is the previously mentioned Von Liche Kennels (VLK). VLK claims to be the best military working dog training and procuring facility in the United States and a major part of the war on terror (Von Liche Kennels, 2015). Unfortunately, I was unable to visit VLK. After multiple attempts to view the facility and speak with staff, my coordination attempts through email were unsuccessful and ultimately ignored. Regardless of my inability to visit the kennel physically, many of the military working dog handlers I spoke with were paired with dogs from this kennel and had attended their "basic" training course. Along with the testimony of

handlers, VLK has posted "Promo" videos to YouTube and has many of their contracts with the military and police departments available online.

Up to three times a year, military units purchase dogs from VLK and typically go through a selection process at the VLK facility. Military working dog handlers attend these selection events, and that is when they are initially paired with their working dog. Once the dogs have been chosen, handlers and dogs go through what's known as a seven-week "basic" training course that is put on by VLK at their facility in Indiana. Part of the price that is paid to VLK includes this "basic" course, which often costs anywhere from six to ten thousand dollars. That is in addition to the ten to fifteen thousand dollars that are typically paid for a single dog.¹⁸ This "basic" course familiarizes handler and dog with each other and introduces the MWD handler to basic commands and terminology. If the dogs complete the course successfully, meaning they do not exhibit any disqualifying traits or tendencies, then they are bought and sent, along with their handlers, for another three-week "advance" training course that is put on by their internal military regimental unit. At any point during this nine to twelve-week period, dogs can be disqualified for service and returned to VLK under warranty for a full price refund or another dog of equal value.

VLK itself is situated on 600+ acres with multiple buildings that can be used for a variety of training purposes. They claim that their facility can hold up to 500 dogs at any one time, although they only list nineteen full-time employees, three of whom are related to facilities maintenance. This seems like a comparatively small number of staff, given the amount of individualized attention needed to satisfy the physical and social needs of dogs, much less appropriately clean the kennels daily. Kenneth Licklider, founder and owner of VLK, states in VLK's Promo video that dogs "care about four things, they got no hobbies. They care about food, water, sex, and air" (Youtube, 2015). The video itself reveals a stark tension between this reductive mentality to bare life on the one hand

¹⁸ See contract in Appendix for detailed costs.

and the superhuman capabilities that dogs possess on the other. Both are necessary for the kennel to be profitable. The kennel needs highly capable dogs that fetch the highest price (sometimes upwards of 35-40 thousand dollars) and satisfy the needs of buyers, in this case, police departments and the military. They also need to keep the costs of training and maintaining the dogs as low as possible, to exploit their profitability fully.

Perhaps counterintuitively, VLK does not breed most of the dogs that it sells. Rather, the kennel operates more like a middleman going on international buying trips to fulfill the demand for working dogs, primarily to countries in Eastern Europe, like Czechoslovakia and Hungary. In one of the VLK contracts acquired online, VLK boasts that:

No private company in the world procures more working dogs on an annual basis. VLK is the largest importer of Military and Police Service dogs in the United States. Each year we travel the globe in search of the most genetically qualified animals that possess the drive and character traits necessary to meet the requirements to perform as a police service dog. For every one hundred (100) to one hundred and fifty (150) dogs they will look at and thoroughly test, VLK will only find six to ten (6-10) that will make the cut for further selection consideration. (VLK Contract, p. 68)¹⁹

The breeding apparatus that is necessary to fulfill the rising demand for military and police working dogs is immense and simultaneously mysterious. While I was unable to visit VLK or the breeding facilities in Europe, handlers and trainers that I interviewed openly spoke about their experiences selecting dogs and going through the basic training course at the VLK facility.

Before we even begin to consider the lives of dogs selected to be trained as police and military canines, we must grapple with the reality of the dog breeding apparatus that is necessary to satisfy an ever-growing demand for working canines. An average female dog can be bred as young as eight to ten months of age. Once these dogs reach maturity, they are typically bred bi-yearly. Since so many of the puppies that are produced will not have the predisposition to successfully become

¹⁹ See Appendix 1

military or police canines, maybe one or two per litter, this requires a never-ending breeding cycle. Female dogs can be pregnant and caring for newly born puppies eight out of every twelve months in a year – two months for the pregnancy itself and another two months of caring for unweaned puppies. Female dogs can be bred up until the age of eight years old, although the older the dog gets, the more dangerous pregnancy becomes. That means that any one female dog can produce between 75 and 120 puppies throughout her breeding career. Of which, maybe 10-14 will possess the capabilities of doing the job of a working dog.

If VLK's claims are correct, it takes between 450-750 breeding females to produce the 300 – 350 dogs that are eventually housed and then sold by VLK every year. And that is only considering the demand for working dogs in the United States. Similarly to the milk cow, whose productivity is measured by the amount of milk she produces in a lifetime, which also requires her to be pregnant, the breeding dogs that prop up this industry are only valuable so long as they produce sellable puppies that are ready to work. We know what happens to the milk cow when her productive years end, she's sent to slaughter.²⁰ What happens to these breeding female dogs is largely unknown by those who operate within the MWD community, though many speculate that the dogs do not meet a kind fate. Due to the foreign location of these breeding sites, I was unable to obtain enough evidence to definitively speak to the living/dying conditions of the breeding dogs. As Timothy

²⁰ For an in-depth account of how cows are bred and raised for a variety of food products, see Kathryn Gillespie's *The Cow with Ear Tag #1389* (2018). Gillespie provides groundbreaking description and critique of the violence that farm animals face in the food production system. In addition, Gillespie (pg.6) argues that "There remains a widespread belief in academic and non-academic circles that animals do not experience grief or loss or joy or love. And this is convenient in contexts where humans may cause bodily or emotional harm to animals: maintaining ignorance over the emotional lives of animals, and describing those who talk about animal emotion as anthropomorphizing or sentimentalizing, helps to maintain and excuse the very practices that cause animals trauma." Similarly to Gillespie, through the retellings of my fieldwork, I attempt to show the wide range of emotions and feeling that are felt and shared between humans and dogs in warfare. Throughout my fieldwork, handlers and trainers, alike, resisted attributing feelings to the dogs they worked with, preferring to explain behavior in functional/instinctual terms when it came to their work. This occurred even as these very same handlers and trainers recognized the uniqueness of each dog and routinely anthropomorphized their dog's behavior in more private settings.

Pachirat (2011) argues, oppressive practices often use the methods of concealment and separation so that no one person becomes responsible for the violence rendered upon another individual. Since the dogs are bred and procured outside of the United States, and a private middleman operates between breeder and the customer (i.e., the military and police departments), responsibility for the lives and ethical treatment of those breeding dogs is thought to be beyond the scope of the human individuals tied up in this process of social reproduction. Once the dogs are beyond their productive breeding years, they transition from exploitable individuals to marginal individuals, rendering them disposable.

The puppies that are a result of this breeding apparatus and possess the requisite capabilities must then be found and brought in from overseas. This selection process is more mysterious than what happens to the dogs once they are stateside. Identifiable oppressive practices are typically only the tip of a likely sizeable oppressive iceberg. Very little about the international procurement process, beyond what is reported, is known. Many handlers and trainers speculate that there are two reasons why many of the dogs are bought and imported from Eastern Europe. The first relates to the genetic makeup of the dogs, because many of the herding breeds originate from Europe; the genetic lines of the dogs, I was told, are purer.²¹ The second reason often has to do with animal

²¹ Because of their evolutionary proximity to humans, dogs have been subject to human mythologies surrounding race, gender, and ability. Humans have bred, changed, and altered dogs in a very eugenic fashion. The AKC (American Kennel Club) currently recognizes 189 dog breeds. For every dog breed, the AKC articulates a breed history, standard, along with appropriate colors and markings. If a particular dog is missing a trait deemed central to the breed, or possesses a trait that is considered a fault in the breed, then he/she cannot be shown or competed in an AKC event. The AKC's mission statement reads:

The American Kennel Club is dedicated to upholding the integrity of its Registry, promoting the *sport* of *purebred* dogs, and breeding for type and function. Founded in 1884, the AKC and its affiliate organizations advocate for the purebred dog as a family companion, advance canine health and well-being, work to protect the rights of all dog owners, and promote responsible dog ownership.

The language of “sport” and “purebred” in this passage reeks of the eugenics era when ideas of white superiority were regularly accepted. It's no wonder that until recently mixed-breed dogs were considered dirty, or held a lower status in comparison to their purebred counterparts. As Claire Rasmussen (2016, p. 79) argues, “understood as arising with scientific racism, evolutionary biology, the cult of domesticity, and processes of democratization, dog shows appear less as a frivolous amusement and more as a part of a political discourse about proper citizenship within a democratizing society marked by race, class, gender, and sexual difference. Ideas about purity and domestication have long been used to differentiate not only between types of dogs but to delineate differences among humans.”

welfare protections or the idea that they are lacking in the countries where the dogs are procured. Handlers and trainers alike implied that the lack of animal welfare enforcement is the reason why many dogs are bred in countries like Czechoslovakia and Hungary, even though those countries are subject to the animal welfare laws of the European Union. It seems that dogs are procured from Eastern Europe because these places can breed and provide dogs faster, cheaper, and in greater abundance than places that have to follow enforceable laws and humane treatment regulations.

The violence done to these dogs through the breeding apparatus that is necessary to satisfy the demands of a far-off consumer is perpetuated partly through myth - the idea of supposed genetic superiority, and unfortunate reality – the lack of animal welfare laws and enforcement in the producing countries. Many individuals argue that this genetic superiority and lack of animal welfare laws puts domestic procurement at a comparative disadvantage. What is also likely, though, is that the United States military does not want to assume the liability, care, and costs for breeding and procuring canines. One trainer put it this way:

With procurement, I think it could be done, but it's going to take a special group of people. It is not very cost-effective at the moment, because even with the right training, you may get a dog to a certain point and decide you have to wash them out. Well, now I've invested six to twelve months into this dog. That's a pretty big loss for any organization, even the government. It's a big loss. (Handler Interviews)

Another reiterated that for the military, "it's typically not worth the time, the financial investment, and the manpower... It's just not going to happen" (Handler Interviews). If procuring dogs is too costly for an institution like government, how can privatizing procurement to a contractor make things any better when their livelihood depends on profitability? The short answer: it doesn't. What privatization does is obscure the breeding and procuring process while making oversight difficult, which typically leads to the possible mistreatment of the dogs. In this case, it's especially pernicious

because the middleman, VLK, has monopolized the procurement contract and often, faces little to no competition – it's privatization without a marketplace of competition. In the case of buying and selling working canines, VLK is both a monopoly and a monopsony.

Again, the profit motive creates an especially hostile terrain for the dogs training for war and perverse incentives for kennel personnel who care for and train them. MWD handlers who took part in selection and the "basic" training at VLK consistently reported that the dogs are kept in small kennels and were routinely brought to them covered in their own feces. One handler stated that the conditions at VLK are so appalling that they resemble a "puppy mill." This same handler said it is clear that VLK "is just pushing out dogs to get paid. There is no heart in the training and caring for the dogs. That's why a lot of the dogs we get have issues and problems" (Handler Interviews). When asked why they did not speak up or say anything, many of the MWD handlers reported that they didn't know any better. It is not until they are brought back to their home kennel, and the kennel culture is cultivated that they begin to realize just how unethical the conditions are for the dogs at VLK. Reflecting on their inaction to the dogs' mistreatment, one handler stated: "it's not that we don't know it's wrong, it's that we don't have any other choice" (Handler Interviews). Many understand that because VLK is the sole vendor, there are no other real options, which makes complaining or calling out the mistreatment a waste of time. One handler put it this way:

VLK is a sole source vendor, not a good scenario. Just the fact that there's no competition. You're setting yourself up as a customer to be put in a position of having zero leverage over what product you're getting. (Handler Interviews)

As this handler outlines, the military has little to no control over how the dogs are trained much less produced. Because many of the dogs do not end up meeting the mission requirements defined by the military, they must be returned before VLK's warranty period ends. If a dog is determined to be unfit for service after the warranty period, then it is typically dependent on the individual, typically a trainer or kennel master within the military, to decide which dogs to keep and which ones to dispose

of. Many of the dogs that are outside of the warranty period but cannot be deployed to the warzone are typically found employment with local police departments.

Turning over failed MWDs to local law enforcement is typically the best-case scenario for dogs that cannot fulfill the job requirements outlined by the military. Dogs "fail out" for a variety of reasons. The most common is related to "environmentals," which is a term used to describe anxiety-producing objects, sounds, or surroundings that make the dogs unwilling to work. It's a catch-22. On the one hand, police departments want dogs that are initially trained in the military environment. They know that the amount and type of training the dogs receive there goes beyond what police handlers can accomplish when they are forced to be on regular patrol.

On the other hand, the dogs are trained to detect explosives and track and apprehend adversaries in war – the subjects they pursue in war are declared enemies of the State. The military's mission objective is radically different from the stated mission of civilian police departments, which is more about mitigating and de-escalating conflict among citizens – even if in practice they operate in a similar militarized fashion.²² Much has been written about the militarization of the American police force; the fact that many of the dogs that do not make it in the military environment end up working for police departments lends further support to the hypothesis that American police departments are militarizing through their training techniques and weaponry.²³

²² In *Afro-Dog*, Bénédicte Boisseron (2018) tracks and unveils how the dog has been central to controlling and violently policing black bodies since the beginning of colonization. During slavery, imported European hounds continued the practice of disciplining black slaves that fled from or resisted white slave owners oftentimes violently maiming their victims. This relationship, both its racialized character and alliance between the white authority and canines is reproduced in every subsequent American era. As Boisseron (2018, p. 38) shows, today's largely white police force uses canines almost exclusively against black subjects. Citing the Department of Justice's 2015 investigation into the Ferguson Police department, the DOJ uncovered that in every "canine bite incident for which racial information is available, the subject was African American."

²³ For more information related to the history of America's police militarization, see Balko (2013) and Phillips (2018). These authors trace the beginnings of police militarization to the civil rights movement, and the protest movements of the 1970's. The formation of SWAT and the military-style weapons and tactics that are now used against civilians have all been portrayed as a way for the state to combat domestic crime. The result has been increases in violent confrontations between police forces and civilians oftentimes leading to the death of them former in the name of promoting security. As was mentioned in the previous footnote, the subjects of these increasingly violent confrontations between police forces and civilians are disproportionately people of color. Ironically, the militarization of civilian police

Part of the justification made by handlers and trainers for the transfer of MWDs to police forces has to do with the welfare of the dog. Police departments typically treat their working dogs relatively well, and their working lives generally are less stressful than the working lives of MWDs. The police working dogs spend almost 24 hours a day with their handlers, return home with them at the end of their shift, and receive medical care paid for by those departments – typically even into retirement. One ex-handler and kennel master argued that law enforcement is often the best place for these dogs that do not pass military standards because the dogs "are constantly with their handler, and they get to go home with them. They get to live with their handlers and have lives beyond their work as a working dog. Whereas, even in the military, the Army sees them as a serial number. They are a piece of equipment, and they stay in their place (Handler Interviews)."

Unlike the dogs that make it past their warranty period, those that fail out before the 6-month warranty expires are returned to the contracting kennel to endure another round of confined kennel space and, if they are lucky, another selection process. Returning a dog to a place like VLK is often a heart-wrenchingly tough decision made by the head trainer and kennel master and a tough emotional pill to swallow for the handler that has been training, preparing, and building trust with the dog. The justification for returning the dog becomes about the safety of American soldiers abroad and cost savings for the military.

This interspecies military-industrial complex thrives on the exploitability of a breeding apparatus that sacrifices dogs for the instrumental rationality of private profit and making war. While families sacrificed their dogs for the war effort in WWII, the contemporary MWD is bred and produced like a tomahawk missile or drone, albeit with a much higher rate of failure. Unlike these

forces coincides with the decline of violent crime nationwide, begging the question: why is this investment or transfer being made (Ford, 2016)?

other weapons of war, dogs cannot be mass-produced. One trainer argues that training and readying the dogs

is not mechanical in the sense that every weapons system functions the same. Like, once you've created the perfect M4, you just factory produce them. You can't factory produce dogs. All the dogs are really unique. In what they struggle with, in what works to overcome things. In general, the concepts and methods are pretty much the same, but how that meshing, again, the dogs training history and genetics but also the handler that he/she is paired with. Every handler is also unique and different. Understanding what motivates them, what they're sensitive too, what kind of relational dynamics they have all go into training. (Handler Interviews)

Dogs, like humans, are sentient beings with their own personalities and quirks that resist any universal approach to training and preparation for war. Unfortunately for the dogs, it's this diversity that makes them vulnerable to violence. The attempt to mass-produce these dogs is like trying to fit a square peg in a round hole – you can do it but not without creating a violent system that destroys some for the sake of a precisely defined and functional end product.

Most of the literature written on the topic of MWDs celebrates them for their capabilities and the bonds that they create with their human handlers – which are real and meaningful. Too often, the social reproduction that takes place before this relationship takes root is simply ignored. The fact remains that the vast majority of the dogs bred for working purposes will never make it as working canines. Working dogs are often valorized and humanized because they meet and satisfy the work requirement. It is this valorization of work in contemporary society that then confers upon them social and political recognition that is not extended to the individuals that fall outside of the social group of working canine. While MWDs, like their human handlers, are made exploitable through their work, being categorized as a marginal, someone who cannot fulfill the work requirement, is far more dangerous and precarious.

III. An Interspecies Transformation: Cultivating Bonds, Resisting Commodification, and Surviving War

I would describe my relationship with my MWD as an unbreakable bond, unique and everlasting – a bond not quite like any other. That kind of relationship is so special because he could see and read exactly where I was at mentally or emotionally at any given moment and meet me there. He had his own demons, too. We experienced a lot of healing together over the last decade in different ways and for different reasons, but we did it together.

-MWD Handler

Perhaps part of what powers the bonds between human handlers and canine soldiers is this shared lived experience in and after combat. The hardships of training, deployments, and the return home are so great that within this crucible of pressure, a shared understanding and appreciation between two species is created and sustained. As Donna Haraway (2008 p. 15) argues, the more we engage and relate to other species and develop close bonds, the more likely it is that those bonds will materially translate into "potent transfections between us." So profound are these transfections between human handler and canine soldier that each become willing to risk life and limb for one another and transform one another in the process. Getting to this stage requires hundreds of hours of work and patience on behalf of human handler and canine soldier. It is only once the dogs get to this stage in their careers, being classified as an MWD, that they become subject to some legal protection and gain political recognition. Perhaps, for the first time in their lives, they have the chance to form meaningful and lasting bonds with a human counterpart. This relationship and bond, as will be shown, is vital to their protection during war and in retirement. Often MWD handlers go to great lengths to protect their canines, sometimes defying the chain of command, breaking the law, and subverting military hierarchies.

As the dogs are being prepared to be sold by the contracting kennel, a variety of factors influence how the pairing takes place, and the amount of training new handlers and dogs receive before they go back to their home bases. How this selection occurs varies widely among the four

branches of the U.S. military and the type of assignment or role an individual has as a canine handler within that branch. Three different classifications describe the various functions and capabilities of MWDs: single-purpose, dual-purpose, and multi-purpose. Single-purpose dogs are strictly explosive detection dogs; in this category, you typically see a mixture of Labrador retrievers, German Shepherds, and Belgian Malinois. Single-purpose dogs generally are handled by the handlers in the Coast Guard or Military Police (M.P.). As the work begins to involve a more physical element that requires deployments overseas, explosive detection, and human apprehension, that work is almost exclusively done by the Belgian Malinois. While a dog might make it to the selection process, this does not guarantee that they will be chosen to join the military. Again, the attrition rate at this point is still high.

In many instances, dogs that are initially selected by groups and paired with handlers do not end up making it out of selection. During the selection process, dogs will be exposed to loud noises and different surfaces. Their detection capability and ability to bite will also be tested; any one of these reasons or justifications can be used to disqualify the dogs from service. This may seem straightforward, but training a dog to bite a human runs against almost 40,000 years of canine evolution.²⁴ These realities make the work of MWDs challenging, and some dogs simply cannot or refuse to do all or parts of the work.²⁵

²⁴ One trainer relayed to me that getting a dog to bite a human is possibly the hardest part of his job. He argued that if you look at the history of canine evolution, humans did not artificially select the overly aggressive dogs that would bite. Even for the herding breeds that might nip or intimidate livestock, they are “not actually following through with the bite.” (Handler Interviews) What has been cultivated into most contemporary dogs is bite inhibition or a resistance to biting human beings. This often abrades against society’s understanding of dogs, especially since dog bites, when they occur, are sensationalized. Most dogs that end up biting do so out of fear, not aggression. But for the military, they want their dogs to bite out of aggression, not fear. Dogs that are used by the military for human apprehension need to bite and hold on to their victim. In contrast, a dog motivated by fear typically does not hold on to the person they are biting. The bite takes place and they often try and get away from the fear-producing object, i.e. the person they are intended to bite. Bite inhibition is also one of the primary reasons why dogs wash out of programs that require them to bite a potential enemy.

²⁵ I say “refuse” to recognize the agency of the dogs in these situations. So many of the explanations that are given for dog behavior are functional/instinctual explanations. Yet, functional explanations for particular behaviors don’t always align with the identified uniqueness of each dog. Some explanations are certainly related to fear and other emotions that make the dogs less likely to work but I do not want to throw out the possibility of canine resistance. In a short article in

In one case, a handler recounted how both he another handler from the same group were initially paired with dogs that were disqualified because of their aversion to loud noises. He stated that:

We selected our dogs, we got paired up with our dogs, and my dog that I was paired up with down there ended up having a bad aversion to loud noises, so obviously, that's not what we want. We operate in an environment where there are loud noises all the time. So, we didn't even take him out of the basic course. He didn't meet our criteria. And then, the other handler's dog, on the advanced course, we found out he had the same problem but on a larger scale. He was fine with gunfire, but you start throwing bangers and stuff, and he would freak out, so he had to be returned. (Handler Interviews)

The selection process is often both exciting and anxiety-producing for both human and canine who are working together for the first time. This often affects performance and makes it difficult to evaluate the dogs. When so much of the work that will be done during their careers relies upon carefully cultivated interspecies trust and communication, the selection process is often a roll of the dice since that bond is yet to be cultivated. Anxiety is running high for both humans and dogs.

While the selection process is tough on both humans and dogs, it is also the first time that human handlers can advocate on behalf of their dogs, something that most will consistently do during deployments and in the transition to retired life. Because the dogs do not speak in the traditional sense, they rely on their handlers to educate the chain of command on their use and purpose to protect them from being put in overly dangerous situations. Like all relationships, human and interspecies, different bonds form at a different pace, but that bond is the powering source of the dogs' protection. One handler retold a story of how he and his dog bonded during the basic

The Nation, Leslie Marmon Silko (1994) recounts her experience of being stopped by Border Patrol agents that used a drug sniffing dog. Silko, admits that she had a small amount of medical marijuana in the car that night, yet the dog refused to indicate to the officers that marijuana was present. Silko argues that the dog, in that moment, acted defiantly, resisting the abusive treatment of her human handlers and the unjust treatment of the arbitrary traffic stop. Silko (1994, p. 413) argues that "the dog refused to accuse us: She had an innate dignity that did not permit her to serve the murderous impulses of those men." Perhaps some of the dogs that "wash-out" as MWDs do so not because they do not possess the necessary capabilities but rather resist partaking in behavior they disagree with.

training course and how his actions during that time framed his role and responsibility to the dog during deployments. He stated:

I would say me and him (the dog) bonded relatively quickly. When I was at the basic course, you're not supposed to keep your dog in your room. I just kept him in my room anyway. So, I had a kennel and I kept it in the corner. And I kept him in the kennel for the most part when I wasn't there. Then, when I was there, I would let him out. But he's not the type of dog that will lay down and hang out.

He's go, go, go. He's in everything. You give him a toy, and if he thinks he smells another toy, he'll drop that one, rip apart a bag trying to get to something he thinks might be a different toy that he wants.

But so, I just kept him in my room and then I knew that the maids came on Thursday to tidy up. So, I would wake up extra early, take him outside, put him in the trailer. And then I would come back in my room, then take the kennel and tilt it up on its back. And then put a binder, a sweatshirt, or whatever else to make it look like I was using it as a shelf or something. To make it look like the dog was not living there. (Handler Interviews)

While this interaction, at first glance, may seem relatively benign, I argue that it is constant actions like this by handlers that prioritize the care and well-being of their dogs that translate into their efficacy and safety on the battlefield. They are constantly cultivating their ability to advocate on behalf of the dog; this requires intimate knowledge and understanding of the dog's personality and capabilities and often results in the breaking of laws that treat the dogs as expendable equipment.

Reflecting on their most recent deployment, this very same handler spoke to this understanding and how it shapes the way the dog is used in combat. He stated:

We did one deployment last year. And it was good; the dog performed really well. I mean, could have done a little better on certain things. But one thing about being a dog handler is knowing your dog's limitations. And you have to be able to voice that.

If someone asks, "Hey, can your dog do this?" Maybe some dogs can. You need to be able to say, "No, I'm not going to be able to use this dog for that. You are going to have to think of something else."

Which sucks, because you don't want to say no. But at the same time, you have to be honest with yourself. You don't want to be the dog in a situation where he might get unnecessarily hurt or even killed. You have to have the courage to say no. (Handler Interviews)

Again, knowledge of a particular dog, combined with an intimate bond, is necessary to be able to credibly evaluate whether or not a dog will be needlessly endangered. It is often that bond which stimulates the handler to advocate on behalf of the canine and protect them from the dangers of war. Deployments are especially important in cementing this interspecies bond and understanding. Through shared experiences in war, a closeness is developed between human and canine, which, for many handlers, creates an obligation that requires action to protect their MWDs.

Canine handlers consistently returned to the role of combat in forging this unique interspecies relationship with their dogs. When asked what the bond with their dog means to them, one handler put it this way:

Handler: I think the best way to explain is through an example, say you have guy, he joins the Army, does his two years, doesn't deploy, and gets out. He's still going to miss the camaraderie and his brothers and this and that stuff. But then you have another guy on the same timeline, deploys once, goes on a bunch of missions and fights beside his friends and endures hardships and the suck, that kind of thing. That bond between those guys that deploy is different; it's so much stronger.

But the bond that I have with that dog to me, I don't even know if it's that strong to him, but to me, it's unbreakable. We haven't been through anything too wild, but we've done a lot of stuff together, killed bad guys together. To be able to do stuff like that, it's crazy. I had my own dog when I was 18 before I joined the military, but I never thought it would be like this.

Interviewer: What kind of relationship would you compare the relationship with your MWD to?

Handler: I don't know, like a best friend. (Handler Interviews)

In the crucible of war, shared experiences and hardships bind these two individuals in ways that transcend species boundaries. In chapter two, I investigated how MWDs have historically been humanized at the expense of other human adversaries. In this chapter, I show what powers this humanization – it is the deeply felt bonds that are developed between handler and canine that then compel handlers to advocate for a heightened consideration of MWDs. Without this close connection to a human counterpart, MWDs continue to face the possibility of oppression and

violence made possible by the military's reductive approach to the dogs that treats them solely as weapons of war.

While many handlers attest to how quickly bonds are formed between handlers and canines. For others, the realization takes more time. One handler stated that he came to realize just how deeply he felt for his dog when the possibility of death presented itself on their first deployment together. He recollected that

even on my first month overseas, it was still very tenuous (the bond), we had employments on our first couple missions. Some were successful; some were unsuccessful. And then, yeah, I just remember there was this one time where I sent him into a building and I sensed that, as soon as I sent him in, I was like see you later, buddy, I'm pretty sure this is your last one. And it wasn't obviously. And I think after that, the weight of that, that this could have been his last, he could have died in there. I started to establish, not establish, but made me realize just how much I valued the bond or the relationship. (Handler Interviews)

And yet, once that bond is cultivated and the importance of the relationship recognized, handlers regularly go to great lengths to protect their canine counterparts. So much so, that they often risk their employment for the benefit of the dog.

On their 3rd deployment together, this very same handler realized that his dog was having joint issues that were being exacerbated by his work in combat. The dog could only continue doing the work at great risk to himself. At the time, this was before 2015, handler adoptions were an option of last resort.²⁶ No law existed that recognized the dogs as individuals, nor the depth and importance of this human/canine interspecies relationship.²⁷ Often, the military retired dogs out to

²⁶ The first law to address MWD retirements was "Robby's Law" passed in 2000. The law was passed to "facilitate the adoption of retired military working dogs by law enforcement agencies, former handlers of these dogs, and other persons capable of caring for these dogs." This could only be done once the dog had reached his or her "useful working life." Active MWDs are not eligible for retirement under this law. It was not until 2006 that active MWDs could be retired for unusual or extraordinary circumstances. In 2011, in addition to the unusual and extraordinary circumstances, the possibility of early retirement of active MWDs was made possible for two reasons. The first, if the dog's handler was killed in action – then his family had the option to adopt the dog. Second, if the handler was wounded in action then the dog could be adopted out to the handler only before the end of his/her "useful working life" (Cruse 2015).

²⁷ As is argued by C.B. MacPherson (1962, p. 7), contemporary liberal democratic society rests on the categorization of persons and property. MacPherson points out that for much of liberal theory "the individual, it was thought, is free inasmuch as he is proprietor of his own person and capacities...Freedom is a function of possession." The self-made

police departments where they continued to work until the age of ten or eleven. Some of the dogs that could not continue to work were euthanized (Handler Interviews). This handler, knowing that continuing his work career would shorten his dog's life, decided to forge paperwork that made it seem that the dog was being transferred to a police department. When, in reality, he intended to retire the dog. The lengthy excerpt that follows is a conversation between that handler and me about his reasoning and justification for defying the chain of command and military policy while simultaneously risking his job for the sake of his dog.

Interviewer: So, why do you think you made the decision to do the paperwork to get your dog?

Handler: I mean, that's just obvious. What else would you do?

Interviewer: Tell me more about that.

Handler: You know what I mean? It's not like the dog's your child, but it's like anyone that you love and you have that kind of relationship with, you're going to do what is absolutely necessary to do what's in that dog's best interest. And in my eyes, that's for him to come live with me, right? And continue the relationship and bond that we've created and have. And Apollo is such a unique dog, and everyone will say that about their dog. And they're all unique in their own ways but Apollo is in his own category in terms of bond, and relationship, intensity and all that kind of stuff.

Handler: So, it's like there was no other option. He's coming to me. There's just wasn't a decision. And it's a push to have to go to make that decision because the program manager at the time, basically said, he came down to me from Washington to Georgia and was basically there for almost a year. Probably like ten months or so. And he basically was like look, we're going to have to figure out a P.D. (police department) or put him down. And so, I had everything squared away in probably a week. So, yeah, it's just like a no brainer. What would you do?

Handler: The dollar amount or the risk of your career or whatever, right? Like it wouldn't matter. You know? If your wife got cancer and you had to move to outside of some hospital in Kansas so she could get treatment, you'd go.

individual owes nothing to society, no obligations exist between persons beyond the contractual relations made in the marketplace. If someone is categorized as a thing or equipment, as the dogs are in this case, they are excluded from self-possession and protection as persons, they are owned by another – meaning they are only protected instrumentally for their value as property. This point has recently been made by Colin Dayan (2011, p. 212), who argues that “dogs are prized not for themselves but as proofs of their owners’ right to possess. The human dominion over things became fixed in law as the criterion of civilization.”

Handler: 'Those aren't even hard decisions to make. There's no thought. Obviously wanting Apollo, I don't know if it's selfish, but there's a desire to have him in my life, which is my impulse. But there's also putting my job on the line, or my career, in terms of policy and their stupid rules (the military) and they are arbitrary, and if I get caught, I get caught. So what? (Handler Interviews)

This excerpt shows the comparative vulnerability that dogs face as a result of their species membership. The protection of the dogs becomes dependent on the depth of the relationship that they cultivate with their human handler. It is then up to the individual handler to demonstrate "courage" to protect the dog for the sake of what they believe aligns with their moral code and their understanding of the dog's best interest. Even if that means breaking with the chain of command and subsequently making themselves vulnerable to the discipline of the State in the process.

Samuel Huntington (1957) famously argued that "When the military man receives a legal order from an authorized superior, he does not hesitate, he does not substitute his own views, he obeys instantly." This theory of objective control gives priority to the chain of command and reduces the soldier to an object carrying out the dictates of superiors. This is often referred to as the traditionalist view in civil-military relations, and promotes a military hierarchy that gives very little autonomy in decision making to soldiers carrying out the dictates of superiors. As has been argued by Andrew Milburn (2010), this view of military hierarchy and the chain of command creates conditions that may cause significant harm and provide the justification for soldiers to commit reprehensibly heinous acts. As his case in point, Milburn gives the example of the mistreatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay that violated the Geneva Convention.

Continuing his critique of objective control, Milburn responds to Peter Feaver (2003), who argues that "In a democracy, the military is not the one assigned to ensure that civilian politicians are not shirking." Milburn (2010) rejects that point of view and rather argues that "when the results of bad decision-making are wasted lives and damage to the nation; when customary checks laid down

in the Constitution – the electoral voice of the people, Congress, or the Supreme Court – are powerless to act in time; and when the military professional alone is in a position to prevent calamity, it makes little sense to argue that he not exercise his discretion."²⁸ Like Milburn, I want to suggest that MWD handlers are uniquely positioned to dissent with the chain of command for the sake of their canine partners.

The dissent of MWD handlers is often propelled by circumstances that undermine their moral code of ethics, and that unnecessarily place the dogs in harm's way. This sensibility to no-say, when confronted by actions or policy that does not align with one's moral code, is central to a well-cultivated democratic character, and, I argue, the pursuit of interspecies justice.²⁹ This ability to disobey in the face of the State's formidable disciplinary power is made possible by the depth of these interspecies relationships. The handlers' advocacy on behalf of their MWDs creates the possibility for reciprocity of a debt previously unpaid to the dogs for their unyielding loyalty and sacrifice. It also makes the soldier aware, perhaps for the first time, of their ability to resist a military hierarchy that treats both human handler and canine soldier as tools for making war. As Milburn (2010) concludes, contrary to prevailing literature on civil-military relations, "when faced with a moral dilemma, the military officer not only has grounds for dissent, but also, if his code of ethics and oath of office so guide, has a duty to disobey. He is obligated to exercise moral autonomy, and in so doing must use his professional ethics to guide him down a path that is by no means clearly defined." The ambiguity created through the act of disobeying is the constant peril of democratic politics. Yet, as Hannah Arendt (2013) argues, it is during ambiguous times that the true contents of an individual's character are revealed.

²⁸ General Mattis's latest critique of the Trump administration is a good case in point.

The bonds that human handlers and canine soldiers form with one another reach such a profound depth that dog and handler regularly risk their lives for one another. Through the trials and tests of trainings and deployments, a bond is cultivated that compels human handlers to advocate on behalf of the dogs that place them in direct tension with the military chain of command. As was shown above, MWD handlers regularly side-step rules, policy, and the chain of command when those dictates cause harm to their canine counterparts. In contrast to traditional civil-military relations scholars who might object to this tension, I argue that the ability to no-say is a crucial step in mitigating the possibility of violence and recognizing injustice.

IV. Born to Serve, Serve to Survive, Survive to Retire

Working dogs are extensions of, and modifications to, the humans they work with – the interaction is an act of interspecies alchemy, which casts aside interspecies barriers in order to enhance our human ability to see, hear, detect, and scent. There is by now no doubt that canines perform exceptional tasks and, in the process, create relationships and bonds with their humans that enacts a type of unique interspecies transformation. Not some mythical hocus pocus, but actual, material, and lived alterations and enhancements not possible without the species-bending acts of interspecies relationships. While the impact and effectiveness of military working dogs is typically expressed by heroism on the battlefield, I argue that their impact is far more significant than their use in combat. The handlers, military personnel, and families that get to know these dogs already think about what is owed to them. Many handlers and families openly advocate on behalf of the dogs and many dream of giving them a retirement free of stress and pain, filled with love given by grateful partners, children, and spouses of those who serve.

Yet, the great tragedy of canines is their comparatively short lifespans; perhaps this is part of the reason why their impacts on our lives are so profound. What follows in the proceeding pages is a documented case of a particular canine's profound ability, followed by the harrowing tragedy of his death. Multi-purpose canine (MPC) Solar died of cancer on July 21st, 2019. Like the World War II dog, Chips, Solar died at the comparatively young age of seven; he never knew life beyond his military service. For everyone involved, trainers, handlers, and the families that hope to one day retire these dogs that tragedy of losing this dog so young lies in the unfulfilled potential life that could have been in retirement.

To capture the depth and complexity that surround the relationship between MWDs, their handlers, and trainers, I choose to present the subsequent retelling in a narrative form. I believe that a narrative, rather than a simple analysis of events, is able to best capture the depth and complexity that surround the relationship between MWDs, their handlers, and their trainers. In many ways, I believe that this story "speaks for itself," giving the reader a purer sense of just how deep and meaningful these canine-human relationships and bonds truly are. The relationship I witnessed between Solar and his handlers was not an outlying experience. In many ways, this anecdote exemplifies the types of interspecies bonds I saw throughout my fieldwork.

MPC Solar is known in the kennel as a push-button dog. Give the leash to any handler, and he goes about his business without much, if any, human guidance. You strap on his harness, and he knows it is time to work. He has done it thousands of times and it means he gets to play his favorite game of hide and seek. He, like MPC Hawkeye, were the transitioning old guard at the kennel. At seven and eight years old, these dogs had deployed more than ten times between them. Their experience in the field detecting explosives and neutralizing enemy threats was perhaps greater than that of any handler that would work with them.

As Luke often relays to me, you "need some dogs to train the handlers." Sometimes, the training goes up the leash, not down. These types of dogs are ideal for trainers like Luke. Because the dogs typically outlast their original handlers, due to the rotational nature of promotions and career development in the military, you want to have veteran dogs training green handlers. For the past five years or so, that is precisely what Solar had done. He's known as "old trusty;" give him a new detection problem, and he reliably works through it. Have a green handler hold his leash, and he becomes a teacher extraordinaire. Like a seasoned master of his craft, his nose was accurate and indications decisive – he taught new handlers "how to see the world through his eyes."

I began to see just how powerful these dogs' abilities are on a windy, snowy day on a local ski slope. Luke had received a call that snow patrol was conducting avalanche control and had lost some of their explosives off the back of a snow machine. They had a general idea of where the explosives were, but they wanted to see if Luke's canines could help them locate the explosives. They were armed, and the run couldn't be opened up until they were recovered. I was elated when Luke asked me if I wanted to come along. While the explosives were supposedly buried under a few feet of snow, it still posed a danger to the public if it was not found and accounted for. Luke was confident that his dogs could locate the explosives, but the conditions were less than ideal. The wind was blowing 30-40 miles per hour, and the snow was coming down like icy pin missiles. Most explosive detection work and training occurs inside buildings or out in fields that aim to replicate the working conditions of Afghanistan and the Middle East. Oftentimes the scent remains somewhat localized, and the dogs use their superior sense of smell to precisely locate the explosives. This would be a new kind of challenge for the dogs, so Luke decided to bring two of his more seasoned canines, MPCs Solar and Triton.

Upon arrival, we were told that the explosives were dropped in the middle of a ski run at the top of the mountain. Luckily, there is a gondola that takes you up the majority of the way – we

would only need to trek an additional mile or so in snowshoes once at the top. We loaded the dogs into a gondola; Colton was going to work with Solar, and Luke was working with Triton. The dogs sat quietly as the gondola made its way up the mountain – they are habituated to riding in all sorts of vehicles from helicopters to Humvees; a short gondola ride is not much of a challenge for them. At the top of the mountain, the gusts of wind were far worse than they were at the bottom. With the wind blowing hard (30-40 MPH) and swirling, due to the topography of the mountain, the dogs' jobs just went from difficult to nearly impossible. The dogs handled the hike to the location much more gracefully than we did. While we needed snowshoes to maneuver in the heavy snow, the dogs' natural four-wheel drive and low center of gravity grants them the ability to deftly navigate terrain that poses a serious issue for their human counterparts.

As we approached the top of the ridge and looked down into the ski slope, where the explosives were dropped, we began to realize the sheer vastness of the search area. The bowl at the bottom of the ridge was approximately half a mile wide, and the slope immediately above it extended perhaps another two miles up and was 100-150 feet wide. Luke, Colton, Solar, and Triton would have to further traverse to the ski slope from the ridge we were currently on and work down the mountain to try and find a scent to mark the explosives. A search area this big is an enormous task for any dog team. To further complicate the search, a howling wind is swirling the scent and blowing snow, further covering the already embedded explosives.

Before the two teams begin searching the area, we find a cluster of trees on the wind-exposed ridge and huddle within to get the humans and the dogs temporarily off of the exposed mountaintop. Ski patrol informs us that they believe the explosives were dropped near three free-standing pine trees in the middle of the slope about 200 feet up from the base of the bowl. Luke and Colton decide that their best bet is to begin working at the top of the three pine trees and work downward – hoping that the dogs pick up a scent.

Because of the steepness of the slope and the possibility of an avalanche, I stay on top of the ridge looking on as Colton, Luke, Solar, and Triton scale down to the search area. It is slick with snow that is about thigh-high. The terrain makes for a tricky descent. Luke takes the lead with Triton breaking a trail for Colton and Solar, who follow shortly behind. From my vantage point on the ridge, I begin to wonder whether or not the dogs will be successful. At this point, I had seen both of these dogs work in buildings and reliably detect explosives – rarely if ever, failing to indicate. Given the difficulty of this problem and the sheer size of the search area, I began to doubt that they would be able to find anything. Just getting to the presumed drop area represented a physical challenge; would the dogs have any energy left to work once they got there?

As the dog teams approach the presumed drop site, I immediately see a change in their behavior. Even from half a mile up on a ridge, the difference is evident. Their tails perk up, they more actively sniff the air and work with an excitement that was not present on their hike to the location. Luke has told me a hundred times, dogs don't see the way we do. Their nose is about 100 times more powerful than ours, and so you have to imagine an alternative way of seeing the world as if there are scent plumes in the air. The best handlers are the ones that begin to "see through the dog's eyes." Once you begin to imagine this alternative reality, the complexity of the task being asked of the dogs becomes clear. Luke and Triton are the first ones to work through the search area. From my vantage point, I can see Triton putting his nose up in the air, trying to find the source and direction of the scent.

The wind is blowing harshly, yet the fact that he is actively sniffing and attempting to locate a source confirms the presence of explosives. Luke works him up and down the tree line for a few minutes, and Triton indicates at the bottom of the second tree, multiple times. Luke asks for confirmation, essentially a test that asks the dog how confident he is in his identification of an

explosive scent.³⁰ Triton confirms, by not budging. They've marked the potential location of the explosives at the base of the second pine tree that divides the ridge.

To ensure the accuracy of Triton's work, Luke wants to give Solar, "old trusty," a chance to find the explosives. Detection work for them is one big game of hide and seek. They know that should they find an explosive scent and accurately indicate on a source location that they will be rewarded for their efforts with their favorite toy. Sure, some dogs may be more or less confident about the presence of explosives, but a dog team that is attuned to one another will be able to decipher and work through these problems. Solar, just as Triton before him, immediately throws his nose into the air, and I can tell from on top of the ridge that he's onto something. At one point, he even stands on his two hind legs to elevate his nose. Dogs identify the source location of explosives by following the potency of a smell. Typically, the closer one gets to the explosive, the more potent the scent. What was being seen in this circumstance was the scent being swirled upward by the wind, which requires the dog to work through and properly distinguish the direction of the source, easier said than done in these conditions. Yet, after a few minutes, Solar works his way down to the second tree and gives a "hard" sit – meaning a confident sit, which tells the handler he has found something. Two dogs have now confirmed that explosives are present in the area surrounding the second pine tree.

Reflecting on this moment some six months later on the day of Solar's death, Luke and I reminisce about the power of the dog's nose and the exceptional work that Solar had done throughout his career: "They found those explosives right by that tree, they both indicated on it. I knew they were right. Good boys." Short and sweet, yet representative of the trust that exists and is

³⁰ If a dog comes off the scent relatively easily, it more than likely means he's less confident in his mark. Should he refuse to come off, that is alternatively a strong indication that he's found something. Unlike drug detection dogs, these dogs are trained to indicate by sitting and to not paw or nudge the source location. You can imagine the potential danger and damage that can be done should a dog aggressively indicate by scratching or pawing at a source location that could contain an explosive. These differences in training and behavior translate into life and death scenarios out in the field.

formed throughout years of interrelation between human and canine. We never saw the explosives that day, they were armed, and they needed an explosive team to come and remove them. Lo and behold, they found the explosives exactly where both dogs had indicated, some five feet beneath the crust of the snow.

The ski slope find seemed to be a pinnacle of sorts. In the months that followed handlers and dogs returned from deployment, some handlers moved on while new ones joined the kennel. By February, three new dogs had also entered the kennel. With Hawkeye's death in combat and the planned retirement of two of the kennel's most senior dogs, Yuba and Solar, a transition was underway. New dogs were needed to fill the void left by the loss of both experienced dogs and experienced handlers. Yuba was retired almost immediately after returning from his last deployment. His handler Marcus was being promoted to kennel master down at regiment in Fort Benning, Georgia. Marcus was retiring Yuba, after three deployments together; he couldn't imagine leaving Yuba behind. Yuba had also experienced an injury in his youth that was not getting any better with age, and thus Luke and the new kennel master decided it was time for him to transition to retirement. With two of his most senior dogs gone, Luke was ambivalent about immediately retiring the third. Solar had been so crucial in the past in training new handlers that should something not work out with the three new dogs, Luke thought it prudent to keep him around. He doubted that Solar would be deployed another time, but he felt that the training value he brought to the kennel team was too valuable to let him go quite yet. With the kennel in a moment of transition, keeping some continuity between past and present seemed important.

Almost all handlers that came through Luke's program in the last five years had, at some point, worked with Solar. Like Hawkeye, Solar's reliability and forgiving nature made him the ideal teacher for new handlers just learning to understand canine communication. Solar's future adoptive family was also close by. His first handler, who would be the one adopting him in retirement, was

still stationed at the same military base, making the decision to keep him around a relatively easy one. No one could have predicted what came next.

In May of 2019, after returning from regularly scheduled training in the eastern part of the state, Solar fell ill. Strange for a dog that for the past five years had been so hardy and reliable. Throughout the next few weeks, Solar's lethargy and visible pain grew. With growing concern for Solar, Luke and the other kennel leadership decided to order tests to uncover what precisely was wrong with him. Solar was initially brought to the military veterinarian multiple times over the course of the next few weeks; nothing definitive came back from the test results. Growing frustrated, Luke and the kennel master pushed for authority to get medical testing at a private vet to determine what was wrong.

Over the past month, Solar had been slowly withering away, barely eating and in visible pain. Luke had voiced his frustrations to me about the military veterinarian and their lack of urgency when it came to Solar's health. He often made the comparison to his experience with the military's V.A. hospital system – he would often retort, "good luck getting treated there." Not being satisfied with the response of the military veterinarian, the kennel finally got approval to seek outside medical care for Solar. Luke told me he did not care how much it was going to cost, that the dog had at least earned that much for his military service. If finding out what was wrong with him was going to cost the military a few thousand dollars, so be it. Within a day of getting tested at a private veterinarian, it was confirmed that Solar had an aggressive, rare form of bone cancer. Treatment was not an option. Solar was put to rest on July 21st, 2019, surrounded by previous handlers, trainers, and other kennel personnel.

Reflecting with Luke about a year after Solar's passing, I asked him what was so hard about losing him that way. He answered:

Handler: It just feels stolen, you know? It feels like he was stolen. He was seven, seven and a half, but so he had a good go. But none the less. Compared with Apollo at the end of his life

and then you have Solar going through what he's going through. It's just like man, it just sucks. And to know what I got to experience (in retirement) with Apollo and to know that Chase is not going to get to have that with his dog. That's the tragic part of it. And Solar was already 80% a pet anyways. Solar was a great working dog and fantastic in a lot of ways and not always great in other ways, but he was the little engine that could. He was just going to continue to come and continue to do it and not back down even though he's not the strongest dog in the kennel kind of deal. And so, to just succumb to something that is bigger than him and nothing that you can control. It's just terrible.

Interviewer: Just the unrealized potential of what could have been in that life with his handler afterward?

Handler: I realized it, and I emotionally feel that way because I don't have to ideate that. I've been able to live that (retirement with their MWD). I've been lucky enough to be able to live that. And him not getting to have that, I see that being taken from him.

Handler: I know what Chase didn't get and what Solar didn't get - and what they would have had. So that was very hard to lose him that way. I'm just somebody that's just like, it's in my head, it's in my wiring, it's like there's a way. There's a way we can beat this. There's a way that we can overcome this. I don't know what it is. But I just have that, you know. That's just my mentality. We'll figure this out. And then when you get to that stuff, you can't control it. And so, it's another reminder of the fragility and the finiteness. (Handler Interviews)

Retirement for both dog and handler represents a time to grow their relationship in ways not possible when human handler and canine soldier are serving in the military. Often, the dogs are required to stay on base and thus never get to experience the home environment. And so, retirement for the dogs, like retirement for human beings, represents the opportunity to develop other parts of themselves that can't be fulfilled through work.

Like other soldiers, many MWDs excel at developing some of their potential through their work. Yet, even as many revere MWDs for their superhuman qualities, they remain vulnerable through their work due to dangerous working conditions and their categorization as tools. Reflecting on the reasons why the transition to retirement is so important for dogs, one handler stated:

Handler: I feel like they deserve it. The remark that they live the highest quality of life is not true. It's not true. Their genetics are certainly tapped into and well utilized from a training aspect, right? Because they have such high level of genetics for work, right? Like when

they're back here, they live in a concrete kennel, however many hours a day, or they are in a trailer waiting to train, how many hours a day, right? Or in a kennel inside of the van or truck, however many hours of the day. It's not optimal in the sense of getting cared for, getting loved on, getting to chill. And to me, it's not just a tool, I place a ton of value in that bond, and I feel indebted to the dog to try and provide that. That's probably the hardest thing, is if I... the days I feel most satisfied and fulfilled is when the dogs get trained the most. And the days I feel the most resentment or bitterness or angst is when they don't do anything, right? (Handler Interviews)

This passage illustrates that even while the dogs develop themselves through their work, their working conditions are often sub-optimal. What makes the loss of Solar so tragic then is that he was never able to experience life beyond his work. To not feel the stresses of kennel life, deployments, and the missions that place the dogs, like other soldiers, in harm's way. This passage also uncovers the underlying work requirement that makes the dogs deserving of a peaceful retirement. Unlike their pet counterparts, MWDs have sacrificed the prime years of their lives for the nation and "deserve" to live out their days in peace in tranquility; they have earned it.

The dogs only become deserving through their work, much like humans in contemporary society – work is the precondition required for full inclusion within the political community. When handlers, trainers, and veterans were asked what else the dogs deserved in retirement, almost all answered healthcare. They admit that many of the health conditions that dogs face in retirement will be related to their service and reason that the State owes them that much. Many handlers even joked that the proposal would not even be a partisan issue: "Americans love dogs, and they love working dogs even more" (Handler Interviews). Currently, their categorization as tools/equipment makes it easy for the State to wash its hands of any obligation to the dog once they are ready to be retired – or "beyond their useful service life."

As is argued by Cruse (2015, p. 263), "this responsibility of adopting a retired MWD means assuming all costs to transfer the dog back to the U.S. if retired overseas, and all medical costs related to treating health issues sustained by the MWD while serving in the military. According to

Air Force Major General Mary Kay Hertog, "Once [the] dog is adopted, it becomes a pet, and therefore loses its status' as a military dog." This loss of status as a working dog strips the dogs of the already minimal civil and political protections provided to them during their service, rendering them dependent on their adopting family's financial ability to care for their wounds sustained in combat. If the dogs are healthy, retirement represents the opportunity to develop other social capabilities that cannot be expressed during their working careers. For those who require medical care due to their service, that retirement might be cut short if their adoptive families do not have the financial ability to provide the necessary care for treatment.

All in all, work-life for the dogs does not provide all that is necessary to live a fulfilling life – retirement is a vital part of the process that allows the dogs to express their "doggy" selves fully. As one handler argued,

Handler: The way the dogs are kept during their service is so non-holistic to what their biological mechanisms are. If you look at somebody who is in solitary confinement, it has a massive behavioral effect on them because none of their senses are being stimulated. It's not what we are designed... how humans are designed to interact with the world. And a dog is the same way. If they are not able to hear stuff, sniff it, scratch it, dig a hole, and lay in it.

Interviewer: They are not being their doggy self

Handler: Yeah, they are not. That exposure to life that they would normally get, you see that it takes a big toll on them. I think, mentally, physically, it takes an effect that degrades them as a piece of equipment. The military says a piece of equipment. (Handler Interviews)

Their classification as a piece of equipment remains a significant source of mistreatment for the dogs both during and after their service. Perhaps recognizing MWDs as canine members of the armed services would change the way they are treated during and after their service (Cruse, 2015). Even still, the reverence the public confers upon MWDs and the praise they receive from government officials often does not match up with the exploitative treatment they face throughout and after their careers. Analogously to the retired human veteran, public thanks typically do not match up with the way the State cares for veterans of either species.

It is estimated that eleven percent of the human adult homeless population are veterans. Of those, fifty-three percent have a disability, fifty percent have a serious mental illness, and seventy percent have a substance abuse problem (NCHV, 2020). The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans (NCHV) argues that "extreme shortage of affordable housing, livable income and access to health care" are the primary reasons for veteran homelessness. Secondly, a large number of "displaced and at-risk veterans live with lingering effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and substance abuse, which are compounded by a lack of family and social support networks. Additionally, military occupations and training are not always transferable to the civilian workforce, placing some veterans at a disadvantage when competing for employment." This divergent reality between the celebrated soldier and the neglected veteran is illustrative of the vulnerabilities faced by both human handler and canine soldier. All too often, what's written and shared about human and canine soldiers does not explore the full trajectory of their life experiences. Considering interspecies justice demands that we examine the full spectrum of vulnerabilities and oppression that manifest during procurement, active-duty service, and retirement for both humans and canines.

MWDs and their capabilities to detect explosives, trek miles to a target, and apprehend foes with non-lethal force are not replicable by either technology or their human counterparts; they are an irreplaceable asset to military operations. During the ongoing wars in the Middle East, thousands of dogs have been used to supplement military operations; they are typically the first members of their platoons through breaches of fortified enemy lines, leading their human counterparts into hostile territory. Not only are they active on the front lines, but "behind the lines, they serve as therapy dogs, service dogs, and loyal companions"(Taylor, 2014). There are currently 1,600 MWDs in the field; that's approximately one dog for every three U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan (Stock, 2017). While the dogs are described as central members of the military units they are a part of, they face

heightened vulnerabilities exacerbated by their species membership, their proximity to dangerous work, and existing military hierarchies.

V. Conclusion

The contemporary relationship between human handler and canine soldier shows the degree to which both are treated as tools for making war. Yet, within this crucible of pressure, some human handlers and canine soldiers develop special bonds that are forged through their shared hardships in training, deployments, and the return home. This tension between oppression on the one hand and the pursuit of flourishing on the other represents the often tenuous and dilemma-ridden nature of interspecies relationships. While this chapter aims to provoke reflection on interspecies justice, I focused primarily on interspecies injustice to problematize the role of the profit-motive, the 21st-century military-industrial complex, contemporary society's work requirement, military hierarchies, and the transient and changing social and political status of human handlers and canine soldiers.

Before MWDs gain recognition as military dogs, they traverse a sinister procurement process created by the profit-motive that renders them vulnerable to violence. For every dog that "makes it" as a working canine, up to 20-25 additional dogs are produced to achieve the desired "behavioral" characteristics necessary for their work. Female dogs that are used for breeding the next progeny of MWDs perhaps face the most significant vulnerability. These dogs are typically pregnant and weaning puppies for two-thirds of every year until they are no longer usable as breeders. Their reproductive labor is not mentioned in any books on the topic of MWDs and goes completely unrecognized by the law. Mirroring the value of work in contemporary human society, dogs that fall outside of the worker category become marginals without access to any legal or political protection. What happens to breeding females once their puppy producing years are over is unknown. But if the treatment of reproducing individuals in other industries can inform us in this case, the end of their productivity is often the end of their lives.

The dogs that are selected by the military escape the private for-profit institutions that enlarge and sustain the 21st-century military-industrial complex. These dogs are considered "lucky" because they are deemed exploitable by the military and domestic police departments. For these select few dogs that begin their work for military and police departments, the types of oppression they face become a product of the work itself. MWDs that work as multi-purpose explosive detection and apprehension dogs face the possibility of being killed by their work. In addition, their legal categorization as equipment labels them as property, not persons, further complicating their protection both during and after their working lives. While their work is dangerous, the work environment becomes the transformative place where bonds with human handlers are cultivated and their capabilities as workers developed.

The hardships of training and deployments form the foundation of this interspecies relationship. Within the crucible of war, humans and canines become closely bonded, looking out for one another's lives in this extremely hostile environment. The dogs, like the soldiers they work alongside, cultivate their skills and become the prized soldiers that are revered by the public and celebrated by government officials. Yet, what is often portrayed publicly does not match up with reality. As was shown throughout the chapter, active duty working dogs live in concrete kennels for the duration of their service and are typically affected by kennel stress and sometimes develop behavioral maladies due to their lack of socialization. They often thrive during deployments because they are always with their handlers, get to socialize with other humans, and are getting regular enrichment through their work. While the dogs certainly develop their talents as workers, they often miss out on other crucial social activities that are necessary for a healthy and flourishing life. The handlers that work alongside them recognize this and look forward to retiring their dogs to provide these broader experiences.

I argued throughout this chapter that surviving their service is dependent on the interspecies bond that the dogs develop with their human handlers. The relationship itself generates an

obligation that motivates many human handlers to advocate on behalf of their canine partners, often undermining the chain of command and other military hierarchies that categorize the dogs as expendable units of equipment. This transition from civilian to exploitable soldier to disposable veteran captures the changing and variable nature of social and political value experienced both by humans and canines alike. While human and canine both experience this variability in social and political consideration as they transition in and out of the military, canines face the added pressure of not belonging to the dominant species and their categorization as property. As the dogs approach and enter retirement, their comparative species vulnerability is exposed, and their dependence on human representatives for continued care and advocacy is revealed.

Building on the case of MWDs explored in this chapter, the next two chapters contribute a political theory of interspecies justice. In chapter four, I will argue that interspecies justice must be understood in terms of the relationships that foster individual flourishing of all concerned. The obstacles to such flourishing are the five faces of oppression famously identified by Iris Marion Young: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. By extending Young's concept of the social group to other species, we become more attuned to differences between and among species. Theorizing that the concept of social groups applies to other species brings forward new avenues to explore oppression and simultaneously theorize its opposite – flourishing. In chapter five, I argue that an interspecies politics brings forward the promise and possibility of redefining and expanding the political community to include non-human animals as beings that matter. In this view, an interspecies politics erodes the humanist foundations of our current political institutions and rather views the fate of human beings as connected to the fate of non-human animals. The promise of an interspecies politics lies in cultivating abilities that identify and value differences between and within other species. In this vein, all beings involved become more attuned to those they are in community with, creating interspecies

spaces of interaction that bring forward new opportunities for flourishing. Ultimately, the promise of an interspecies politics holds the potential to resist and overcome reactionary, racist, xenophobic, exclusionary, and anti-democratic politics.

Chapter 4

Fire and Ice: The Interspecies Politics of Social Groups & Oppression

Samwell Tarly: “Maybe the decision about what’s best for everyone should be left to... well, everyone.”

Bronze Yohn Royce (Laughing): “Maybe we should give the dogs a vote as well.”

George R.R. Martin – Game of Thrones

I. Introduction

During the final television episodes of the fantasy epic, Game of Thrones (GoT), the culminating war against the Night King and the battle for the Seven Kingdoms is determined by an interspecies relationship between Daenerys Targaryen and fire-breathing dragons. Even in the realm of fantasy, non-humans are essential to prevailing war efforts. Like other fantasy epics, GoT frequently depicts fictional events or relationships in ways that shed new light on our lived-reality.³¹ In GoT, dragons, dire wolves, horses, and even ravens are regular, significant non-human

³¹ Fiction has long been used to communicate or critique the workings of contemporary society. Examples such as *Invisible Man*, by Ralph Ellison, interrogate the erasure of black identity through an unnamed protagonist and his experiences navigating white supremacy. Many other works of fiction, like Margaret Atwood’s *MaddAdam* series, Aldous Huxley’s *A Brave New World*, and George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and *1984*, are just a few other examples of fiction that have relevance for political theory. The recognition that fictional novels can often inform political theory is not some new revelation. In *Political Theory, Science Fiction, and Utopia*, Tony Burns (2008) investigates the *The Dispossessed* written by Ursula Le Guin to uncover the influence of political theory on Le Guin’s thought and then, subsequently, how Le Guin went on to influence political theory. Beyond fiction’s ability to inform political theory and vice versa, I believe that pedagogically political theorists ought to turn to fiction more often to introduce students to central questions, concepts, understandings, and points of view in political theory. The point and purpose of normative political theory is to imagine how the world ought to be, which requires the ability to think beyond what is. We must not be afraid to enter the world of fantasy. I chose GoT to introduce this chapter and the question of considering animal lives because the series brings to fore the importance of non-human animals in war and conquest, which is also a central theme of this dissertation. The television series also contemplates many intersecting contemporary issues that relate to the consideration of non-human animals. Most notably and through analogy, the existential threat of the White Walkers mirrors the contemporary threat of climate change. The series also puts in serious question oligarchic rule, intra and inter species inequality, and the will to power.

interlocutors. These creatures are so important that both wars are won thanks to interspecies alliances.³²

At no point during the series does one wonder which is the “right” side to fight for. As was shown throughout chapters two and three of this dissertation, the tactic of dehumanizing adversaries in war is used almost universally to render “enemies” killable, while the inverse, humanizing non-human animals that fight alongside victors/conquers, uplifts the social and political value of non-humans used in war.

Despite the central importance of non-human labor in war, this chapter's beginning epigraph clearly articulates the current political status and place of non-human animals in our actual and fantasy worlds. They are not seen as legitimate political actors when it comes to our current political institutions. With respect to the hierarchical political pyramid mentioned above, many animals find themselves floating between the middle and lowest levels of political status. As the political pyramid metaphor suggests, the further up the pyramid we move, the fewer beings we typically find – this space is often reserved for the most dominant humans among us. Being part of the dominant species provides privileged access to enhanced political consideration even if some actions taken by dominant actors erode the status of some for the benefit of others. As was shown throughout chapters two and three, dehumanizing actions are most overt and reach their zenith during war. More importantly, those social and political institutions that regularly devalue adversaries in combat are also frequently used against citizens and non-citizens at home to justify various types of inequalities and forms of domination. While it is perhaps easiest to see domination when it results in killing the “other” through violence, other forms of domination are perhaps just as perverse even if they are more covert in operation.

³² This interspecies alliance analogizes well with my earlier documentation of canine domestication and the benefits that process conferred to both homo-sapiens and early canines.

GoT is perhaps the fantasy example *par excellence* to help readers and watchers contemplate the social and political value of non-humans fighting in war and the social, political, and cultural institutions instrumentalized to justify war and killing. Indeed, the dragons, dire wolves, horses, and ravens in GoT evoke surprise and wonder, and garner attachments from readers and watchers. These attachments lead to emotions of joy and happiness when these non-humans successfully fend off enemies and distraught despair and emotions of sadness when those animal lives are taken or lost. Watching fire breathing dragons and giant dire wolves through our television screens stimulates our capacities for wonder and excitement and provokes our senses for their political consideration. Alternatively, very few emotions are reserved for the White Walkers (the enemy) precisely because they are dehumanized to such a degree that very little consideration is given to them at all. If these sensibilities can be tapped into through a television screen, imagine the thoughts and feelings that witnessing the superhuman abilities and emotional lives of non-human animals in real life could produce to cultivate a sensibility for political consideration.³³ In fact, chapters two and three of this dissertation show how the relationship between handlers and dogs taps into this sensibility for interspecies political consideration.

With the advances being made in the human understanding of animal cognition, the 21st century represents an unprecedented time to reevaluate what political consideration means and for whom it exists. The remainder of this chapter aims to tear asunder existing “naturalized” humanist institutions that exclude some non-human animals from political consideration and the possibility of flourishing. I argue that the obstacles to such flourishing are the five faces of oppression famously

³³ The type of witnessing I am suggesting builds off of the work of Gillespie (2017). Gillespie (2017) argues that “Centering the animal as a subject of witnessing allows us to see with particular clarity the ethical ambiguities at work in witnessing while at the same time attending to the importance of witnessing-as-politics. My project here is to lay bare moments of emotional and physical turmoil not seen as such—the lives that are rendered ungrievable—and examine how we can and should respond to them.” While Gillespie turns to witnessing and grief to uncover practices of domination, a practice I also use throughout the dissertation, witnessing, I argue, can also stimulate awe and wonder, which might actually be a better tactic for enacting political consideration, a la the capabilities approach.

identified by Iris Marion Young: exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. By extending Young's social group concept to non-human animals, we become more attuned to differences between and among species. Theorizing the existence and intersection of non-human social groups brings forward new avenues to explore oppression and simultaneously theorize its opposite – interspecies justice. Some non-human animals are conscious, act purposefully, and labor creatively and must be included in our circle of moral and political concern. The dilemma-ridden nature of interspecies relationships explored in this dissertation, like the investigation into the political commentary fantasy can offer us, reveals troubling *patterns of behavior* that devalue human and non-human lives alike for the benefit of a privileged few. What this dissertation argues is that interspecies relationships are political relations in need of more serious attention.

The MWD case, like the GoT example, shows us that non-human animals that engage with us in warfare are often revered for their abilities and actions in combat. And yet, once it comes time to extend political value, consideration, and care for the dogs, they historically and contemporarily fall outside our defined political “we.” For example, the dogs are classified by the military as equipment during their service, which awards them the same amount of political consideration as an M4 rifle. In contrast, their handlers, fellow soldiers, and commanders regularly attest to their value beyond their usefulness as a tool on the battlefield. While human handlers think of and consider the dogs as fellow soldiers who are vital parts of their platoons, their classification as tools also ensures that they fall outside the dominant group, making them vulnerable to domination and violence. The MWD case is not an aberrant one. Military working dogs show us the variability and vulnerability that they, much like their human counterparts, experience through the procurement process, active-duty service, and retirement.

How any individual is perceived and classified by society directly affects the type of social and political consideration they receive and the power their social group wields. This chapter argues

that domination can be experienced by all species and is not a uniquely human experience. I suggest that theorizing interspecies domination by extending Young's Five Faces of Oppression to non-human animals also means they can experience flourishing, which will be the focus of chapter five. Throughout this chapter, I will show that MWDs will face the possibility of exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence throughout their lives. The 'Five Faces' rear their heads at different moments of vulnerability and are sustained by the designation and differentiation created by social groups.

This means that the process of pursuing interspecies flourishing is rife with the possibility of diverse forms of oppression. This zone of contact, or interaction, is not readily determinable nor reducible to a formula for flourishing or resistance to oppression. An element of spontaneity exists within this sphere of interaction and is dependent on the interaction of the actors themselves. Thus, when we begin to consider what justice might demand in relationships with others, we must ask what their needs are in relation to their pursuit of flourishing. Secondly, how might our conscious purposive interactions with them provide an opening, or potential, to resist coercive relations and promote more attuned forms of interspecies flourishing? And lastly, while I stretch and turn the theory of the 'Five Faces' toward interspecies relationships, I rely on the real-life interspecies relationships explored in the previous two chapters to examine the manifestation of oppression and the resistance that arises in its wake.

This chapter contributes to the existing human-animal studies and political science literatures in two significant ways. First, it builds upon previous attempts by Lori Gruen (2009) and Robert Jones (2015) to extend Iris Marion Young's 'Five Faces of Oppression' to non-human animals. While Gruen and Jones make important interventions in applying Young's 'Five Faces' to non-human animals, my primary interest lies in extending and broadening the social group concept to other species. Like Young, and contrary to much of the existing literature in human-animal studies, I

will argue that the social group is the appropriate place to identify and investigate oppression. Social groupings act as essential constituters of personal identity and signifiers of difference. As Young (2011, p. 9) argues, “oppression happens to social groups,” even if it is frequently felt and experienced at an individual level. Young’s focus is on marginalized human groups and the complexity, fluidity, and differentiation that exists amongst and between groups themselves. Groups are not homogenous and, often, not necessarily coherent, which makes arguments of essentialized natures problematic. This line of argument, I argue, is useful and applicable to non-human animals and interspecies relationships. Non-human animals have historically been treated monolithically when, in reality, species are highly diversified and not reducible to a singularly understood essentialized nature. What needs to be done now, and what I attempt to begin in this chapter, is to acknowledge and attend to this diversity, difference, and asymmetry in some of our relationships to identify and undermine the possibility of interspecies oppression.

II. Iris Marion Young’s Approach to Justice and Power

Young begins *Justice and the Politics of Difference* with three radical criticisms of preexisting theories of justice. She first argues that free-standing universal theories of justice that presuppose no particular organization of society ‘are too abstract to be helpful in evaluating actual institutions and practices’ (Young, 2011, p. 4). It only makes sense to speak about justice if one presupposes a particular organization; Young argues that for many free-standing theories of justice, this is modern liberal capitalist society. This claim to universality seeks to naturalize those situations, institutions, and practices that structure modern liberal capitalist society. Alternatively, Young argues that if we are to understand justice and justice claims, we must be particularly attuned to, and honest about, the dominant structures, institutions, and practices that currently shape our collective, yet highly diversified, lived experiences. This type of inversion to understanding justice ‘embeds’ individuals

and groups within a present context with bundled relations that act and react within existing structures. It is within these actions and reactions that the possibility of injustice and oppression arise.

Young's second radical departure criticizes exclusively distributional theories of justice. She argues that distributional concerns frequently focus on the distribution of material goods and income. While the distribution of these things may be important, the focus on distribution alone assumes and remains uncritical towards social structure and institutional context. In this scenario, justice is not about the structures themselves, but rather, who gets what, when, where, and why. Young attests that some scholars have attempted to extend this distributive paradigm to non-material goods – like decision-making power and the division of labor. However, these scholars generally treat the structures themselves as natural and only consider reordering who takes part in them when, where, and why (Young, 2011, p.16). Through Young's critique, what is made clear about the distributive paradigm is that it is less concerned about social relations and processes that themselves might create injustice. Rather, they construe injustice as inappropriate distribution. Young gets at the heart of the matter by citing Marx:

It was a general mistake to make a fuss about so-called distribution and put the principal stress on it. Any distribution whatever of the means of consumption is only a consequence of the distribution of the conditions of production themselves. The latter distribution, however, is a feature of the mode of production itself (Marx, 1947, p. 10).

If Marx and Young are correct, then addressing distribution without changing the dominant structures that determine that distribution will never fully remediate the resulting injustices. The benefit of Young's approach to justice is that we do not assume that the structures are immediately natural and inevitable. Rather, we begin with particular forms of oppression and domination and reflect on the potential correction of these injustices and the structures that make them possible (Young, 2011, p. 31). The response might mean many things, including dismantling and replacing a mode of production with a new one. In the MWD case explored in the previous two chapters, those

who worked most closely with MWD's regularly participate in this process of reflection and subsequent protection of their canine partners. While their actions are directed at protecting their dogs, their critiques often bring attention to broader processes (procurement) and institutions (military hierarchy) that instrumentalize the dogs as pieces of equipment for the purposes of making war.

Lastly, Young's third radical criticism of preexisting theories of justice demonstrates her commitment to critical theory and inverts who the relevant knowers and enactors of justice are. In contrast to the distributive paradigm, which aims to impose a managerial approach to justice, Young recommends what she calls a 'reflective discourse about justice.' Such discourse 'makes arguments, but these are not intended as definitive demonstrations. They are addressed to others and await their response, in a situated political dialogue' (Young, 2011, p. 5). In the first case, justice is an ideal known by all, and injustice can be 'fixed' through changes in how society's resources are divided and distributed. In the latter case, we listen to groups and individuals who are situated in complex social relations. Young presents this alternative frame through Jean-Francois Lyotard. Lyotard recognizes that power's presence in our deliberations is often expressed through overactive speech:

For us, a language is first and foremost someone talking. But there are language games in which the important thing is to listen, in which the rule deals with audition. Such a game is the game of the just. And in this game, one speaks only inasmuch as one listens, that is, one speaks as a listener, and not as an author (Lyotard, 1984, pp.71-72, cited by Young, 2011, p. 4).

In this rendition, justice is no longer pursued by those who 'know' justice and speak and act in pursuit of a presumed ideal state of affairs. Rather, a theory of justice premised on recognition becomes 'calls, pleas, claims upon some people by others. Rational reflection on justice begins in a hearing, in heeding a call' (Young, 2011, p. 5). In other words, the pursuit of justice becomes

dynamic and relational. It relies on spaces where softer or stifled voices can be heard, requiring a critical reappraisal of over-active and especially loud speech.³⁴

Only through the recognition of injustice and oppressive practices can we begin to theorize or think about its opposite – interspecies justice. Our lived reality ‘presents its own unrealized possibilities, experienced as lacks and desires. Norms and ideals arise from yearning that is an expression of freedom: it does not have to be this way, it could be otherwise. Imagination is the faculty of transforming the experience of what is into a project of what could be, the faculty that frees thought to form ideals and norms’ (Young, 2011, p. 6). This imaginative process resists the naturalization of current institutions; rather, justice might mandate entirely new institutions and relationships. When it comes to MWDs, the evidence is clear. Serious revisions are needed when it comes to the dog’s treatment related to procurement practices, active-duty service, and retirement. While the handlers that work with the dogs are constantly critiquing and imagining alternatives to current practices, their inability to enact these changes brings to the fore the power of current institutions and practices.

Before we attend to the specifics of any particular interspecies relationship, we must define power, however elusive power is, and domination to better understand their ebbs and flows. Young’s approach to power mirrors the way she treats justice. Power, like justice, is not merely a distribution, nor a possession; it is rather a set of relations. Focusing our attention on resource distribution and neglecting the structures that foster that distribution ‘misses the way in which the powerful enact and reproduce their power’ (Young, 2011, p. 32). As Nancy Fraser (1997, p. 190) also

³⁴ Vince Jungkunz (2016) makes the case by arguing that “silence should take speech’s place as the more appropriate means of liberation, and post-humanism as the more democratic form of engagement.” Jungkunz, citing the Ancients and subsequent feminists who come to criticize their view, rightly points out that the reliance on speech over silence also privileges the public over the private, relegating the private sphere to political irrelevance. As feminists will later counter, the private sphere and the family are political institutions that have been cast outside the realm of the political because they were presumed to be “natural” conditions.

argues in *Justice Interruptus*, our focus must be bifocal in nature. We must attend to societal institutions just as much as the distribution of resources, if our concern is justice.

If power is a set of relations structured by societal institutions and the subsequent distribution of society's resources, then domination for Young (2011, p. 31) is defined by the structural or systemic criteria that 'exclude people from participating in determining their actions or the conditions of their actions.' While Young does not speak directly about non-human animals, her approach has great potential for identifying structures of domination and relations of oppression while also considering justice with regard to non-human animals (Gruen, 2009; Jones, 2015; Washick, B., Wingrove, E., Ferguson, K. et al., 2015).

Herein lies the importance of extending Young's Five Faces of Oppression to interspecies relationships. Young identifies the 'Five Faces of Oppression' as **exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence**. Each face represents asymmetric power relations between groups that deny one group the opportunity to flourish. Exploitation highlights how some people exercise their capacities under the control, according to the purposes, and for the benefit of other people resulting in a transfer of power from one group to another (Young, 2011, p. 49). Marginalization is synonymous with being disposable, which means that the labor of marginals cannot or will not be used by employers – marginality is frequently delineated by race, ethnicity, gender, ability, and, now, species. Powerlessness is a condition experienced by those who are forced 'to take orders...[who have] little opportunity to develop and exercise skills' (Young, 2011, p. 57). Cultural imperialism 'involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture and establishes it as the norm'; those who differ become marked as *other*, deviant, and inferior (Young, 2011, p. 59). Lastly, violence is the cumulative physical confrontation that oppressed groups experience through 'random, unprovoked attacks on their person or property, which have no motive

but to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person' (Young, 2011, p. 61). Violence is the destructive force that silences and quiets the voices of the unheard and unrecognized.

While previous articles written by Gruen (2009) and Jones (2015) have focused on the applicability of the 'Five Faces' to non-human animals, I rather focus on extending and applying the idea of the social group to other species.³⁵ Oppression happens to social groups; thus, extending this concept to non-human animals is vital to confronting oppressive practices. I argue that by attending to both intra- and interspecies differences, we can better identify the constitutive relationships that generate interspecies oppression and simultaneously theorize its opposite – interspecies justice. All oppressed groups share, whether exploited or marginalized, 'some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings' (Young, 2011, p. 40). While many groups suffer this injustice broadly, no single 'face' can adequately identify and express the complex set of relations that foster such injustice for any particular group. By applying Young's 'Five Faces of Oppression' through the idea of the social group to non-human animals and interspecies relationships, one can better understand the dominant structures that foster acts of oppression. Once these structures are identified and the oppressed are "heard," we can begin to move toward more emancipatory relations with non-human animals.

III. The Five Faces of Interspecies Oppression

Young's 'Five Faces of Oppression' is well-suited for an interspecies application because of the way she defines the social group. Social groups are:

³⁵ In a recent article, "Species-Being for Whom: The Five Faces of Interspecies Oppression" (2020), I argued that social groups could be interspecies in nature, meaning that individuals of different species could be part of the same social group. This dissertation chapter seeks to correct that misstep. As will be shown throughout the remainder of this chapter, species distinctions have important effects on interspecies power relations. It makes little sense to argue that MWDs are part of the same social group as other human soldiers. While the dogs are at times considered soldiers and form meaningful interspecies relationships with their human counterparts, their species membership makes them more vulnerable to oppression than human soldiers. Arguing that social groups could be interspecies in nature effaces essential differences that materially affect power relations. Neglecting to identify these differences risks doing more harm to those most at risk for oppression. This chapter corrects my previous mistake.

A collective of persons differentiated from at least one other group by cultural forms, practices, or way of life. Members of a group have a specific affinity with one another because of their similar experience or way of life...Group identification arises, that is, in the encounter and interaction between social collectivities that experience some differences in their way of life and forms of association, even if they also regard themselves as belonging to the same society (Young, 2011, p. 43).

Young here defines social groups belonging to the human species. The definition of social groups recognizes the diversity that exists between the individuals of a particular species. Humans are not the only species for whom this is true. For example, think of the numerous dog breeds that are defined differently because of their diverging 'cultural forms, practices, or way of life' (Young, 2011, p. 43). Some of these cultural differences and practices have already been recognized as it relates to canines by Raymond and Lorna Coppinger (2001). In their book *Dogs*, the Coppingers' document the wide range of differences between canines by investigating the distinctions between household dogs, village dogs, livestock-guarding dogs, sled dogs, and herding dogs. The Coppingers' argue that the differences between these dogs are so fundamental that they deserve recognition of their own social groups.

What this means in practice is that, just like different human social groups, identifying social groups within other species is an important recognitional act necessary for the purposes of identifying oppression and pursuing interspecies justice. For instance, sled dogs as a social group within domesticated dogs have a much higher need for exercise and work than a typical household dog. While household dogs may live perfectly good lives, not running and exercising daily, not providing these opportunities to sled dogs may actually constitute harm and oppression. In fact, looking out at the emerging dog psychology literature, it appears that many behavioral issues seen in dogs relate to a person's misunderstanding of a particular dog's needs and their inability to meet them. If our measure or sense of justice relates to an individual's or a group's ability to flourish, then certainly consideration should be given to whether or not an individual adopting a dog can satisfy

those requirements. If they cannot, then we ought to reserve the right to call this out as an oppressive relationship.

I began this chapter with references to the book and television series *Game of Thrones* to underscore the importance of non-human animals in war. I also mention the attachments that fans made to the various non-human characters in the series. Like the MWDs used in real-world combat, the dogs used to play the dire wolves in the series cultivate an admiration by onlookers. This admiration recently sparked a demand in adoptions of dog breeds the “looked” like the dire wolves in *GoT* - primarily huskies, malamutes, and mixes of various arctic breeds. Soon after this spike in adoptions, animal shelters across the United States reported a twofold increase in the surrendering of these sled dog type dogs (Alberts, 2017). Angelique Miller, president of Northern California Sled Dog Rescue, in an interview with the Dodo, stated that:

They’re so cute in the shows, so a lot of people go and buy these dogs as puppies, but they don’t do any research on the breed. This is not a breed for everybody. The breed is very active. They have a lot of energy, so they need a lot of exercise. They have an extremely high prey drive. So we will not adopt these dogs out to anyone who has any type of small animal.

They are escape artists, too, so if they get bored, they’ll get under your fence. And they are pack animals. They do like to be with other dogs and they do like to be with humans, and they like to be inside with you when you’re home. (Alberts, 2017)

Again, if we think of the process of interspecies flourishing as the combined ability to recognize and then satisfy the needs of other beings, then the example above must be called out as oppression. If we can recognize the needs of the dogs and then specifically deny those needs, we – as humans – are inhibiting interspecies flourishing. Adopting a dog to serve our own emotional desires at the expense of the dog’s well-being is exploitation, as defined by Young. Anyone who has been in a relationship with a *working* dog knows that the social grouping classifier of “working” identifies particular needs that, if left unfulfilled, lead to “challenging” behavior.

We can also see how the extension of the idea of the social group to other species here bears significantly on the question of oppression. It would make very little sense to compare the needs of a Chihuahua to an Alaskan Malamute or a Belgian Malinois.³⁶ The breeds have different histories, enjoy different activities, and even have diverging communication styles. While these breeds are classified as belonging to the species of *Canis lupus familiaris*, their needs differ to such a degree that further social group distinctions must be applied if interspecies flourishing is to become the purpose of interspecies relationships.

While it is important to recognize how social groupings affect the needs of individuals within a species and thus their pursuit of flourishing, it's also important to recognize how intraspecies group differences operate to oppress. A case in point in America is the pit bull terrier. Pit bulls, more than any other breed, have been discriminatorily targeted by the law. Beginning in the 1980s, logics operating similarly to race and class worked to essentialize pit bulls, and other dogs that bear a physical resemblance to them, as dangerous and a threat to peace and security within cities. The power of this narrative led many cities to pass pit bull bans. The culminating results of this discriminatory campaign led to a state-sanctioned crackdown with lethal results. More than any other breed, Pit bulls face the possibility of being killed by the State because of the supposed threat they pose to society. The alchemy of interspecies oppression blurs the boundaries of species distinction by applying logics of discrimination upon certain groups across species lines.

When it comes to pit bulls, Katja Guenther (2020) captures the intersecting logics of oppression through her experience working in a PAWs animal shelter in Southern California. Reflecting on the death of Monster, a pit bull she witnessed at PAWs, Guenther (2020, pg.1) argues that

³⁶ Although I would argue the smaller dogs equally need levels of stimulation to keep them satisfied and flourishing. Society often finds it more permissible for smaller dogs to act out because their smaller stature makes them more physically dominatable.

He [Monster] died because he lived in a community of lower-income people of color in which human residents face challenges that threaten their ability to maintain continuous, geographically proximal relationships with anyone, human or animal; this placed him at particular risk for entering an animal shelter. As a pit bull, Monster was also part of the group of dogs most likely to end up in a shelter and the least likely to leave alive because of breed discrimination that is itself grounded in racism and classism.

Applying the Five Faces of Oppression to interspecies relationships becomes the vehicle through which we can further undermine discriminatory practices that arbitrarily target individuals belonging to a particular social group. Comparing the two examples provided above, it makes little sense to treat “bully” breeds and arctic breeds identically. While both face the possibility of oppression, they do so for different reasons. In the first case, arctic breeds are oppressed due to our human ignorance of their needs and our inability to fulfill those needs. In the second case, discriminatory practices related to race and class are applied to “bully” breeds, giving the State license to do violence upon those who fall within that social group.

Many reading along may be thinking that identifying social groups within the species of *Canis lupus familiaris* (domesticated dog) is unrepresentative of the differences that exist within other species. By this logic, extending the idea of the social group to species outside the human species or species closely related to *us* simply will not apply. In other words, the category of the social group is unique to domesticated dogs, humans, and perhaps other species that share a relationship with humans. I find this critique unconvincing for two reasons. The first is that it reeks of human exceptionalism, the idea that humans are superior and the formation or identification of a social group is the expression of that superiority. The second relates to the first but is more about revealing our ignorance related to the differences that exist within the non-human world. To assuage the critique mentioned above, I find it helpful to give an example of a “wild” animal species with readily identifiable social groups.

A “wild” animal species with readily identifiable social groups will be familiar to many. That non-human species is the Orca whale, more colloquially called the Killer whale. Orca whales are

found in all five of the world's oceans and exhibit different cultural forms that can be used to identify different social grouping. For example, take the comparison between the resident orcas of Puget Sound, who feed exclusively on salmon, and the transient, ocean-dwelling, orcas who primarily eat other mammals. These differences go beyond what these members eat; the groups also communicate very differently; their linguistic differences resemble those among humans (Safina, 2016, p. 311). Both groups belong to the species *Orcinus orca*, yet the needs and ways of life of the individuals within these two groups are different. Further differentiating species into social groups has important ramifications when we begin to think through our political obligations to non-human animals. Our treatment of and policy response to the variability of social groups within species represents one of the most important advancements we can make in cultivating an interspecies politics. It becomes less likely that we treat social groups within species in the same way.

By extending Young's conceptualization of the social group, we can see why only addressing distribution is inadequate if our concern is interspecies justice. Young (2011, p. 39) argues that justice is, in one sense, a distribution of goods, but, in another sense, 'also [addresses] the institutional conditions necessary for the development and exercise of individual capacities and collective communication and cooperation.' This concept of justice has significant ramifications for the political consideration of non-human animals and non-human social groups. If justice is what Young (2011, p. 40) asserts, then oppression is defined as a lack in an individual's or collective's ability to develop themselves and express their needs, thoughts, and experiences – a relational asymmetry. For many, because animals lack the ability for human speech, they cannot effectively communicate how their development is being inhibited or their needs neglected. The current state of affairs represents an institutional constraint that cannot be overcome by addressing distribution alone. As many scholars argue, the spoken word is not the only form of communication that

resonates when considering the needs of human individuals. Why impose such a rigid barrier when it comes to non-human animals?

Even as institutions slowly change to recognize and include some non-human animals, we must remain vigilant and cultivate an ability to recognize how the ‘Five Faces of “Interspecies” Oppression’ implicate social groups within other species. Young’s concept of exploitation can be extended to non-human animals, most clearly by investigating industrial animal agriculture. The cow, chicken, or pig labor to increase in size only to become sellable on the market, but the commodity ‘meat,’ that they are producing, is never actually owned by the animal itself, even though its flesh is part of its corporeal body. These animals labor similarly to humans within capitalist society, in the sense that they are laboring instrumentally for the purposes of capital accumulation. Alienation and objectification, in both cases, manifest as the disaffirmation of the workers themselves; they feel ‘miserable and unhappy, develop no free physical or mental energy [this coerced labor thus] mortifies [their] flesh and ruins [their] mind[s]...[their] work, therefore, is not voluntary, but coerced *forced labor*. It is not the satisfaction of a need but only a means to satisfy other needs’ (Marx, 1994, p. 62). Animals that are coerced into forced labor oftentimes become physically ill, deformed, and mentally unstable. Images of chickens unable to stand because of their quick weight gain; cattle attacking humans as a result of the violence imposed upon them; and pigs escaping confinement have become commonplace.³⁷

These are constant reminders of the profound alienation endured by non-human animals and how these side effects of capitalism manifest similarly among human beings. **Exploitation**, as Young (2011, p. 50) argues, ‘enacts a structural relation between social groups... These relations are produced and reproduced through a systematic process in which the energies of the have-nots are

³⁷ For an expansive account of animal resistance, see Jason Hribal’s *Fear of the Animal Planet: The Hidden History of Animal Resistance* (2011).

continuously expended to maintain and augment the power, status, and wealth of the haves.’

Oppression operates in a sadistic asymmetric fashion. Industrial animal production pits two highly oppressed groups within society – animals raised for industrialized slaughter and the human laborers necessary to kill them - against one another to augment the power of a third – capitalist producers. Think not only of the cows, chickens, and pigs being raised and killed for slaughter and consumption but also of the human individuals forced and coerced to work in slaughterhouses. Humans working in industrial animal agriculture often find themselves in similarly precarious situations - working for low wages in dangerous environments (Pachirat, 2011). In this scenario, one intraspecies group’s survival requires the killing of another.

While exploitation problematizes forms of labor, **marginalization** is a condition experienced by those who are categorized as disposable and, according to Young (2011, p. 53), is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression. In a society where one is forced to trade one’s labor for wages to live, being categorized as unusable “potentially subjects (some) to severe material deprivation and even extermination” (Young, 2011, p. 53). In Young’s analysis, people of color, women, and the elderly often experience marginalization through discriminatory nonrecognition. Critical accounts of marginalization problematize atomistic individuality and independence by turning to feminist contributions identifying dependence as a fundamental part of the human condition in need of recognition.³⁸ We are all dependent at some point in our lives on others; thus, independence does not accurately describe our lived reality. Even still, perhaps the most perverse aspect of marginalization is being categorized as disposable. This becomes abundantly clear in the case of species when we think of companion animals. Those that are unwanted, or deemed deficient,

³⁸ Eva Feder Kittay’s *Labor’s Love* and Joan Tronto’s many works on the ethics of care (1993) and (2010) are highly regarded examples in feminist theory. Josephine Donovan and Carol Adams *The Feminist Care Tradition in Animal Ethics : A Reader* (2007) is also instructive when it comes to dependence and care as it relates to non-human animals.

find themselves in the precarious situation of facing death. Over 670,000 dogs were euthanized in 2016, demonstrating that marginalization is not a form of oppression that solely afflicts human beings. Let us not forget about the human labor that is necessary for this killing to go on. This shows that even within the same species (canines), individuals can face highly differentiated treatment that is oftentimes attached to ideas about particular breeds and their supposed essentialized natures (functioning similarly to race) – pit bulls being the most recent victims.

Powerlessness operates similarly to a class structure mediated species lines. Many animals labor and toil for the sake of capital producers, but some animals labor and toil to augment the power of other animals. Think of the cows, chickens, or pigs that are used to feed domesticated dogs and cats. It is also impossible to separate the human labor that goes into producing food, toys, and other material objects that some pets are consuming. Class here seems to be a vital factor; pets of the wealthy also have their power augmented by the labor of working and middle-class humans. Glamorous pets and their wealthy owners find themselves relationally exercising more power than laborers producing the commodities they consume – further supporting the claim that social groups are the appropriate place to begin uncovering acts of oppression and structures of domination. From the early 16th century to very recently, pet keeping was a practice primarily enjoyed by the wealthy.³⁹ Again, power operates at the confluence of class, race, gender, and now, species. We can no longer ignore the fact that the lives of non-human animals are similarly affected by structures of power and that power can be wielded and augmented by social groups within various species to oppress other beings.

³⁹ Let us be clear, it is not that other classes didn't have relationships with canines or other non-humans, it is just that those relationships were labor-related. Canines were used for herding, guarding, and keeping pest populations low. Felines, also, to keep pest populations low.

These first three faces of oppression are ‘concrete power in relations to others – of who benefits from whom, and who is dispensable’ (Young, 2011, p. 58). In contrast, **cultural imperialism** is the process of rendering someone’s experience, or subjectivity, invisible within society. Speciesism, like racism, sexism, ableism, and classism, otherizes particular individuals or groups by placing them outside the scope of political and moral consideration. As Young argues, these stereotypes are so dominant ‘that they are not noticed as contestable’ (Young, 2011, p. 59). The stereotype that non-human animals and their interests are inferior to humans has been a central tenet of most societies since ancient times.

These stereotypes and the glaring asymmetries in power relations described above display the precarity of being non-human. These forms of oppression lead to arbitrary and random attacks that are structured by systemic **violence**. Young (2011, p. 61) argues that violence as a face of oppression ‘is less [about] the particular acts themselves... than the social context surrounding them, which makes them possible and even acceptable.’ Violence is legitimate because an individual is marked as belonging to a particular group; being part of that group renders them inferior, thus justifying violence.

These forms of oppression and injustice are challenging to overcome because they are ingrained in the dominant culture. Only by making pleas for recognition heard and lives seen can ‘change in cultural images, stereotypes, and the mundane reproduction of relations of dominance and aversion’ be achieved (Young, 2011, p. 63). Of course, how that is done is not easy nor universalisable. To begin this process and transition to theorizing interspecies justice requires that we recognize the highly differentiated lives of social groups within each species.

IV. Military Working Dogs, Interspecies Oppression, and Social Groups

Throughout this dissertation, I have shown that military working dogs, through their interspecies relationships with humans, have augmented power relations within and between human

communities. While MWDs cultivate more power through their labor as soldiers, they never achieve a political status that is on par with the most dominant humans. Their species membership renders them inferior to these human counterparts, which means they cannot reap the often-unrecognized benefits of belonging to the dominant species. Despite the dog's ability to positively augment their power in relation to their human adversaries, their individual vulnerability will vary throughout their lifetimes. Their vulnerability to oppression depends on a multitude of factors notwithstanding interspecies bonds, individual skill, their social group, and proximity to dangerous work.

Even as the threats of interspecies oppression arise, I argue that human handlers often cultivate a keen understanding of these threats and vigilantly guard against forms of oppression that affect their non-human partners. MWD handlers routinely criticize the treatment of the dogs throughout the procurement process and active-duty service, suggesting that only in retirement do the dogs actually get to experience the full variety of life experience necessary to fully express their “dog” natures. Although handlers and trainers routinely advocate for their dogs, advocacy is complicated by a profit-seeking military-industrial complex paired with a military hierarchy that instrumentalizes both human and canine soldiers to make war. Within this crucible of shared experience, handlers and dogs cultivate life-long bonds that stimulate action to resist oppressive structures.

Yet still, oppression abounds. The social production of MWDs is an insidious process of oppression that renders the dogs caught up in it as objects whose labor is consumed for the purposes of making war. Many of the dogs caught up in the process of production are made more vulnerable because they are grouped together as “breeding” or “stock” dogs. What is shown throughout the MWD case is that for those that escape this hyper commoditization, a change in the classification of their social group is required. The dogs that are selected for military service become identified as soldiers rather than breeding dogs, which makes their labor more visible and

recognizable. This, paired with the substantial interspecies relationship between handler and dog, become the necessary precondition for resistance to oppression.

Before the possibility of interspecies resistance to oppression, the dogs must be produced through a breeding apparatus and ushered through a training and selection process that is rife with the possibility of oppression. Again, this process is exacerbated by the profit-motive at each level of production. During this time of training and procurement, the dogs face the constant threat of disposability – a threat consistent with the second face of oppression, marginality. Once a new progeny of puppies is born, those who show some promise of becoming working dogs are selected to move on to the initial training phase to prepare them for possible military selection. What occurs to the dogs that do not “make the cut” is not entirely known, but many speculate that they face death in one form or another. In other words, they are confronted by the last of the five faces of oppression – the cumulative threat and practice of violence.

Those that are caught up in the breeding apparatus mentioned above, mostly reproducing-aged females, are in a constant state of marginality, only valuable so long as they can produce the next offspring of working dogs. Once their breeding years are over, they also face the threat of disposability and thus violence. Of the surviving offspring, the “lucky” few selected for military service escape the marginality experienced by those deemed unfit. Although they escape this marginality, they now become exploitable by the State. Recognizing the different forms of oppression that affect canines caught up in these processes of social reproduction is essential for structuring our political and institutional responses to oppression. Herein lies the importance of recognizing the analytical value of social groups in an effort to examine the ebbs and flows of interspecies power relations.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Social reproduction scholars argue that the point of social reproduction theory (SRT) is to make visible that labor and work that are made invisible by classical economists and politically denied by policymakers (Bhattacharya, 2017). While many SRT scholars focus on human forms of labor and work, the social reproduction of MWDs reveals how reproductive labor

Different social groups exist within the process of social reproduction explored in chapter three and mentioned directly above. For example, “reproducing-aged female working dogs” that are used for breeding in this process of reproduction face particular forms of oppression structured by their gender, age, ability, and classification as “working dogs.” Their social grouping is unique, and their identification within it makes them more vulnerable to the insidious profit-motive driven military-industrial complex that propels the industry. Their gender and ability to bear offspring become the operative component of their identity, which renders them more vulnerable than their comparable male counterparts. In this way, “breeding-aged female working dogs,” as a social group, face a comparably greater possibility of oppression made unique to their social group. The social group has two operative functions: in the examples given above, they render individuals more vulnerable to oppression, but the social group can also offer protection from certain types of oppression.

The dogs that are selected for military service become canine *soldiers*. While that title may seem trivial, becoming a military working dog now renders the dogs subject to public policy and confers protections to the dogs by their inclusion within the social group of canine *soldiers*. This is also the first time that the dogs will establish a prolonged relationship with a human handler. The legal recognition of their social group paired with an interspecies relationship with a human counterpart makes MWDs less vulnerable to the types of oppression that afflict dogs caught in the processes of social reproduction. Although their new social group does alleviate particular vulnerabilities connected to social reproduction, they are now made exploitable and vulnerable to oppression as a condition of their work as soldiers. As defined by Young (2011, pg. 59), cultural imperialism ‘involves the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture and establishes it as the norm’; those who differ become marked as *other*, deviant, and inferior.’ MWDs fall outside of the

is made invisible across species lines. The MWD case shows this most clearly. MWDs themselves receive public and political recognition, even if we admit that it is limited, while all the individuals caught up in producing those canine soldiers go completely unrecognized.

dominant (human) group's experience because they do not belong to the dominant species. This speciesism structures relations at every level, from the procurement process, active-duty service, to the retirement of the dogs. Their categorization as *canine* marks the dogs as inferior compared to their human counterparts, placing them lower on the pyramid of political consideration, which leads to more significant vulnerabilities to oppression.

Active-duty MWDs, whose lives are privileged and protected in some ways by their categorization as soldiers, nevertheless face the possibility of oppression through exploitation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and the potential for violence that structures their work. Many of the handlers point out that the dogs are kept in separate concrete kennels during the training cycle before deployments, neglecting their social natures.⁴¹ While stateside, the dogs are almost always kept in kennels except for when they partake in training. Unlike police dogs that go home with their handlers after a day's work, MWDs must remain on base for security purposes. Handlers and trainers report that when the dogs are stateside, they exhibit signs of kennel stress that they believe is related to their almost constant confinement. One handler even compared the impact of kenneling to the effect that solitary confinement has on incarcerated humans. Perhaps not surprisingly, when the dogs deploy overseas and are in constant interaction with their handlers, socializing with other members of their platoons, and regularly engaging in work (using their noses for detection and engaging in social and physical activity) - they thrive. The visible signs of stress go away. Emotionally the dogs are more stable. Every handler I spoke with who experienced this difference articulated

⁴¹ Many of the MWDs experience kennel stress while on base. Coppinger and Zuccotti (1999) argue that “dogs are socially interactive animals, and require species-specific social environments to maintain mental health... Dogs raised in cell-like conditions can develop abnormal behaviors of extreme fear, kennel shyness, and atypical aggression, or become involved in acute stereotypies (Carlstead, 1998). Stereotypies such as route tracing, self-injurious behaviors, or coprophagy and hypertrophied behaviors such as barking are indicators of psychologically deprived animals.” All of these symptoms have been described by the handlers who work with the dogs. They universally acknowledge that the reason the dogs do so well when they deploy is because they live out social and physical needs that are not fulfilled when they are back on base.

strong opinions regarding the dog's treatment and care upon their return home. For many handlers, retiring their dog represents the possibility of actualizing interspecies flourishing. This sensitivity and attentiveness to the needs and natures of their canine partners is precisely the type of recognitional work that an interspecies justice must cultivate.

Although active-duty canine soldiers receive greater moral and political consideration because of their classification as “soldiers,” they lose that privileged status upon retirement. Reclassification, as a retired veteran MWD, strips the dogs of the little protections they enjoyed during their service. Once retired, the dogs rely solely on their adoptive families, typically the family of an ex-handler, for care and protection. By retiring MWDs, the State absolves itself of any and all obligations to the dogs. Like their human veteran counterparts, retired MWDs face the burden of living with physical and emotional trauma sustained during their working lives - a cost too often borne and relinquished to their private familial lives beyond the obligations of the state. Their reclassification as “retired veterans” once again renders the dogs more vulnerable to oppression, even if they are freed from their service requirements.

Again, their social group classification has changed once more, this time to “*retired* military working dog.” As we can see, throughout their lifetimes, MWDs will belong to various different social groups structured by component parts of their identity. Their belonging to this or that social group grants them more or less power and protection at any given time. At the height of their power, they will command more political consideration than their human adversaries in war. At their least powerful, they may be treated as mere objects existing for the satisfaction of human wants and desires.

The extension of the five faces of (interspecies) oppression, along with the extension of the concept of social group to other species, provides leverage with which to analyze the ebb and flow of interspecies power relations. Within the case of MWDs, it becomes clear that the categorization

of species is not the sole determiner of political value or consideration. As was shown throughout the last three chapters, MWDs augment power relations in war and receive greater moral and political consideration than the adversaries fought partly because they are classified as belonging, in part, to the dominant social group of friendly soldiers. While this augmented political value projects them above other human adversaries, they, however, can never reach the top of the political pyramid. A pervasive speciesism keeps them from climbing to the pinnacle of the pyramid, which is reserved solely for the most dominant human beings.

Young's 'Five Faces of Oppression,' like Marx's *Capital*, pictures relations of domination in modern society as a living social hell that precludes the potential for flourishing as self-creation. Young's direct investigation of exploitation, marginality, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence extends this hell beyond the working day and draws our critical attention to the (in)justice of current institutions and cultural practices. My application of Young attempts to extend this critique further still, to include non-human animals as both subjects and objects within these relations of oppression with the corresponding need to reimagine our social relations with non-human animals.

In the proceeding chapter, I conclude this dissertation by arguing that an interspecies politics brings forward the promise and possibility of redefining and expanding the political community to include non-human animals as beings that matter. In this view, an interspecies politics erodes the humanist foundations of our current political institutions and rather views the fate of human beings as infinitely connected to the fate of non-human animals. The promise of an interspecies politics lies in cultivating abilities that identify and value differences between and within other species. In this vein, all beings involved become more attuned to those they are in community with, creating interspecies spaces of interaction that bring forward new opportunities for flourishing. I also warn that without institutions that socialize the capabilities for

care and consideration that are cultivated within interspecies relationships, we may inadvertently promote a perilous form of an interspecies politics that perpetuates a problematic status quo.

Ultimately, the promise of an interspecies politics holds the potential to resist and overcome reactionary, racist, xenophobic, exclusionary, and anti-democratic politics.

Chapter 5

The Promise of an Interspecies Politics

If all the beasts were gone,
Man would die from a great loneliness of spirit,
For whatever happens to beasts,
Also happens to man.
All things are connected.

- Chief Seattle

The boundaries of the home became the expected boundaries of love. With the fetishisation [sic] of the home as a space of purity and interdependence, extra-domestic intimacies, whether within or between species, seemed archaic fantasies (the community, the small farmer) or passing affairs (feminism, animal rights). Outside the home, the domain of economic rationality and conflicting individual interests reigned. Moreover, this kind of family fetish reappeared in mid-twentieth century U.S. mass culture—and once again in our times now—as the United States assumed a global leadership that allowed it to draw from older regimes of colonial culture. Here love is just not expected outside family walls. Within the family, other species can be accepted; pets are models for family devotion. But the model of the loving and beloved pet does not spread love; it holds it tight inside the family.

- Anna Tsing

I. Introduction

Throughout this dissertation, I have argued that MWDs and the interspecies relationships they build with their human handlers are a powerful force to be reckoned with. Dating back to Ancient times, canines have combined their powers with humans to dominate other humans on the battlefield. These MWDs augment power relations in a way that places them higher within a political pyramid of consideration than the adversaries they fight against. In modern times, their superhuman capabilities supplement human forces and cannot be replicated by other forms of technology – making the dogs precious assets. Beyond these abilities, humans and dogs that participate in warfare together build intimate bonds that transcend species boundaries. These bonds become so strong

that human handlers often advocate on behalf of their canines to the point of undermining the chain of command and threatening their military careers.

While our initial reaction is perhaps to celebrate the advocacy of human handlers on behalf of their dogs, it seems that their advocacy, care, and consideration fails to extend beyond the individual dogs that work alongside them. A case in point being the comparatively deplorable treatment that breeding-age female dogs receive in comparison. Within the case of MWDs, we see handlers becoming attuned to differences that come as part and parcel of each dog's individual personality. We witness handlers recognizing the different needs that each dog requires to flourish with the corresponding actions that ensure that those needs are met. And yet, while this care and consideration occur, the question remains: is this extension of care and consideration a product of a politics of difference that recognizes and values differences between beings – what I argue is the promise of an interspecies politics? Or is the extension of care and consideration a manifestation of a politics of assimilation that values like experiences and characteristics – or rather, an individualized interspecies practice? Throughout the remainder of this chapter, I argue that without institutions that socialize the capabilities for care and consideration that are cultivated within interspecies relationships, we may inadvertently promote individualized practices informed by a politics of assimilation rather than an institutionalized interspecies politics grounded in a politics of difference.

On the morning of January 6th, 2021, the day the United States Senate was constitutionally bound to count the votes of the Electoral College and confirm the next President of the United States, then-President Donald Trump held a rally undermining the results of an election he lost. During his speech at the rally, which had approximately ten thousand supporters in attendance, Trump made countless false claims related to election fraud, the constitutional process, media bias,

and the Vice President's ability to subvert the will of the people. All of Trump's claims have been refuted by officials of both major political parties, constitutional lawyers, well-reputed journalists, and all living Presidents – except for Trump. There simply is no empirical evidence for any of the claims that Trump made about the recent election being "stolen."

Despite all this, a disturbingly large portion of the American electorate continues to believe in the falsehoods spewed by Trump and others like him – claims like rampant voter fraud and corruption at the highest level of government. This belief in false claims, paired with the rampant anti-intellectualism that typically accompanies it, creates a dangerous concoction that undermines the democratic institutions that all Americans claim to uphold.

Trump's rhetoric stokes a flame that has been slowly growing over the past few decades. The flame represents the discontent felt by large swaths of the American population that feel left behind by government policy that has failed to rein in growth in economic and racial inequality.⁴² Too often, this rise in inequality is inaccurately blamed on more inclusive public policies often passed by Democratic leadership that seek to make government more inclusive of and responsive to the plight of racial minorities in America. Thus, it's no surprise that campaign slogans like "Make America Great Again" fuel reactionary political projects inspired by white supremacy. For many, this rise in political discontent is not new nor surprising. In his 1998 book, Richard Rorty remarked with prescient accuracy that:

[M]embers of labor unions, and unorganized unskilled workers, will sooner or later realize that their government is not even trying to prevent wages from sinking or to prevent jobs from being exported. Around the same time, they will realize that suburban white-collar workers — themselves desperately afraid of being downsized — are not going to let themselves be taxed to provide social benefits for anyone else.

At that point, something will crack. The nonsuburban electorate will decide that the system has failed and start looking around for a strongman to vote for — someone willing to assure them

⁴² The United States is now one of the most economically unequal democracies in the world. Wages have been stagnant for the majority of the working class for approximately the last 50 years (Mishel, Gould, & Bivens 2015).

that, once he is elected, the smug bureaucrats, tricky lawyers, overpaid bond salesmen, and postmodernist professors will no longer be calling the shots. ...

One thing that is very likely to happen is that the gains made in the past 40 years by black and brown Americans, and by homosexuals, will be wiped out. Jocular contempt for women will come back into fashion. ... All the resentment which badly educated Americans feel about having their manners dictated to them by college graduates will find an outlet.

Sure enough, what Rorty predicted is reminiscent of our reality now. A growing number of Americans are now more likely to believe misinformation and vote for representatives that support conspiracy theories in support of their point of view. One of the most recent conspiracy theories relates to the COVID-19 pandemic and the progressive plot to control the world. These conspiracy theories propagate the idea that COVID vaccines were actually bio-implants meant to track individuals, a plan orchestrated by billionaire Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (Goodman & Carmichael, 2020).

To compound matters, a corresponding rise in communication technology via social media has made it easier for people to surround themselves with like-minded voices, creating the effect of an echo-chamber that reaffirms these patently false ideas. These echo-chambers at the extreme margins of both political parties rarely get challenged even if the information or the subject being discussed is flagrantly false. These echo-chambers are enticing precisely because they confirm people's points of view, however extreme, even when there is no empirical basis for them. These feelings of discontent and the prevalence of misinformation combine with underlying racial animus, more frequently now, to lead people to commit violent acts that threaten the lives of co-citizens and subvert the very democratic institutions that Americans claim to believe in.

This was what we witnessed in the aftermath of Trump's speech – violence and a credible threat to American democratic institutions. A sitting President instructed his supporters to storm the Capitol building, where Senators and the Vice President were in the process of verifying electoral votes. In closing, Trump directed his mob of supporters to "walk down Pennsylvania

Avenue ... to the Capitol ... to try and give them (Republicans, including Vice President Mike Pence) the kind of pride and boldness that they need to take back our country” (Trump Transcript, 2021). The violence and destruction that took place that day, at the direction of a sitting President, have not been seen on the Capitol since the British burned it down in 1814.

As Trump supporters stormed the Capitol building, journalists reported seeing a fully constructed gallows with ropes tied into nooses. In the videos that emerged during the days following the insurrection, Trump supporters can be heard chanting "Hang Mike Pence" – indicating that the gallows were meant for the Vice President. It was later revealed that the Vice President only narrowly escaped the insurrectionists actively looking for him. Thanks to Eugene Goodman, a black Capitol police officer, Vice President Pence and Senator Mitt Romney avoided capture. Goodman baited and then led the insurrectionists away from the Vice President and Senator, allowing them to flee to a protected area. As all of this was unfolding, President Trump sat by watching the events evolve, never once reaching out to his Vice President or ordering the National Guard to quell the insurrection. It was as if we were witnessing a coordinated coup attempt. Eventually, Trump recorded a video asking his supporters to "go home," but that he nevertheless "loved them."

As the day wore on, it was striking to see the different types of treatment the predominantly white insurrectionists received compared to the treatment Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters received just a year before. In preparation for the BLM protest, Capitol police wore their riot gear and already had the National Guard's support. Alternatively, during the insurrection, you can see some Capitol police officers helping the insurrectionists down the Capitol steps. Some police officers even posed for pictures as the insurrectionists made their way into the Capitol building, shouting threats to the members of congress in the building. The

insurrectionists were predominately white—their actions of destroying public property and making violent threats to elected officials a flaunting of white privilege.

By day's end, five people would be pronounced dead – one, a Capitol police officer. Although a few officers seemed to support the riot, violent exchanges between the insurrectionists and Capitol police left over 140 officers with injuries by day's end (Jackman, 2021). Countless others had been trampled or injured in some other way. All unnecessary losses of life should be mourned, but I can't help but wonder, "had those been black and brown bodies destroying the People's House, what type of State-sanctioned violent response would they have been met with?" I'm afraid history tells us there would have been much more blood spilled and perhaps more lives lost. Boisseron (2018) argues that when these violent clashes occur between whites in power and black and brown people seeking political recognition, the violent suppression has often been multispecies in nature. Like the case of MWDs, historically white police officers combine their power with police canines to violently quell what often began as peaceful protests.

I begin this chapter with a retelling of the recent events at the Capitol because they reflect a growing tribalism in America fueled by misinformation, racial animus, and a divestment from social institutions that socialize care and consideration. These elements now combine and manifest as violence. Violence is ever-present in the history of many democracies, and America is certainly no stranger to it. America's history is riddled with examples of citizens fighting for their rights for recognition from slavery, the campaign for women's suffrage, the labor movement, and the Civil Rights Movement to gay liberation; America's history is shaped by citizens that resist the State's attempt to silence their pleas for recognition violently.

What was seen at the Capitol on January 6th was different. It was not an attempt by a historically marginalized group to gain political recognition. It was a demonstration of power

by those protected by their social group's whiteness who perceive more inclusive policies as a threat to their comparative share of power – these were actions motivated by a fear of difference. As Corey Robin (2004, p. 101) argues, "people with power are themselves often seized by fear of those without it, either the fear aroused by guilt for having committed injustice, or, more commonly, the fear that the powerless will one day rise up and dispossess them." Indeed, movements for equality and recognition require the questioning of privilege and a reorganization of power relations that sustain inequality and privilege. While power is rarely handed over voluntarily, the promise of a democratic society lies in its ability to treat all members with dignity and respect. Violence that targets the most marginal citizens among us and threatens their lives because they seek political recognition is the reactionary response often utilized to promote an undemocratic status quo.

During the Capital insurrection, the events that played out capture the diverging politics that an interspecies politics can contribute to or resist. In the first instance, the perilous form manifests through practices that extend the sphere of moral and political consideration on the value of likeness or sameness. The insurrectionists were predominately white and supportive of exclusionary political projects that reaffirm their power through their whiteness. Those that are part of this social group are extended social, political, and economic rights. At the same time, those that fall outside are excluded as other and are confronted by the five faces of oppression discussed in chapter four. This form of exclusionary politics that underlies the perilous form of an interspecies politics is identified by Young (2011, p. 158) as a politics of assimilation.

This politics of assimilation contrasts with the politics of difference supported throughout this dissertation. Individualized interspecies practices can contribute to and often reaffirm a politics of assimilation by extending moral and political consideration based on a like-value or experience. Unlike a politics of difference, a politics of assimilation defines justice

by assuming "that equal social status for all persons requires treating everyone according to the same principles, rules, and standards" (Young, 2011, p.158). This stands in sharp contrast to the promise of an interspecies politics grounded in a politics of difference. A politics of difference conceptualized by Young (2011, p. 158) "argues that equality as the participation and inclusion of all groups sometimes requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups." To promote social justice, Young argues, "social policy should sometimes accord special treatment to groups." Like Young, I have argued throughout this dissertation that it makes very little sense to treat and regard all beings in the same way. Differences between members of a pluralistic democratic community exist and ought to be recognized in order to promote flourishing for all members – not doing so perpetuates power relations between groups as they are. The events at the Capitol are representative of the political violence that can result when a politics of assimilation clashes with the aspirational politics of difference.

Resistance to individualized interspecies practices grounded in a politics of assimilation means resisting the idea that justice is equal to universal treatment. Rather, the promise of an interspecies politics built on a politics of difference means cultivating an understanding of the internal relations that make up our surrounding web of life and recognizing other beings' needs, not simply their ability, or usefulness, for our own purposes. Thus, the promise of an interspecies politics might mandate restoring, or not encroaching upon, wolf habitat in Yellowstone, taking your dog to the veterinarian, or ensuring that all dogs caught up in the apparatus of military procurement are provided the opportunity to have lives beyond their service. In other words, a MWD might have the ability to detect explosives and apprehend adversaries, yet to live a full and flourishing life, MWDs also need companionship, diverse forms of exercise and life experiences to sustain a well-balanced dog. If I am genuinely concerned about interspecies relationships living up to the promise of an interspecies politics, I will resist viewing those relationships simply for their instrumental value.

In addition, an interspecies politics built on a politics of difference rejects conceptualizing justice as the universal treatment of all beings. Instead, the promise of an interspecies politics aims to craft a politics that attends to difference through the recognition of social groups and their proximity to oppression.

II. The Promise and Peril of an Interspecies Politics

The remainder of this chapter will examine the tension brought forth by this chapter's epigraphs and the dilemmas discussed throughout this dissertation. First, an interspecies politics brings forward the promise and possibility of redefining and expanding the political community to include non-human animals as beings that matter. In this view, an interspecies politics erodes the humanist foundations of our current political institutions and rather views the fate of human beings as infinitely connected to the fate of non-human animals. The promise of an interspecies politics lies in cultivating abilities that identify and value differences between and within other species. In this vein, all beings involved become more attuned to those they are in community with, creating interspecies spaces of interaction that bring forward new opportunities for flourishing. Ultimately, the promise of an interspecies politics holds the potential to resist and overcome the reactionary, racist, xenophobic, exclusionary, and anti-democratic politics founded in a politics of assimilation.

As the retelling above suggests, the recent events at the Capitol were a direct threat to a democratic society and a partial manifestation of the elements of white supremacy, misogyny, and xenophobia – to name a few - that are further sustained by the perilous interspecies practices sustained by a politics of assimilation. In contrast, throughout this dissertation, I have shown that humans regularly include non-human animals, particularly dogs, within their sphere

of moral and political concern. This ability to include members of other species within our sphere of concern as co-workers, companions, and family members shows the expansionary promise of an interspecies politics. These capabilities for inclusion demonstrate the profound expanse of the human capacities for care and consideration – even as the lived experience of the beings in question differs significantly from our own.

Thus, the promise of interspecies politics lies in a politics of difference which entails: "that equality as the participation and inclusion of all groups sometimes requires different treatment for oppressed or disadvantaged groups" (Young, 2011, p. 158). Herein lies the conundrum of an interspecies politics; the perilous form extends political consideration on the basis of sameness and like experiences. Once individuals have met the qualifications of sameness, they are extended rights similar to others already included within the political community. As Young points out, though, equality is not analogous to equal treatment. Rather, political equality needs to recognize and attend to difference in a way attuned to the needs and life forms of the beings in question. Too often, we extend consideration to beings because they are like *us*, they feel pain - like *us*, or they have experiences that are similar to *ours*. But as long as sameness is the requirement for political consideration, the possibility of Muslim bans, forced separation at the border, the objectification of animal lives, and various other oppressive policies and practices will remain.

Across the political spectrum, human individuals recognize the different "superhuman" abilities of many non-human animals. As was shown throughout this dissertation, dogs, in particular, receive special recognition for their abilities to detect explosives (in the case of MWDs), provide restorative psychological relief in various forms, and even detect traces of infectious disease – the COVID-19 virus being the most recent case (Else, 2020). However, even those human individuals that show an ability to extend consideration to non-human

animals often, ironically, draw the strictest political boundaries when it comes to the moral and political consideration of other human beings. This stands in contrast to the anecdotal belief that many hold that being in relationships with companion animals automatically makes one more likely to develop empathic capabilities for all beings.

Unfortunately, the scholarly results are more mixed than these initial inclinations might suggest. Early research investigating the benefits of non-human animal companionship found positive associations between "companion animal ownership in childhood and concern about the welfare of both humans and non-human animals" (Paul and Serpell, 1993). Taylor and Signal (2005) found that current companion animal relationships correlated with high scores on measures of human-to-human empathy. These studies lend support to the belief that interactions with companion animals make individual humans more open to widening their sphere of moral and political concern, which would be a positive development for an interspecies politics.

However, as more advanced research on the topic has emerged, findings have shown a more troubling trend. This more recent research casts doubt on the benefits that interspecies relationships have on interhuman empathy. These studies demonstrate "a significant association between current or childhood ownership and empathy directed at animals, but not at humans" (Paul, 2003). In short, being in relationship with non-human animals leads one to have greater empathy for other animals but not necessarily other humans.

Another recent experimental study examining empathic responses to interspecies victimization authored by Levin, Arluke, and Irvine (2017) indicates that,

Respondents were significantly less distressed when adult humans were victimized, in comparison with human babies, puppies, and adult dogs. Only relative to the infant victim did the adult dog receive lower scores of empathy. These results provide partial support for the assumption that people generally care more about non-human animal suffering than human suffering. More specifically, when confronted with hypothetical abuse, individuals report more distress over non-human rather than human victimization, unless a human child experiences the suffering.

These results are striking for many reasons, particularly when considered in light of the epigraphs that frame this chapter. While humans have cultivated their empathic capabilities in relation to their closely connected companion animals, it seems that this has not transferred to valuing all human lives. Without the institutions to socialize care and consideration, these interspecies practices do not automatically become an institutionalized interspecies politics.

Finally, a most recent study authored by Wilks, Caviola, Kahane, and Bloom (2020) found that children are far more likely to value the lives of non-human animals over those of human beings. Only when an individual reaches adulthood do they actually begin to prioritize the lives of other humans. The findings of this article suggest that "the common view that humans are far more morally important than animals appears late in development and is likely socially acquired." These results make it clear that simply belonging to a particular species, in this case, the human species, does not make any individual more empathic towards its own members. Rather, empathic attitudes toward others is a cultivated capacity that is "socially acquired." Nothing about our humanness makes us more likely to consider and care about the plight of our fellow human citizens.

Without the institutions that socialize consideration and empathy within our own species, we cannot presume that our co-citizens will be socialized to care about the plight of other humans. Agnes Heller (1974, p. 72) identified these types of needs as "satisfiable only in togetherness with others," they are social needs that require social institutions to cultivate the stated abilities. Another example of a social need is the need to learn, which Heller (1974, p. 72) argues "is possible only by means of adequate institutions for public instruction. The same thing applies for the need of healthcare and to innumerable kinds of cultural need, even to the need for community." In the absence of social institutions that socialize care, consideration, and empathy toward other beings – interspecies relationships may fill voids that inadvertently render us less caring, considerate, and empathic to the plight of other human beings. Again, our relationships with companion animals may

simply reaffirm the individualized interspecies practices grounded in the politics of assimilation sustained by consumer capitalism.

These individualized interspecies practices remind me of a Mark Twain quote that I often find posted in interspecies homes: "The more I learn about people, the more I like my dog." Twain's remark underscores the conundrum that frames this chapter. While interspecies relationships can lead to the cultivation of sensibilities that expand our capabilities for care and consideration of the other, those capabilities and sensibilities do not automatically transfer to the political community writ large. The recent events at the Capitol bring to the fore the troubling results of divestment from various social institutions meant to satisfy social needs - democratic institutions, education, various failings of civil society, and growing unrest from the failures in public policy to address deepening social inequality.

III. Interspecies Practices, Consumer Capitalism, and Misanthropy

Despite the fact that the Capitol insurrection and the resulting violence was done by those with a more conservative worldview, the practice of a politics of assimilation is not unique to any particular political ideology. A politics of assimilation is practiced by people from various social groups holding a diverse set of political ideas that are often deepened by individualized interspecies practices. In the opening to the results of a pet ownership survey for 2020, the survey firm Cramer-Krasselt (2020) states that "despite all the indicators that point out how divided our nation has become, one thing we can agree on is our love for pets." Democrats and Republicans are just as likely to be dog owners at 36 percent. In comparison, Democrats are more likely to be cat owners at 40 percent compared to Republicans at 35 percent. Individuals of both

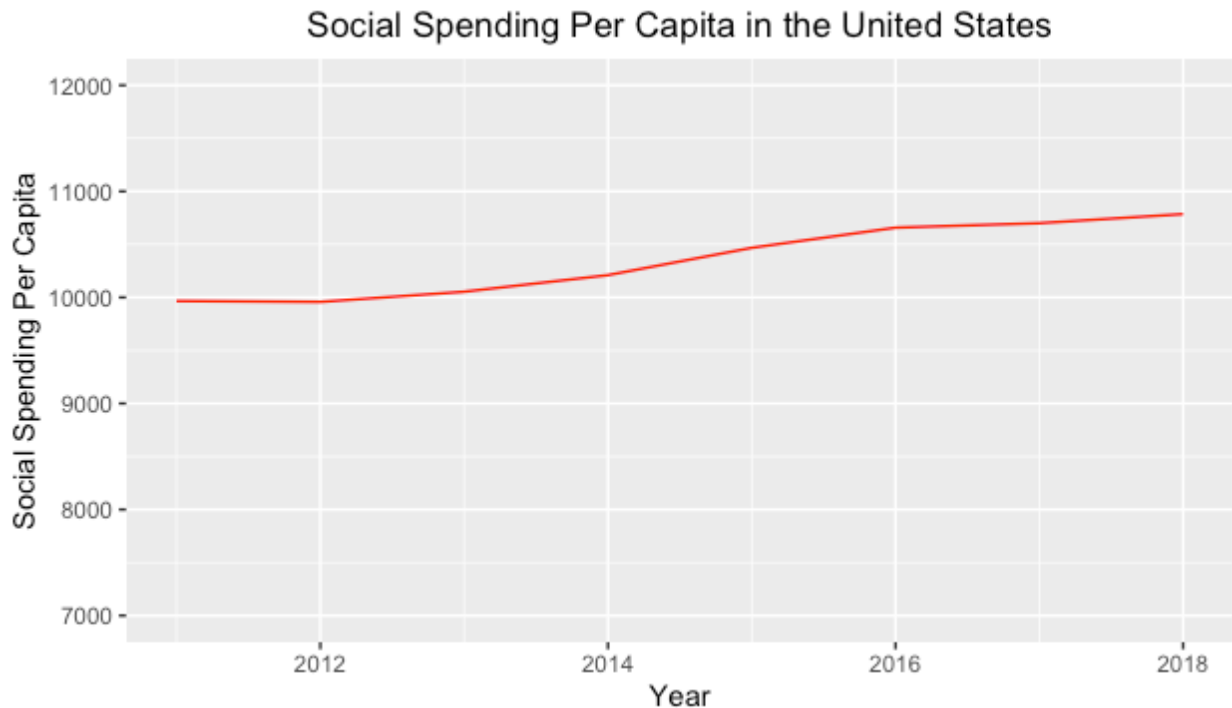
parties agree that dogs and cats are considered family members, with approximately 32 percent of people admitting that their pet is the most important member of the family (Cramer-Krasselt, 2020).

Correspondingly, the pet industry is also one of the fastest-growing industries in the United States. In 2020, Americans spent 100 billion dollars on their companion animals – more than double what they spent in 2010 (APPA, 2020). Just as an interesting point of reference, the United States' federal government only spends about 55 billion dollars a year on K-12 education (Knight, 2021). The United States has the distinction of being the largest consumer economy in the world, and the pets of its citizens consume at a similar rate. Gregory Okin (2017) argues that "U.S. dogs and cats consume as much dietary energy as ~62 million Americans, which is approximately one-fifth of the U.S. population." To put it more starkly, if America's pets comprised a separate country, they would rank fifth in global meat consumption. This stands in glaring contrast to the reality that 690 million humans struggle with hunger and 3 million children die each year of malnutrition (World Hunger, 2021). It appears that some companion animals in the United States have augmented their political status above many humans in developing countries.

The pet industry's growth, interpreted most generously, may lead us to conclude that humans are becoming more attuned to the needs of their companion animals and responding accordingly. Individuals spending more of their discretionary income on their companion animals' food, toys, and healthcare may not strike us as a terrible thing compared to the neglect that many companion animals faced just a few generations ago. Yet, two questions remain: Why has this perceived increase in care and consideration of companion animals not resulted in a corresponding increase in care for the most vulnerable humans both domestically and globally? And second: are companion animals healthier and happier due to this increase in consumer spending on their behalf? More critically, this consumption by Americans for the benefit of their non-human animal companions is representative of another feature of individualized interspecies practices, a feature driven by an underlying

consumer capitalism. These individualized interspecies practices: first, promote a retreat from expanding public and societal consideration required to address domestic and global institutionalized inequities. Second, the elevation of our companion animals to beings that matter in our contemporary consumer culture is really about creating more consumers within our economy than it is about treating our non-human companions well.

In the graphs below, I have plotted visual representations of pet spending in billions of dollars and social spending per capita in the United States for the years of 2010-2018. The social spending per capita data were collected by the OECD (2020) and "comprises cash benefits, direct in-kind provision of goods and services, and tax breaks with social purposes. Benefits may be targeted at low-income households, the elderly, disabled, sick, unemployed, or young persons. To be considered "social," programs have to involve either redistribution of resources across households or compulsory participation." Finding proxy measures for care and consideration for the most vulnerable is difficult, but this variable measures benefits directed at marginalized communities. I believe this measure captures elements of what I mean when I refer to the socialization of care and consideration. Social spending is essentially flat for the years 2010-2018.

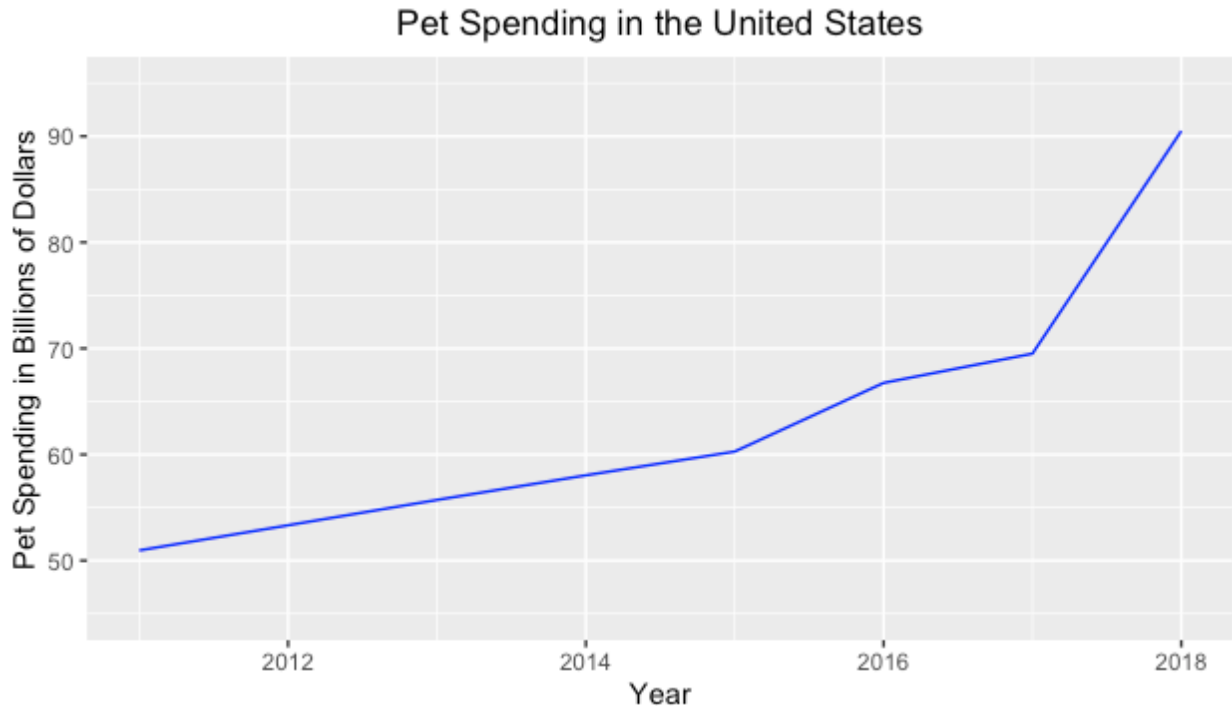


The data on companion animal spending was collected from the American Pet Products Association (2020) and is an aggregated measure of spending on pet food and treats, other supplies, and veterinary care. Spending on pets in 2020 was more than double what it was in 2010, a stark difference when compared to the stagnation in social spending during the same time period. It is also interesting to note that obesity in companion animals rose over that same decade. Over 55 percent of dogs and 59 percent of cats are classified as overweight or obese (Pet Obesity Prevention, 2019). These statistics put in question whether or not the increases in consumer spending on our companion animals translate to increases in their wellbeing. These realities remind me of Aldo Leopold, who questioned whether increases in consumption and comfort result in enhanced wellbeing. Leopold (1989, p. 116) reminds us that "Our grandfathers were less well-housed, well-fed, well-clothed than we are. The strivings by which they bettered their lot are also those which deprived us of pigeons. Perhaps we now grieve because we are not sure, in our hearts, that we have gained by the exchange. The gadgets of industry bring us more comforts than the pigeons did, but

do they add as much to the glory of spring?" Like Leopold, I question if all advances in contemporary society have left us better off. Has the quantitative increase in the economy's size corresponded with a decline in the quality of our lives?

Like us, companion animals may be affected by this wellbeing paradox. The paradox states that "growing income and consumption levels do not appear to contribute additionally to societal wellbeing and may even detract from it" (Jackson, 2008, p. 704). While measures of weight are imperfect indicators of wellbeing, they do represent a convergence of factors that may ultimately shed light on the effect our contemporary lives have on our physiology. What is also interesting is that, like many of our pets, three in five Americans are considered overweight. Michael Pollan (2011) argues that "when food is abundant and cheap, people will eat more of it and get fat. Since 1977, an American's average daily intake of calories has jumped by more than 10 percent. Those 200 or so extra calories have to go somewhere." I bring up obesity not to shame individuals but rather to identify problems with our current consumer culture.

Ezra Klein (2021), in a recent podcast for the New York Times, noted that "the food system is not producing food primarily to nourish people. It's producing food primarily to generate profits." The food industry knows it has a demand problem – individuals can only consume so much. Because the industry is driven by a profit motive that demands increases in quarterly profits, the industrial food producers have found ways to increase demand. The result is an increasingly overweight population. Combine this with a more sedentary lifestyle that is more common in advanced capitalist economies, and the result is an overall less healthy population (Rütten et al., 2013). The key takeaway from this comparison on consumption habits and wellbeing is that our companion animals are often mirrors of our life and consumption habits.



These trends in pet ownership and spending have only increased due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. It seems that multiple factors have motivated people to adopt dogs in particular. Working from home, more free time, and social isolation have all been identified as reasons stirring increases in adoptions (Morgan et al., 2020). Reflecting on these trends, a foreboding irony emerges. While increases in adoptions and empty shelters certainly bodes well for many companion animals, in the background, over 500 thousand Americans have lost their lives to the COVID-19 virus as of February 23rd (Tompkins et al., 2021). Those who have died of COVID-19 are disproportionately from communities of color, showing the disparate impact on social groups identified in chapter four. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, David Ansell (2017) argued that American democracy:

has become a plutocracy where members of a small minority dictate the shape of life and death in the nation through their grip on wealth. Because of their influence, the United States is vastly more unequal than other advanced industrial societies. And as inequality has increased, there has been a corresponding impact on life expectancy. Because life expectancies are so low in so many neighborhoods, the United States as a whole has dropped to the bottom of the world's developed countries in life expectancy.

Of course, I am not implying that there is a causal relationship between the spending on companion animals and COVID-19 deaths or decreases in life expectancy. I am simply noticing that the lack of collective coordination to protect the most vulnerable humans around us is coinciding with more humans seeking out relationships with non-human others. Again, these events lend further support to Tsing's thesis that our relationships with companion animals do not imply an extension of care and consideration to other humans within our community. Rather, in the absence of social institutions that can facilitate the transfer of these capabilities of care and consideration, we may inadvertently, or sometimes purposefully, withdraw these capacities from public life.

As domestic and global inequality increase, individuals across affluent nations are further excluded from the possibility of living public lives and search for meaning elsewhere. Theta Scopkol remarks that "It's long been known that the better educated, those with higher incomes, participate more in politics on everything from voting to contacting politicians to donating" (Pazzanese, 2017). As inequality continues to rise and the possibility for political participation declines, individuals living in consumer capitalist societies turn to consumption in an effort to derive individual meaning and value. But as Herbert Marcuse (p. 8) reminds us:

The free election of masters does not abolish the masters or the slaves. Free choice among a wide variety of goods and services does not signify freedom if these goods and services sustain social controls over a life of toil and fear – that is, they sustain alienation. And the spontaneous reproduction of superimposed needs by the individual does not establish autonomy; it only testifies to the efficacy of the controls.

We are entering unexplored territory where our relationships with companion animals become our coping mechanism for deep social alienation from one another and society. We live in an increasingly complex and intractable world where many perceive that they have very little to no

control over the economic and political conditions of their lives.⁴³ The home becomes the place of control, freedom, care, and consideration. Everyone and everything that falls outside is forgotten or classified as other.

In addition, the retreat is also an effort to escape the harsh realities that produce oppression without confronting aspects of our personal lives that contribute to them. Since we perceive a lack of agency when it comes to the creation of change in the economic and political world, our private actions become unassailable to outsiders. As this flight from public life occurs, our need for social interaction, care, and consideration finds an outlet in our relationships with our closest non-human animal companions. In accordance with the dominant culture, we find satisfaction for ourselves and our companion animals through private hedonistic consumption. As these trends continue to spread, a corresponding decline in the world's diversity - cultural, biological, economic, and ecological – is also occurring, representing an assimilation on the dominant cultural form. The danger of individualized interspecies practices uncritically absorbs the underlying politics of assimilation and projects an idea of the good life as one that is commensurate with consumer culture. As Tsing argues, "Within the family, other species can be accepted; pets are models for family devotion. But the model of the loving and beloved pet does not spread love; it holds it tight inside the family." Just because someone cultivates a relationship with a non-human animal does not mean that they have done so in a way that extends that care and consideration to a larger, more diverse interspecies community.

For some, this disconnection from society, paired with their connections with non-human animals, breeds a dangerous type of misanthropy. This misanthropy reaches its peak in overt

⁴³ In a 2015 Pew research survey, 47 percent of Americans agreed that there's not much ordinary citizens can do to influence the government. In line with Scopkol, the more highly educated are far more likely to believe in their political efficacy.

political projects that call humans a "plague on the planet" and advocate the political "solution" of ending the human species. In some circles, calls for the end of domestication and our relationships with domesticated species, a view popularized by Gary Francione (2014), highlights the extreme ends and potential dangers that this concoction can create. In *Dangerous Crossings*, Claire Kim analyzes three cases where one comparatively more powerful social group of humans attempts to subject another because of their treatment or use of non-human animals.⁴⁴ In all three cases, predominantly white, politically left-leaning individuals turn to racial narratives in order to render the individuals practicing the politically contested acts inferior. These political tactics operationalize one legacy of oppression in order to protect another marginalized group – in these cases, it's various non-human animals.

Thus far, this chapter has shown that individualized interspecies practices manifest through the politics of assimilation sustained by consumer capitalism. This politics of assimilation extends political consideration on like values and requires convergence on a dominant cultural form. Once this assimilation occurs, justice is enacted as the universal treatment of the identified members of that political community. In this arrangement, interspecies practices create conformity, undermine pluralism, and trivialize difference. The outcome manifests through shifting alliances between individuals of multiple species and pits various social groups within society against one another. Their power in relation to one another is often a product and usage of various legacies of oppression – racism, sexism, ableism, and speciesism - that are weaponized to render some groups inferior to others.

⁴⁴ To make clear, I do not want to justify the mistreatment of any non-human animal. I do however want to point out and object to the political practices used by the groups contesting those practices. It makes very little sense to combat one form of oppression by deepening another.

IV. Identifying and Resisting Individualism, Nationalism, and Tribalism

"Man is not a killer, but the group is."

- Konrad Lorenz

What I have argued throughout this dissertation is that dogs, military working dogs, in particular, have the ability to augment power relations in their favor. Their increase in political consideration frequently comes at the expense of or in order to oppress other, less powerful human beings. In many ways, the relationship the dogs cultivate with their human handlers is representative of the danger that individualized interspecies practices can create. MWDs and their handlers share training and combat experience that make them specially attuned to one another. Through these shared experiences, a bond emerges that propels human handlers to advocate on behalf of their canine partners, sometimes at the risk of their own careers. Handlers often mention these experiences as the source for the shared understanding they have with their canine partners. Even still, in this highly commodified military space, human and dog resist the objectification imposed upon them by an apparatus that treats both individuals as weapons for waging war. The promise of an interspecies politics lies in the capabilities cultivated in interspecies relationships. As we stand, the peril lies in the way those capabilities are or are not institutionally socialized beyond these relationships.

The development and satisfaction of social needs require the appropriate social institutions. In the case of MWDs and their handlers, they cultivate the capabilities for care and consideration through their interspecies relationship but forgo the possibility of extending those capabilities to members outside of their social group. In the military context, this makes sense. Military training teaches soldiers to, one: cultivate a sense of love for the nation, otherwise known as nationalism, and two, cultivate strong identification and bonds with other

soldiers. The cultivation of both of these capabilities requires the ability to set and identify strict boundaries of consideration – demarcating who belongs and who does not.

Cultivating nationalism in soldiers is deemed an essential precondition for militaries that ask individuals to take action on its behalf (Griffith, 2010). Barry Posen (1993, p. 81) defines nationalism as "the propensity of individuals to identify their personal interest with that of a group that is too large to meet together; to identify that interest on the basis both of a 'culture' that the group shares, and a purported history that the group purportedly shares; and to believe that this group must have a state structure of its own in order to thrive." This definition of a shared identity among members of the group requiring a state structure to thrive is cast antagonistically against other groups. This nationalism, Posen argues, helps "generate the individual commitment and the organized cooperation that make for combat power on the battlefield." The institution of nationalism makes no presumption of peace or cooperation. Its sole function is to drum up support for a particular social group compared to others on an international scale. At its core, nationalism is a social institution that drums up conflict and devalues difference.

So strong is this commitment to the nation and bonds between soldiers that they can enable action on behalf of the social group that individuals otherwise would not take. In short, social groups can facilitate bad behavior because they foster anonymity due to their size and shift accountability to the group itself. Grossman (2009, p. 151) argues that larger groups that are more psychologically bonded and in close proximity are more susceptible to feelings of enablement. To illustrate the power of groups, Grossman turns to the act of killing. He argues that "group anonymity seems to facilitate a kind of atavistic killing hysteria," pointing to the examples of mass murder in Rwanda (Grossman 2009, p. 151). The Rwandan example shows the pernicious effects of social institutions that cultivate care and consideration around a particular national or ethnic identity.

Thus, while we can foster care, consideration, and even love for individuals that are part of our social groups, without the corresponding social institutions to spread that consideration, it can be turned against others that fall outside its boundaries.⁴⁵ Resulting, at worst, in genocidal acts. While the events at the Capitol did not reach this fever pitch, they were a manifestation of group contagion that can lead mobs to act violently.

While it makes sense that soldiers acculturated in a military environment develop a heightened sense of nationalism and group affiliation to others they fight alongside, the question remains: why do average citizens develop similar strong in-group/out-group mentalities that resist more inclusive practices? Ernest Gellner (2008) argues that industrial society is similar in many respects to the military. He argues that "modern society is, in this respect, like a modern army, only more so. It provides a very prolonged and fairly thorough training for all its recruits, insisting on certain shared qualifications: literacy, numeracy, basic work habits and social skills, familiarity with basic technical and social skills" (Gellner, 2008, p. 29) According to Gellner, this produces "a kind of cultural homogeneity demanded by nationalism."

If Gellner is correct, then the individual living in contemporary society is specially acculturated to prioritize group affiliation on the basis of sameness. If a unified American nationalism reached its apex during and immediately after the second world war. Since then, a growing division within America is being fueled by our two-party system representative of diverging cultural forms that cut

⁴⁵ Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, also postulated that individuals acting as parts of a group, mob, or mass acquire a sense of "infinite power." This perception leads individuals to take actions that they would otherwise curb. Like Grossman, Freud (1975) argues that mass confers upon the individual a sense of power and security which grant the individual an ability to act as part of a mass and also feel the safety in numbers. The atavistic hysteria that is mentioned by Grossman is analogous to group contagion identified by Le Bon in Freud. As Freud (1975, p. 14) states, a "group is impulsive, changeable and irritable. It is led almost exclusively by the unconscious. The impulses which a group obeys may according to circumstances be generous or cruel, heroic or cowardly, but they are always so imperious that no personal interest, not even that of self-preservation, can make itself felt... It (the group) has a sense of omnipotence; the notion of impossibility disappears for the individual in a group."

on the levels of race, ethnicity, social class, and party ID.⁴⁶ More often now, these diverging cultural forms produce social institutions that promote shared characteristics in a fashion similar to the nationalism described above. Our contemporary situation was recently appropriately summed up by Amy Chua and Jed Rubenfeld (2018) in an article titled "The Threat of Tribalism." They argue that:

America's resurgent tribalism are many. They include seismic demographic change, which has led to predictions that whites will lose their majority status within a few decades; declining social mobility and a growing class divide; and media that reward expressions of outrage. All of this has contributed to a climate in which every group in America—minorities *and* whites; conservatives *and* liberals; the working class *and* elites—feels under attack, pitted against the others not just for jobs and spoils, but for the right to define the nation's identity. In these conditions, democracy devolves into a zero-sum competition, one in which parties succeed by stoking voters' fears and appealing to their ugliest us-versus-them instincts.

What Chua and Rubenfeld describe was identified by George Washington in his farewell address as the "spirit of party." Washington warned us against its danger, "it agitates the community with ill-founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection." While some of our contemporary societal divisions are taking on different forms, they have culminated in the event that frames the beginning of this chapter – the insurrection at the Capitol.

Dogs and other domesticated companion animals adeptly infiltrate barriers of human community and social groups, many times creating space for consideration for themselves. But, as I have argued throughout this chapter, this expansion in consideration does not imply a transfer to other humans and non-human animals within our communities. I have argued previously that "our capacity for empathy and love is enhanced through the reciprocal love of other species. Without the recognition of our intimate relations with other species our understanding of

⁴⁶ According to a Pew Research survey, Republicans and Democrats are now more divided along ideological lines than ever before. Heltzel and Laurin (2020) argue that "80% of Americans today feel unfavorable towards their partisan foes, and the portion feeling *very* unfavorable has nearly tripled since 1994. These trends have led scholars to speculate that politics is a unique intergroup domain wherein people's hate for opponents exceeds their affinity for co-partisans."

them would be much more limited and our capacity for love more narrowly defined. But most importantly, we would be missing out on relationships that reveal to us parts of ourselves that would be, otherwise, unknowable... Their relationship with us has the potential to enhance our capacity to love, understand difference, and resist capitalist exploitation" (Dubeau, 2018). While interspecies relationships indeed grant us the ability to foster capabilities of care, empathy, consideration, and love in ways not imaginable in other human relationships, those abilities and sentiments do not automatically transfer to society writ large.

Reflecting on the current state of American politics, we see troubling trends emerging as a result of increases in partisanship, divestment from social institutions, and growing inequality across various segments of American society. These forces combine with a prevailing individualism and consumer capitalism that encourage individuals to retreat from public spaces and equate wellbeing with private hedonistic consumption. Our companion animals fit neatly within this world and even bring about its reproduction through their own forms of consumption. They become the manifestation and mirrors of our own alienation. This process is not unique to individuals expressing a particular political ideology. The recent data show that if Americans can agree on one thing, it's their love for companion animals. At this moment, rather than being an expansionary force for greater inclusion, individualized interspecies practices function to affirm exclusionary social and political practices reproducing a perilous politics of assimilation.

V. The Promise of an Interspecies Politics

It does not have to be this way. Recognizing how this perilous politics of assimilation manifests is the necessary first step in confronting its malevolence. As Marx once said, "philosophers have interpreted the world. The point, however, is to change it." The promise of an interspecies politics

lies in its ability to cultivate understanding and even love for the other, resisting the very elements of civil society that seek to divide us. Across the political spectrum, individuals of all backgrounds have shown their abilities to recognize and care for beings that, in many ways, exhibit striking differences from themselves. What is required now is not to rebuild past or existing social institutions. It is to construct new institutions that can expand our sphere of moral and political concern to include non-human animals as beings that matter and extend that consideration to other human beings both locally and globally. This promise of an interspecies politics holds the potential to resist and overcome the reactionary, racist, xenophobic, exclusionary, and anti-democratic politics of recent times. Through this new construction, we can address legacies of oppression that have targeted the most vulnerable among us and begin the work of building a more inclusive and diverse interspecies community.

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