

Night of the Living Patriotism

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

Gandhi, *Selected Writings*

For where animals are concerned there is always love.

Jilly Cooper, *Animals in War*

Dogs do not build monuments to their dead.

William W. Putney, *Always Faithful*

George Kateb argues patriotism is a mistake.¹ It constitutes an affront to key Enlightenment values to which one and all should aspire: independence of mind, refusal of fanaticism, and disdain for idolatry, group idolatry in particular.² More disturbingly, Kateb argues that patriotism “is an inevitable mistake. It cannot be avoided; almost no one can help being a patriot of some kind and to some degree.”³ Assuming Kateb to be right (and the evidence seems to be with him), why should this be the case? The answer relates to the role that group membership plays in people’s lives. The defense of patriotism represents a dominant mode of thought in which group membership is honored for the meaning and significance it brings to individual identity, thus helping people carry what Kateb refers to as “the burden of selfhood.”⁴ Self-definition proceeds from the license and limitation such membership affords. Without these, coherence and purpose would suffer.⁵ Kateb writes: “Group membership and allegiance simplify life by tying the

identity of each member to a structure of inclusion and exclusion, of questions and answers, of rites and ceremonies, of allowable and censurable fantasies.”⁶

Wendy Brown, likewise, argues that patriotism works through identification and idealization. Brown also extends Kateb’s analysis. Borrowing from Freud, citizens (otherwise strangers) unite with one another through the shared experience of loving a romanticized or fantasized version of the country.⁷ Love—and the loyalty it generates—entails repressing an inherent hostility to the country (as is the case with all love objects) to which criticism can not only give voice but also disseminate. Should the latter occur, it might unravel the “consolidating power of the idealization,”⁸ which accounts for patriotism’s conversion of critique and dissent into existential threat. Love questioned fosters a renewed will to love. Such love routinely attaches itself to and finds expression in leaders (a president), symbols (a flag), rituals (remembrance ceremonies), or the power of the country.⁹ To the extent that the nation swells and the patriot shrinks, even to the vanishing point, anything can be ordered and obeyed—however violent or destructive.¹⁰ After the fact, such actions become the object of celebration and memorialization—to keep love alive and strong. Add a religious component to patriotism, where country is treated like a secular god, and the love-death dynamic becomes even more potentially lethal, as the work of Maurizio Viroli intimates.¹¹

Kateb’s and Brown’s dissections of patriotism sober and prod. Sober because patriotism, for all its fatal flaws, would seem to be a permanent component of politics, one that lends itself to ugliness, violence, and exploitation. People apparently need to love their country and insist that others feel likewise, sentiments exacerbated and manipulated in times of stress: war, for example. Prod because patriotism, an acquisition

rather than a feature intrinsic to political life, might prove susceptible of transformative critique. To borrow Kateb's language, a mistake can be identified, explained, and corrected. Patriotism, given its gratuity, could in theory be jettisoned without loss or injury, especially with alternative notions of citizenship available.

Here Simon Stow's defense of patriotism must be engaged, for he deploys a tragic conception of patriotism that renders it an indispensable, if also problematic, aspect of democratic political life.¹² Stow seeks a balanced patriotism, one that places celebration and critique in dialectical tension. Celebration makes critique possible, palatable; critique moderates and recovers celebration. Without this combination, Pericles waxes proud and triumphant about Athens while in denial about its imperial, undemocratic character. Pericles's funeral oration thus requires a Dionysian counterpart, which Thucydides provides in his account of the plague. Here Athens does not live up to its vaunted self-conception. Rather it tends, again and again, to subvert it. Neither version of Athens represents the whole truth. Balance must prevail, as Athenian identity lies somewhere in between. A polity that can achieve patriotic balance can affirm what is best about itself, confront and challenge its flaws, and cultivate new norms and identities. Or so we are told.

Stow's desire to save patriotism from itself and deliver it reborn to a democratic polity raises questions. Since Stow sees right through patriotism's fictions, both the accolades it commonly boasts and the high crimes and misdemeanors it reflexively denies, what exactly needs to be saved? Perhaps Stow conceives patriotism as tragic necessity, an admittedly compromised political form that, despite its considerable costs, must nevertheless be affirmed, even embraced, given the threats, challenges, and

commitments politics face in a hostile world replete with enemies—threats, challenges, and commitments that cannot be met without the love that patriotism monopolizes. If so, such a position, to be convincing, needs not only to make an argument for patriotism’s indispensability rather than presume or insinuate its obviousness but also to consider possible alternatives, including practices of citizenship without patriotism. Can citizens be connected to their politics and attend to them only through love? Perhaps Stow conceives patriotism in tactical terms, a convenient tool of liberal or left political life capable of engendering possibilities that otherwise might remain beyond reach. If so, this would bring us back to Kateb’s lament about patriotism’s inescapability.

Whether Kateb or Stow is right that patriotism must, for now at least, operate in some form as either contingent or tragic necessity, it needs to be made a question. Yes, Kateb and Stow question patriotism, but let’s radicalize their interrogatories. Assume that patriotism fares well in the political realm. Assume that patriotism provides a loyalty, sense of duty, and service that would otherwise be lacking. Assume this and more. What does it mean? What if, that is, patriotism as elixir proves more problematic than the troubles it addresses? Given patriotism’s self-professed attachment to sacrifice, death first of all,¹³ what if it turns out to be dangerous not just to democratic politics (which Stow and Kateb recognize) but also dangerous in a more fundamental way? What if patriotism turns out to be antithetical to life itself? What then?

LONG LIVE DEATH

To appreciate patriotism’s comportment to life, consider September 11, 2009, which marked, so to speak, the eighth anniversary of al-Qaeda’s mass murder in New

York City, northern Virginia, and western Pennsylvania. Commemorative events mimicked prior anniversaries: powers-that-be pronouncing, bells ringing, victims' names recited, declarations of eternal remembrance sworn. As Stow argues, patriotic affairs prefer to be unthinking occasions—by design. Death must be privileged and melodramatic forms work best. There is no need for reflection, let alone critical thinking. Each is unwelcome.¹⁴

President Barack Obama, speaking at a Pentagon ceremony, reflected and reinforced this unthinking habit. The private ceremony, reserved for victims' families, concentrated and intensified the lethal emotions in play. Obama would freeze death and its agonies in perpetuity: "Eight Septembers have come and gone. Nearly three thousand days have passed, almost one for each of those taken from us. But no turning of the season can diminish the pain and the loss of that day. No passage of time and no dark skies can ever dull the meaning of this moment."¹⁵ A performance such as Obama's becomes a self-fulfilling practice, for death's pain does fade with time unless it's cultivated. And patriotism loves to work the garden of death for meaning(s).

Thus, in the past year, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey has been disseminating September 11 debris across the country (and abroad) in the name of memorialization. To further its efforts, the Port Authority is conducting a national media campaign to distribute some two thousand pieces of steel it has lovingly housed for years. If a city, town, state, museum, corporation, government agency, or even foreign nation asks for remains, the request will almost certainly be granted, assuming the entity making it can pay the freight to have them transported. Twenty-five requisitions have been granted; a dozen more await approval. All this in the name of "patriotic awareness."¹⁶

Such awareness focuses narrowly. For the first time, September 11 was named a National Day of Service. People were encouraged to make a contribution to their local community, from beach cleanup to park repairs. Objections were immediate and vehement. The rhetorical character of the objections revealed, however inadvertently, patriotism's connection, even addiction, to death and, more disturbingly, its antipathy to life. Debra Burlingame, sister to the pilot whose jet struck the Pentagon, ridiculed it as some kind of "Earth Day where we go and plant trees." Matthew Vadum derided the idea of service for its focus on "food banks and community gardens."¹⁷ Death must remain the centerpiece.

Death must remain the centerpiece insofar as September 11, 2001 makes a strange, even inapt subject for memorialization. It's not just that the day has been inscribed in national and international memory thanks to relentless media coverage on and of the day itself; it's more that the attacks do and cannot speak to any kind of actual achievement or would-be achievement, like any number of wars, World War II being perhaps the most obvious example, do. Rather, September 11, 2001 represents a day of contingent victimization. People who were in the wrong places at the wrong times were murdered. They did not give their lives to or for anything. They were not asked to sacrifice. They were not drafted in some cause. In the United States, September 11 names an identity crime with America as the victim. "We" were attacked and people were killed for who we are. Death—that we were worth killing—vindicates us. It is only in death that we come to life. Obama, then, won't let the pain ease or abate.

Patriotic culture feeding on death is nothing new. Kateb asks, "How is patriotism most importantly shown? Let us not mince words. The answer is that it is most

importantly shown in a readiness, whether reluctant or matter-of-fact, social or zealous, to die and to kill for one's country."¹⁸ Let's push Kateb's claim further. Patriotism must prove itself through death. No other test suffices. Otherwise professions of love amount to mere words. Anyone can say them. Meaning comes through trial, that is, through sacrifice and sacrifice may be directed at the self or at other people or "things" that one loves, the more precious the better. That is what makes sacrifice a sacrifice. Patriotism must also prove itself in the *celebration* of the readiness to die and kill. Memorialization and monumentalization thus reflect and perform patriotism's death drive.

The enthusiastic dispersal and embrace of World Trade Center death ruins within and across national borders, raises, by virtue of its nihilism, the specter of a pronounced antipathy to life. It is not without precedent. Witness the high regard accorded President Harry S. Truman in the United States. Widely disliked upon leaving office, Truman has experienced a posthumous renaissance.¹⁹ Rebirth seems due in part to his identification with the containment doctrine in the early years of the Cold War when the United States successfully checked the Soviet Union, but largely to his handling of the conclusion of World War II, more specifically, his decision to drop atomic bombs on Japan—ostensibly to end the war.²⁰ What kind of political culture reveres and celebrates apocalyptic military violence? It's not just that the weapons may or may not have been required to end the war. It's that nuclear weaponry represents the potential negation of life on earth. As Robert Oppenheimer conceded, those who designed the bomb couldn't be confident that detonation wouldn't bring about a chain reaction that would lead to global destruction.²¹ Yet this is what American patriotism celebrates. The World War II Memorial on Washington's Mall, which opened to and continues to enjoy popular

acclaim, salutes it when it self-consciously celebrates America's unprecedented destructive power: "We are determined that before the sun sets on this terrible struggle our flag will be recognized throughout the world as a symbol of freedom on the one hand and of overwhelming force on the other." America may be in a unique position to celebrate a particular kind of force, but it is not unique in celebrating what it deems necessary destructive power for righteous, glorious national ends.

Yet let's leave Hiroshima and Nagasaki aside. Conceptions of enmity, at which patriotism excels, can justify the ordinarily unthinkable. In war moral concern is no match for dehumanization and demonization. What about what we claim to love most? What about the love that supposedly defines us, morally enhances us, and makes us better? What happens when it is sacrificed? I am not referring to families readily surrendering sons and daughters, husbands and wives, mothers and fathers to military demands, however problematic, but to another relationship, a distinctive emotional bond that transcends the purely human. I am referring to patriotism's readiness to bring even the non-human world into its sphere of operations, its moral and political orbit. Patriotism extends its death reach from fellow humans to animals and revels in the extension. Insofar as patriotism perpetually searches for new forms of death on which to sustain and solidify itself, it has found one with, to invoke a cliché, man's best friends.

J'ACCUSE

On April 1, 2001, Richard Ben Cramer issued a polemic entitled, "They Were Heroes Too." Published in *Parade Magazine*, a Sunday newspaper supplement, it reached an audience in the several tens of millions.²² Cramer seemed intent on righting what he

deemed an obvious and longstanding wrong. When it comes to war, the United States has perpetrated its share of civic slights against those who served on its behalf. On the Mall in Washington, the country's sacred symbolic space, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, and the World War II Memorial pay tribute to veterans in wars that were, respectively, reviled, forgotten, and overlooked. One would think that the completion of Friedrich St. Florian's grandiose World War II design settled memorial accounts. Not so. There was one group of vets that has not received its due—just the opposite. Advocates have pushed for, among other things, a national monument, a tree outside Arlington National Cemetery, a commemorative postage stamp, and mention in the Armed Forces History Hall in the National Museum of American History.²³ Each effort has resulted in failure, which is not to say that efforts to secure recognition ceased.²⁴ Cramer's operating presumption could be stated as follows: if the country knew of the patriotic crime being committed against some of its most loyal denizens, surely a remedy would emerge. Hence the piece in *Parade Magazine* calling attention to this sorry state of affairs and detailing the heroics of an underappreciated band of brothers: the dogs we sent to war to serve and die on our behalf. Yes, dogs.

Cramer's reproach, while seemingly warranted, neglected certain memorial developments. In 1901 a Civil War monument was dedicated to the 11th Pennsylvania Infantry regiment; it included a sculpture of its mascot and guard dog, Sallie, a bull terrier killed in action. In 1918 a memorial depicting a German shepherd was dedicated to "The War Dog" at the Hartsdale Pet Cemetery and Crematory in Hartsdale, New York for service during "the World War." On July 21, 1994, the fiftieth anniversary of Guam's invasion, the Marine War Dog Memorial was unveiled at the United States Marine Corps

War Dog Cemetery on the island. The memorial salutes twenty-five dogs killed “liberating Guam in 1944.” Featuring a life-size rendering of an actual Doberman (Kurt) that served, the statue sits on a pedestal surrounded by the graves of the twenty-five dogs that *gave* their lives to the country. Kurt is in the down position, relaxed but ready for action. His ears are pointed, suggesting that he is alert and forever on duty guarding his comrades, much as soldiers “patrol” the space in front of the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery. Reminiscent of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, the names of the dogs are inscribed on the side of the pedestal: Kurt, Skipper, Nig, Missy, Blitz, Bursch, Yonnie, Poncho, Prince, Cappy, Arno, Pepper, Koko, Tubby, Fritz, Duke, Silver, Ludwig, Bunkie, Hobo, Max, Brockie, Rickey, and Tam. The memorial inscription, delineating the dangerous tasks dogs performed, mimics the tributes offered humans, invoking the idea of sacrifice in the name of freedom: “25 Marine War Dogs gave their lives liberating Guam in 1944. They served as sentries, messengers, scouts. They explored caves, detected mines and booby traps. SEMPER FIDELIS.” Several other war dog memorials were dedicated in 2000 and 2001, and about a dozen more subsequent to Cramer’s piece, which means that many had been in the works before it was published.²⁵ None, however, is considered a national memorial, which means that the story of animals in war remains largely untold. To many animal lovers, this lack constitutes a grave political injustice. Ironically, the telling of the stories of animals in war, due principally to memorialization efforts, may reveal too much. A considerable patriotic literature, written testimonials, accompanies the memorial tributes paid dogs (and other animals). It is to the literature that I now turn.

LOVING ANIMALS TO DEATH

Civic memorials, manifestations of love, make the past present. As such the contents of the past automatically become the object of contestation, but contestation centers on the politics of the present. Peoples constitute and reconstitute themselves in love as they decide who they are or what they aspire to be in the course of erecting monuments to (what they take to be) their triumphs, their achievements, their tragedies, that is, to their vision of themselves. In politics identity questions amount to existential struggle as rivals seek hegemony over any and all opposition. Love seeks unanimity, but given the stakes involved resolution or consensus appear to be wishful thinking. The drive to secure univocality, however, all but ensures opposition and plurality.

Remarkably, then, politics seems absent when it comes to animals, dogs in particular. Animals don't divide; they unite. Pet-loving nations that would honor them have no doubts about the legitimacy or necessity of their cause. Given the wartime "service" rendered by animals, it would seem impossible not to acknowledge and recognize them. Skeptics may need to be educated about the role that animals play in wartime or they may seek to place limits on the honors accorded them (do not bestow medals, for example) in order to preserve one dimension of the human/animal boundary, but they too wish to pay proper respects.

It is precisely the veritable unanimity and solidarity surrounding the question of animals, military war dogs especially, to which I would like to call attention and problematize. What does it say about peoples who understand themselves as animal loving that they not only wish but also feel compelled to honor them in the first place? What does it say about peoples that they honor them in the way they do? What does it say

about peoples that the following words can only be read as tribute and cannot be read against themselves as condemnation: “For their contribution to the war effort, the dogs paid a dear price, but the good they did was still far out of proportion to the sacrifice they made”²⁶ It’s not as if animal survivors can appreciate the tribute they receive. It’s not as if bereaved “parents” can take solace in seeing their offspring’s names inscribed in stone for all eternity. It’s not as if future generations of animals can or will be inspired to match the exploits of their forebears. Animals don’t visit sacred public spaces. They’re not even allowed to traverse memorial grounds. Building a memorial to animals, including dogs, necessarily raises questions about its reason for being. Not coincidentally, the very reasons animals receive honor perform double duty as they simultaneously dishonor those according it. It’s not just that animals are subjected to the known horrors of war; it’s that war turns inward on and against animals themselves. War consumes everything in its path, including the very beings that make that consumption possible. Think of war as cannibalization, a kind of holocaust for animals (a theme I elaborate below). Still, animal memorials form part of the patriotic memorial complex; as such, they purport to embody the love that humans and animals share, a love reaching its perfection in wartime. We salute animals and, given the place that animals, especially dogs, occupy in the lives of human beings, they in turn salute us. It’s a mutual admiration and affection society. Yet animal memorials also illuminate patriotism’s perverse addiction to death. It’s not just that more sacrifice leads to more debt that requires more sacrifice, which can only be redeemed by death. A new manifestation of sacrifice, of killing, untainted by any prior notion of duty or responsibility, and a new class of “heroes,” from another species, enters the patriotic fray. If anything, animal memorials suggest that patriotism is hostile

to life itself, insofar as they reveal that patriotism recognizes no apparent boundaries. Insofar as love of country is exemplified by sacrifice, including and especially that which is most precious, and such sacrifice is deemed the condition of possibility of political life, a life designed exclusively for human beings, then such sacrifice belies the very notion of limits when it comes to animals. Love enhances itself the greater (more valuable) the substance of the sacrifice. Love and cost are codependents. As cost rises, it does nothing but prove the love, which, ironically, is also how that which is precious can become mere commodity. Patriotism can exalt what ought to be unthinkable. Animal memorials point to practices that rather than induce celebration, honor, and respect ought to provoke outrage, disgust, and horror. The love that animates the memorialization of animals, however, seems impervious, blind to its own narcissistic, life-denying character.

TAKE MY LIFE, PLEASE

Narrative sameness informs war dog stories, though they differ in one crucial respect from stories about human soldiers. Dogs that execute the routine everyday tasks assigned them receive heroization. Dogs are deployed in war for one reason alone: to save human lives. Anything they do that can be linked to such a result or calculation brings patriotic encomiums their way, as well as to those who volunteer them. Performance proves beyond doubt, if doubt there were, that dogs are brave, loyal, and steadfast. The training they receive to obey commands absolutely, with complete obedience the condition of possibility of service, an outcome that might have to be attained through the select application of pain, seems conveniently forgotten. Likewise, if

dogs cannot be trained, due to disease, physical impairment, or character defect, they may be destroyed.²⁷ In other words, fail basic training and die.

What is it that dogs do? They take on some of the most dangerous assignments military forces prefer to spare human beings. Taking point on a patrol, especially in a jungle, is one of the riskiest assignments—along with mine and booby trap detection. It exposes dogs not only to initial enemy fire; military foes soon learn the role dogs play and begin to target them specifically, even, in the case of Vietnam, offering bounties for the killing of dogs (as well as their handlers).²⁸ This effectively doubled the danger to which dogs were exposed. Dogs were considered successful to the extent that they alerted to enemy forces or drew fire and prevented the loss of American lives. It wouldn't matter how many dogs were casualties; human lives saved alone mattered.

In the United States military, dogs are supposedly used for defensive rather than offensive purposes (a distinction hard to sustain). Unlike the Soviet Union, which trained dogs to carry satchels of explosives under tanks for detonation, the American military deems such use cruel and excessive. Yet the United States routinely experiments with what dogs (and other species) can do. During World War II, for example, the Army attempted to train dogs to destroy enemy pillboxes. The effort was ultimately abandoned, but not because of any moral concern. It was abandoned because it proved unsuccessful. The wreckage of battlefield conditions rendered dogs unreliable, even dangerous to those on whose behalf they were to kill. Dogs might return to their handlers just as their explosives were about to detonate. The operational assumption of the United States military has been that if dogs can perform a task, especially one that is highly dangerous or risky, they will perform it.²⁹

Training of military working dogs starts when they are young. Dogs between six months and two years of age are prioritized—being the most malleable. Get them while they're young, as young as five days old.³⁰ This means that dogs, if we compare them to humans, are to be taken as “infants” or “children.” The regimen to which they are subjected is difficult. Dogs must not only be trained to obey commands without hesitation; they must also be able to function under extraordinary circumstances. It is critical, therefore, to expose them to battle-like conditions early and often. The sound of automatic gunfire and the physical and aural experience of bombardment, which paralyze many dogs, form two key components to training. Unlike human soldiers, however, dogs do not understand what is happening. The fear and terror deliberately inflicted on them—for their own good, for our own good—cannot be softened with knowledge that they are experiencing a simulation. The very training that dogs suffer thus anticipates the so-called real thing more closely than their handlers apparently realize. Of course, since the military ultimately considers dogs to be equipment no different than a machine this treatment, “bordering on the inhumane,” does not necessarily pose any ethical problems.³¹

Treating dogs as equipment, the flip side of love, reached its grisly logical conclusion during the Vietnam War. Of the roughly 5,000 military working dogs employed, a little over two hundred returned to the United States. Combat deaths aside, thousands of survivors were left behind with the Army of the Republic of Vietnam. Thus most were euthanized. None returned to civilian life, as it were. Reintegration was deemed too difficult, meaning too expensive, so it became fiscally and logistically

convenient to reduce dogs to a species of military property, to be disposed of in whatever way worked, that is, that posed the fewest problems.

The United States War Dog Association, an advocacy group founded by current and former military handlers dedicated to spreading the gospel about the history of military working dogs, thereby ensuring they are properly recognized and memorialized, expresses in exemplary fashion the fatal ambiguity bedeviling animal lovers and animals in war. It, too, treats dogs as property. On the organization's website, you find what is called the K-9 Wall of Honor, which lists dozens of dogs killed in action and details the circumstances, invariably heroic, of their deaths. The Wall of Honor also includes the so-called K-9 promise. This involves those who love dogs most speaking on their behalf. Since they cannot speak for themselves, it is reasonable to presume that the organization will deliver a skilled impersonation. Thus you find the following declaration: "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."³² The dog, as it were, disassembles and offers itself piece by piece to humans for use as they see fit so their vast war machine can continue running. Despite the rhetoric of equality that the military circulates about dogs as fellow soldiers, the possibility that dogs "in" the military might have needs or wants or interests of their own, is impossible. Any one of these gifts, once taken, means the effective end of the dog's life. The pledge amounts to signing your own death warrant. For the dog, the injunction that "I was only following orders" represents perfection rather than war's perversion. Is it any wonder that dogs were made complicit in the torture of

enemy prisoners, whether in Vietnam or Iraq? The degradation of other species takes whatever forms necessary.

DO WE LOVE OUR DOGS?

One might think that the use of animals, especially dogs, in war would pose serious ethical problems for the families who donate dogs and for the people who train them. One would be wrong. As nationally renowned dog breeder and self-styled patriot Arlene Erlanger put it after the United States entered World War II, “*the dog world* must play its part in this thing.”³³ The imperative reveals patriotism’s power to fabricate and then order the world, converting it into standing reserve. No-thing escapes its optic. Other so-called worlds may be called into being, too, if necessary. The imperative also suggests not just a free-floating resentment about assuming the burdens of citizenship during wartime; it suggests that death’s creative reach can be extended in new, unexpected ways to bind the political order. To say that the dog world, given life for lethal purposes, must do its part is to say that dogs, too, must sacrifice and die. Erlanger referred to “what the war means to dogs,” which intimates a new depth to patriotism’s conception of enmity, as if to say that the idea of the family pet may not survive the war, thanks to our enemy. Dogs, too, have a stake in the fighting. They are threatened; thus they can be enlisted. They can be rendered part of us. If one were to object that dogs are forced to serve in wars for which they are not responsible, one might learn that this makes dogs no different than your average soldier, who is entitled to no such concern.³⁴ Besides, in the patriotic world we show the rightness of our cause and the value of what we die for by sacrificing

what is most precious to us, sacrificing it unbidden. Love of country leads to instrumentalization.

To appreciate the successful military use of animals, especially dogs, and its subsequent public affirmation through memorialization, I turn to Kennan Ferguson's disconcerting essay on dogs and love.³⁵ Armed forces do not grant animals special privileges—just the opposite. Yet people do often bestow special privileges on pets. When it comes to making fundamental ethical decisions, then, how is it that people routinely prioritize dogs over human beings? Doesn't this ranking represent a betrayal of humanity? Doesn't this pose a problem for democratic citizenship and its presumptions of equality and mutuality? How can people choose dogs over their fellow human beings?³⁶

Dogs, of course, are loved individually not generally. It is specificity that matters. People would opt to save their fellow human beings, generally speaking, rather than dogs, generally speaking. Yet people's love of their own dogs is such that it scrambles quotidian ethical compartments. People and dogs satisfy mutual needs in one another, but "the emotional attachment is not reducible to those needs."³⁷ Owners would not hesitate to save their pet's life by paying for an expensive operation even if such money could be used to save the lives of other (abstract) human beings. Abstract considerations cannot compete with the specificity of dog love.

Dogs have functioned as models of behavior to which we aspire. They make us better, it is thought, more fully human. They have also functioned "as virtuous actors rather than insensate embodiments of abstract virtues."³⁸ Dogs were even understood to be "morally superior to human beings," in part because they were naturally or inherently good and "did not need to remind [themselves] to be loyal and courageous, as did a

man.”³⁹ Of course, we were responsible for this moral triumph, for human beings domesticated dogs and thereby expunged their ferocity.⁴⁰ Loving dogs, according to popular belief, ultimately indicated “a caring, kind, humane soul.”⁴¹ It also “elevated” us; we acquired virtue insofar as we were capable of transcending our narrow self-interest and acting on behalf of those “beasts [that] cannot even speak.”⁴² Dogs were not the only beneficiaries; as we care for dogs we cultivate skills and aptitudes that redound to human relationships, for example, between parent and child.

Ironically, the very love of dogs (or other animals) that enables humans to take decisive action on their behalf, to make sacrifices for them, governs the sacrifice that people make of these very same dogs (or other animals) in wartime. As Ferguson notes, “the ideal canine is one with the human ideals of compassion, loyalty, and bravery.” These are its “essential qualities.”⁴³ Not surprisingly, then, dog owners in both the United States, Great Britain (and elsewhere) rush(ed) to volunteer their pets for war.⁴⁴ War and patriotism would seem to reinstate the human/animal boundary transcended by pet love. Or does unconditional love breed unconditional use? People love dogs; they love their dogs in particular. They also love their countries, which, as Kateb reminds us, is largely an abstraction. They might view these loves as compatible (we all must make sacrifices in war, including our families, why not our dogs too?). But the very specificity that furnished dogs (and other pets) with a kind of privileged, protected status disappears with the advent of war and patriotism’s claims. It seems, then, that patriotism, love of country, abstraction par excellence, trumps love of dogs (or horses or pigeons). This reverses one of the unique characteristics constitutive of human-dog connections.

Ferguson notes that with moral belief, judgment may not guide or prove decisive for action. Logic does not (necessarily) trump love. Thus, “even if one strongly believes that humans are more important to protect than are dogs, one may not necessarily act that way.”⁴⁵ Practices of patriotism suggest otherwise. Vast numbers of pets fail to return home war after war, but owners do not fail to volunteer them with every repetition. Jilly Cooper speculates that if people knew what kind of training their dogs must endure to become effective tools of war they might reverse their decisions, patriotism or not, but given that people do know that war entails death and thus the strong possibility, even likelihood, that their beloved pets will not return, the attribution of such a retrospective protective impulse to pet owners seems unwarranted.⁴⁶ Moreover, dog owners, through private practices of love, prepared the way for their own civic sacrifices and the public sacrifice of their dogs. With the advent of pet cemeteries and “ceremoniously burying and memorializing dogs,”⁴⁷ people were always already prepared to mourn the loss of their beloveds. Dying for country, so to speak, would only double the love. It might also double the mourning and perhaps the pride and pleasure as well. In addition, pet owners understood that sending a beloved pet, whether dog or horse, off to war and thus away from the owner constituted “a kind of betrayal.”⁴⁸ In Europe in particular, with the scars of World War I still vivid and visible, it’s not as if the horrors of war were unknown or long forgotten. Animal lovers knew well what kind of future awaited their pets. Thus at the outset of World War II, several hundred thousand dogs and cats were killed *in anticipation* of war’s onslaught.⁴⁹ Call it the perfection of disposability. Rooted in love.

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME?

On November 24, 2004, England unveiled the *Animals in War Memorial*. The monument covers not just the twentieth century and its gruesome conflicts but warfare throughout history. Human use of animals to fight wars did not originate in the modern age, though it may have been pushed to its logical destructive extreme, thanks to technological circumstances, in the 1900s. In World War I alone, some eight million horses perished. The staggering figure had many causes, in particular the logistical fact that eventually the war would have been impossible to wage without them. That is, given the conditions on European battlefields, which finally rendered trucks inoperative, horses (and mules and donkeys) became the condition of possibility of war. It did not matter how many died, since they enabled the war to continue. It would have ground to a halt in their absence.

At first glance *Animals in War* seems to have a feel for its own ambiguity. Two inscriptions confront the visitor on a large wall that contains a narrow passageway at its center. One inscription salutes “all the animals that served and died alongside British and Allied forces in wars and campaigns throughout time”; the other states, “They had no choice.” You might think that England, much like the United States with the Vietnam Wall, understands the dilemmatic character of the memorial undertaking. Nevertheless, the four monumental figures represented, two mules bearing heavy freight on the lower side of the wall, a dog and a horse bearing no burdens and representing “hope for the future” on the other, higher side of the wall, betray little, if anything, of the experiences of war. Aesthetically, *Animals in War* resembles Frederick Hart’s *The Three Soldiers* at the Vietnam Memorial complex in Washington, D.C., a traditional representational sculpture designed to convey the youth, innocence, and vulnerability of men at war,

ostensibly honoring “sacrifice” while ignoring this specific war’s imperial, arguably genocidal, certainly self-destructive character.⁵⁰ Likewise the recognition on offer in London seems minor, minimized, corresponding to the supporting role that animals by definition played in war. They served, as it were, and died, yes, but their suffering could not compare to what human beings endured. They may have had no choice, but consent is irrelevant regarding animals. The inscription suggests resignation, perhaps something of a lament, rather than a criticism or rebuke. War deals in necessities, after all. Nevertheless, an inscription on the wall opposite the mules informs the reader: “many and various animals were *employed*...and as a result *millions died* from the pigeon to the elephant. They all played a vital role in every region of the world *in the cause of human freedom*. Their contribution must never be forgotten.”⁵¹ It’s not just that carnage can be casually incorporated into the traditional heroic narrative that countries habitually tell—and must tell—of themselves. Note the banality of expression. Animals were employed. Millions died. What does the nonchalance signify? That love of country can endure no matter what happens because mere events cannot alter the ideal to which love gives expression? If you visit the memorial’s official website, you learn that “British, Commonwealth, and Allied forces enlisted many millions of animals to serve and often die alongside their armies.”⁵² The transitive verb (enlist), which obscures the nature of the relationship between human and animals, seems to intimate that it might have been used intransitively as well. Similarly, what does the imperative to keep death, however sanitized, alive in perpetuity, especially the kind of mass death that cannot reflect well on the cause of human freedom, signify?

Washington's *World War II Memorial* likewise proclaims the duty of eternal recollection, driven by the notion of debt. The unbalanced civic account funds the dynamic of endless sacrifice. Pericles established terms of payment twenty-five hundred years ago in his funeral oration: each generation must enhance the legacy bequeathed to it (at great cost) and thereby surpass the achievements of its forebears. Once accomplished, the old debt can be considered paid. Yet new debt has been generated in the process, requiring new sacrifice, leading to new debt. Etcetera. To animals in war, however, debt's unpayability works differently: they do not and cannot participate in, let alone benefit from, war's outcome or aftermath. They have no legacy to enhance. The war to make the world safe for democracy provided no returns, nor could it, to animals. It's not so much that debt is unpayable to animals (so-called payments could be made in perpetuity). It's that the very notion of debt, implying a reciprocal relationship of some kind, denies what was done to them. Animals didn't just die from employment, as the memorial suggests; they were subject to an exterminatory logic to facilitate, to enable war.

Ultimately, *Animals in War* arrives stillborn and disappears. The frolicking horse and adorable dog opposite the mules suggest that animal sacrifice made for a better world, including for animals themselves, thus justifying the toll exacted. Death turns out to be good, and patriotism celebrates it. To appreciate the sleight of hand perpetrated by *Animals in War*, compare it, first, to the Cenotaph in Whitehall, London, an "empty tomb" built to salute First World War dead. Apparently simple in design, it marks rather than denies the traumas of the war, including the ambiguous character of victory. Located in the middle of traffic at the heart of national government, it is that which cannot be circumvented. Geography forces it into the city's daily life. Jenny Edkins argues: "[The

Cenotaph] attempts no narrative or interpretation. It marks something that is shared yet inexpressible in more explicit terms. What is shared, we might say, is the inexpressibility.”⁵³ Or, compare it to the civil rights memorials deployed at Kelly Ingram Park in Birmingham, Alabama. Unlike James Drake’s *Police and Dog Attack* or Ronald S. McDowell’s *The Salute to the Foot Soldiers*, both of which feature police attack dogs in action, designed to induce an experience in visitors similar to the one produced in those subjected to state sanctioned violence, *Animals in War* effectively erases what it purports to embody. With memorial visitors reduced to mere spectators, it depicts a scene that could be located almost anywhere, anytime, under countless conditions. To bring war to life, to materialize the horror of its violence, to make the animals’ “contribution” real, war’s destructive impact both on the landscape and on the animals themselves needs to be imparted. Why not mules drowning in craters of mud and water? Why not mules dismembered, remnants of body parts strewn here and there? Why not mule corpses piled on top of mule corpses? Or, more subtly, why not present mules on one side of the wall and present animals in absentia on the other, suggesting that animals enter the war machine but do not exit it? Wouldn’t this facilitate remembrance? Of course, if *Animals in War* were equal to its self-assigned task, it might well call its very reason for being into question. It might move from tribute to anti-war memorial. But this is no counter-monument.⁵⁴ Much like the *Japanese-American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II* in Washington, D.C., which ostensibly features America’s apology for the carceral treatment of its own citizens following Pearl Harbor but actually revels in its own contrition, *Animals in War* affirms a country that addresses publicly the arguably

ambiguous character of war's costs—a candor which serves to enhance national greatness.

Animals in War forms part of a transnational trend. Equally troubling are the identical War Dog Memorials built at March Air Field Museum, March Air Force Base, Riverside, California and at Sacrifice Field, National Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, Georgia. The monuments showcase a soldier, standing, peering into the distance. A German shepherd, leashed, sits next to him. Both are alert, especially the dog, but not quite tense. They are ready for action, on call for country. They ooze power, confidence, security, and strength. At the dedication ceremony in Riverside, California Associate Supreme Court Justice Ming Chin, a decorated Vietnam officer, welcomed the war dogs home, repatriated at last—much like their human comrades were “returned” through the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. Betrayed by the country they served, the Vietnam dogs were left behind at war's close, their fate mimicking the POWs and MIAs allegedly abandoned. Chin reminds the audience that dogs have feelings, too. They feel; they hurt; they suffer; but most important of all, they save human lives. As the ceremony concludes, hundreds of Vietnam veterans walk by the statue, pause, and pet the dog as if it were real, alive.⁵⁵ But only they are alive.

The very effort to salute and honor animals in war raises questions that call the enterprise into question. How is that millions have died? What were the circumstances of death? What does this numerical reality reveal not just about the nature of warfare but also about the creature who, alone in nature, wages war against himself? What about the project of animal memorialization? Is it a sincere effort to honor a debt that demands payment or might it be a project that conceals as much as or more than it reveals? Does

memorialization mean that the horrors inflicted on animals can be repeated ad infinitum? Once a debt is paid, cannot more debt be assumed? What if, on the other hand, details of the debt were fully aired? Might this have the potential to subvert the entire endeavor? What's more, might the subversion be such that we find ourselves hard pressed to justify our very existence on the planet insofar as we pose a threat to life itself? Ironically, the evidence that supports such a claim comes from self-styled animal lovers themselves. Those who bear witness to or document so-called animal heroics provide damning substantiation against the allegedly benevolent beneficiaries, namely, us.

The American and British militaries, by no means unique, presume that when it comes to waging war, the animal world is available to be used as they see fit. Animals are assigned routinely to a number of tasks and saving human lives ranks first among various priorities. Effectiveness is the only criterion. If animals can be used to save human life, they will be so used. It doesn't matter how dangerous the assignment might be. It doesn't matter if animals lose their lives in the process. How could it? The point of animal use is to do whatever it takes to protect and save human lives. The number of animals killed likewise makes no difference. As long as war goes on and animals can be used to effective purpose, they will be used. If this means using animals without properly caring for them, which in turn can mean they will be worked until expiration, that is, worked literally to death, they will be so used. The logic is exterminatory. If every member of a species has to be sacrificed to win a war, winning trumps life. Even ostensibly humanitarian organizations such as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals contributed to the dominant patriotic logic of total sacrifice. Starting with the Franco-Prussian War, advocating for better care and treatment of animals exacerbated

their exploitation. Those wounded could be patched up and returned to service—whether they were fully healed or capable.⁵⁶ Better to extract as much labor as possible from beasts of burden than let them die and get nothing. After all, it was not always certain if more animals would (soon) be forthcoming and “there was a war to be won,” which means that the military machine had to be fueled and refueled.

This logic takes remarkable turns as it unfolds. In World War I, for example, pigeons were used extensively for communication (as were dogs). It’s not just that “enlistment” subjected pigeons to a life likely to be nasty, brutish and short; it’s not just that it subjected them to specific countermeasures that escalated their risk (the Germans targeted them with hawks and falcons, thus setting nature at war with itself, as well as machine gun fire); it’s that their utter disposability subjected them to eradication, by any means necessary, by the very people already exploiting them and supposedly recognizing their value. One British commander, rather than let 2,500 pigeons fall into enemy control, set them on fire and burned them to death.⁵⁷ In east Africa, 1916-1917, over ten thousand donkeys and horses died from exposure to tsetse flies. Once the first contingent expired, a second was brought in despite the known consequences. The temporary cure, arsenic, extended their miserable lives a few weeks before they would drop dead in their tracks.⁵⁸ In World War II, the Russians trained dogs to run under tanks with explosives strapped to their backs. Poland, it is rumored, was emptied of dogs for these suicide missions.⁵⁹ The British needed mules for transport in Burma, where they were deemed uniquely suited to local conditions. Yet they had a tendency to bray, which would place human lives in danger. The military thus severed the vocal cords of some 5,500 mules before shipping them overseas.⁶⁰ Also in Burma, elephants were used extensively to build bridges and

roads. If the British couldn't use them, no one could. The Royal Air Force would target elephants employed by the Japanese, perhaps the first version of better dead than red.⁶¹ When circumstances became dire, again in World War I, the British took the horses they were using for transport (which was already killing them by the millions) and slaughtered them for food and for comfort (mattresses).⁶² This reduced the subordinate standing from which they already suffered. It's not just, then, that horses would be killed as war exploded around them; they were literally deconstructed or cannibalized and converted into so many usable pieces and parts. At conflict's end, the War Office insisted on some kind of return on its investment and declared the remaining horses unfit for duty so they could be sold to slaughterhouses.⁶³ The French required no such rationale, let alone return on investment; they destroyed 15,000 dogs at war's end (a policy duplicated by the other combatants).⁶⁴ Even mascots, animals exempted from combat duty and designed to provide emotional comfort, could find themselves converted to food.⁶⁵ Still in World War I, the British, having exhausted its supply of camels, appropriated 3,000 cow camels, most of them pregnant. This doubled the risk to the life of camels as such. They were forced to give birth along the way.⁶⁶ At one moment, it makes good logistical sense to slaughter those you claim, at another moment, to be serving alongside you. Jilly Cooper inadvertently expresses the ethos of exploitation: "a dead mule was only a disaster if he floated out to sea with his pack saddle on."⁶⁷ Equally deplored: disabling a dog to exempt it from combat operations, which happened, if infrequently, in Vietnam.⁶⁸

The animal's useful military-patriotic life does not end with death. In Washington's National Museum of American History, you can find a stuffed dog and pigeon, both considered heroes, from World War I. (Imagine finding Sergeant Alvin

York, internationally acclaimed, medal winning World War I soldier, in the museum.) Placing the animals on display may well suggest that nature, perhaps the very world itself, was on our side. These animals, which would have been awarded purple hearts if they were humans, saved lives under fire, with Cher Ami, the pigeon, losing a leg in the process.⁶⁹

RE-COVERING SACRIFICE

Even with an underlying assumption of disposability, animal casualties achieve such scale that they threaten to become indefensible, unthinkable, for those advocating their use. Thus peoples seek to justify or redeem the slaughter to which they give sanction, an alchemical process at which patriotism excels. One strategy centers on recovering the notion of choice. Animals undergo brutal, bordering on sadistic, training to enable them to perform in wartime conditions. They are not naturally accustomed to machine gun, mortar, or artillery fire. They must be exposed, repeatedly, to each of them. Food is the weapon of choice in training. Hunger conquers all, including fear, if you wait long enough.⁷⁰ Pain, however, is prohibited, scorned even—unless no other method proves effective, that is. Despite the requirements and goals of training, it is insisted that you can't make an animal like a dog do whatever you like.⁷¹ Dogs, the story goes, have a kind of will of their own.⁷² Thus, in the end, what we make them do, which puts them in harm's way and generates countless casualties, is nothing other than what they would want to do for us anyway. Cooper, speaking of the dog *per se*: “he acted out of love, not because he was made to.”⁷³ Cramer prefers a more subtle approach. Following Pearl Harbor, he writes, “canine combatants were recruited just as men were. But no draft was

required.” A few owners may have been unloading unwanted pets, “but most were patriots who sent a dog off to war just as they would a son.” Here dogs bask in and absorb the patriotic glow of their owners, as if to suggest that no draft was needed for dogs because dogs were ready and waiting.⁷⁴ They act out of love.

Cooper also writes of one of war’s “redeeming” features: the mutual devotion that develops between animal and human. Humans experience animals as extensions of themselves.⁷⁵ Animals reciprocate the feeling. Hence the story of the dog left behind as his master ships off to France who tracks down his owner overseas. This testifies to the unique bonds that join humans and animals. The dog could only be fully at home by his master’s side. It might look like we are exploiting them, but they want to serve us and because they do, this service ennobles both them and us.⁷⁶ The sense of home and family, which unites human and animal, makes it possible to argue that the dog world must do its part in war. We’re all in it together. It is a seamless transition for dogs to provide on the battlefield the love and devotion they provide at home. The love and devotion must be hardened, sharpened, honed; then it can be put to the test. Just as a citizen’s love of country can only be tested in war, thereby transmogrifying citizen into patriot, so a dog’s love can be enhanced and exalted through a conflict about which it can know nothing. In World War II, the Marines developed a certificate of discharge for dogs. Depending on the quality of service, a dog would receive either an honorable or dishonorable judgment. The idea was to instill an “esprit de corps” in the dogs.⁷⁷

There is a reason celebrants of animals in war recount, ad nauseam, stories of what animals have done to save human lives: the feats so astound that they must point to something deeper. It can’t just be that animals are responding to the training they have

received. They would not be able to endure and overcome the pain and agony they suffer if not for a shared solidarity of fate. Consider Satan, a half-breed Greyhound working for the French in World War I. With one corner of Verdun at stake and a French position about to buckle, a dog races to deliver news. Shot down hundreds of yards from the French lines, his master stands up in full view of the enemy and yells, “Courage, Satan, my friend. Come for France.” The handler is killed, but Satan rises from the dead and struggles the several hundred yards to deliver news that help would be forthcoming. Since Satan also carried pigeons on his back, the beleaguered French were able to identify the position of the German batteries targeting them and target them in return. A piece of Verdun was saved.⁷⁸ Or consider Winkie, the pigeon, who flew 129 miles from the North Sea to Scotland which enabled the rescue of an otherwise doomed World War II bomber crew. One might doubt the courageousness of this little bird, who was quite proud when duly honored and toasted at a dinner held in her honor, but given the number of pigeons who dally, this would be a mistake.⁷⁹

Celebrants like Jilly Cooper project patriotic meaning into the deeds animals perform, not despite but precisely because of the ever-accumulating evidence, that is, corpses. Otherwise death would convert the already dubious notion of sacrifice into sheer slaughter. On occasion, Cooper resorts to the language of tragedy, thereby suggesting that the horrific fate of animals lies beyond anyone’s control, as if mass death just happens to be happening to them in especially cruel ways. Cooper appears to recognize limits, objecting to certain instances of military experimentation. American efforts to attach incendiary devices to bats and drop them from bombers over Japan to set fires strikes her as beyond the pale. Yet how this use of animals differs from other uses—any other

uses—of which she approves remains unclear.⁸⁰ What's more, the military use of animals leads inexorably to greater understanding and knowledge, enabling the military to expand and refine the use to which animals can be put. Knowledge fosters power and power fosters new demands for knowledge. Animals are trapped in this dynamic, which the patriotism complex celebrates and cheers "in the cause of human freedom." The concern here is not just that distinctions made between humans and animals collapse upon close examination, such that many animals can be considered superior along certain dimensions to some human beings. After all, it's not clear how or why such a distinction, assuming its validity, leads to using animals at will. Rather, let's ask, what do countries reveal about themselves as they exercise power at critical moments in their collective lives? As countries readily sacrifice the very values for the sake of which they supposedly fight, they also sacrifice those creatures over which they have unprecedented power. It's the inability to use animals in war—and "honor" them afterward—that politically disturbs.

PATRIOMORPHISM

The British decorate animals. The Dickin Medal, named after the founder of the People's Dispensary for Sick Animals, Maria Dickin, represents the animals' version of the Victoria Cross.⁸¹ Animals receive plaudits for bravery, courage, and devotion to duty. World War II saw forty-nine medals awarded. Those who insist that tribute must be paid to animals necessarily anthropomorphize them. Building public monuments and memorials to them, which extends beyond England and the United States, may well represent the culmination of this process.⁸² Does it matter, however, that animals do not

and cannot *know* they acted heroically? Given limited cognitive abilities, they lack concepts such as country, war, death, freedom, courage, and sacrifice. What matters is that we insist on projecting onto them what we take to be our best qualities and pretending there is equivalence as we continue to treat them as disposable.⁸³

When it comes to war, then, animals do not sacrifice. They do not “serve” on equal terms with their human “comrades,” extravagant claims to the contrary notwithstanding. Animals can be used, expended in ways that humans cannot. Allied forces sacrificed ten thousand lives to breach Normandy in 1944, but morality imposed an implicit ceiling on the number of casualties deemed acceptable. Thus Normandy would have been abandoned if projected losses crossed a certain threshold. Such limitation applies to war as a whole—surrender always exists as an option. No number of animal casualties, however, could prove decisive as long as they served their purpose. There can be no Pyrrhic victories with animals.

After war concludes, animals, despite services rendered, can still be sacrificed; they are treated as military equipment, which enabled the United States, as mentioned above, to use dogs in Vietnam and return none of them home to their pre-war lives.⁸⁴ The various costs associated with repatriation were deemed excessive. What, then, does it mean to pay tribute to beings for which no intrinsic respect exists? What does it mean to pay tribute to beings for which war can represent a holocaust—not at the hands of “enemies” but due to your “compatriots”? The language may be problematic, but given the manner in which the so-called friends of animals deploy human concepts and categories to animal behavior, they invite, in their own celebratory accounts, the idea of war as a kind of holocaust for animals. Eight million horses perished in World War I. The

needs of war alone dictate the numbers, the upper limit of which might actually be reached.

If a memorial to war animals can't be a tribute to them and it refuses to present itself as a warning or an admission of wrongdoing, what is its reason for being? The recent upsurge in the memorialization of animals for "service" in war extends and enhances patriotism's traditional narcissism and addiction to death. Peoples salute themselves—for saluting—as they salute those who have no choice. Moreover, with patriotism facing persistent shortages of human subjects to monumentalize, peoples have turned to the animal world for colonization. They can now use their deaths for political purposes. Through memorialization of animals democracies would transform victims into heroes, abomination into virtue, gratuity into necessity, cruelty into camaraderie, exploitation into love, life into death, transformations that deflect questions of moral responsibility for wars waged not against enemies but against the very animal world they ostensibly would honor. The "loss" of animal life may be lamented at memorial sites, but it is also affirmed as a sign of the value of the cause at stake. The suffering inflicted on animals, deliberately not incidentally, must have—must be given—meaning. As peoples recognize and acknowledge (or think they recognize and acknowledge) the horrors of war and its consequences, they become worthy of the sacrifices they impose on animals in pursuit of their great pursuits. Through remembrance they redeem themselves after the fact. It's as if human and animal worlds become one, interdependent, interconnected, thanks to a singular goal. Cooper salutes animals with words that condemn the eulogisation and signal its emptiness: "Most animals who died have no memorial. Sick, wounded, starved, slaughtered, they have perished as though they had never been. The

only way we can repay them is to treat them with more kindness in peace, and hope that in the future they are drawn as little as possible into our wars.”⁸⁵ Ironically, Cooper presumes and reaffirms the ethos toward animals—their utter disposability—that not only leads to recognition of a problematic debt but that also subverts both her existential lament and passive hope for the future. The debt cannot be repaid but only exacerbated. That is, we can only justify the debt by making sure that the sacrifice succeeds. And it can only succeed, given the dangerous, deadly world in which we live, by the expenditure of more lives and the incurrence of more debt. The circle of debt and death, now widened “thanks” to animals, recurs, patriotism’s gift to us all.

The love that patriotism extols presumes citizen sacrifice. In wartime, this means parents handing over children to the state for military service, which they often do gladly. It also means children watching their parents depart, in which they are taught to take great pride. Love and death are thus constitutively linked thanks to the responsibilities of citizenship. Love finds its ultimate fulfillment in death. What could be more arduous than families sending their own members off to war? Perhaps it’s volunteering the family pet, whether dog, horse, or pigeon, an act that captures the narcissism involved in the use of all animals. With patriotism in play pets are not valued more than people, but they do enjoy a distinct status—more precious, in a sense, because more vulnerable, more dependent. They resemble perpetual children, even infants. Yet they are sacrificed without question, without hesitation. There is no limit to what the country can require of animals, which improves on the ethos of sacrifice already operative in patriotism. Whether it’s American Founders sacrificing freedom to slavery to bring the country into being or Abraham Lincoln sacrificing freedom to slavery to maintain the union, peoples

must be willing and able to sacrifice precisely what cannot be compensated or recuperated. Ironically, we disclose our goodness through what we kill. If we are willing to sacrifice this much and to this extent, against our own interest and value, we must be good. Thus the strength of the patriot is measured by what he can sacrifice, that is, kill. As to the country, the greater the loss, the greater we make ourselves. This is the logic of patriotism, perfected by animals in war, first the killing, then the tribute that cannot be one—not to animals, anyway.

In the ever-present aftermath of war, American, British, and Australian patriotisms, to name three, have come to demand that the contributions of animals “never be forgotten,” but what kind of memory is being called for? Is the memory historical, rooted in *commonplace* appreciation and understanding of the often-critical roles animals played in the twentieth century’s freedom wars? Is the memory military, rooted in the esoteric knowledge, learned more than once from enemies always a step ahead, that the talents of animals can be ignored only at great peril, that failure to use animals quickly and effectively could mean defeat in a future war? Is the memory political, rooted in a demand that societies be prepared to mobilize themselves from top to bottom, to do what it takes to win wars, which includes placing animals on call, ready at a moment’s notice to “serve.” Is that what must never be forgotten? If the memory to be cultivated is historical, military, or political, it means that we must not forget that we are entitled to give and take life at will.⁸⁶ It’s not as if there’s a tragic sensibility at work here, rooted in necessity and manifested in a claim that the political good war ultimately achieves can be secured only by also doing great and gross wrong, including that done to animals. To be able to kill with absolute license, in turn, we must perpetually celebrate ourselves for

doing so—even and especially as we also disavow it. Patriotism makes this possible through memorial recognition that reaffirms proprietary appropriation. This ethic threatens to make life itself impossible. Regarding animals, no scale of death appears too great for the life and celebration of the country. Regarding animals, no manner of death appears too horrific for the life and celebration of the country. Animals, like the world, are disposable. Patriotism’s greatest success, then, might be the domestication of extinction, the finest form of death addiction. What greater proof of love could there be?

¹ George Kateb, *Patriotism and Other Mistakes* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). Given Kateb’s trenchant analysis, patriotism feels more like a moral offense than a mistake.

² Kateb, 3.

³ Kateb, 3.

⁴ Kateb, 4.

⁵ Kateb, 4.

⁶ Ibid. One might add that life is also thereby endangered, a theme to which I return below.

⁷ Wendy Brown, “Political Idealization and Its Discontents,” *Edgework: Critical Essays on Knowledge and Politics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 27-29.

⁸ Brown, 27.

⁹ Brown, 30.

¹⁰ Brown, 28.

¹¹ Maurizio Viroli, *For Love of Country: An Essay on Patriotism and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 19.

¹² Simon Stow, “Pericles at Gettysburg and Ground Zero: Tragedy, Patriotism, and Public Mourning,” *American Political Science Review*, 101:2, May 2007, 195-208.

¹³ See, for example, Steven Johnston, *The Truth about Patriotism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Martha Raddatz, “Obama Reflects on 9/11, War That Followed,” abcnews.go.com, September 11, 2009.

¹⁶ Michael Wilson, “Sept. 11 Steel Forms Heart of Far-Flung Memorials,” *New York Times*, September 7, 2009.

¹⁷ The Associated Press, “On 9/11, Day of Mourning Becomes Day of Service,” September 10, 2009.

¹⁸ Kateb, 7.

¹⁹ See, for example, the 2009 C-Span Historians presidential leadership Survey, where Truman ranks fifth: <http://www.c-span.org/PresidentialSurvey/Overall-Ranking.aspx>.

²⁰ See Campbell Craig and Fredrik Logevall, *America’s Cold War: The Politics of Insecurity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009), 52-56.

²¹ See Jonathan Schell, *The Fate of the Earth* (New York: Avon Books, 1982).

²² http://www.parade.com/corporate/parade_history.html.

²³ I assume this is a reference to the permanent exhibit: “The Price of Freedom: Americans at War.” No permanent exhibit devoted to animals in wars exists, but animals do receive mention in both the Civil War and World War I.

²⁴ Efforts were made during World War II to establish a memorial to dogs in front of the Pentagon. Michael G. Lemish, *War Dogs: A History of Loyalty and Heroism* (Washington, D.C.: Potomac Books, 2008), 147.

²⁵ For a list, see the Vietnam Dog handler Association website: <http://vdha.us/memorials/>.

²⁶ William W. Putney, *Always Faithful: A Memoir of the Marine Dogs of WWII* (Dulles, Virginia: Potomac Books, 2003), xi.

²⁷ Lemish, 45.

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- ²⁸ Lemish, 242.
- ²⁹ Lemish, 53-59, 88-90.
- ³⁰ Lemish, 216.
- ³¹ Lemish, 142; Putney, 25,29, 42. The quote is from Putney, 42.
- ³² <http://www.uswardogs.org/id67.html>
- ³³ Lemish, 36, emphasis added.
- ³⁴ Lemish, x-xi.
- ³⁵ Kennan Ferguson, "I ♥ My Dog," *Political Theory* 32:3, June 2004, 373-395.
- ³⁶ Ferguson.
- ³⁷ Ferguson, 375.
- ³⁸ Ferguson, 376.
- ³⁹ Ferguson, 376.
- ⁴⁰ Ferguson, 376-377.
- ⁴¹ Ferguson, 377.
- ⁴² Ferguson, 377.
- ⁴³ Ferguson, 376.
- ⁴⁴ Cooper, 75; Lemish, 47.
- ⁴⁵ Ferguson, 380, 384.
- ⁴⁶ Cooper, 75.
- ⁴⁷ Ferguson, 375.
- ⁴⁸ Cooper, 39.
- ⁴⁹ Cooper, 86.
- ⁵⁰ See Hart's own description at <http://www.vvmf.org/index.cfm?SectionID=103>.
- ⁵¹ Carolynn Langley: <http://www.roll-of-honour.com/London/AnimalsInWarMemorial.html>. Emphases added.
- ⁵² See: http://www.animalsinwar.org.uk/index.cfm?asset_id=1375.
- ⁵³ Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 64.
- ⁵⁴ See James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
- ⁵⁵ See the memorial video: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3dQSdR5LwA>
- ⁵⁶ Cooper, 32, 48-49, 62.
- ⁵⁷ Jilly Cooper, *Animals in War: Valiant Horses, Courageous Dogs, and Other Unsung Animal Heroes* (Guilford: Lyons Press, 2002) 103.
- ⁵⁸ Cooper, 199-200.
- ⁵⁹ Cooper, 95. Cooper comforts herself with the faith, citing Luther, that these dogs will be rewarded in heaven for such meritorious conduct.
- ⁶⁰ Cooper, 139.
- ⁶¹ Cooper, 154.
- ⁶² Cooper, 36.
- ⁶³ Cooper, 62-63, 65.
- ⁶⁴ Lemish, 29.
- ⁶⁵ Cooper, 186.
- ⁶⁶ Cooper, 123.
- ⁶⁷ Cooper, 137.
- ⁶⁸ Lemish, 224-225.
- ⁶⁹ See <http://americanhistory.si.edu/militaryhistory/exhibition/flash.html>
- ⁷⁰ Cooper, 75-76.
- ⁷¹ The Princess Royal, patron of the fund that built the *Animals in War* memorial. See "They served and suffered for us," <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/3626468/They-served-and-suffered-for-us.html>.
- ⁷² Lemish, 141.
- ⁷³ Cooper, 73.
- ⁷⁴ Cramer.
- ⁷⁵ Cooper, 47.
- ⁷⁶ Cooper, 192.
- ⁷⁷ Lemish, 60-61.

⁷⁸ Cooper, 79; Lemish, 19-20.

⁷⁹ Cooper, 105-107.

⁸⁰ Cooper, 207.

⁸¹ See the PDSA's website: <http://www.pdsa.org.uk/page309.html>.

⁸² Prominent memorials to animals can be found in Australia, Belgium, and Japan, for example.

⁸³ Alexandra Horowitz, *Inside of a Dog: What Dogs See, Smell, and Know* (New York: Scribner, 2009), 238-241.

⁸⁴ Sgt. John E. O'Donnell, *None Came Home: The War Dogs of Vietnam* (1st Books Library, 2001).

⁸⁵ Cooper, 211.

⁸⁶ And doesn't this lesson entail, among other things, relentless scientific experimentation on animals, experimentation that includes, say, training pigeons for suicide missions inside missiles tracking their targets? Cooper, 110-111.