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Bestiality, Zoophilia, and Human-Animal Sexual Interactions

Joanna Bourke

Linda Susan Boreman (aka Linda Lovelace) was raised in Yonkers, New York, where, as a child, she fantasized about becoming a nun. By the time she was 21 years of age in 1970, her ambition was to marry a loving man and raise children. Two years later, her sadistic partner and pimp Chuck Traynor, along with film producer Robert Wolf, forced her at gun-point to make a pornographic movie which involving having sex with a short-haired, tan-coloured dog named Norman. Unlike Lovelace – about whom we know a great deal – little is known about Norman, except that he could “go” (that is, have sex) “all night and all day” and was “beady-eyed”.¹ When he looked at Lovelace, she “had the eerie sensation that he knew more about what was going to happen than I did”.² The silent 8mm stag film was released under a number of titles, including “Dog 1”, “Dog Fucker”, “Dog-a-Rama”, and “Dogarama”. As with 99 per cent of films in this genre, it depicted a woman rather than a man engaging in sexual acts with an animal.³

Although “Dogarama” became notorious within a pornographic sub-culture, its popularity never reached the heights of “Deep Throat”, a human-on-human film that Lovelace and Traynor made later that year. “Deep Throat” grossed approximately \$100

¹ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, *Ordeal*, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 92.

² Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, *Ordeal*, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 92.

³ Marty Rimm, “Marketing Pornography on the Information Superhighway: A Survey of 917,410 Images, Descriptions, Short Stories, and Animations Downloaded 8.5 Million Times by Consumers in Over 2,000 Cities in Forty Countries, Provinces, and Territories”, *Georgetown Law Journal*, 83 (1994-1995), 1849-1934. Also see Robert E. Jenkins and Alexander R Thomas, *Deviance Online: Portrayals of Bestiality on the Internet* (New York: Centre for Social Science Research at the State University of New York, 2004), 12.

million (although some estimates claim \$600 million). Lovelace had only agreed to making both of these pornographic films after being beaten and threatened with death by Traynor but, ironically, it was the success of “Deep Throat” that eventually enabled her to escape from his grip.

Eight years after the release of Dogarama, Lovelace published her account of filming it. She revealed that if she could have “foreseen how bad it was going to be”, she “wouldn’t have surrendered” to Traynor’s threats and “would have chosen the possibility of death”. She claimed that

I am able to handle almost everything that has happened to me in my life... but I’m still not able to handle that day. A dog. An animal. I’ve been raped by men who were no better than animals, but this was an actual animal and that represented a huge dividing line.⁴

Her confession is revealing. During her years with Traynor, Lovelace suffered multiple insults and assaults, including rape, beatings, and anal sadism, but she regarded having sex with a dog as worse than death. The suffering inflicted on Lovelace by the “bestial” men who repeatedly raped her was multiplied many times over when the “beast” was a member of a species for whom consent was also deemed irrelevant. No one asked Norman whether he consented; no one asked Lovelace either.

Within the hyper-sexualised, pornographic circles in which Lovelace moved, fantasizing about or performing acts of bestiality was considered risqué and arousing. Lovelace recalled that playboy Hugh Hefner would spend hours “rapping about sex with

⁴ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 91-2.

animals". He admitted that he had tried several times to "get a girl and a dog together".⁵ Indeed, "Dogarama" was not the first time Traynor had attempted to get Lovelace into committing bestiality either. Before that film, Traynor had intended to drive Lovelace to Juarez (in Mexico) to watch her and other women having sex with a donkey. The "event" was planned to take place in sporting pit surrounded by customers who would lay bets on how many centimetres of a donkey's penis each women could accommodate in their vaginas. Traynor told Lovelace what to expect:

The chicks [women] go in one at a time.... And the crowd cheers, just like when prizefighters come into a ring. And then they strap the chick up on this contraption and then they bring out their trained donkey and they lead the donkey right into the fucking cunt.... They've got to point him right, you dig? Sometimes the chick gets ripped up a little – I'm telling you, you haven't lived 'till you've seen one of those donkey dongers. Those suckers are huge.⁶

Fortunately for Lovelace, a car accident prevented them arriving in Juarez, so Traynor purchased a dog named Rufus with the intentions of forcing Lovelace to have sexual intercourse with him instead. On this occasion, however, Lovelace had taken advice from an experienced bestialist who specialized in "making love to dogs". Lovelace was advised to

wait for the animal to come to you. Stay in just one spot and let him take all the time in the world. If you move at all, he may get scared off. A dog doesn't like it when you back away or make any moves toward it.... And

⁵ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 157.

⁶ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 76-7.

whatever else you do, don't touch it [the dog's penis] directly. You'll scare the dog to death.

Lovelace took the advice to heart, but simply “reverse[d] her instructions”. By acting in a way that dogs found sexually aggressive, Rufus “backed off” and refused to perform.⁷ In this way, both Lovelace and Rufus were able to exert some agency, albeit within limits set by an abusive husband and a predatory owner.

Although Lovelace regarded sexual intercourse between humans and animals with loathing, she admitted that her entire world at that time was “bestial”. The millions of “ordinary” men and women who flocked to see the film “Deep Throat”, in which Lovelace was literally raped on screen, participated in this theatre of degradation. Like other women in her milieu, Lovelace was referred to as an animal: she was a just another “chick”. The pornographers were a “Wolf” and animal “trainer/Traynor”. When describing the multiple rapes, Lovelace routinely characterized her assailants as “animals” who treated her “as though I was a piece of meat”.⁸ Unsurprisingly, she was deeply scarred by her sex acts with human as well as non-human animals. But it was the forced act of bestiality with Norman that was most painful. She recalled that

There were no greater humiliations left for me. The memory of that day and that dog does not fade the way other memories do. The overwhelming sadness that I felt on that day is with me at this moment, stronger than ever. It was a bad day, such a bad day.⁹

⁷ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 143-44.

⁸ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 35-6.

⁹ Linda Lovelace with Mike McGrady, Ordeal, 1st pub. 1980 (London: W. H. Allen, 1981), 94.

Lovelace, Norman, Rufus, and an unnamed donkey were nothing more than commodities to be exploited by sadistic pornographers and their patrons.

* * *

Lovelace's bestiality and her emotional responses to it provide one way of approaching the question of human-animal relations. As a child, Lovelace had been the proud owner of a canine companion, whom she adored. Dogs are a part of human culture, and have been for centuries. Indeed, non-human animals are central to human culture, even its sexual imaginary. From the earliest human cultures through to ancient Egypt, India, Rome, and Greece, cave paintings and other artistic forms depict humans having sex with animals. In the modern period, sexual relations between species appear in art (Katsushika Hokusai's "The Dream of the Fisherman's Wife", 1820), literature (H. G. Wells' The Island of Dr Moreau in 1896 and its film version The Island of Lost Souls of 1932), sex education manuals for children (Jane Cousins' Make It Happy in 1978), and theatre (Bamber Gascoigne's Leda Had A Little Swan in 1968 and Edward Albee's The Goat: Or, Who is Sylvia in 2003), as well as anthropology, myth, and folk tales.¹⁰

Given the centrality of animals within the human imaginary, it is not surprising that there is a proliferation of terms used to refer to "human-animal sexual relations". Some commentators focus on the act of intercourse (which is called "bestiality", "an unnatural offence", "buggery", "sodomy", "Egyptian", "animal love", or "animal sexual abuse"), while others assign an identity on human practitioners ("bestialists", "sodomists", "zoosexuals", or "zoos", for example). Psychiatrists have coined a vast number of diagnoses, each seeking to describe distinctive sexual practices or

¹⁰ For a discussion, see Midas Dekkers, Dearest Pet: On Bestiality, trans. Paul Vincent (London: Verso, 1994).

orientations. These include zoophilia, zoophilism, zoerasty, zoostuprum, zoofetishism, zoerastia, zoosadism, formicophilia, animal fetishism, and bestiosexuality.

Seemingly non-judgemental descriptions, which avoid both medicalizing and pathologizing practitioners, also proliferate, but are equally problematic. For example, my preferred phrase – “sexual activities between humans and animals” – overlooks the fact that humans are animals: all sex between humans is, by definition, “sex between animals”. While admitting this problem, in this essay I will nevertheless be referring to “humans” and “animals” as a convenient shorthand. The text would be encumbered if I insisted throughout of referring to “sex between nonhuman and human-animals”.

There is a further problem: what is meant by “sex”? Humans engage in a range of activities they call “sexual”, including caressing, masturbating, cunnilingus, fellating, and penetrating the anus or vagina, to name just a few. As we shall see, both in legal texts and animal protection discourses, the assumption is often made that “bestiality” involves penetration of the mouth, anus, or vagina of one or more of the participants. This makes it easier to argue that the acts are offensive because of potential or actual injury to either of the participants. Ethical issues become less clear-cut if “sexual” includes non-penetrative eroticism or non-genital sensuality, such as when a cat licks a woman’s vulva or (as in formicophilia) a woman is aroused by ants collecting honey from her mons veneris or her hand. It is no coincidence that both of the examples I have mentioned here involve sexual acts between women and animals, since female sexuality is routinely assumed to be less aggressive than its male counterparts. In contrast, the debates about bestiality have too often assumed a phallic model of sexuality that de-eroticises most of the body, localising eroticism in the penis – whether of the human or animal male.

Imprecision in defining the main terms is compounded by the almost total absence of statistical information about how many people engage in sexual activities

with animals. Most acts take place in private. Practitioners are profoundly aware of the need for secrecy. The tiny proportion of cases that lead to arrests and convictions are often folded into statistics that also refer to “buggery” between consenting (human) adults. What surveys do exist are frequently taken in psychiatric or penal settings, making them highly skewed towards deviant populations and extreme practices such as zoosadism. This means that the high correlation between men who practice bestiality and go on to hurt other people may be due, in fact, to sample bias.¹¹

Nor do we know the number of animals involved. Only rarely are they named, as were Lovelace’s “Norman” and “Rufus”. The animals are often not injured and so do not come to the notice of veterinarians and other human carers. At the other extreme, they may be subsequently killed; their deaths unmourned.

These are formidable, yet unavoidable, problems. It has led to a situation where nearly everyone who works in the field cite American sexologist Alfred C. Kinsey’s extraordinary surveys in Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (1948) and Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (1953). Kinsey and his team found that one adult American male in twelve or fourteen (8 per cent) claimed to have had a sexual encounter with an animal. In farming communities, 17 per cent had experienced orgasm as a result of animal contacts since their adolescence, but this statistic rose as high as 65 per cent in some locations. They concluded that

¹¹ Andrea M. Beetz, “Bestiality and Zoophilia: Associations with Violence and Sex Offending”, in Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia. Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 46-70; Rebecca L. Bucchieri, “Bridging the Gap: The Connection between Violence Against Animals and Violence Against Humans”, Journal of Animal and Natural Resource Law, 11 (2015), 115-35; Justin P. Nichols, “The Hidden Dichotomy in the Law of Morality”, Campbell Law Review, 31 (2008-2009), 591-611; Kathleen M. Quinn, “Animal Abuse at Early Age Linked to Interpersonal Violence”, in Brown University Child and Adolescent Behavior Letter (March 2000), np.

Ultimately, 14 to 16 per cent of the rural males of the grade school level, 20 per cent of the rural males of the high school level, and 26 to 28 per cent of the rural males of the college level have had some animal experience to the point of orgasm.

In most cases, the sexual encounter was a passing phase or occurred when substitutes for heterosexual human relationships were unavailable. Nevertheless, Kinsey admitted that strong emotional ties could develop between farm boys and their animal love-object: there were even men who were “quite upset emotionally, when situations force them to sever connections with the particular animal”.¹²

Kinsey also asked American women about their sexual practices. He believed that females were “less inclined” than males to be “aroused by a variety of psychosexual stimuli”. He believed that this was because women were less dependent on “psychological stimulation”. He did find, however, that 3.6 per cent admitted that they had engaged in sex with an animal after they had become adolescent. An even smaller proportion (1.5 per cent) of pre-adolescents had engaged in such acts. Nearly all of these sexual contacts involved pets such as dogs and cats.¹³

The only other major, population-wide (as opposed to penal or psychiatric) survey took place in 1972. Morton Hunt sampled 2,026 persons aged over 18 years and living in 24 urban areas across the US. He found that 5% of American men and 2% of American women reported at least one sexual encounter with an animal.¹⁴ He

¹² Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin, Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co. Ltd., 1948), 670-71 and 675-76.

¹³ Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, Clyde E. Martin, and Paul H. Gebhard, Sexual Behavior in the Human Female (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1953), 502 and 505-6.

¹⁴ Morton M. Hunt, Sexual Behavior in the 1970s (Chicago: Playboy Press, 1974).

explained the lower statistics compared with Kinsey's survey on the grounds that his sample were more urbanised and had less access to animals.

Despite the repeated use of these statistics, their usefulness is highly questionable. Not only were the surveys based on research conducted between 55 years (Hunt) and three-quarters a century (Kinsey) ago, but the methodologies employed were flawed. Hunt was neither a trained sociologist nor a sexologist. Kinsey's "persuasive" (and, some say, aggressive) interviewing style has often been noted.¹⁵ As a consequence, faced with the absence of reliable data, many commentators simply make assertions based on their personal impressions. It is not uncommon to hear unsubstantiated claims that bestiality is "not uncommon in some districts and under certain circumstances".¹⁶ No evidence is provided.

Better data exists about the different animal species preferred by practising bestialists. When asked, they generally contend that their most favourite animals are male canines, followed by female canines, and then male equines. The fourth most favoured animal was female equines (for men) and male felines (for women).¹⁷ This is not to rule out a vast range of other animals being used as sexual companions, including goats, pigs, sheep, cows, chickens, turkeys, hamsters, dolphins, eels, and octopuses.

Imprecise definitions and the lack of data on the numbers involved have not inhibited legal and media interest in human-animal sexual practices. Attitudes to bestiality have varied dramatically over time and geopolitical region. In England prior to

¹⁵ For example, see William G. Cochran, Frederick Mosteller, and John W. Tukey, Statistical Problems of the Kinsey Report on Sexual Behavior in the Human Male (Washington DC: The American Statistical Association, 1954).

¹⁶ W. Norwood West, "Sexual Offenders: A British View", The Yale Law Journal, 55.3 (April 1946), 534.

¹⁷ Hani Miletski, "Zoophilia – Implications for Therapy", Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 26.2 (2001), 86-7.

the sixteenth century, “buggery” (as it was called) was not harshly punished. In 1533, however, the Buggery Act deemed “bestial” acts (either with a human or a non-human animal) to be deserving of death. This was only reduced to imprisonment from 1861, although the number of years that offenders had to serve varied from life to a few months. In many parts of Europe and the US after the Second World War, the seriousness of the offence was progressively reduced. Rather than being a felony, bestialists were increasingly prosecuted for cruelty to animals, breach of the peace, trespass, damage to property, or offences to public decency.

It was only in the twenty-first century that a particularly censorious attitude towards bestiality re-emerged, largely in response to animal rights activism and (particularly in the US) religious fundamentalism.¹⁸ Although arguments based on cruelty to animals remained prominent, increased attention was also paid to concepts such as “dignity” and “consent”. Fairly representative of this emphasis can be seen in the UK Home Office’s 2000 report, Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law of Sex Offences. It decided that sex with animals should remain a criminal offence because bestiality “offended against the dignity of animals and of people”. Animals are unable to consent to such activity, which is why legal systems needed to remain in place in order to “protect animals” from this “profoundly disturbed behaviour”.¹⁹

It is worth asking, therefore, what is “profoundly disturbing” about bestiality? Throughout the period, public attitudes to bestiality reflected entrenched religious prohibitions. Judeo-Christian texts proclaimed bestiality to be wicked. Leviticus 18, verses 22-24 stated that humans would “defile” themselves if they “lie with any beast”:

¹⁸ For a discussion, see Michael Roberts, “The Unjustified Prohibition Against Bestiality: Why the Law in Opposition Can Find No Support in the Harm Principle” Journal of Animal and Environmental Law, 1 (2009-10), 184-91. For a detailed analysis, state by state, see Gieri Bolliger and Antoine E. Goetschel, “Sexual Relations with Animals (Zoophilia): An Unrecognized Problem in Animal Welfare Legislation”, in in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 34-5.

¹⁹ Home Office, Setting the Boundaries: Reforming the Law of Sexual Offences (London: The Home Office, 2000), 126-27.

“it is a confusion”, the scriptures contended. Leviticus 20, verses 15-16 reiterated the point, insisting that a man or woman who has sexual intercourse with any beast “shall surely be put to death: and ye shall slay the beast”.²⁰ Similar verses can be found in Deuteronomy 27:21 and Exodus 22:19.²¹ Bestiality was said to be an affront to the “dignity of man” and, as philosopher Emmanuel Kant decreed, it degraded people “below the level of animals”.²² Like masturbation and homosexuality, it was condemned as a form of non-reproductive sex.

For many commentators, there was also something repugnant about the sexed bodies of non-human animals. They inspired disgust. For example, when a woman in Iowa witnessed her husband having sex with a cow, she was granted a divorce, not because her husband had been unfaithful but on the grounds of “extreme cruelty” to her. The author of Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality (1962), reported that the “indignity” of her husband’s bestiality “would make the marriage relation so revolting to her that it would be impossible for her to discharge the duties of a wife”. This would “defeat the whole purpose of the relation”.²³

Of course, it is worth noting that the opposite conclusion could be drawn. Might bestiality “upgrade” animals by treating them “as something better than they are”, asks philosopher Peter Morriss in “Blurred Boundaries” (1997). He contended that

Sexual intercourse is supposed to be a sign of love; it is supposed to be carried out between two creatures of approximately equal standing. For a human to have sexual intercourse with an animal implies that it is of equal

²⁰Leviticus 18: 22-24 and Leviticus 20: 15-16.

²¹Deuteronomy 27:21 and Exodus 22:19.

²²Emmanuel Kant, Lectures on Ethics, trans. P. Heath (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 156.

²³ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 42.

standing to the human.... So it blurs, or denies, boundaries, particularly the boundary between the human and the animal.²⁴

Despite religious and moralistic injunctions, distinctions were routinely made between different categories of people who had sex with animals. Until the rise of “zoo” movements in the late twentieth century (of which I will say more shortly), a sharp divide was drawn between youthful or “experimental” bestiality and its adult, long-standing counterpart. In the former instances, bestiality was regarded as a regrettable yet opportunistic activity. Practitioners were boys and young men living in rural areas who either lacked alternative ways to attain sexual gratification or where pre-marital sexual activity with humans was taboo.²⁵ As the forensic psychiatrist Richard von Krafft-Ebing reminded readers in Psychopathia Sexualis (1886), the “monstrous and revolting” act of bestiality was often the outcome of “low morality and great sexual desire, with lack of opportunity for natural indulgences”.²⁶ Bestialists might also believe that bestiality was a cure for venereal disease.²⁷ Whatever the motive, practitioners were typically naïve and, when found out, embarrassed. In the early 1980s, for example, one police surgeon recalled interviewing a young man suspected of bestiality. The man admitted that he had become “curious and, more important, frustrated” after attending sex instruction in school. He had “attempted to enlist the services of several girls of his acquaintance to help him with his homework, but had been rejected”. Therefore, when he witnessed some cattle on a farm “behaving in an interesting manner”, he decided to enlist their help instead. The police

²⁴ Peter Morriss, “Blurred Boundaries”, Inquiry. An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy, 40 (1997), 271.

²⁵ I. D. Craig, “Bestiality”, The Police Surgeon. Journal of the Association of Police Surgeons of Great Britain, 20 (November 1981), 42. Also see Andrea M. Beetz, “Bestiality/Zoophilia: A Scarcely Investigated Phenomenon Between Crime, Paraphilia, and Love”, Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice, 4.2 (2004), 17; Gerald H. Cerrone, “Zoophilia in a Rural Population: Two Case Studies”, Journal of Rural Community Psychology, 12.1 (summer 1991), 29-39; Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 45; Daniel T. Wilcox, Caroline M. Foss, and Margerite L. Donathy, “A Case Study of a Male Sex Offender with Zoosexual Interests and Behaviors”, Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11.3 (September 2005).

²⁶ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis. A Medico-Forensic Study, 1st pub. 1886 (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939), 561.

²⁷ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 120.

surgeon was sympathetic, paternalistically observing that, despite the offence, the suspect was “a pleasant lad, embarrassed and ashamed by the situation”. All that was needed was “tactful and sympathetic management”, including proper sex education and access to more compliant members of the (human) opposite sex.²⁸ Such forms of bestiality were misguided, rather than wicked.

In contrast, adult men who practiced bestiality were a more worrying phenomenon. At the very least, they might be impotent or afraid of inter-human sexual relations, as Sigmund Freud believed.²⁹ Of greater concern was the possibility that they were intellectually subnormal or psychiatrically ill.³⁰ Krafft-Ebing, therefore, distinguished between the relatively benign practitioner who lacked any “opportunity for natural indulgences” and those for whom such practices were evidence of a “psycho-pathological condition”.³¹

With the growing institutional and ideological power of psychiatry (In particular, its forensic branch), the pathological nature of bestiality became increasingly more prominent. Even youthful practitioners of bestiality were being scrutinized for signs of a much more alarming malaise than mere curiosity. Once again, Krafft-Ebing’s case studies were crucial to the pathologization of human-animal sexual contact. The bestialists he treated often possessed a “heavy taint” and “constitutional neurosis”, which made them “impotent for the normal act”. They were degenerates or atavistic

²⁸ I. D. Craig, “Bestiality”, The Police Surgeon. Journal of the Association of Police Surgeons of Great Britain, 20 (November 1981), 42.

²⁹ Sigmund Freud, Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, authorized translation by James Strachey (London: Imago Publishing Company, 1949), 27. Note that Freud did not believe that they were necessarily insane.

³⁰ Manjeet Singh Bhatia, Shruti Srivastava, and Sumeet Sharma, “An Uncommon Case of Zoophilia: A Case Report”, Medicine, Science, and the Law, 45.2 (2005), 174-75; Edward Allen Clifford, The Sexual Perversions and Abnormalities, 2nd ed. , 1st 1940 (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 326; L. Shenken, “Psychotherapy in a Case of Bestiality”, American Journal of Psychotherapy, 14 (1960), 728-40; W. Norwood West, “Sexual Offenders: A British View”, The Yale Law Journal, 55.3 (April 1946), 534; Daniel T. Wilcox, Caroline M. Foss, and Margerite L. Donath, “Working With Zoosexual Offenders (Addressing High Levels of Deviance)”, in Wilcox, Tanya Garrett, and Leigh Harkins (eds.), Sex Offender Treatment. A Case Study Approach to Issues and Interventions (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 243-44.

³¹ Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis. A Medico-Forensic Study, 1st pub. 1886 (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939), 561-62.

throwbacks to earlier evolutionary stages of life. Every trait common to criminally degenerate men were also ascribed to bestialists. Krafft-Ebing gave as an example a patient who had been born out of wedlock to a mother who was “deeply tainted, hysteron-epileptic”; his “deformed, asymmetrical cranium and deformity and asymmetry of the bones of the face” were proof of “psychically degeneracy”; and he had been a masturbator and abuser of animals since his early youth. In short, he was a “human monster”.³²

By the early twentieth-century, it was almost axiomatic that bestiality was an “impulse obsession” and therefore evidence of “hereditary degeneracy”.³³ Typical examples were given by Léon Henri Thoinet in Medicolegal Aspects of Moral Offenses (1911). One of his patients was a young man who “had a horror of women” and, from the age of 17 years engaged in sexual activity with hens, ducks, horses, and cows. Thoinet was not surprised to discover that his patient had alcoholic parents, was a mystic, and, from the age of five years, had suffered “epileptic vertigo, followed by brief attacks of ambulatory automatism”.³⁴

It was rare for any of these commentators to reflect on the biased nature of their samples. Practically all based their analyses on men (and occasionally women) who were either incarcerated in prison for horrendous acts of violence or had been forcibly committed to lunatic institutions with longstanding psychiatric problems. Given their sample, it was inevitable that these forensic specialists would conclude that

³² Richard von Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis. A Medico-Forensic Study, 1st pub. 1886 (London: William Heinemann Ltd, 1939), 532 and 534.

³³ Léon Henri Thoinot, Medicolegal Aspects of Moral Offenses, trans. Athur Wisswold Weyssse (Philadelphia: F. A. David Co., 1911), 444.

³⁴ Léon Henri Thoinot, Medicolegal Aspects of Moral Offenses, trans. Athur Wisswold Weyssse (Philadelphia: F. A. David Co., 1911), 444.

bestiality was a symptom of violent criminal tendencies, psychosis, and other serious afflictions.³⁵

The medicalization of bestiality gained institutional respectability in 1980 when it first entered the American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). Renamed "zoophilia", DSM-III described bestiality as a recognisable psychiatric disorder in which "the act or fantasy of engaging in sexual activity in animals" was a "repeatedly preferred or exclusive method of achieving sexual satisfaction".³⁶ By DSM-IV, published in 1994, zoophilia had lost its stand-alone status but was listed under "Paraphilia Not Otherwise Specified", along with telephone scatologia (obsession for making obscene calls), necrophilia (engaged in sex with corpses), partialism (exclusive sexual focus on one part of the body), and the three fetishes coprophilia, klismaphilia, and urophilia (fetishes for faeces, enemas, and urine in turn).³⁷ Twenty-first century psychiatrists warned that men convicted of sexual offences with animals were "the most deviant and indiscriminate of sex offenders".³⁸ They engaged in a range of different offences and had a particularly high likelihood of "dangerousness".³⁹ Not surprisingly, treatments became increasingly harsh. They

³⁵ For example, see Samuel H. Ruskin, "Analysis of Sex Offenses Among Male Psychiatric Patients", American Journal of Psychiatry, 97 (January 1941), 964.

³⁶ American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, third edition (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1980), 270.

³⁷ American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994), 523.

³⁸ Gene G. Abel, Judith V. Becker, Jerry Cunningham-Rathner, and Joanne L. Rouleau, 1987, cited in Daniel T. Wilcox, Caroline M. Foss, and Margerite L. Donathy, "A Case Study of a Male Sex Offender with Zoosexual Interests and Behaviors", Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11.3 (September 2005), 305-17; Gene G. Abel and Joanne L. Rouleau, "The Nature and Extent of Sexual Assault", in W. L. Marshall, D. R. Laws, and H. G. Barbaree (eds.), Handbook of Sexual Assault (New York: Plenum Press, 1990).

³⁹ Daniel T. Wilcox, Caroline M. Foss, and Margerite L. Donathy, "A Case Study of a Male Sex Offender with Zoosexual Interests and Behaviors", Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11.3 (September 2005), 305-17. Arguments that bestialists would go on to harm humans are common in the literature. For example, see F. R. Ascione, "The Abuse of Animals and Human Interpersonal Violence", in Ascione and P. Arkow (eds.), Child Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Animal Abuse (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1999), 50-61; F. R. Ascione, "Children Who are Cruel to Animals: A Review of Research and Implications for Developmental Psychopathology", in L. Lockwood and Ascione (eds.), Cruelty to Animals and Interpersonal Violence (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1998), 83-104; Gary Duffield, Angela Hassiotis, and Eileen Vizard, "Zoophilia in Young Sexual Abusers", The Journal of Forensic Psychiatry, 9.2 (September 1998), 294-304.

included not only include group and family therapy, avoidance techniques, therapy and training, but also drugs, electric shock treatment, and incarceration.⁴⁰

The medicalization of zoophilia did not meet with universal approval. In the 1960s, some permissive voices could be heard. Robert Edward Lee Masters' Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (1962), for example, confidently stated that

Present-day scientists, basing their opinions upon extensive and impeccable data, have concluded that man's desire to mate with members of species other than his own is quite natural.

He noted that "parallels tendencies [were] to be found among other representatives of the animal world". Indeed, he claimed, bestialists were significantly less "perverted" than homosexuals since the former "'humanized' his opposite-sex animal love object" while the homosexual's same-sex love-object was "an abnormal one". In other words, bestialists tended to desire the opposite sex – which was less deviant than homosexual love for the same one. Attitudes towards bestiality, he argued, were nothing less than "emotionalism run amok, magical and theological superstition, puritanism, and hysteria".⁴¹

⁴⁰ For examples, see Gerald H. Cerrone, "Zoophilia in a Rural Population: Two Case Studies", Journal of Rural Community Psychology, 12.1 (summer 1991), 29-39 and Daniel T. Wilcox, Caroline M. Foss, and Margerite L. Donathy, "A Case Study of a Male Sex Offender with Zoosexual Interests and Behaviors", Journal of Sexual Aggression, 11.3 (September 2005), 305-17.

⁴¹ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 4, 124, and 44. He was arguing against the views of Krafft-Ebing who believed that the zoerast was "farther removed from the normal object" than the homosexual.

Others attacked the DSM directly for insisting that, to be diagnosed as having a paraphilia, patients (as they were increasingly called) had to “repeatedly” engage in or “exclusively” prefer sex with animals rather than with humans. As such, a large proportion of people who engaged in bestial practices were excluded. The diagnosis also required patients to be maladjusted or disturbed by their sexual practices and/or preferences. This meant that it was possible to argue that if a bestialist was neither harmed nor rendered socially incapacitated by their fantasies or practices, there was no problem. Religious groups were appalled. Along with homosexuality, moralists argued that the sexual preference or practice of bestiality was in itself pathological (as well as sinful) and they suspected psychiatrists of legitimating deviant sex.

The most influential critiques, though, did not come from religious moralists but from animal rights activists. They claimed that the focus on human participants was misguided: the question of bestiality needed to take account of animals. These arguments took many forms, most of which focussed on questions related to cruelty and consent.

Rights-based activists argue that bestial practices are intrinsically callous, if not vicious. Humans coerce animals into sexual practices. They breed certain animals (cows and hens, for instance) to be docile so they are unable to resist a determined human; they also “groom” them by making them entirely dependent on the goodwill of their human owners.⁴²

His later point about “grooming” animals for sex can be seen in pro-bestiality commentary. For example, in a particularly disturbing passage, Masters informed readers that

⁴² Anton Hvozdič, Andrej Bugarsky, Jana Kotterová, Milada Varqová et al., “Ethological, Psychological, and Legal Aspects of Animal Sexual Abuse”, The Veterinary Journal, 172 (2006), 375.

the animal's response is far more likely to be an erotic one if, as is the case with human females, it [the animal] has been subjected beforehand to a lengthy period of caresses and what may be called "love play".

He argued that the "bestialist no less than the human lover must... 'woo' the chosen sex-object, in order to allay anxieties, and in order to bring that object to a pitch of erotic arousal similar to his own". This "conditioning" need not last throughout the relationship since, "like women", animals

respond to competent erotic training by becoming conditioned eventually to an increasingly swift response to the needs of the sex partner, so that "love play" need not be so prolonged as when the animal was still a novice to the zoophilic relationship.

Even more offensively, he noted that animals respond to being raped "even less satisfactorily, and often with more vigorous resistance... than women".⁴³

Masters was openly dismissive of the sexual needs of women belonging to both human and non-human species. Others were unrepentant about causing injury, including bruising vaginas, battering cloaca, and even killing their animal partners. One German study in the 1960s found that 70 per cent of all zoophilic acts were violent: indeed, the authors found, they were often sadistic.⁴⁴ Another survey of 448 "battered

⁴³ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 81-2.

⁴⁴ Gieri Bollinger and Antoine F. Goetschel, "Sexual Relations with Animals (Zoophilia): An Unrecognized Problem in Animal Welfare Legislation", in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 36. Note, though, that only violent acts were likely to come to public awareness.

pets” found evidence of sexual assault in six per cent of the animals.⁴⁵ Andrea M. Beetz’s study of 113 men who practiced bestiality revealed that over five per cent confessed that they had at least once harmed an animal. Just under ten per cent admitted to have at least once used force during sexual acts with animals.⁴⁶ Even without explicit violence and coercion, the lives of most animals are exceptionally vulnerable to such assault.

Animal rights activists also warned that the high likelihood of causing physical harm to animals is compounded by their inability to consent to sexual intercourse with humans. Some animals are able to resist sexual activity by biting or scratching and others (such as Lovelace’s “Rufus”) avoided the encounter by failing to “perform” the required action. Nevertheless, most animals resemble infants, children, and what philosopher Tom Regan called “moral patients” in their inability to give meaningful consent.⁴⁷ Surely, such critics argue, there is an analogy between bestiality and child sexual abuse.⁴⁸

One of the most prominent advocates of this position is sociologist Piers Beirne. In an influential article published in Theoretical Criminology in 1997, Beirne argues that sex with animals is always abusive. He insists that because bestiality “almost always involve[s] coercion” and because “we will never know if animals are able to assent – in their terms – to human suggestions for sexual intimacy”, bestiality should be renamed “interspecies sexual assault”.⁴⁹ Beirne admits that he is worried that some critics will

⁴⁵ H. M. C. Munro and M. V. Thrusfield, “Battered Pets: Sexual Abuse”, in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia. Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 71. Also see Anton Hvozdič, Andrej Bugarsky, Jana Kotterová, Milada Varqová et al., “Ethological, Psychological, and Legal Aspects of Animal Sexual Abuse”, The Veterinary Journal, 172 (2006), 374-76.

⁴⁶ Andrea M. Beetz, “Bestiality/Zoophilia: A Scarcely Investigated Phenomenon Between Crime, Paraphilia, and Love”, Journal of Forensic Psychology Practice, 4.2 (2004), 14.

⁴⁷ Tom Regan, The Case for Animal Rights (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 327-29.

⁴⁸ I. Imbschweiler, M. Kummerfeld, M. Gerhard, I Pfeiffer, and P. Wohlsen, “Animal Sexual Abuse in a Female Sheep”, The Veterinary Journal, 182 (2009), 481.

⁴⁹ Piers Beirne, “Rethinking Bestiality: Towards a Concept of Interspecies Sexual Assault”, Theoretical Criminology, 1.3 (1997), 317 and 326. Also see Piers Beirne, “Rethinking Bestiality: Towards a Concept of

accuse him of diluting the horror of human-on-human sexual assault by introducing this concept. They are wrong, however. Following the highly controversial arguments of Carol Adams in books such as The Sexual Politics of Meat: A Feminist-Vegetarian Critical Theory (1990), Beirne notes that

Sexism and speciesism operate not in opposition to each other but in tandem. Interspecies sexual assault is the product of a masculinity that sees women, animals, and nature as objects that can be controlled, manipulated, and exploited.⁵⁰

It is a comment that resonates with Lovelace's experiences during the making of "Dogarama" and "Deep Throat".

Animal welfare groups, animal rights activists, and animal liberationists threw their energies behind these arguments. They claimed that, like paedophiles, bestialists "groom" their animal-victims to achieve compliance.⁵¹ Two researchers went so far as to claim that the "zoophile's world is similar to the rapist's and child sexual abuser's" in that both claim that the sexual encounters are consensual and mutually beneficial. They assert that "just as pedophiles differentiate between those who abuse children and those who love children – placing themselves, of course, in the latter group – zoophiles distinguish between animal abusers (bestialists) and those who are

Interspecies Sexual Assault", in Anthony L. Podberscek, Elizabeth S. Paul, and James A. Serpell (eds.), Companion Animals and Us. Exploring the Relationships Between People and Pets (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 313-331.

⁵⁰ Peirs Beirne, "Rethinking Bestiality: Towards a Concept of Interspecies Sexual Assault", Theoretical Criminology, 1.3 (1997), 327. Also see Carol J. Adams, "Woman-Battering and Harm to Animals", in Adams and Josephine Donovan (eds.), Animals and Women: Feminist Theoretical Explorations (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995), 55-84.

⁵¹ Helen M. C. Munro, "Animal Sexual Abuse", Veterinary Journal (2006), 195.

zoophiles”.⁵² As Gieri Bollinger and Antoine F. Goetrachel explained in 2005, although animals can develop strong positive feelings for humans (and may even initiate sexual relations), they usually do this “only... if it [sic] is used to such behaviour” or has been “trained to perform this behaviour”. In other words, bestial acts require significant “conditioning”: this “not only infringe[s] upon the free sexual development of an animal but also holds the danger of the creation of a strong dependency”.⁵³ Humans are required to honour the “dignity” of other species, which means protecting them from “humiliation, excessive exploitation, and interference”. This is similar to what “humans do on behalf of children.”⁵⁴

* * *

Arguments against human-animal sexual practices on the grounds that they cause pain and may even lead to injury are incontrovertible. Interestingly, this is the position often taken by those who don’t wish humans to be harmed. Penetrative intercourse with dogs, for example, can cause serious injuries if the act is interrupted before the dog ejaculates.⁵⁵ Disproportionate size or excessive vigour in penetration can also be dangerous to the human participant. In the US, for example, there was a powerful the backlash when bestialist Kenneth Pinyon died from a perforated colon after having sex with an Arabian stallion named “Bullseye”. The case caused a major uproar, and resulted in the re-criminalisation of bestiality in Washington. Robinson Devor directed a film entitled “Zoo” (2007) about the tragedy and its aftermath. However, proponents of bestiality counter these arguments on the grounds that that

⁵² Robert E. Jenkins and Alexander R Thomas, Deviance Online: Portrayals of Bestiality on the Internet (New York: Centre for Social Science Research at the State University of New York, 2004), 45.

⁵³ Gieri Bollinger and Antoine F. Goetschel, “Sexual Relations with Animals (Zoophilia): An Unrecognized Problem in Animal Welfare Legislation”, in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 39.

⁵⁴ Gieri Bollinger and Antoine F. Goetschel, “Sexual Relations with Animals (Zoophilia): An Unrecognized Problem in Animal Welfare Legislation”, in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 38-9 and 42.

⁵⁵ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 23-4.

the state should not be involved with regulating human behaviour simply because of potential danger. After all, many sexual practices are risky, including fisting, barebacking, and having unprotected sex with a person with a sexually transmitted infection. That is not a reason to criminalise such practices.

Animal activists, however, are primarily concerned with not causing harm to nonhuman animals. A weak version of this argument states that harm is intrinsic to cross-species sex because such encounters are “unnatural”. The problem with this argument is that both “wild” and domesticated animals do have sexual intercourse with nonhumans of different species to their own.⁵⁶

A more convincing argument focuses on the inability of animals to signal consent. For many activists, animals should be protected from all non-consensual practices, and not only sexual ones. Animals patently do not “consent” to numerous practices that occur in commercial farming, including meat or commodity production. Indeed, these activists point out, sexual and non-sexual forms of harm are indistinguishable. Animal liberationist Karen Davis insists that animal farming is “sexually abusive in essence” because it “invites lascivious conduct” towards “‘food’ animals on the part of producers and consumers alike”.⁵⁷ She points out that “humans engage in oral intercourse with unconsenting [sic] non-human animals every time they put a piece of an animal’s body inside their mouth”. Omnivorous humans over the age of fifty are “walking around with half their internal organs having been taken by force from creatures they think it demeaning of our species to have sex with”.⁵⁸ Davis’ view is

⁵⁶ Jonathan Balcombe, Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good (London: Macmillan, 2006), 126-32; Jennifer Terry, “‘Unnatural Acts’ in Nature: The Scientific Fascination with Queer Animals”, GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies (2000), 156; Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 77; Tony Milligan, “The Wrongness of Sex with Animals”, Public Affairs Quarterly, 25.3 (July 2011), 246.

⁵⁷ Karen Davis, The Holocaust and the Henmaid’s Tale. A Case for Comparing Atrocities (New York: Lantern Books, 2005), xiv.

⁵⁸ Karen Davis, “Bestiality: Animal Liberation or Human License?” (22 April 2001), at <http://www.upc-online.org/010422bestiality.html> (viewed 8 December 2016).

extreme, but consistent: people who oppose bestiality must resist every form of animal exploitation.

This insistence on consistency is important. How can someone argue against human-animal sex (which, they contend, is inherently non-consensual) and yet engage in thousands of other interactions with animals without eliciting meaningful consent? Animals do not consent to nearly all of their interactions with humans. They do not consent to be bred to look “cute”, to become involved in sports such as horse or dog racing, to be used as beasts of burden on farms, to test cosmetics and medication, to be ogled in zoo enclosures, to be sprayed and neutered, to be killed and eaten, or to have their skin made into handbags. Their reproductive preferences and desires are also routinely overridden. Standard farming practices include the castration of pigs, the manual or electrical stimulation of the genitals of bulls to collect the semen, and the confinement of female cows on “rape racks” to artificially inseminate them. It is hard to dispute the view of legal scholar Mary Anne Case that, in prohibiting bestiality, “it is our attitude toward sex, more than our concern for animal freedom of choice or animal welfare, that motivates us”.⁵⁹

There is another way to think about consent, however. It is worth asking why there is such an emphasis on consent in human-with-human sexual relations. For example, we forbid sexual relations between adults and children because, although the child might not be able to understand the psychosocial significance of the sexual act in human communities – and, therefore, may even be willing participants – it is likely that, at a later stage, they will understand it. The consequences of that knowledge could be traumatic.

⁵⁹ Mary Anne Case, “Pets or Meat”, Chicago-Kent Law Review, 80 (2005), 1148-149. Emphasis added.

This is not the case with nonhuman animals who are unlikely to possess the cognitive understanding of the importance of the sex act for humans. In other words, human infants, children, and “moral patients” have the potential to share our understanding of sex and this knowledge might harm them in the future. In contrast, the dog who approaches and voluntarily mounts a woman is following his own species-specific “meaning”. Although we may not know what that “meaning” actually consists of, our ignorance does not make the dog’s actions, and the human’s response, necessarily “wrong”. There is no reason to insist that animals must possess the same understanding about sex as human participants.

Further, in human-animal sexual relations the notion of “consent” is anthropocentric. It frames animal sexuality in human terms. What humans think is “sexual” might not be for the animals involved. They might understand it as being physically groomed (fondling), fed (ingesting ejaculate), relieved (masturbation), or given affection. Or, indeed, they might barely register the human contact at all. Nonhuman animals possess starkly different pleasure-worlds to human ones but, as I argue in What It Means to be Human, we need to celebrate the “unsubstitutable singularity” – the unknowability – of all sentient beings.

It is also important to question the much-asserted dogma that it is always impossible for a human to be in a sexually intimate relationship with a non-human animal. Even Beirne, who coined the term “interspecies sexual assault”, only claimed that sex with animals was “usually” forced or exploitative. Animals have complex emotional lives: they enjoy sex and affection, and deliberately seek it out. They take manifest delight in interspecies touching. They engage in genital rubbing and copulation outside breeding seasons. Primates stimulate the clitoris and penis of themselves and their companions, as well as engaging in “gg-rubbing”. They are highly sexed creatures.⁶⁰ Many have bodies that are very similar to ours

⁶⁰ Jonathan Balcombe, Pleasurable Kingdom: Animals and the Nature of Feeling Good (London: Macmillan, 2006), 108-14. Also see Bruce Bagemihl, Biological Exuberance: Animal Homosexuality and Natural Diversity

and while it would be mistaken as well as anthropomorphic to infer psychic states like “desire” to them, it is not unreasonable to assume that they too respond in positive ways to pleasurable sensations and have libidinal experiences.

* * *

Proponents of human-animal sexual relations argue persuasively that their sexual responses to their animal-companion are not only loving ones, but also are reciprocal. Indeed, animals have been known to “forsake intercourse with their own kind in testimony to their preference for relations with humans”.⁶¹ “Preferential humanity” might be a minority position for animals, but should not be ruled out entirely.

There have been many moving accounts of human-animal love. In My Dog Tulip (1965), for example, writer J. R. Ackerley provides lengthy, amorous descriptions of his companion-animal Queenie.⁶² When he was asked whether his affection included a sexual component, he admitted that when Queenie was in heat he would press his hand “against the hot swollen vulva she was always pushing at me at these times, taking her liquids into my palm”.⁶³ Elsewhere, he admitted to “A little finger-work”.⁶⁴ When Queenie died, Ackerley grieved intensely. “I shall never stop missing her”, he

(London: Profile, 1999); Jonathan Balcombe, Second Nature. The Inner Lives of Animals (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Marc Bekoff and John A. Byers (eds.), Animal Play: Evolutionary, Comparative, and Ecological Perspectives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁶¹ Robert Edward Lee Masters, Forbidden Sexual Behavior and Morality. An Objective Re-Examination of Perverse Sex Practices in Different Cultures (New York: The Julian Press, 1962), 46 and 82.

⁶² J. R. Ackerley, My Dog Tulip, 1st 1965 (New York: New York Review of Books, 1999)

⁶³ J. R. Ackerley, My Father and Myself (London: Bodley Head, 1968), 218.

⁶⁴ This is according to his friend Peter Parker, cited in Joan Acocella, “The Writer and the Dog”, The New Yorker (7 February 2011), online.

confessed, adding that “No human being has ever meant so much to me as she meant”.⁶⁵

Ackerley was writing in the late-1960s and his revelations caused outrage. From the late twentieth century onwards, however, self-defined “zoos” began contacting each other and establishing safe forums in which they could communicate with likeminded zoophilics. The internet proved to be crucial not only in the establishment of a “zoo identity” but also in sharing information and discussing questions of consent.⁶⁶

They were particularly keen to challenge the derogative image of zoophiliacs. Professional men (and some women) from stable, urban upbringings openly acknowledged their “preferential bestiality”.⁶⁷ Emboldened by the success of gay liberation, they argued that zoophilia was a sexual orientation, like homosexuality or transgenderism.⁶⁸ Like these other marginalised groups, their desires evoked strong emotions of affection, incited erotic passion, and fulfilled deeply-rooted fantasies.⁶⁹ Animals could be true “partners”. Humans and nonhuman animals were “companion species”.

⁶⁵ Dean Flower, “The Beastliness of ‘My Dog Tulip’”, *The Hudson Review*, 65.1 (spring 2012), 175.

⁶⁶ R. J. Maratea, “Screwing the Pooch: Legitimizing Accounts of a Zoophilic On-Line Community”, *Deviant Behavior*, 32 (2011), 918-43; Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 32.6 (2003), 526.

⁶⁷ Christopher M. Earls and Martin L. Lalumière, “A Case Study of Preferential Bestiality”, *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 38.4 (2009), 605-9.

⁶⁸ Robert E. Jenkins and Alexander R Thomas, *Deviance Online: Portrayals of Bestiality on the Internet* (New York: Centre for Social Science Research at the State University of New York, 2004), 45. Also see R. J. Maratea, “Screwing the Pooch: Legitimizing Accounts of a Zoophilic On-Line Community”, *Deviant Behavior*, 32 (2011), 929.

⁶⁹ Hani Miletski, “Is Zoophilia a Sexual Orientation: A Study”, in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), *Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 82.

Crucially, the same disciplines that had been responsible for the modern pathologization of bestialists – that is, psychiatry, sexology, and sociology – began changing their minds. They met with zoophilic communities and began sympathising with their members.

One of the earliest and most influential of these researchers is sexologist Hani Miletski, whose earlier work had addressed incest between mothers and sons. Miletski's zoophilic research involved 82 male and 11 female zoophiles and was published in the Journal of Sex Education and Therapy in 2001. She found that the majority of the people she interviewed were happy with their sexual preferences. They did not want to be "cured" and reported that "acceptance of their bestiality and zoophilia is the most important factor for their sense of well-being". They valued "consent" in their relationships and were devastated when their beloved companion died. One interviewee admitted that, after an extended period of grief over the death of his long-time sexual companion, he had bought a puppy. He waited for her to mature before making "sexual advances". However, this dog was "not interested in having sex with him", so he also "lost interest in having sex" with dogs.⁷⁰ In fact, even the notion of "grooming" an animal was anathema to her respondents. Mutual pleasure was their primary goal. As one zoophile told Miletski, "I enjoy it very much, so do the animals". He lamented the fact that

It can be a bit frustrating that the majority of society has yet to emerge from the ethical Dark Ages and still believe that we are somehow nasty individuals.

⁷⁰ Hani Miletski, "Zoophilia – Implications for Therapy", Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 26.2 (2001), 87.

He was confident about the rightness of his “own ethical code”, which he had “no desire to give up... and which does no harm to anyone else”.⁷¹

Miletski found that many zoophilics believed that their sexual orientation was innate. As one female zoophile recalled, years before she “understood sex, sexuality, morality, or zoophilia”, she

understood that I had a deep love for animals, a bond that was undeniable.... I don't believe I “chose” this lifestyle. It is just a part of who and what I am – one part of many. It is natural, consensual, satisfying, and overwhelmingly loving. My dogs are happy – I am happy.⁷²

In the words of another interviewees, “I feel a draw to dogs. Rottweiler above all other breeds. It's as if I am a Rottweiler, but I have the body of a human”.⁷³ This was a position taken by other zoophilics, such as Mark Matthews, whose autobiography The Horseman (1994) is a searing account of human-horse love. They believed zoophilia was a kind of “species dysphoria”, similar to that affecting transsexuals.⁷⁴ Psychological maladjustment arose primarily because zoophilics were forced to be secretive about their sexuality, and therefore were plagued by loneliness, guilt, anxiety, and depression.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Hani Miletski, “Is Zoophilia a Sexual Orientation: A Study”, in Andrea M. Beetz and Anthony L. Podberscek (eds.), Bestiality and Zoophilia: Sexual Relations with Animals (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2005), 89.

⁷² Hani Miletski, Understanding Bestiality and Zoophilia (Bethesda: East-West Publishing Co., 2002), 194.

⁷³ Hani Miletski, “Zoophilia – Implications for Therapy”, Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 26.2 (2001), 89.

⁷⁴ Mark Matthews, The Horseman (Amherst: Prometheus Books, 1994).

⁷⁵ Hani Miletski, “Zoophilia – Implications for Therapy”, Journal of Sex Education and Therapy, 26.2 (2001), 85.

In a similar study published in 2003, sociologists Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg also immersed themselves within a zoophilic community. They were struck by the similarities between “some of the early gay groups that we studied in the 1960s and 1970s” and zoophilic ones in at the end of the twentieth and beginning of the twenty-first centuries.⁷⁶ These “zoos” were anxious to distinguish themselves from “bestialists”, who they castigated as being concerned primarily with “human gratification”.⁷⁷ In contrast, zoophilics were passionately concerned for “the animals’ welfare and pleasure” and placed a strong “emphasis on consent in the pursuit of sexual gratification”.⁷⁸ All the “zoos” Williams and Weinberg spoke to claimed to have strong bonds of love for their animal partner and believed that their animal-companions loved them in return.⁷⁹ In the words of one member of the community, “My relationship with animals is a loving one in which sex is an extension of that love as it is with humans, and I do not have sex with a horse unless it consents”.⁸⁰ Or, as another contended, “Although I do get an erection when interacting sexually with a stallion, my first priority is always the animal’s pleasure, erection, and personal affection toward me”.⁸¹

These findings were at the opposite extreme to that of earlier generations of researchers, who based their research on bestialists within high-security prisons or psychiatric hospitals. In contrasts, “zoos” were highly affectionate towards their companions. One highly-educated zoophilic who communicated with psychologists Christopher M. Earls and Martin L. Lalumière wrote movingly about how his two “mare-

⁷⁶ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 525.

⁷⁷ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 526.

⁷⁸ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 526. Also see R. J. Maratea, “Screwing the Pooch: Legitimizing Accounts of a Zoophilic On-Line Community”, Deviant Behavior, 32 (2011), 928-31.

⁷⁹ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 529.

⁸⁰ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 526.

⁸¹ Colin J. Williams and Martin S. Weinberg, “Zoophilia in Men: A Study of Sexual Interest in Animals”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 32.6 (2003), 526.

wives” had brought him peace and love – both things he had previously lacked. He took great pleasure seeing them when he awoke every morning and at night would “sit with them, or stroke them or hold them or be with them.... Life’s good”. He admitted that he had

walked a long, hard road, largely without a map and I took some wrong turns, I had pain and despair and helplessness, but in the end I found the right path, reached my destination and now I am happy and at peace.⁸²

Of course, the zoophiles who have attracted the attention of these sexologists, sociologists, and psychologists are not representative of people who engage in sexual activities with animals. Their samples are just as skewed as their predecessor’s. Members of zoophilic communities are likely to be older, highly educated, and more community-orientated than other people who have sex with animals. They are more likely to value animals and, therefore, more concerned with arguments about and evidence for “consent” and “pleasure” in their animal-partners. Nevertheless, their existence is evidence that we should not automatically rule out bonds of love and affection between humans and animals.

This is not an argument for sexual contact with animals. After all, nearly all bestialists and many zoophilics treat their sexual partners as objects, of no intrinsic value or worth. They regard animals as simply more “cooperative” or “convenient” than human partners.⁸³

⁸² Christopher M. Earls and Martin L. Lalumière, “A Case Study of Preferential Bestiality”, Archives of Sexual Behavior, 38.4 (2009), 606.

⁸³ P. O. Peretti and M. Rowan, “Zoophilia: Factors Relating to its Sustained Practice”, Panminerva Medica, 25 (1983), 129.

But it is an argument against the automatic rejection of such relationships and the pathologizing of all zoophilics. The extreme differentials in power relations between human and nonhuman animals means that we must be extremely wary about sexual relations with nonhuman animals, as we must be with sexual relations with vulnerable humans. Unequal relations are an endemic problem in sexual relationships. Given the exploitation of animals dating from the beginning of human civilisation, these concerns are particularly fraught in human-animal contacts. At the very least, those who do engage in zoophilia need to be clear that it is not possible to be romantically involved with an animal if they also eat them, exploit their carcasses, and mistreat them in a multitude of other ways.

* * *

In conclusion, let's return to Linda Lovelace's heartrending autobiography. In it, male human-beings not only equate women with animals but also insult a male-dog called "Norman" by forcing him to have sex with a non-consenting Lovelace. The (human) men are little more than "beasts" themselves. Readers are encouraged to question whether the chief conflict in interpersonal relationships is due to irreconcilable genders (female or male) or to different genus (Canis or Homo). This is what Peter Singer was alluding to when he argued that while the "taboo on sex with animals" may have "originated as part of a broader rejection of non-reproductive sex", the

vehemence with which the prohibition continues to be held, its persistence while other non-reproductive sexual acts have become acceptable, suggests that there is another powerful force at work: our desire to differentiate ourselves, erotically and in every other way, from animals.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Peter Singer, "Heavy Petting" (2001), www.nerve.com/opinions/singer/heavypetting.

The non-human category of sentient beings is placed at the bottom of the great “Chain of Being”, to be patronised or petted, exploited or eaten, but not to serve as legitimate objects for sexual pleasure. This absolute prohibition on sexual relations between humans and animals is interesting, especially given the subtle and malleable ways most interactions between people and animals are discussed.

Lovelace’s autobiography enables us to critique questions of consent and affection. Both she and “Norman” possess “lives that matter”. Both were being groomed and coerced into a sexual encounter. In fact, the autobiography that includes the account of “Dogarama” is actually the second of two memoirs that she co-wrote. The first account of her life is a celebration of desire: there is no mention of her sexual encounter with a dog nor is there any hint of being coerced into sex by her pimp-husband. Both “bestialities” were excluded from the first account of her life. In contrast, her second autobiography asks: Are men animals? Although insulting to real-life animals (including the “bleary” Norman), her answer is a resounding “yes” – sex with human-males is bestial.

The prohibition of sex between human and nonhuman animals is primarily a function of history – that is, centuries of prohibitions. That is no reason to overturn it and, indeed, it is a strong reason to move with caution. However, there are no limits to the imagination of eroticism. We can all imagine ways of being companionate with an animal: a form of “trans-species connectedness”. In order to achieve this, though, we need a different conception of sexuality – one that is neither phallogocentric or anthropocentric. As Monika Bakke put it,

Attitudes to sexual relations between human and nonhuman animals depend on the ideas we have about ourselves, our bodies, our position in the

environment, our general convictions about sexuality and eroticism, as much as on the specific ways we actually get our pleasures.⁸⁵

Love is a “coup de foudre”; it is ungovernable. By being “open to otherness”, we might finally find ourselves edging towards becoming “companion species”.

⁸⁵ Monika Bakke, “The Predicament of Zoopleasures: Human-Nonhuman Libidinal Relations”, in Tom Tyler and Manuela Rossini (eds.), Animal Encounters (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 224.