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HUMAN SEXUAL CONTACT WITH ANIMALS

New insights from current Research

Sexual Contact with Animals throughout History

Throughout history we can find pictures, paintings and reports about humans having sexual interactions with animals.

One of the earliest rock paintings, that shows a depiction of a man having intercourse with a large quadruped (probably a deer), dates from the bronze age (the 2nd millenium B.C.) (Dekkers, 1994). Ancient rock paintings in Siberia show the intercourse of men with moose (Taylor, 1996). Another rock drawing from 5000 B.C. shows a fox/dog copulating with a woman (Neret, 1994).

From a revision of the Sumerian and Akkadian law by Hammurabi in Babylonia (1955-1913 B.C.) we know, that sex with animals must have been practiced there, since it is explicitly forbidden by death penalty in one of the nearly 300 legal provisions.

Sometimes only the intercourse with certain kinds of animals - e.g. impure animals - was forbidden, as in the society of the Hittites (13th Century B. C.). Thus, it was forbidden to have sex with a dog or a cow, but not with a horse or a mule (Gregersen, 1983; Dekkers, 1994).

In the Old Testament all kinds of sexual contact with animals is prohibited. The references read as follows:

"Whoever lies with a beast, shall be put to death" (Exodus 22:19)

"You shall not have sexual intercourse with any beast to make yourself unclean with it, nor shall a woman submit herself to intercourse with a beast: that is violation of nature" (Leviticus 18:28-24).

"A man who has sexual intercourse with an beast shall be put to death and you shall kill the beast. If a woman approaches any animal to have intercourse with it you shall kill the woman and the beast" (Leviticus 20: 15-16).

These biblical text-passages were the justification for punishing people with the death penalty until up into the 18th century, as can be seen from court reports.

Many paintings and carvings of humans engaging in sexual interactions with animals have been found in various ancient religious temples (Davis, 1954). In Egypt, women copulated with male goats and men with female goats in the temple at Mendes to worship the goat as the incarnation of the procreative deity. Widely known are reports from ancient Greek mythology: especially Zeus - morphed into different kinds of animals - engaged in sex with different women. The best known episode and the probably most painted one is that one, where he copulates with Leda as a swan. On other occasions he took the shape of a bull to

rape Demeter and to have intercourse with Europa. As a stallion he had sex with Dia (Ixion's wife). In ancient Greece sexual acts with animals also were shown on stage. And in Ancient Rome it is reported to have been common for the shepherds to have sex with their sheep and there were brothels specializing in sex with different kinds of animals.

If we look long enough for information we can find reports and tales of sexual interaction of humans with nearly all kinds of halfway anatomically suitable animals - dogs, horses, goats, sheep, bears, large cats, foxes, donkeys, moose, deer, pigs, monkeys and apes, even crocodiles. Also sex with animals, that do usually not survive the intercourse, as most poultry and rodents, has been practiced.

Definitions of Terms

Sexual interaction of humans with animals is often referred to with different terms, such as sodomy, bestiality, zoophilia and zoerasty. The usual definitions of these terms are shortly described here (though different authors often give different definitions).

The rather outdated term sodomy is defined as "any sexual intercourse held to be abnormal, especially bestiality or anal intercourse between men" (Neufeldt & Guralnik, 1989). Often the term sodomy is used to describe any kind of "unnatural" sexual acts and "crimes against nature" (Stayton, 1994).

Bestiality is mostly used to describe any sexual acts and relations between a human being and an animal.

According to Rosenfeld (1967) and Rosenberger (1968) the term zoerasty is only appropriate, if the intercourse with an animal is an established preference. Krafft-Ebing (1935) uses that term for those with a pathological personality. But Masters (1966, 1962) calls anyone, who has sexual relations with animals a "zoerast" and states, that the animal sex is a kind of masturbation for those persons who have no emotional involvement with the animal.

The term zoophilia is frequently used with the same meaning as bestiality. Masters (1966) uses it to describe the predominant or exclusive desire for sexual relations with animals. The term "zoophilia" is also known from the DSM-III (APA, 1980). In the current version IV, it is included in the category "paraphilia not otherwise specified". The diagnostic criteria of the DSM-III are: "the act or fantasy of engaging in sexual activity is a repeatedly preferred or exclusive method of achieving sexual excitement".

According to the multi-axial system of the DSM-IV (APA, 1994) though, the person, in addition to the usual criteria, also has to show clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational or other important areas of functioning.

Though we know from recent research that the majority of people engaging in sex with animals do not suffer in a clinically significant extent, and their social and occupational life etc. is not necessarily impaired, I will call those people "zoophiles", or short "zoos", because that is what they call themselves. From contacts made over the internet, chats and email-lists I have learned, that the zoophile community - and there exists a zoo-community in the internet - discriminates between "zoophiles" and "bestialists". Also in the internet you can find many different definitions for these terms, but the bottom line mainly is: a zoophile has an emotional attachment to the animal, or at least he/she cares about the feelings, will and consent of the animal and is careful not to inflict any pain or distress to the animal or even hurt it.

Bestialists are referred to as engaging in animal sex mainly for their own gratification,

sometimes not caring really much about the animals, or also as just having sex with the animal because no human partner is available.

Research on Human Sexual Contact with Animals

In the last century, there have been different opinions about the prevalence of human-animal-sexual-interaction. According to general opinion, one is talking about a very limited to a very insignificant part of the population, mainly mentally retarded, morally depraved persons, farm boys and those who cannot get sex from a human partner.

Some more careful discussions of the subject can be found in the works of Freud (1963), Hirschfeld (1948) and Krafft-Ebing (1935). But research on bestiality is rare and consists mainly of single-case-studies and court reports. Certainly these studies provide us with some important information about zoophilic persons, but we can assume that the ones who get caught or volunteer for therapy are probably a special subgroup. According to Miletski, who recently did a study with a large sample of 93 zoophiles (1999) there had been only three important studies up to then, providing some information on prevalence and frequency of human sexual interaction with animals. They had a closer look at the subject and worked with larger samples. Unfortunately, at least some of the information must now be assumed to be outdated. These 3 studies were done by Kinsey et al. (1948 & 1953), Gebhard et al. (1965) and Hunt (1974).

Kinsey, Pomeroy and Martin's (1948 and 1953) studies on sexual behavior in the US provide a great deal of information on sexual contact with animals. In their studies we find the first data on the prevalence of bestiality - among men they found it to be 8%. But they find that in most cases the sexual contact occurs only a few times. They also state that the animal contacts are mainly confined to farm boys, because those have access to animals. According to their estimate about 40-50 % of all farm boys engage in sex with animals.

A third of the men had had their first sexual animal contact by the age of nine and about 6 % of their sample had their experiences during early adolescence. Among single men over 20 only 1% still had sex with animals - but for unmarried men in rural areas the figure was still 4% at the age of 25. Not only farm animals were chosen for animal contacts, but also cats and dogs.

In their study of 1953 on the sexuality of American women, Kinsey, Pomeroy, Martin and Gebhard found, that animal contacts occur much less often among females than among males. Only 1.5% of the females reported sexual contact with animals before adolescence, mostly the household-pet. 20% of those who reported animal contact reached orgasm through these experiences. Only 1.2 % reported repeated genital contact. 3.6% reported to have had sexual contact with the animal after the onset of adolescence, and 1.8 % had these experiences only until the age of 21. But there had also been some women who had their animal experiences at a later age - mostly a one-time experience. Most of the females who had sex with animals were single and were better educated than other participants of the study. In 75% of the animal contacts the animal involved was a dog. The sexual activities included general body contact, touching the animal's genitalia, masturbation of the animal, and being orally manipulated by the animal. Also intercourse with the animal was reported.

In their study of 1965 Gebhard, Gagnon, Pomeroy and Christenson compared different types of sex offenders on several issues, and one of them was sex with animals. They obtained data from over 1000 white males convicted of sex offenses, and two control groups (misdemeanors/felonies, and traffic violations). For the purposes of their study, they limited the definition of sexual experience with animals to penile penetration and experiences after

the onset of puberty. Neither the control group (traffic violations) nor the sex offenders, who committed crimes against adults of the other sex both showed a significantly higher prevalence of animal contacts than the average population (8.3%).

However, the heterosexual aggressors against minors had a significant higher amount of animal experiences (33.3%) and the homosexual offenders against children under the age of 12 and adults both had an incidence rate of 24 %.

It is also important to notice that the majority of the individuals in the study had more actual animal contacts than fantasies about it. From this finding, the researchers concluded that the lack of psychological involvement makes these experiences comparable to self-masturbation.

Hunt (1974) analyzed and interpreted the data of 982 males and 1044 females from a general sex survey (also including questions on bestiality). In comparison with the Kinsey data, his findings indicate that there was a significant decline of the percentages of people, who have sex with animals. The overall incidence for males was only 4.9 % compared to Kinsey's 8 %. For females, the number of post-puberty sexual contact with animals was 1.9 % in comparison to Kinsey's 3.6 %. His explanation was that the proportion of the U.S. population living on farms had shrunk. Hunt also finds that sexual animal contacts are mostly due to teenage experimentation - and that most had only sexual contact with an animal a few times. About half of the animals involved with men had been dogs, and the common kind of sexual contact among women was licking of the genitalia by the animal and masturbating the animal (no intercourse was reported).

Miletski's Study on Zoophilia (1999)

Today, we are in possession of important new information on people who have sexual relationships with their animals. This information comes from a recently published monumental study in this field by Miletski in 1999 at the Institute for Advanced Study of Human Sexuality in San Francisco.

Miletski used the internet to find zoophiles, and she also found them through advertisements in a magazine often read by zoophiles (the Wild Animal Review). Here we have the first sample entirely consisting of people who report sexual contact with animals. Miletski designed a 350-item questionnaire and sent it to the people who replied to her advertisements. She received data from 82 men and 11 women. She also sought personal contact to some of these people via telephone and met some of them in person. Her study provides us with a a great deal of new - sometimes surprising - information which differs significantly from what we had learned from previous studies. Only some of her results can be presented here.

Most of the responding men (48%) and women (45 %) were college graduates or above. 16% of the males work in computer-related fields, 11% are artists, about 9% are students and about 7% work in animal-related fields. 27% of the females are students, 9% work in animal-related fields and 18 % in the medical field.

26% of the men and 27% of the women have never been married or lived in a sexual relationship with another person for a month or more. 32 % of the males and one woman are currently married. But almost half of the men and the majority of women are currently single.

One woman and 20 % of the males currently live on a farm and 67% of the males and 73% of the females live with a pet (mostly canines, felines and equines).

Half of the men and 55 % of the women have been in psychotherapy. The most often reported reason was depression, two men (out of 82) had a bipolar disorder, 3 had a nervous breakdown, two had personality disorders and 2 men were diagnosed with paraphilic disorders (exhibitionism, voyeurism). 22% of the men tried to commit suicide; the reasons were isolation, loneliness, depression etc. in 7 cases, interpersonal problems with lovers in 3 cases, and only 2 of the 82 men reported the reason was "being a zoophile.

About half of the men in psychotherapy told their therapist about their zoophilic activity, and about half of those experienced negative reactions (the therapist thought he was kidding and laughed, did not know what a zoophile was, intended to report him to the authorities, tried to force him to stop).

The primary sexual fantasies of the men and women are

- having sex with animals (76 % of males, 45% of females)
- watching other humans have sex with animals (35% of males, 40% of females)
- having sex with a woman (28% of males, 0 % of females)
- having sex with a man (8% of males, 27% of females)
- having sex with children (7% of males, 0% of females)

83% of the men have experienced human heterosexual intercourse, and 90% of the women.

10% of the men have sexual experiences with children, and one of the women had such experiences.

The reasons for having sex with animals vary broadly:

For the men the following reasons were "true /mostly true":

- I am sexually attracted to the animal 91%
- I want to express love and affection to the animal 74%
- The animals are accepting and easy to please 67%
- The animal wants it 66%
- I want to relieve sexual tension 40%
- I want to experience something different 25%
- I have no human partners available 12%
- I am too shy to have sex with humans 7%

For the women the following reasons were "true/mostly true":

- I am sexually attracted to the animal 100%
- I want to express love and affection for the animal 67%
- The animal wants it 67%
- The animals are accepting and easy to please 56%
- I want to relieve sexual tension 11%

The animals the men are most attracted to are the following:

- Canines 87%
- Equines 81%
- Bovines 32%
- Goats 28%
- Sheep 27%
- Felines 15%
- Pigs 14%

The animals the women are most attracted to:

- Canines 100%
- Equines 73%
- Felines 27%

Only 8% of the men and none of the women wanted to stop having sex with animals. Two of the men already did stop (one of them says "because it is perverted and was just adolescent experimentation") and the other four mainly wanted to stop, because if anybody (especially the partner) found out, it would have bad consequences for their relationship or personal life.

When asked about rating oneself on a sociability scale, the majority of participants rated themselves as friendly and outgoing individuals. Except for three men, all reported to have close human friends, and the majority had either daily or weekly contact with those friends. The majority of men (67%) and women (82%) placed themselves on a satisfaction scale anywhere from "extremely happy" to at least "generally satisfied/pleased".

Miletski's basic research question was "Is there a sexual orientation towards non-human animals?"

She adapted the definition for "sexual orientation" from Francoeur (1991): According to Francoeur there must be

- an affectional orientation
- a sexual fantasy orientation
- an erotic orientation (with whom or what we prefer to have sex)

Miletski found out that there seems to be such a sexual orientation towards animals but also points out that sexual orientations can be fluid and changing with time and circumstances.

Currently ongoing Study on Zoophilia

At the moment, I am conducting a study on zoophilia for my dissertation in psychology at the University of Erlangen, Germany.

The contact to my respondents was nearly exclusively established over the internet. I talked to zoophiles in zoophilia chat rooms, have been on zoophilia-email-lists for about one year and also placed advertisements on message boards and web-sites. The data are obtained both via questionnaires, that are sent out as e-mail attachments, and via interviews.

I am using 6 questionnaires, one about zoophilia and 4 standardized questionnaires (CPI, IIP, FRBS and a "psychopathy" questionnaire that includes the Zuckerman Sensation Seeking Scales) as well as TAT-pictures, to be rated for motivation (according to the system of Winters).

The data presented here were obtained from 32 interviews with male zoophiles (from Germany, the USA, Italy, UK, Netherlands).

22 of the interviews I conducted face-to-face, 2 via telephone, and 8 via ICQ- or IRC exclusive chat.

The average age of the participants was 30 years, with a range from 18 to 46 years of age.

19% had attended school up to the 9th/10th grade , 53% attended high school/some college and 28% are currently studying or have a university degree.

31% now work in computer-related fields (that is probably due to the fact, that the sample is drawn via the internet) and only 13% have worked or currently work in jobs in that they are dealing with animals.

53% live in urban areas and 47% in a rural area.

The preferred kinds of animals are dogs (66%), horses (41%), large cats (lions, tigers etc.) (13%) and one respondent would prefer a dolphin. In other words, these are the animals they would like to have sexual contact with (though it is obvious to most of those who are interested in large cats and dolphins, that is probably wishful thinking.)

Actual sexual contact occurred with the following kinds of animals:

- Dogs (78%); the sexual contact includes masturbation of male and female dogs, mutual oral sex, vaginal-penile intercourse with female dogs, anal penetration by a male dog and general body contact .
- Horses (53%); sexual contact includes masturbation of male and female horses, oral sex performed on the horse (both sexes), penile-vaginal intercourse with female horses and general body contact.
- Cats (13%): two participants masturbated normal housecats, one participant masturbated male and female tigers and one participant masturbated a lion.
- Farm Animals (19%): the species were donkeys (intercourse with female and masturbation of male), cows (vaginal intercourse), camels, llamas, goats, pigs, sheep, rabbit (oral sex on a male).

One of the participants earned money by performing sexually with animals for private live-shows, so he has experiences with nearly all of the above listed kinds of animals.

The animal favored in masturbation fantasies are:

- Dogs (81%)
- Horses (63%)
- Cats (22%)
- Dolphins (7%)
- Bull (one person)
- Werewolf/Human morphed half into a large cat (7%)

59% of the participants currently own at least one animal (or the animal lives with the family). 84% of these own a dog, 21% a cat, and 7% a horse.

84% had animals in their childhood/adolescence (mostly dogs, cats and rodents).

94% of the participants have sexual experiences with human partners, only two have no such experiences at all (one of them is quite young, and today, about 6 month after the interview took place, he has petting experiences with a male partner).

13% of the men had experiences only with men, 37% only with women and 50% with both men and women.

69% report that they have never tried "unusual" sex practices (as S/M, play with urine and/or feces, sex with children, exhibitionism). Out of the 31% with some kind of unusual practices 2 men tried practices with urine/feces of animals, 2 others had sexual encounters with their

sister/cousin, one likes masochistic sex, one prefers to get his body licked all over by animals and humans and 2 men have a large variety of sex toys, that they sometimes construct themselves. 15 % sometimes use stuffed animals as masturbation help or at least tried that once. One likes to apply deer scent to himself when having sex with his female partner and another one sometimes takes mud baths that sexually excite him.

9% of the men are married, 6% are divorced. Only 31% currently have an intimate relationship, but 63% had a steady intimate relationship at least once in their life. 16% of the respondents have children.

53% report that they did not have good social contacts in childhood and adolescence. 19% say that they had some friends, but not many, and 28% said, that they had good social contacts in childhood/adolescence. The ones that had no good relationships report that they were often picked on, teased, ridiculed and had difficulties making friends.

Only two of the participants report that they still have no friends and very few social contacts, 28% are "doing OK." with their current social contacts, though they would like to have more friends, and 66% are happy with their social contacts now. In short, the majority of the respondents are satisfied.

None of the participants ever got a disease (zoonosis) from an animal. Most of them take good care of the medical conditions of their pets, but when they engage in sex with animals that they do not own, they cannot be sure about possible diseases. Also, if the animals have sexual contact with different humans, the possibility of transferring a disease cannot be ruled out, and most zoophiles pay attention to that fact.

How did they start fantasizing about sex with animals or having sexual relations with animals? There are several different ways how their zoophile interests developed:

Some have always been interested in their preferred animal and only later developed sexual fantasies about them, some read in books/magazines about zoophilia (e.g. the Sex Atlas), some found it very exciting to watch animal matings on TV (especially on the Discovery Channel in the US) and fantasized about that. Others started to touch the genitals of their pet-dog out of curiosity, in some cases the dog came up and licked the person's genitals. Others did not remember when their fantasies started, but the behavior often started with nonsexual cuddling with the animal and then became sexual. So we see that there are a lot of ways that can lead up to the first sexual experience with an animal.

31% reported psychological problems in their childhood, but as adults only 16% report psychiatrically relevant conditions such as depression, nervous breakdown, drug addiction, or depression because the animal partner died.

56% of the participants never have been in therapy. About 44% have been to counseling or to psychotherapy.

Since zoophilia/bestiality is illegal in a number of countries (e.g. USA, UK), most of the zoophiles are worried about being "outed" to the "wrong" persons. Even though in Germany zoophilia is not illegal anymore since 1969, most zoophiles still are very cautious, since the social stigma could destroy their private lives, they could perhaps lose their jobs etc. In

Great Britain, zoophilia can still be punished with life imprisonment, though that is probably no longer a realistic threat.

There is one more important thing to be pointed out here: Many of the zoophiles have a very close emotional attachment to their animal partners. They report that they love their animal

partner as others love their human partner and are devastated when their animal partner dies. They care about the sexual pleasure of the animal as well as their own. Certainly, those who engage in sex with other people's animals (such as fence-hoppers) often do not form such a close relationship, but most of the zoophiles take care not to inflict any pain or injury to the animal. Beside those zoophiles there are, of course, also others engaging in sex with animals, who do so for the extraordinary experience and some of them do not care that much about the animal's consent or health. Some even hurt or kill the animal.

The zoophilic persons volunteering for studies like Miletski's or mine certainly are a special sample and not representative for the general population, but they can show us, that someone who has sex with animals on a regular basis is, in the majority of cases, not a morally depraved, antisocial and mentally ill person, as earlier case studies had often suggested.

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