Chapter 9

Animal Sexual Abuse and the Darkness of Touristic Immorality

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ABSTRACT

Simply put, tourism is about travel and its associated services. Yet, beyond its glittery appearance, at least sometimes, these services contain elements of domination and control of fellow humans, nature, and culture. Even innocent animals are not spared in the pursuit to making money. The extant literature on “dark tourism” barely addresses the darkness of tourist behavior derived from the nexus between human avarice and animal suffering. Sexual relations with animals has been documented for many centuries; yet, this exploitation as a touristic pursuit is relatively new. In this paper, conditions for the growth of this phenomenon and international regulatory responses are described and the structure and dynamics of the underground animal sex tourism industry are explored.

INTRODUCTION

Globalization of sex tourism implies not only the proliferation of sex tourism into more regions of the world but also its varied forms of development (Jeffreys, 2010). Animal Sex Tourism (AST) is a touristic phenomenon that has developed around
the practice of sexual acts with animals. It undoubtedly encompasses one of the most extreme taboos and rarest of paraphilias associated with tourism, zoophilia. DSM-5 (APA, 2013) categorizes zoophilia as a “recurrent and intense sexual arousal involving animals.” While often touted as simply a degenerative byproduct of Western capitalism, post-humanists like Bakke (2009), aver that commonalities between humans and animals have far reaching consequences. These commonalities include a variety of sexual forms and calls for a conceptual shift from bestiality to open exploratory zoosexuality. With such a shift, the prevailing anthropocentric world view would be replaced with pan-speciesism.

Aggrawal (2011) classified ten kinds of bestiality related behaviors on a continuum from least harmful to most harmful. At one extreme, the animal is an object of the human’s need for sexual gratification; at the other extreme, the animal is an equal partner. The latter extreme is an expression of the emancipation of the human soul from the boundaries of the culturally conditioned human form (Bakke, 2009). From an atheistic perspective, Singer (2001) opines that the behavioral boundaries between humans and animals are arbitrary. Bestiality, then, is the behavioral choice of the individual; morality is a religious construct to which they are not obligated to conform. Beirne (1997) offers a typology of interspecies sexual assault including sexual fixation, commodification, adolescent sexual experimentation, and aggravated cruelty. He posits that most ‘interspecies sexual assault’ behaviors can be best understood by following a moderated view somewhere between the extremes of anthropocentrism and ‘pseudo-liberal tolerance’.

To promote sexual tolerance and understanding toward people who may have engaged in unnatural sexual activities, Timpf (2013) reported on a “sensitivity training” workshop hosted on the Yale University campus. Among the many responses to survey questions regarding various types of sexual behavior in which attendees may have participated (including “consensual pain during sex”), three percent of the attendees said they had engaged in bestiality. Zoophiles Engagement für Toleranz und Aufklärung (Zoophiles for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is arguably the most well-known zoophillic organization (ZETA, 2014). ZETA’s principles were originally forged by zoophiles in the U.S. and adopted by their counterparts in Germany in the 1990’s. ZETA’s principles are featured on its organizational website (ZETA, 2014). The principles emphasize kind treatment of animals, valuing the animal’s well-being before one’s desires for sexual satisfaction, discouraging bestiality in the presence of others, and censuring those who engage in and promote animal sexual abuse. ZETA publicly declared its position on these principles by conducting the world’s first march for zoophile rights in Berlin on February 1, 2013. Their website also advertises “Animal Passions”, a documentary about a man who discovers his zoophilia early in life, faces and solves a myriad of problems, and finally achieves inner peace when he marries his mare (ZETA, 2014).
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