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Homeless Dogs
&
Melancholy Apes

HUMANS AND OTHER ANIMALS
in the
MODERN LITERARY IMAGINATION



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IMMODERATE LOVE

The Lady and the Lapdog



Figure 2. Gustav Courbet, "Nude with Dog" (1861). Photo credit: Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, NY.

This chapter examines the imaginative experience inspired by a particular, striking, and now pervasive kind of intimacy—the inter-species intimacy engineered by the rise of modern pet keeping. In early eighteenth-century literature, this novel connection between humans and nonhuman animals is almost exclusively represented through a specific, gendered image: that of the lady and the lapdog. Indeed, this image is the inaugural event for the literary representation of pet keeping in England. The companion animal, in its diverse roles and relationships, becomes a significant figure in English literature by the nineteenth century. But in the prior period the image of the lady and the lapdog stands virtually alone in expressing the new cultural obsession with the household pet. Early eighteenth-century literary culture thus sees the initial establishment of this first trope of inter-species connection and strongly influences its subsequent elaboration in the very different literary modes that follow. This particular depiction of pet keeping inspires a literary form that expresses the encounter with difference through a rhetoric of sudden inversion—in which ideas of alterity are instantly transformed into experiences of intimacy. The paradigm of sudden inversion links pet keeping with the representation of other encounters experienced by Europeans at this crucial moment in the expansion of their culture across the globe, and with other attempts to engage unfamiliar beings through the activity of the imagination. And it suggests a special role for gender in the imaginative involvement with animal-kind, since women are constitutive both of this distinctive, domestic representation of human-animal conjunction and of other, global inter-species connections.

We can see the formal dynamic at stake here most clearly in a text from the end of our period of focus, in the young Elizabeth Barrett's poetic expression of love for her spaniel Flush in a sonnet entitled "Flush or Faunus," included in a collection published in 1850. Looking back to what we have seen in chapter 2 of the eighteenth-century struggles to

situate the newly discovered hominoid ape in relation to a shifting understanding of the human, we can identify Barrett Browning's reference to Faunus as a signal of that ongoing ontological problem. As we observed in Edward Tyson's writings and their redactions, the classical semideities—the fauns, satyrs, nymphs, and Pan himself—were drawn directly into the debate about the definition of the human, since they were understood to be the classical record of the appearance of the great ape. And looking forward to the dog narrative of the twentieth century, which we will explore in chapter 5, we can find a redaction of Barrett Browning's poetic experiment with the representation of interspecies connection in Virginia Woolf's *Flush: A Biography* (1933), a story of change, travel, and reinvention from a dog's perspective, connecting his life to his mistress's relationship with Robert Browning. Inter-species intimacies often substitute for human ones in precisely this way in the representation of pet keeping in the eighteenth century as well, as we shall see. Barrett Browning's poem has multiple, intersecting connections with the experience of animal-kind in the eighteenth century and beyond. Its distinctive images and structures provide a specific formal perspective on that experience.

As we shall see, "Flush or Faunus" draws on an extended tradition of connection between dogs and women in its construction of a surprising moment of love between the lady and the lapdog:

You see this dog; it was but yesterday
 I mused forgetful of his presence here,
 Till thought on thought drew downward tear on tear:
 When from the pillow where wet-cheeked I lay,
 A head as hairy as Faunus thrust its way
 Right sudden against my face, two golden-clear
 Great eyes astonished mine, a drooping ear
 Did flap me on either cheek to dry the spray!
 I started first as some Arcadian
 Amazed by goatly god in twilight grove:
 But as the bearded vision closelier ran
 My tears off, I knew Flush, and rose above
 Surprise and sadness,—thanking the true PAN
 Who by low creatures leads to heights of love.¹

The opening gesture—"you see this dog"—places Flush at a comfortable and familiar distance in the composition of the scene of the poem; we might even visualize him in

¹ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Flush or Faunus," *Poetical Works of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974), 196.

a domestic setting, lying at the hearth. And it also locates him, as a nonhuman being, at a distance from the speaker and reader as they are joined by their common human connection with one another. Thus, at the outset, alterity is both naturalized and unexamined. This opening gesture also works to establish a contrast between the distant and familiar dog, on the one hand, and the immediately following representation of that nonhuman being's intimate, surprising engagement with the woman, on the other. Suddenly, the animal's head appears on the speaker's pillow, as the setting becomes a bedside and the account becomes retrospective.

At this point in the poem, distance is transformed to proximity and familiarity to strangeness through a formal reversal that, as we shall see, is characteristic of the figure of the lady and the lapdog. The distant, familiar dog appears as a strange, "hairy" or "goatly," "bearded" being at the speaker's pillow, and the speaker at first fails even to connect him with the dog of the poem's opening lines. Rhetorically, this is an intensely felt and surprising moment, marked by the words "sudden," "against," "thrust," "started," and "amazed," which replaces the ordinary or naturalized distance of the opening with a striking alterity produced by the intimate contact between human and animal and leading directly to the experience of "heights of love." The intimacy is signaled by the tear that Flush wipes away from the speaker's face with his drooping ears; the alterity by the insistent hairiness of this nonhuman being; and the channel of connection by the gaze of the nonhuman "golden-clear great eyes" that joins the lapdog and the lady. The surprise and even the intimacy in this case is also sexual, indicated by the evocation of the classical god Pan as well as by the bedside setting, and climaxing in the concluding discovery of a love that is itself defined by the transformation of "low" to "heights," a reversal of the normal hierarchy of human- and animal-kind. As we shall see, this rich structure of inversion, and the constellation of images that brings it about, is a rehearsal of a long-established fantasy of a connection between dogs and women. Barrett Browning's poem is paradigmatic of a particular imaginative experience—an experience that has a link to contemporary culture, a sustained literary history, a correlation with gender, and a role in the larger contemporary problematic of the representation of human-animal encounters.

The Cultural Fantasy of the Canine Pet

The image of the lady and the lapdog arises as a widespread literary trope at the same time as companion animals become widely evident in the bourgeois household. I have already suggested that the human relationship with nonhuman animals is profoundly reshaped in the eighteenth century, and that pet keeping is one of the central cultural signs of and means to that reshaping. As Keith Thomas has shown, the rise of

certain "privileged species" to a relationship of special proximity with human beings in the early modern period reveals deep shifts in human-kind's perception of the natural world and indicates the "narrowing gap" between human and animal that then defines some of the fundamental claims and debates of the modern era. Thomas describes the foundations of pet keeping—including domestic intimacy, the use of proper names, the sense of companionship, the growing idea of animal intelligence, new notions of animal character, the belief in animal souls, the new demarcation of domestic space, and the material practices involved in the breeding and maintenance of pets—and demonstrates the progression of this historical phenomenon to the point of "obsession" in the eighteenth century.² Through an examination of epitaphs and elegies for animals, Ingrid H. Tague shows that "pet keeping first developed as a widespread phenomenon [during the eighteenth century, in a period that also] saw the rapid growth of literary works dealing with pets."³ And J. H. Plumb argues that this new engagement with pets within the bourgeois household is one of the means by which "quite humble men and women, innocent of philosophical theory, [were led to accept] perhaps unconsciously, the modernity of their world."⁴

The pet plays a complex cultural role in this period: as commodity, companion, paragon, proxy, and even kin. The practice of pet keeping was initially an urban phenomenon and served as a response to modern alienation and commodification by creating a being who could generate a sense of connection and meaning in a world of things.⁵ In this era of dramatic increases in consumption, pets were increasingly visible as a sign of prosperity and widely bred and sold for profit. New practices of selective breeding, developed at first for livestock, were exploited to produce more desirable types of ornamental fish, canaries, and pigeons, while exotic pets like parrots and monkeys were coveted possessions (Plumb, 318–322).⁶ And the eager pursuit of potential household pets resulted in the inclusion of nondomesticated species, including ferrets, squirrels, rabbits, and mice.

But, then as now, cats and dogs were the animals most readily embraced as companions for human beings, and in this period both were frequently associated with the

²Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon, 1983), 92–142, 117.

³Ingrid H. Tague, "Dead Pets: Satire and Sentiment in British Elegies and Epitaphs for Animals," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 41 (2008): 289–306, 291.

⁴J. H. Plumb, "The Acceptance of Modernity," in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 316–334, 316.

⁵See Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 38.

⁶On the history and spread of parrot keeping, see also Edward J. Boosey, *Parrots, Cockatoos and Macaws* (Silver Springs, Md.: Denlinger's, 1956), chapter 1: "Parrot-keeping in the Past."

cultural practices of women. Domestic cats, who were especially appreciated for their character and affection, are frequently mentioned in the eighteenth century. Though the male tradition has several famous instances of cat companionship, including Horace Walpole's Selima, Samuel Johnson's Hodge, and Christopher Smart's Jeoffrey, Margaret Doody shows that Anna Seward's poem on her own cat Selima's death, "An Old Cat's Dying Soliloquy," is representative of a strong interest in animals that marks eighteenth-century women's poetry. According to Doody, Seward's cat "proves capable of loyalty and affection, her virtues thus making her implicitly worthy of cat heaven—or of human heaven too" in a concluding assertion that demonstrates the connection between the culture of pet keeping and the contemporary debate about animal souls. Doody's perspective on the ways that women poets of the eighteenth century "defiantly adopt the sensibility of animals" suggests the special connection between women and imaginary animal-kind in this period.⁷ The earliest literary depictions of companion animals associated these beings primarily with female pet keepers, and many women writers themselves shared this assumption.

Dogs, of course, were the most visible and ubiquitous companion animal. Many factors contributed to the increasing appreciation of this particular nonhuman being's potential for household intimacy with human-kind in the course of the early modern period. Early on, among the aristocracy, the mastiffs who protected the estate and the hounds who made up the hunting pack were privileged creatures. Small dogs were cultivated as personal companions by aristocratic women in the medieval period, with the fashion for toy spaniels most prominent in the early sixteenth century, and for pugs in the seventeenth. At the end of the seventeenth century, Charles II refined the toy spaniel, introducing the King Charles spaniel in his court in London. This attachment to canine companions spread widely among the English bourgeoisie in the eighteenth century, when pugs and toy spaniels were widely kept in the household and depicted as eating at table, arrayed in jeweled collars, attended by physicians, sleeping in human beds, riding in carriages, and sitting for portraits (Thomas, 117). These practices were accompanied by a rapidly developing new conception of animal character, including an array of strongly positive assumptions about the intelligence, loyalty, affection, gratitude, and courage of the canine being that was rapidly becoming understood as "man's best friend." Indeed, as pet keeping became pervasive, animals were sometimes cited as exemplary models for human behavior, preferable to humans themselves: dogs might be seen as more loyal or more sympathetic than humans, and a canine companion might take the place of a suitor, husband, father, or daughter. Dogs thus became the center

⁷Margaret Doody, "Sensuousness in the Poetry of Eighteenth-Century Women Poets," in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730–1820*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 3–32, 18, 20.

of an influential cultural fantasy about the potential proximity of human- and animal-kind.

As pet keeping inspired new ways of thinking about and representing animals, concurrent historical events engaged the eighteenth-century imagination in other experiences of alterity. Pet keeping arose as a major cultural phenomenon during the period that marks the first age of British imperial expansion; the establishment and growth of the slave trade; and a widespread popular enthusiasm for global projects involving the control of territories and, along with this impulse, the accumulation of information about the geography, the botany, and the nonhuman and human inhabitants of the world. As we shall see, the image of the lady and the lapdog can be understood in relation to this larger, global context, as an imaginative experiment that reaches beyond the domestic, inter-species proximity of the fashionable woman and her pug. In this period, the lady and the lapdog is an especially resonant figure, in relation to the larger contemporary concern with the European encounter with the world.

Imaginary Lapdogs and Poetic Form

Significantly, the representation of the canine pet finds its first widely prevalent literary expression through a gendered image. We can find an early version of the lady and the lapdog in the General Prologue of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, where the Prioress dotes upon her "smale houndes," feeding them with special "rosted flessch" and milk, and weeping at their injuries.⁸ Chaucer's satire here makes reference to the practice of pet keeping in English convents, which Keith Thomas identifies as an early instance of this cultural phenomenon (110). Lapdogs are also mentioned in seventeenth-century poetry, notably in the misogynist tradition of the 1680s and 1690s.⁹ Markman Ellis notes the early role of lapdogs as a "misogynist trope of female venereal concupiscent, repeatedly described as one of the *artes amatoriae* of the modern woman by libertine writers."¹⁰ This heritage clearly shapes the sexual signification that continues to attend the figure and influences its particular gendered referent: woman-kind.

⁸ Geoffrey Chaucer, General Prologue, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1963), 144–149.

⁹ See, for instance, Robert Gould, *Love Given O're or, a Satyr against the Pride, Lust, and Inconstancy, &c. of Woman* (1682), repr. in *Satires on Women*, Augustan Reprint Society (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1976).

¹⁰ Markman Ellis, "Suffering Things: Lapdogs, Slaves, and Counter-Sensibility," in *The Secret Life of Things: Animals, Objects, and Its Narratives in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Mark Blackwell (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell University Press, 2007), 92–116, 97. For other studies of the role of lapdogs in antifemale satire in this period, see Ingrid H. Tague, "Dead Pets" and Theresa Braunschneider, "The Lady and the Lapdog: Mixed Ethnicity in

But the prominence of this image increases significantly and its literary prevalence is substantially expanded in the subsequent period. As we shall see, the figure of the lady and the lapdog—with its particular repertory of images and attendant formal dynamics—becomes a staple trope of the antifemale verse satire of the first half of the eighteenth century.

In this period, then, at the time of the rapid rise in the keeping of companion animals, the figure of the lady and the lapdog develops its distinctive profile. The literary representation of lapdogs occurs mainly in poetry, though dramatic social comedy includes references to pet keeping by women as well. As Tague has observed, many of the lapdog poems are elegies and epitaphs, in which mockery and satire are the dominant modes. But more significantly, these portrayals of inter-species connection follow and develop a common scenario. They typically invoke a set of allied images of female sexuality: the woman's bed, the breast, the nap, the lap, sometimes the gaze, and especially the kiss. And formally this depiction of the lady and the lapdog is configured through structures of dissonance, reversal, and sudden inversion—structures that are indebted to the tradition of neoclassical satire, but that place that heritage in a new, inter-species construct.¹¹

In a satiric letter "To a Lady on the Death of her Lapdog and Squirrel in One Day" included in a collection published in 1710, a "person of quality" highlights the special privilege of the lady's lapdog: "[L]ittle Dory... had the charmingest Creature in the World for his Bedfellow."¹² All through the first half of the eighteenth century, verses on the lady and the lapdog focus on this theme of bedside intimacy. Typical rhyme words—*nap* and *lap*; *miss*, *bliss*, and *kiss*; or *lies* and *thighs*—give a series of verbal anchors for the ideas of sexual connection. Jonathan Smedley, in his verses "On the Death of a Lap-Dog" (1723), provides a typical sample:

To him her softest things she'd say:
Oft on her downy Breast he lay;
And oft he took a gentle Nap,
Upon her Sleep-inticing Lap.¹³

A couplet from Edward Stephens's poem "On the Death of Delia's Lap-Dog" (1747) illustrates another of these verbal pairs: "Pompey, Companion dear to Miss, / Full off

Constantinople, Fashionable Pets in Britain," in *Humans and Other Animals in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*, ed. Frank Palmeri (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 31–48.

¹¹ Braunschneider canvases some of this satiric material in "The Lady and the Lapdog."

¹² Letter 16, in *Serious and Comical Essays* (London: J. King, 1710), 180.

¹³ Jonathan Smedley, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1723), 122.

was honour'd with a Kiss",¹⁴ as does Henry Carey's complaint to the lady in "The Rival Lap-Dog" (1713):

Corinna, pray tell me,
When thus you repel me,
When humbly I sue for a Kiss,
 Why *Dony*, at pleasure,
 May kiss without measure,
And surfeit himself with the Bliss?¹⁵

And these canine parodies of love lyric can also involve the Petrarchan discourse of the gaze, which accompanies the kiss and extends the physical link between the lady and the lapdog into the incorporeal realm. For example, Isaac Thompson's "The Lap-Dog" (1731) adds an evocation of the animal's eyes:

Securely on her Lap it lies,
Or freely gazes on her Eyes;
To touch her Breast, may share the Bliss,
And unprov'd, may snatch a Kiss.¹⁶

The "bliss" mentioned here evokes a sexual connection that some poems explore more directly. "An Epitaph upon My Lady M——'s Lapdog" presents the "bedfellow" idea in warmer language:

Beneath this Stone, ah woful Case!
 Poor little *Doxey* lies,
Who once possess'd a warmer Place
 Between his Lady's T——'s.¹⁷

Indeed, the lapdog seems to be both an inappropriate or perverse sexual partner for the woman, and also a metonym for female sexuality—a dynamic that places the animal simultaneously within and outside the realm of the human, or—from another perspective—places the woman both within and outside the realm of the animal. John Gay's interesting poem "The Mad Dog" (1730) takes on this problem directly, seeking to provide an explanation for the relationship between the dog and the sexualized woman.

¹⁴ Edward Stephens, *Miscellaneous Poems* (Cirencester: Tho. Hill, 1747), 25.

¹⁵ Henry Carey, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London: J. Kent, A. Boulter, and J. Brown, 1713), 25.

¹⁶ Isaac Thompson, *A Collection of Poems* (Newcastle upon Tyne, 1731), 94.

¹⁷ Mr. "Bavius," *The Grub-Street Miscellany* (London: J. Wilford, 1731), 45.

The libidinous female subject of the poem describes to her confessor her obsession with "Love's soft Extasy":

She tells him now with meekest Voice,
That she had never err'd by Choice;
Nor was there known a Virgin chaster,
'Till ruin'd by a sad Disaster.

That she a Fav'rite Lap-dog had,
Which (as she strok'd and kis'd) grew mad,
And on her Lip a Wound indenting,
First set her youthful Blood fermenting.¹⁸

Gay's comic etiology proposes that the "disease" of female sexuality originates in human-animal affection—the interaction of stroking and kissing that links the lapdog and the lady—and that it is transmitted by the inter-species "kiss." In other words, female nature is ironically produced by the violent contact between the realm of the human and that of the nonhuman; in this reversal, the woman is defined by the animal, who is also her antithesis.

As we have seen in Carey's "Rival Lap-Dog," these poems—all presented in the voice of a male onlooker—express the envy that the potential human partner feels for the nonhuman being positioned at the lady's breast or between her thighs. For instance "On a Lap-Dog" (1721) by Thomas Brown addresses the dog with this exclamation: "[A]h! could'st thou know/How thou dost my Envy raise." As the dog lies in "that Lap," the speaker suggests an "Exchange" between human and animal, a reversal of "Place" and "Station" which, if granted, will entitle the lapdog to a uniquely human privilege: "[A]n Epitaph upon thy Grave."¹⁹ Here, the speaker wishes himself into the animal's place—and the animal into the human's—in a way that highlights an inversion of the implicit hierarchy that ranks human above animal. Thompson's "The Lap-Dog" goes further and extends the hierarchy inversion into a gender inversion, by describing a magic substitution of the male lover for a female pet:

Give me a Spell, a potent Charm,
To turn myself to MINNY's form!
In sportful Dance, and wanton Play
On *Silvia's* Lap I'll spend the Day. (94)

¹⁸ John Gay, *The Mad Dog* (London: A. Moore, 1730), title page, 7.

¹⁹ Thomas Brown, *The Fifth Volume of the Works of Mr. Thomas Brown* (London: Sam. Briscoe, 1721), 333.

And John Hewitt's "Upon *Celia's* having a little Dog in her Lap" (1727) expresses a clear preference—to be a "four-footed" being rather than a man:

'Tis four-footed *Cloe*, your Smiles can engage,
 Whilst a Shape that is human must bear with your Rage,
 Since, thus, my Addresses by *Celia's* refused,
 Pray, who would be Man? when a Dog's so well us'd?²⁰

These last two examples go beyond envy, and beyond ironic reversal, in presenting a comic fantasy of species transposition arising from the idea of canine-human affection.

All of these effects are played out at length in a long poem in Hudibrastics published in 1730 entitled *The Rival Lapdog and the Tale*. The "Little RIVAL to the Great" is a King Charles spaniel "of *antient Stock*," whose "monstrous" act is to supplant his lord in his lady's bed. We learn that "he was *Courtly-bred*" and that "*Court-Companie* he always kept, / With *Lords* he din'd,—with *Ladies* slept."²¹ He takes "*sawey Freedoms*" (8) with his lady's belongings and her clothes, but beyond that he is seen to "towze Her, with his Paw," while the lady in turn "*was proud to have her dear Dog rude, / As rude with Her, as e'er He cou'd*" (36). The poem ends with a sustained inter-species love scene:

... *Breast to Breast*, incorporate
 Almost,—He lay like *Dog in State*;

Fair-Lady, all in Raptures, to
 Be so *caress'd* by *such a Beau*;
She hugg'd, and kiss'd, and cry'd, and clung,
And He return'd all with his Tongue;
 Put *Lady-Fair* quite out of *Breath*,
 And buss't her, *e'en a'most* to *Death*;
Sir Lick Lips was so *tir'd* too,
 He fell a sleep while *One* tell's *Two*. (39)

Here we can find the full repertory of lapdog imagery: the bed, the breast, and the caress, combined with raptures, kissing, crying, and climaxing with the licking tongue. The moral of the tale condemns women's passion for pet keeping:

... [M]ust the *great Affairs of State*,
 Be forc't for *Dogs*, or *Cats*, to *wail*?

²⁰John Hewitt, *Miscellanies in Prose and Verse* (Bristol: Penn, 1727), 29.

²¹[Stephen Fox?], *The Rival Lapdog and the Tale* (London: W. Smith and G. Greg, 1730), 7.

What *Mortal* can with *Patience* see?²

For some are's fond of *Cat* and *Kitten*,
 As other *Ladys* are *Dog-smitten*;
 And that's a *Vice*, too *rampant grown*. (44)

But its message can finally be compactly summarized in a phrase: "Ne'er dote on *Dogs*" (55).

The Rival Lapdog's critique of intimacy between women and their dogs is signified rhetorically through a characteristic inversion; the text generates a series of Hudibrastic incongruities through its representation of the animal's connection with the human. Thus, the end rhymes might comically juxtapose *cur* and *sir*—"This may be thought *strange* of a *Cur*, / But not of *this fine Dog*, (good *Sir*)" (31), or call attention to the reversal in status entailed by the dog's proximity to the fine lady—"His *Tast*, too, was of *Quality*, / With *Lady-Fair* He'd always *lie*" (9). As with Thompson's magic substitution or Hewitt's fantasy of transposition, *The Rival Lapdog's* ironic end rhymes express surprising or deflating convergences between the dog and the human—conjunctions that are also evident, though in a different rhetorical device, in the canonical antifemale satire of the period, Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1717).

Pope's use of lapdogs shows the relevance of animal-kind to the most complex ironies of Augustan satire. Though his appearance in this text is brief, Belinda's lapdog, Shock, along with the poem's broader references to the practice of women's pet keeping, create effects that are closely related to those of *The Rival Lapdog*. *The Rape of the Lock* opens with the familiar inter-species bedfellow scene, which, as we have seen, becomes the locus classicus of the figure of the lady and the lapdog in the poetry of this period. The first canto begins as the sun peeps through the curtains at the lapdog and the lady. The lapdog is the earlier riser: "Lapdogs give themselves the rowzing Shake," but "*Belinda* still her downy Pillow prest." Belinda sleeps for another hundred lines until "*Shock*, who thought she slept too long, / Leapt up, and wak'd his Mistress with his Tongue."²² We have already found the tongue to be a vivid signal of inter-species intimacy in the contemporary lapdog poetry, of course. Here, the canine-woman connection is further developed as a parallel to the crisis of the plot: when the baron cuts Belinda's lock, "Not louder Shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast, / When Husbands or when Lap-Dogs breathe their last" (3.156–157). And Thalestris incites Belinda's fury by describing the dire consequences of the loss of Belinda's hair in these famous words: "Sooner let Earth, Air, Sea to Chaos fall, / Men, Monkies, Lap-Dogs, Parrots, perish all!" (4.119–120).

In these verses, Pope's characteristic zeugma, the signature rhetorical device of this poem, develops around the surprising conjunction of human and animal, generating

²²Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, in *Poetry and Prose of Alexander Pope*, ed. Aubrey Williams (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), 115, 115–120.

couplet incongruities much like those of *The Rival Lapdog*. In the first pair of lines, husbands and lapdogs are joined by "breathe their last"; in the second, men and lapdogs are linked by the predicate "perish all!" This repeated juxtaposition serves a general satiric end—to criticize the fashionable female for her proximity to her lapdog in preference to her husband, and, in short, to express *The Rival Lapdog's* moral: "Ne'er dote on Dogs." But the deeper formal structures of these works are even more significant than their explicit morals for our understanding of the long-term impact of the figure of the lady and the lapdog. Like the Hudibrastic rhymes of the later poem, the yoking of Pope's couplets here forces disparate ideas into proximity. The resulting collision of ordinarily separated beings, kinds, or positions unbalances assumptions about difference and kinship, hierarchy and equality, creating the possibilities for new alliances and frameworks—possibilities that carry forward into future imaginative engagements between woman and animal-kind.

Imagining the lapdog through the mode of antifemale satire—the dominant literary context for the representation of this companion animal in the period—imprints the figure of the lady and the lapdog with the inversions of satiric form. In addition, the focus on the female is generated through the dual opportunities of social practice and literary tradition. The contemporary assumption that women have a special affinity with animals and the related tendency to portray the newly prominent culture of pet keeping as a specifically female activity find a ready locus in eighteenth-century satire in part because this neoclassical mode itself draws deeply upon the image of the woman, through the influence of Juvenalian misogyny. Women and especially female sexuality are familiar topics of critique for the Augustans. But the idea of affection for an imaginary animal, emanating from the historical rise of pet keeping, adds a distinctive problematic to the structures of inversion that express this critique. The figure of the lady and the lapdog reconceives the Augustan and Juvenalian attack on female sexuality as an inter-species experiment—an experiment that introduces a new and different realm of potential intimacy to the modern imagination. Now the fantasy is not limited to the exposure of female sexual excess, as in the famous exploits of the "imperial whore" of Dryden's Juvenal, who leaves her husband's bed for the brothel where "expectingly she lies, / With heaving breasts, and with desiring eyes."²³ For these lapdog poems, the familiar ironic reversals call up larger questions generated by the portrayal of inter-species connection—questions about the absolute antithesis of beings, about the definition of the human by the animal, about the substitutability of animal for human, about the challenge to hierarchy and privilege, or even about the potential for these

²³ John Dryden, "The Sixth Satire of Juvenal," in *The Poetical Works of John Dryden*, ed. George R. Noyes (1693; Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1950), 176–177.

reversals themselves to lead to "heights of love." Within this particular satiric tradition, then, the representations of animals provide seeds for what is to become a rich formal and thematic contemplation of such questions. These poems create a literary practice that gathers imaginative depth and significance in the course of the eighteenth century and beyond.

Perversions of Kin and Kind

As the literary representation of pet keeping develops in the second half of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, the male human figure enters the picture in a new way. In the romantic period, dogs come to be seen as companions to solitary male characters—wanderers, hunters, shepherds, hikers, and poets especially. And in the literature of this period, relationships between men and dogs explore notions of canine loyalty and devotion in contrast to human versions of such traits, maintaining the social satire from the figure of the lady and the lapdog but investing the inter-species connection with sentiment. Thus, Eliza Reeves's "An Epistle to a Friend, with a Setting Dog" (1780) very typically compares the purity of a dog's loyalty to the self-interest of a human's:

Such pure attachment, without guile or art;
Such faith, a satire on the human heart,
Which int'rest warps from Friendship's sacred line,
To tread the paths of treacherous design.²⁴

Thus the literary treatment of the companion animal undergoes a decided shift in valence from the early eighteenth to the nineteenth century. As Tague has described it, as the period goes on, "Pets were used less to point up human follies than to demonstrate human virtues, including the virtue of experiencing a special bond with animals" (290). But, significantly, the structures of sudden inversion that derive from Augustan satire and that provide the figure of the lady and the lapdog with its distinctive impact continue to inform that depiction of animal-kind, even as that figure is integrated into narratives of sensibility.

We can witness this integration in process in the statement of advice about female conduct by a well-known philanthropist of the mid-eighteenth century, Jonas Hanway.

²⁴ Eliza Reeves, *Poems on Various Subjects* (London: C. Dilly, 1780), 69.

In his "Remarks upon Lapdogs" (1757), Hanway provides a complex approach that indicates the shift in attitude toward female pet keeping that occurred in the course of the eighteenth century:

I think a woman of sense may entertain some *degree* of affection for a *brute*; I do not mean a human *brute*, but a *dog*; for instance, which is a faithful animal. . . . The great fault seems to lie in the *degree* of esteem in which we place such objects; and the manner in which we express our humanity towards them. . . . But to the honour of *lap-dogs*, this is not their case! When under *proper discipline*, how *greatly* are they instrumental to the *felicity* of fine ladies! and how happy are these to find an object to amuse their idle moments, and perchance to preserve themselves from the *danger* which always attends having *nothing to do*.²⁵

Hanway's injunctions regarding women's behavior in relation to their dogs do not follow the rules of the satiric poetry of the period—"Ne'er dote on Dogs"—but rather advocate pet keeping, painting an attractive picture of inter-species contact by describing the "felicity" and "happiness" generated by inter-species "affection." Indeed, the lapdog even serves, according to Hanway, as a means to regulate female behavior and to preserve female character by keeping women from a "danger" that alludes directly to female sexuality. In Hanway's version, the figure of the lady and the lapdog points in the opposite direction from that of the satiric poetry—it signals the preservation of female virtue rather than the problematic expression or awakening of female sexuality.

But Hanway's account takes a turn that demonstrates the continuity between this later, sentimental image of affection between women and their lapdogs and the idea of sudden inversion that we have seen emphasized in the earlier satiric tradition:

But, alas! the *best* things may be abused, and the kind intentions of providence perverted! Thus we may sometimes see a fine lady, act as if she thought the *dog*, which happens to be under her precious care, was incomparably of more value, in her eyes, than a *human* creature, which is under the care of any other person, or peradventure, under no care at all. From hence we may conclude, that an immoderate love of a brute animal, tho' it may not destroy a charitable disposition, must weaken the force of it. Where "the *milk* of human kindness," where the choicest powers of humanity prevail most, there most care ought to be taken to find the *propet object* of them, lest this disposition, excellent and admirable in itself, should

²⁵ Jonas Hanway, "Remarks upon Lapdogs," in *A Journal of Eight Days Journey*, 2nd ed. (London: H. Woodfall and C. Henderson, 1757), 1104–105.

degenerate into a foolish and absurd tenderness, or an undistinguishing regard for the *noblest* and *vilest* of GOD's creatures. (105)

Hanway is performing a balancing act here, since on the one hand he wishes to privilege the relationship between the lady and the lapdog as an "excellent and admirable" disposition; as a manifestation of the "best" and "choicest" of human powers, namely, that of sympathy. But on the other hand, pet keeping is said to represent a misdirection of charity, a "perversion" of the "intentions of providence," a leveling of accepted hierarchies of "noble" and "vile," and an "immoderate love." This idea of "immoderate love" evokes that very sexualization which, in Hanway's earlier appreciation of the lapdog, pet keeping is said to forestall. Indeed, the idea of a sexualized affection appears at this point in Hanway's discourse through the same rhetoric that we have seen to be typical of satiric poetry: Hanway criticizes "the *kissing* of a dog" as "absurd and ridiculous" (107) and insists that "a man of taste and sentiment. . . will be *shock'd* to see a lady ravishing a *dog* with her caresses; and the more distinguished she is for her personal charms, the more shocking she will appear" (107). The "kissing" and "ravishing," the "caresses," the "tenderness," and the "immoderate love" that the text vividly specifies here are not compatible with Hanway's initial understanding of lapdogs as an antidote to the "dangers" of female sexuality. Far from it. In those opening paragraphs, the inter-species relationship is a tame and safe connection that promotes a socially accepted, even morally exemplary, norm of female conduct. But at the very point when a woman's love for her dog comes to be promoted as a signal of the human virtue of charity, it also becomes shocking and immoderate. Ironically, seeing the figure of the lady and the lapdog as an exemplary image of natural sympathy entails the representation of that connection between human- and animal-kind as a perversion of the "intentions of providence," a challenge to relations of hierarchy, and an experience that stands outside the realm of the "proper." Here, then, the inversions and reversals that we have seen to be central to the developing scenario of the lady and the lapdog become implicated with ideas of the normal.

The impropriety or abnormality of this inter-species intimacy can be expressed in terms of a perversion of kinship connections as well. For instance, in Susan Ferrier's *Marriage* (1818), the fashionable female's preference for her lapdog over her daughter substitutes an inter-species affection for a familial one. Mary, the sentimental protagonist of the novel, is newly introduced to her long-lost mother, Lady Juliana, and also to Lady Juliana's lapdog:

"Your style of dress is very obsolete, my dear," said [Lady Juliana], as she contrasted the effect of her own figure and her daughter's in a large mirror; "... I shall desire my woman to order some things for you; . . . Apropos, you will find it dull here by yourself, won't you? I shall leave you my darling Blanche for a companion,"

kissing a little French lap-dog, as she laid it in Mary's lap; "only you must be very careful of her, and coax her, and be very, very good to her; for I would not have my sweetest Blanche vexed, not for the world!" And, with another long and tender salute to her dog, and a "Good bye, my dear!" to her daughter, she quitted her to display her charms to a brilliant drawing-room, leaving Mary to solace herself in her solitary chamber with the whines of a discontented lap-dog.²⁶

This scene presents a compact invocation of the figure of the lady and the lapdog, including the familiar image of kissing and the rhetoric of tenderness that signals this inter-species intimacy. But this is a misdirected mother's kiss, bestowed on the dog instead of the child. The mother's heartless obliviousness to her child is contrasted with her affection for the lapdog, and the misdirection of her kiss marks the immoderate love that in this passage is represented as outside the bounds of a normal, familial intimacy—a transgression of the relationships of kin as well as kind.

Ironically, by transgressing the boundary of kind, the idea of intimacy with the lapdog helped to extend the compass of natural sympathy beyond the European. In a central scene from Sarah Scott's sentimental novel, *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), the male protagonist's fashionable wife demonstrates an incongruous inter-species connection, much like that of Lady Juliana with her lapdog. As Mrs. Ellison and her husband walk through their Jamaican plantation, discussing the treatment of their slaves, their discussion is interrupted by the lady's lapdog:

[Mrs. Ellison] was turning the conversation to another subject, when a favourite lap-dog, seeing her approach the house, in its eagerness to meet her jumped out of the window where it was standing; the height was too great to permit the poor cur to give this mark of affection with impunity; they soon perceived that it had broken its leg, and was in a good deal of pain; this drew a shower of tears from Mrs. Ellison's eyes, who, turning to her husband, said, "You will laugh at me for my weakness; but I cannot help it."²⁷

The lady in this scene is driven by some unnamed compulsion—"I cannot help it"—to an inter-species connection that both she and her husband regard as problematic. The "shower of tears" that she bestows on the lapdog is a natural sentiment, and her husband, like Hanway, applauds this as an indication of her virtue, if not as a signal of

²⁶ Susan Ferrier, *Marriage* (London: John Murray, 1818), 158–159.

²⁷ Sarah Scott, *The History of Sir George Ellison*, ed. Betty Rizzo (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 13. Markman Ellis has also read this passage closely in an important essay and book chapter, "Suffering Things" and *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 96–98.

her sexual self-control: "You will one day know me better than to think I can laugh at any one for a token of sensibility; to see any creature suffer is an affecting sight; and it gives me pleasure to observe you can feel for the poor little animal, whose love for you occasioned his accident" (13). But, like Lady Juliana's kiss, Mrs. Ellison's sympathy is misdirected. The appropriate recipient is identified in her husband's plea that she attend to "the sufferings... of her fellow creatures," namely, the mistreated slaves on their Jamaican plantation. Mrs. Ellison's compulsion of love for her lapdog, though a natural effusion of sentiment, leads her to leap over the boundaries of kind. Mr. Ellison's reference to the Africans, her "fellow creatures," calls attention to this violation of the boundary between species, at the same time as it encourages her sympathy for beings of her own kind. As in Hanway's essay, the lady's attachment to the lapdog in this episode of Scott's novel is both an exemplary model of human virtue and a perversion of that virtue.

Dickens's Inter-Species Embrace

Charles Dickens's fiction is a core resource for the representation of the canine pet, and Dickens finds a signal use for the figure of the lady and the lapdog in three of his major novels: *Little Dorrit* (1857), *Dombey and Son* (1848), and *David Copperfield* (1850). Dickens's dogs provide a perspective on both the continuity and the transformation of this figure from its eighteenth-century versions. The images and effects that accompany Dickens's dogs emerge directly from the earlier satiric tradition, except, interestingly, for these animals' size. Though they behave like Pope's Shock, *Little Dorrit's* and *Dombey and Son's* canine pets are not lapdogs, but giants. The lady-and-the-lapdog figure in *Little Dorrit* appears in a local scene and serves to uncover the lady's affections. This exchange is set at the Meagles's country estate, where Minnie Meagles's two suitors arrive together for a visit to the family. Minnie's romantic attachment to Henry Gowan becomes evident to Gowan's rival, the novel's male protagonist, Arthur Clennam. Gowan appears with his giant Newfoundland dog, and Minnie's connection with him is telegraphed in her evident affection for the animal, rendered through the jealous consciousness of Arthur Clennam: "How she caressed the dog, and how the dog knew her! How expressive that heightened color in her face, that fluttered manner, her downcast eyes, her irresolute happiness!... The dog had put his great paws on her arm and laid his head against her dear bosom. She had laughed and welcomed them, and made far too much of the dog, far, far, too much."²⁸ Here we see in compact form the caress, the female bosom, the strange inter-species embrace, and the "far, far, too much" that indicate the familiar

²⁸ Charles Dickens, *Little Dorrit*, ed. Harvey Peter Sucksmith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 198.

connection of immoderate love. From Clennam's point of view, the lady's intimacy with the dog is a both a testimony to Minnie's natural sentiment and a signal of impropriety, and both of these effects are pursued within the novel, as Minnie's true virtue is confirmed, while her marriage to Gowan—the dog's master—leads her to ruin.

The question of the transgression of the boundaries of kin is directly relevant to Florence Dombey's relationship with Diogenes, another "great hoarse shaggy dog," whose size is a means of underlining his comic alterity, and whose name alludes to the Cynic philosopher who argued that animals are superior to humans.²⁹ Florence is given the dog on her brother's death, and her intimate connection with him is presented as a direct substitute for her cruel alienation from her father. In the scene in which Diogenes is introduced, we see the same contrast between ordinary distance and immoderate intimacy that is characteristic of the representation of the lady and the lapdog elsewhere in this period. At his first appearance, Diogenes is a comical and familiar object of human amusement, a "poor cur," or "that dog" of familiar parlance: "Diogenes was as unlike a lady's dog as dog might be; ... as ridiculous a dog as one would meet with on a summer's day; a blundering, ill-favoured, clumsy, bullet-headed dog, continually acting on a wrong idea that there was an enemy in the neighbourhood, whom it was meritorious to bark at" (212). In fact, Diogenes' first act is to scare off Florence's friend, Mr. Toots:

[He] suddenly took it into his head to bay Mr. Toots, and to make short runs at him with his mouth open. Not exactly seeing his way to the end of these demonstrations, ... Mr. Toots, with chuckles, lapsed out at the door: by which, after looking in again two or three times without any object at all, and being on each occasion greeted with a fresh run from Diogenes, he finally took himself off and got away. (213)

This baying and barking and comical cavorting is followed by a very different encounter, a connection between dog and woman that includes all of the now-familiar elements of the trope: a strange, hairy face; an alien gaze; an intimate embrace; a falling tear; a bedside encounter; an immoderate love; and a transgression of the boundaries both of kin and kind, as follows:

Though [Diogenes] was far from good-tempered, and certainly was not clever, and had hair all over his eyes, and a comic nose, and an inconsistent tail, and a gruff voice; he was dearer to Florence ... than the most valuable and beautiful

²⁹ Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son*, ed. Alan Horsman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 156. For the Cynics' regard for animals, see Richard Sorabji, *Animal Minds and Human Morals: The Origins of the Western Debate* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993), 160.

of his kind. ... "Come, then, Di! Dear Di! Make friends with your new mistress. Let us love each other, Di!" said Florence, fondling his shaggy head. And Di, the rough and gruff, as if his hairy hide were pervious to the tear that dropped upon it, and his dog's heart melted as it fell, put his nose up to her face, and swore fidelity. ... He ... rose up on his hind legs, with his awkward fore paws on her shoulders, licked her face and hands, nestled his great head against her heart, and wagged his tail till he was tired. Finally, Diogenes coiled himself up at her feet, and went to sleep. (212–213)

In this dynamic of comic distance and alien intimacy, Diogenes, like so many of his imaginary canine predecessors, takes the place of a missing human and familial contact. Florence, and Dickens, see Diogenes as a substitute for Florence's cruel father. She calls on her dog to "love me for his sake!" Dickens concludes the painful account of Mr. Dombey's rejection of Florence with another bedside representation of the lady and the lapdog:

Diogenes already loved her for her own [sake], and didn't care how much he showed it. So he made himself vastly ridiculous by performing a variety of uncouth bounces in the ante-chamber, and concluded, when poor Florence was at last asleep, ... by scratching open her bedroom door: rolling up his bed into a pillow: lying down on the boards, at the full length of his tether, with his head towards her: and looking lazily at her, upside down, out of the tops of his eyes, until from winking and winking he fell asleep himself, and dreamed, with gruff barks, of his enemy. (217).

The strange bedside gaze here is the channel that joins Florence and Diogenes, marking their intimacy. Again, this connection between a woman and an animal substitutes for the natural, familial intimacy that should subsist between father and daughter, in the same way that the connection between Lady Juliana and her lapdog takes the place of the love that should naturally join mother and child. The transgression of the boundaries of kin and kind, and the reversals and inversions rehearsed in this passage, lead directly to an alternative realm of affection, proposed in Florence's words "let us love each other."

David Copperfield's Jip is a true lapdog, and his interaction with David's child-wife, Dora, is built on the familiar prototype and alludes directly to its satiric heritage. During David's courtship of Dora, Jip elicits the envy of the displaced human lover, and Dora's treatment of the dog reproduces the language of immoderate love, with its caresses, its erotic "punishments," and its licking tongue. In David's words:

He was mortally jealous of me, and persisted in barking at me. She took him up in her arms—oh my goodness!—and caressed him, but he insisted upon barking

still. He wouldn't let me touch him, when I tried; and then she beat him. It increased my sufferings greatly to see the pats she gave him for punishment on the bridge of his blunt nose, while he winked his eyes, and licked her hand, and still growled within himself like a little double-bass. At length he was quiet—we might be with her dimpled chin upon his head!—and we walked away to look at a greenhouse.³⁰

When David announces his straitened circumstances to Dora and encourages her “perseverance and strength of character,” the solution is kissing the lapdog:

“But I haven't got any strength at all,” said Dora, shaking her curls. “Have I, Jip? Oh, do kiss Jip, and be agreeable!”

It was impossible to resist kissing Jip, when she held him up to me for that purpose, putting her own bright, rosy little mouth into kissing form, as she directed the operation, which she insisted should be performed symmetrically, on the centre of his nose. I did as she bade me—rewarding myself afterwards for my obedience—and she charmed me out of my graver character for I don't know how long. (609–610)

Jip's special intimacy with Dora is emphasized at the time of her decline and death, and the representation of their relationship has the same structure as Diogenes' connection with Florence Dombey—a dynamic of distance and intimacy, in which the lapdog's proximity to the lady is contrasted with his comic distance from those around her, including her husband, and is seen as a substitute for a natural or normal human connection. Jip, like Diogenes, attacks innocent bystanders, in this case David's aunt, Dora's nurse, with an energy that contrasts with his intimacy with his mistress, and that resembles Diogenes' comical attacks on Mr. Toots:

Dora had helped him up on the sofa; where he really was defying my aunt to such a furious extent, that he couldn't keep straight, but barked himself sideways. The more my aunt looked at him, the more he reproached her; for, she had lately taken to spectacles, and for some inscrutable reason he considered the glasses personal.

Dora made him lie down by her, with a good deal of persuasion; and when he was quiet, drew one of his long ears through and through her hand, repeating, thoughtfully, “Even little Jip! Oh, poor fellow!” (789–790)

The sofa is Dora's invalid bed, where the canine companion, with his long ears, takes an intimate place in relation to the lady, in contrast to the comical distance from

³⁰ Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 444.

human-kind with which he begins the encounter. Jip had also barked at David when he first courted Dora, a behavior that especially endears him to her, as she says: “I couldn't be such friends with any other dog but Jip; because [another dog] wouldn't have known me before I was married, and wouldn't have barked at Doady when he first came to our house. I couldn't care for any other dog but Jip, I am afraid, aunt” (790). Jip's special relationship with Dora, based on their intimacy “before [she] was married,” and his attacks on her husband-to-be, can be compared to Belinda's relationship with Shock, who wakes his mistress with his tongue as a substitute for the human lover she dreams of.

For the innocent Dora, or Florence Dombey, however, the sexual innuendo is difficult to apply. Though these scenes include the same inter-species embrace that we can track back even to *The Rival Lapdog*, the suggestion of an awakening or excessive or perverse female sexuality does not illuminate either of those characters or belong to the imaginative experience generated by their texts. On the other hand, the idea of an alternative realm of affection created through this inter-species embrace certainly emerges as an experiment in the definition of love in Dickens's novels. Adding these sentimental female characters to our survey of the appearances of the lady and the lapdog helps us see that the significance of such experiments with the idea of inter-species love is not limited to the early eighteenth-century satire on sexual excess. Immoderate love—or heights of love—evokes a broader idea, relevant to all these occasions of inter-species affection, whatever their local role; an idea of a realm outside the bounds of the normal, which emerges from the relationships of inversion and reversal that characterize this imaginative encounter with animal-kind.

Immoderate Love

The lady and the lapdog has a powerful literary resonance. The range of examples that we have surveyed suggests that this figure, even when it appears in very different texts and modes of discourse and across a period of a century and a half, carries a lasting imaginative vitality. The “bedfellow” setting, the female breast, the tenderness, the caress, the embrace, the kiss, the tear, and, in short, the heights of love, express the intimacy of the human-animal connection. The nonhuman gaze marks the channel of contact. The hairy or supersized being, the immoderate or unnatural attraction, and the misdirected or substituted affection signal its shocking, surprising, or sudden alterity. Brought together in one imaginative moment, these effects collide. And the result of their collision is the sudden inversion that we have tracked from satiric poetry—those structures of discordance, antithesis, magical substitution, hierarchy reversal, or species transposition that define the figure of the lady and the lapdog.

Why such resonance? Most immediately, as we have already seen, the lady and the lapdog provides an occasion to explore ideas of human-animal intimacy generated by the rise of pet keeping. Is the animal a force within or a being external to the human? Do animals regulate or liberate human behavior? Can humans become or substitute for animals, and vice versa? Does love define or transcend species?³¹ But in addition, this inter-species fantasy and the questions it contemplates have a broader purview. The cultural phenomenon of pet keeping and the female connection with animals were closely related to the generalized humanitarian movements of this era. What Keith Thomas describes as “that growing concern about the treatment of animals which was one of the most distinctive features of late-eighteenth-century English middle-class culture” (144) found resonances in the new philanthropy.³² Hanway’s essay illustrates this connection clearly, as he evokes, in connection with the beloved lapdog, the idea of “a human creature, which [may be]... under no care at all.” Furthermore, as Markman Ellis has demonstrated, lapdogs served as a common point of reference in contemporary discussions of sympathy toward African slaves. Ellis argues that “the campaigns against slavery and animal cruelty [were] intertwined in the public imagination” in this period: “Just as the abolitionists sought to reposition Africans as thinking and feeling people, the animal-cruelty campaigners sought to refigure the cultural construction of brute creation, showing them to be not things but animals possessed with feeling and thus endowed with certain rights” (“Suffering Things,” 106–107). We have seen this association illustrated in Mr. Ellison’s reproof to his wife for her failure to apply the same sympathy to her “fellow creatures” as to her lapdog (13).³³ This broader relevance suggests that the questions raised by the figure of the lady and the lapdog intersect actively with a wider engagement with the connection between women and animals—an engagement that persists and develops over the course of this period. Ladies and lapdogs inform ideas about humanity or charity, as well as the understanding of sympathy or love, as those ideas are construed in relation to notions of kin and kind. In this respect, the lady and the lapdog is a particular instance of a collective imaginative project.

Meanwhile, the issues of sexuality that we have seen to be endemic to this particular human-animal conjunction find a strange echo in contemporary representations of inter-species miscegenation—in the frequent and widely accepted stories of apes

³¹Ellis also explores the deep problematization of the lapdog, describing “the intensity of the struggle over the meanings of the lapdog in the mid-eighteenth century” (“Suffering Things,” 99).

³²For a sustained account of the rise of “compassion for the brute creation,” see Thomas, *Man and the Natural World*, 143–192.

³³Ellis has treated this text in detail in “Suffering Things” and *The Politics of Sensibility*. See also Laura Brown, *Fables of Modernity: Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2001), 254–256.

engaging in sexual intercourse with women.³⁴ These stories arise, of course, from the extraordinary shifts in the definition of the human in relation to the hominoid ape—shifts that we saw in chapter 2 to be deeply resonant in the eighteenth-century imagination. The image of apes raping women appears in Edward Long’s *History of Jamaica* (1774), in a sustained summary of seventeenth and eighteenth-century natural historians’ and travelers’ accounts of the hominoid ape in Africa:

So far as [apes] are hitherto discovered to Europeans, it appears that they herd in a kind of society together, and build huts suitable to their climate; that, when tamed and properly instructed, they have been brought to perform a variety of menial domestic services; that they conceive a Passion for the Negroe women, and hence must be supposed to covet their embraces from a natural impulse of desire, such as inclines one animal towards another of the same species, or which has a conformity in the organs of generation.³⁵

These apes “endeavour to surprize and carry off Negroe women into their woody retreats, in order to enjoy them” (360). And, Long supposes, “I do not think that an oran-outang husband would be any dishonour to an Hottentot female” (364). James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, recites the same stories—that “these Orang Outangs... carry away young negroe girls, and keep them for their pleasure: And, [one traveler] says, he knew one negroe girl that had been with them three years.”³⁶

Famously, the bathing scene from the fourth voyage of Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* redacts this familiar ape-rape myth. Here, as we have seen in chapter 2, the Yahoos are Swift’s composite version of the hominoid ape, with their “thick hair” and “beards like goats,” and Gulliver the vulnerable rape victim:

Being one day abroad with my protector the sorrel nag, and the weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a river that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the stream. It happened that a young female yahoo, standing behind a bank, saw the whole proceeding, and inflamed by desire... came running with all speed, and leaped into the water within five yards of the place where I bathed. I was never in my life so terribly frightened... She embraced me after a most fulsome manner; I roared as loud as I could and the nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her grasp, with the utmost reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite bank, where

³⁴For a summary of the ape-rape myth, see H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: Warburg Institute, 1952), 261–286, and Brown, *Fables of Modernity*, 236–245.

³⁵Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 3 vols. (London: T. Lowndes, 1774), 2364.

³⁶James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh, 1774; repr. New York: Garland, 1970), ¶ 277–278.

she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my clothes. . . . [N]ow I could no longer deny that I was a real yahoo in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me as one of their own species.³⁷

In this image of inter-species sexual contact, where the hairy, alien being embraces the human, Swift is clearly experimenting with the established miscegenation fantasy by proposing, in the event, that these alien creatures are, surprisingly, of the same species as the human.

These anecdotes of ape-rape can be used to suggest the degenerate nature of non-European—especially African—peoples, as Long's account clearly does. Or they can implicitly support the protoevolutionist idea of continuity from nonhuman to human-being, as is the case with Monboddo's interpretation of these stories. But in either instance, this fantasy has the same shape and many of the same components as that of the lady and the lapdog—an image structured around the representation of a sudden movement of intimacy across a divide of alterity; a moment of connection between a woman and an alien, hairy nonhuman being; an immoderate love; and a violation of the ordinary norms of kin and kind. In Barrett Browning's words:

A head as hairy as Faunus thrust its way
Right sudden against my face,
.
... the bearded vision . . .
.
... the true PAN
... leads to heights of love.

Stripped to their imaginative core, this inter-species love sonnet and the eighteenth-century miscegenation anecdote represent the same unexpected historical experience of human-animal contact. And furthermore, in thanking "the true PAN" who presides over this moment in which the normal human-animal hierarchy is so fundamentally challenged, Barrett Browning's poem reaches back to the turn of the eighteenth century and to Edward Tyson's influential connection of the orangutan with the semideities of classical mythology—with the fauns, the satyrs, Silenus, and with Pan himself, a connection evident in the poem's title, "Flush or Faunus." We examined this connection at length in chapter 2, where we saw its centrality to the ontological questions generated by the new

³⁷ Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. Louis A. Landa (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 207, 215. For a reading of Gulliver's bathing scene in the context of the rape myth, see Brown, *Fables of Modernity*, 240–242.

experience of animal-kind. And we saw it highlighted in chapter 1, in Thomas Love Peacock's complex characterization of his ape hero in *Melincourt; or, Sir Oran Haut-ton* (1818).³⁸

Of course we know that Flush is not Barrett Browning's figure for Tyson's *homo sylvestris* or for Long's ape that rapes African women, and that Florence Dombey is not Dickens's redaction of the so-called Hottentot female caught in the embrace of the "rough and gruff," "hairy" beast as "he . . . rose up on his hind legs, with his . . . fore paws on her shoulders." But the deep formal resemblance among these texts helps us grasp the richness and the speculativeness of the figure of the lady and the lapdog. In its earlier satiric versions, as we have seen, this figure gathers a fund of images, forms, and effects whose ironies shape a distinctive, destabilizing approach to inter-species connection. These effects carry forward, transferring that array of questions about identities, hierarchies, and stabilities to successive sentimental and affective literary forms, and thus reproducing, through those processes of destabilization, some of the most troubling dimensions of the modern experience of alterity. In this way, this feminized, domestic trope of inter-species household intimacy comes to mirror one of this era's most powerful global images of the encounter with alterity.

In both the miscegenation anecdote and the representation of women's pet keeping, the experience of difference takes the same form. Like the Yahoo in Swift's rape scene or the Hottentot in Long's history, Flush, Diogenes, and the "Rival Lapdog" are portrayed as most alien, most disturbing, or most perverse at the point of their closest contact with the human. But the representations of this sudden encounter in the realms of race and culture produce no positive innovations. In the case of the lady and the lapdog, however, this collision propels the account of human-animal connection outside the bounds of the normal and creates the opportunity for a new and vital imaginative framework in which ideas about kinship and species difference, hierarchy and privilege, or antithesis and affection are fundamentally revised. "Immoderate love" emerges as the surprising fulfillment of this revision. The product of astonished difference, this new notion of love is based on alterity rather than identity, and on a structure of dissonance, reversal, and inversion rather than of sameness or coherence. The literary figure of the lady and the lapdog, in its long reach from social satire to sentiment and from the bedside setting to the habitats of Africa, makes the historical engagement with animal-kind into an imaginative experience that is "good to think."³⁹

³⁸ Pan has many meanings, most of them consonant with the humanist interpretations of the classical tradition. In this context, Barrett Browning's "true Pan" is usually seen as a Christ figure. For instance, Patricia Merivale reads this sonnet as a contrast between Flush, a "goatish and terrifying" pseudo-Pan, and the representation of Christianity in the "true Pan" who replaces him in the poem's conclusion. Patricia Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969), 82.

³⁹ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (1962; repr. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 89.