

BEYOND THE PALE HORSE:  
ANIMALS, SUBSTITUTION, AND THE COST OF ROMANCE IN THE  
*ORLANDO FURIOSO*

Tess Grogan

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews



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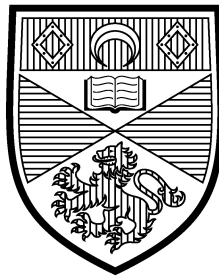
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Beyond the Pale Horse:  
Animals, Substitution, and the Cost of Romance in the *Orlando furioso*

Tess Grogan



University of  
St Andrews

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of MPhil  
at the  
University of St Andrews

September 2017

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## Abstract

This study responds to Patricia Parker's landmark account of endlessly expansive romance, suggesting that the genre's structural deferrals and excesses come at a steep hidden price. Like other early modern discourses—rhetoric, economics, empiricism—romance produces a fiction of unmitigated progress which assiduously obscures losses sustained along the way. Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is distinct from later romance epics because it refuses to conceal its own logic, instead staging scenes of cost openly and conspicuously. I suggest that the brutal subroutines sustaining romance's narrative profusion are visible in the poem's exceptionally strange and vital animal figures, which deviate sharply from more conventional images deployed by Ariosto's successors. The first chapter considers the figure of the mother predator, whose irate defense of her abducted offspring serves to augment the wrath of the *Furioso*'s male paladins. These indecorous comparisons destabilize the poem's justifications for violence; by contrast, similar figures in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* and Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* reinforce normative hierarchies and place romance's violence beyond question. The second chapter addresses Orlando's savage killing of a female packhorse while in the nadir of his madness. With reference to the poem's other scenes of sexualized violence, I respond to readings that situate Ariosto's mare as a symbol of humanist dialectic advancement, suggesting that the mare's adamant suffering instead exposes the costs exacted by that romance of progress, a disclosure which disappears in the later poems. The stakes of this project are urgent: by attending to the ways in which romance linchpins *arme* and *amori* are mapped onto women and female animals, it is possible to trace how sexual violence was understood by a poem with a broad and enduring legacy, and to approach its disclosures as a radical act.

## Acknowledgments

This project was made possible by the tremendous generosity of the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, which supported my two years of study and research at the University of St. Andrews. I would like to extend my thanks to the Commissioners, both past and current, as well as my sincere gratitude for the competence and patience of Ms. Mary Denyer, Ms. Elizabeth Clark, and Ms. Rachel Arnold. The community of Marshall scholars has been an unexpected joy, and I would like to thank my peers in the UK for providing couches, provocative questions, and merriment.

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Closer to home, Alexa Winik and Justin Duff provided affection, crisps, and incisive scholarly commentary on Jesus and bears. Go up, thou baldhead! (2 Kings 2:23). The Oracle gave freely in logistical counsel, prophetic emojis, and unconditional love. I was baffled and touched when Audrey Hall checked out a copy of Ariosto at her local library. Last and foremost, Will has listened, cooked, and sought gender in all things.

To quote a much greater man than I: "Though...I am unconscious of intentional error, I am nevertheless too sensible of my defects not to think it probable that I may have committed many errors." Those remaining are my own, and persist in spite of the best efforts of good people.

## Note on translations, transcription, and abbreviation

This project is comparative in essence, moving rapidly through three poems, in multiple editions and translations. I have opted to cite the primary texts in footnotes for clarity, abbreviating citations in accordance with standard field practice. Citations for each of the primary epics are abbreviated to the title initials (list below), cited by canto, stanza, and line number for Ariosto and Tasso, and by book, canto, and stanza for Spenser. E.g. A citation from lines 3-5 of the fifth stanza of the fourth canto of the *Furioso* will be noted in the form *OF*, 4.5.3-5. I use standard Einaudi (Turin, 1992) and Caretti (Parma: Zara, 1993) editions of Ariosto and Tasso; English quotations of these texts are, unless otherwise indicated, taken from verse translations by Barbara Reynolds (London: Penguin, 1975 and 1977) and Anthony Esolen (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000) respectively. These particular translations have the benefit of matching the Italian line numbers relatively faithfully. Differences between the English and the Italian are minimal, but some divergences are discussed where relevant to the larger study. I rely on Robert McNulty's edition of John Harington's translation (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), and on the second edition of A.C. Hamilton's classic Spenser (London: Routledge, 2013). In the case of the last two English poems, I follow the orthography of the critical editions, both of which retain spelling from the first printings except in certain extraordinary cases.

My first chapter refers frequently to bestiary material. While it is impossible to definitively trace Ariosto's "source" for something as widespread as the beast simile—these formulations often turn up in classical and biblical material, and likely far predate both—I refer to three texts that may be taken as representative of animal lore as it was understood in the sixteenth century: Isidore of Seville's extremely popular *Etymologies*; the lavish medieval Ashmolean (MS. Ashmole 1511) and Aberdeen (MS. Aberdeen 24) bestiary manuscripts; and Edward Topsell's *Historie of foure-footed beastes* (1607). Isidore is available in a critical edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), but the other three are best accessed online: through the Early English Books Online database in the case of Topsell (<https://eebo.chadwyck.com/home>) and on the Bodleian and Aberdeen library websites in the case of the bestiaries (<http://bodley30.bodley.ox.ac.uk:8180/luna/servlet> and <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/bestiary/>). I reproduce the orthography of these sources, quoting from provided translations of the Latin bestiaries and retaining the spelling of the 1607 Topsell.

FQ	<i>The Faerie Queene</i>
GL	<i>Gerusalemme liberata</i>
OF	<i>Orlando furioso</i>
OEHV	<i>Orlando furioso in English Heroical Verse</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>

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## Introduction

Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori,  
le cortesie, l'audaci imprese io canto  
—Ludovico Ariosto<sup>1</sup>

That girls are raped, that two boys knife a third  
Were axioms to him  
—W.H. Auden<sup>2</sup>

The opening lines of the *Orlando furioso* brim with the matter of romance. Love and war, France and Africa, hotheaded youthful deeds and brave sea crossings all herald the scope of this notoriously expansive poem, which traverses continents via hippogriff and sends characters shooting famously to the moon. The second stanza is similarly extravagant, promising "cosa non detta in prosa mai, né in rima" (things as yet untried in prose or rhyme) and situating the poet himself as a latter-day Mad Orlando, in thrall to his own Petrarchan mistress. It is not until the third verse that Ariosto suggests that this capacious tale is in fact delimited by court politics, with a formulaic invocation of Ippolito d'Este's patronage: "Quel ch'io vi debbo, posso di parole / pagare in parte e d'opera d'inchostro...che quanto io posso dar, tutto vi dono."<sup>3</sup> The poet offers to repay his debt to the Cardinal with a gift of "opera d'inchostro," ink-work. Amidst the ensuing catalogue of heroes, lovelies, and exotic locales it is easy to pass quickly over this rote reminder that the capacious cosmos of the *Furioso* is the product of a bounded system of exchange, a world wrapped up in a gift box.

Yet the romance itself is full of little bounded economies. The kleptomaniac dwarf Brunello keeps up a bustling trade in enchanted jewels and heirloom armaments, facilitating the convenient reappearance of items when appurtenant to the plot. Horses and women are stolen,

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<sup>1</sup> Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso* (Turin: Einaudi, 1992), 1.1.1-2.

<sup>2</sup> W.H. Auden, "The Shield of Achilles" in *Selected Poems* (New York, Vintage: 2007), 207.

<sup>3</sup> *OF*, 1.3.5-8. For discussion of Estensi patronage see Werner L. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: The Style of a Renaissance Despotism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973).

loaned, and exchanged; familiar characters like Orlando, Rinaldo, Charlemagne, or Baiardo are salvaged and recycled from prior romances. When a person or object does vanish permanently, the rare disappearance is remarkable; the watery interment of Cimosco's gun and the princess Angelica's exit, stage left, to Cathay have both prompted ample commentary. This principle of conservation dictates emotion, as well: rage and fury do not vanish simply because a lady does.<sup>4</sup> *Amore* too operates like a checkbook: the distressed damsel Olimpia laments the necessity of surrendering kin and castles on account of her kidnapped love Bireno, as the narrator opines "If constant souls, as well may be conceived, / Reciprocal affection justly earn, / Bireno should at least her love return."<sup>5</sup> "Reciproco amor" dictates nearly every intimate relationship in the poem. When Ruggiero rescues Angelica from the sea orc, he "thinks he can surmise / A thousand kisses promised in her eyes"; after she evades his attempted ravishment, he "rail[s] against her who had thus exchanged / In recompense for all his help and tact / This rude, ungrateful disappearing act."<sup>6</sup> The ingratitude of *donne*—female violation of the rules of romance's sexual economy—preoccupies the narrator for the duration of the poem, from "ill-rewarded" Ruggiero to Orlando "[s]lain...By her ingratitude, alas!"<sup>7</sup> The expectation is clear: Give, and it shall be given.

Debbo, pagare, recompensa, mercede, premio:<sup>8</sup> these are the terms of a closed system, presumably opposed to the poststructuralist account of open, ever-expanding romance classically articulated by Patricia Parker.<sup>9</sup> This is a genre known for furious violent excesses, for passions burning like wildfires, for the unstoppable, the immovable, the frenzied, the exceptional. Its

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<sup>4</sup> See Valeria Finucci, *The Lady Vanishes: Subjectivity and Representation in Castiglione and Ariosto* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1992) for discussion of the necessity of this latter disappearance.

<sup>5</sup> Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando Furioso*, trans. Barbara Reynolds, Vol. 1 (Baltimore: Penguin, 1975), 9.50.1-6; 10.2.6-8.

<sup>6</sup> *OF*, 10.112.7-8; 11.7.6-8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.82.8; 23.128.3-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.3.5-8; 19.31.1-8; 31.3.5-8.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Parker, *Inescapable Romance: Studies in the Poetics of a Mode* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979).

rhetoric specializes, paradoxically, in conveying the very ineffability of its subject matter. In this study, I argue that romance's thematics of endlessness should not be taken at face value.

Romance is a closed system masquerading as an open one, belied by signs of cost which the genre assiduously obscures. This elision of cost and proclamation of infinite value is by no means unique to romance, but forms the spine of several discourses pivotal to the emergence of modernity: rhetoric, empiricism, and economics. Conversely, the use of romance material by major thinkers in these fields signals the proximity of the romance to emergent forms of knowledge, and the mutual implication of these discourses.

Copia, or verbal abundance, is a term most closely associated with Erasmus's Latin treatise *De Copia*, published four years before the *Orlando furioso*. In explaining his theory of composition training, the Dutch humanist proposes that rhetoric should be theorized as an economy: a profitable form of personal and communal enrichment.<sup>10</sup> Commonplacing, the collection of exempla and sententious material from existing works, is a way of always being "in ready money."<sup>11</sup> Unlike financial markets of the period, humanist learning hawks a form of enrichment that is limitless, unenclosed by any finite availability of goods or market demand. The only limiting factor is the orator's own creative capacity, as Erasmus demonstrates in his famous litany of ways to thank someone for a letter. "To me your letter was assuredly what the brain of Zeus was to the Persians," the list's coup de grâce, is impressive in its own right; more astounding is the sense that Erasmus could continue with this mounting hyperbole, spinning straw into gold for all perpetuity.<sup>12</sup> In her foundational study of romance structure, Patricia Parker proposes that a similar indefinite postponement of closure is crucial to the formal

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<sup>10</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, *On Copia of Words and Ideas*, trans. Donald B. King and H. David Rix (Milwaukee, WI: Marquette University Press, 2007), 14.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 42

dynamics of the genre.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the great romance poets are masters of precisely the skills which Erasmus describes, drawing on the bottomless account of inherited material—from stock characters to classical epithets—to gild their narratives. Both Erasmian rhetoric and Ariostan romance craft a world of endless possibility, where debts never come due.

At first glance, there is nothing more vocally opposed to the florid rhetoric and narrative excess of romance than early modern empiricism. Francis Bacon explicitly distances himself from fable in *The Advancement of Learning*:

Besides this, we reject, with a particular mark, all those boasted and received falsehoods, which by a strange neglect have prevailed for so many ages, that they may no longer molest the sciences. For as the idle tales of nurses do really corrupt the minds of children, we cannot too carefully guard the infancy of philosophy from all vanity and superstition.<sup>14</sup>

However, Bacon's own well-documented relationship with fables and myths destabilizes this casting of fictions as the mere molesters of his infant science.<sup>15</sup> The fruits of the method championed by Bacon and others—medical sciences, production technologies, war machines—themselves rely on a familiar logic, recognizable from romance and Erasmian rhetoric: the fiction of endless advancement and eternally deferred costs. In Bacon's construct, the allegedly lascivious "idle tale" undergirds the innocence of the discourse it threatens, subtly affirming the credentials of the philosopher's own work. As we shall see, idle tales and the scientific revolution were fully conterminous, mutually implicated in visions of war that can be won without death, of labor that requires no effort, of bodily violence that prompts no human hesitation or affective

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<sup>13</sup> Parker, *Inescapable Romance*.

<sup>14</sup> Francis Bacon, "The Great Instauration," *Bacon's Physical and Metaphysical Works*, trans. Joseph Devey (London: Bell, 1904), 18.

<sup>15</sup> See Erica Fudge, "Calling Creatures by Their True Names: Bacon, the New Science and the Beast in Man" in *At the Borders of the Human: Beasts, Bodies and Natural Philosophy in the Early Modern Period*, ed. Ruth Glibert Erica Fudge, and Susan Wiseman (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 91-109.

calculus. The production of "cosa non detta" in science, as in romance, requires an act of forgetting: an erasure of missteps, a total acceptance of the romantic fable of expansion.<sup>16</sup>

Markets and debts pervade romance as much as romance pervades the most influential modern account of markets: the *Communist Manifesto*. Unlike Bacon, Marx makes no attempt to renounce his document's reliance on fable. Giants (Modern Industry) and spectres (Communism) populate the pages of this most materialist of treatises. The bourgeoisie is at once "the sorcerer, who is no longer able to control the powers of the nether world whom he has called up by his spells" and something of a Black Knight, armed with "weapons with which [it] felled feudalism," and conducting "expeditions that put in the shade all former Exoduses of nations and crusades."<sup>17</sup> An idealized vision of the medieval period is central to Marx's concept, just as the earlier poets relied on a sanitized and lionized Charlemagne; in short, the *Manifesto* is as much a historical romance as Ariosto's *Furioso*. Marx, like the romance poets, describes crises generated by copia: the "epidemic of over-production...too much civilization, too much means of subsistence, too much industry, too much commerce."<sup>18</sup> As Marx and his many philosophical successors continue to insist, concrete costs always sustain the profits of an open system—the ladies and cavaliers of the ruling classes may simply choose not to see them.

In each of these interrelated discourses, losses are hidden, buried, or transformed. In asserting a fiction of endless progress, modernity obsessively denies its own cost. Yet the romantic commonplaces employed by these thinkers still hint of the dangers of this proposed open value system. Marx famously quotes a romance figure epitomizing the genre's fraught relationship with the limits of its own power, the sorcerer-auteur who drowns his book and

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<sup>16</sup> Lorraine Daston uses the resonant phrase "amnesiac science" to describe this erasure in "The Sciences of the Archive," *Osiris* 27, no. 1 (2012). See also Daston's "The Moral Economy of Science," *Osiris* 10 (1995): 2-24.

<sup>17</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 8-9; 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

breaks his staff.<sup>19</sup> While Marx uses this reference to ostensibly condemn the exploitative nature of the free market, other critics have pointed out exploitations that even the Marxist account has erased.<sup>20</sup> Gayle Rubin first exposed classic Marxism's obstinate refusal to consider the costs of women's work; like the early modern discourses discussed, Marx's theoretical framework is loathe to acknowledge its own indebtedness. Rhetoric is perhaps the most clear-eyed about its own potential social costs; the potency of Erasmian copia is undercut by the explicit identification of the successful orator with Proteus, whose mythical transformative capabilities vie for pride of place with an equally notorious interest in raping female passersby.<sup>21</sup> Early modern tracts of all stripes express anxiety about verbal proliferation—the period's own "epidemic of over-production"<sup>22</sup>—with awareness that rhetorical potency is a parlous riptide, easily pulling a silver tongue into the service of a malcontented Iago or Shylock.

Crises of modernity are always, in some sense, crises of value. In the sixteenth century an influx of bullion and goods from the New World fomented inflation and credit emergencies in the Old, which were mapped onto the period's literary consciousness. Critics such as Lorna Hutson have written compelling accounts of credit and credibility in early modern literature; however, these discussions have generally avoided the sprawling poetic romances.<sup>23</sup> Romance indeed promotes an expectation of insulation from the workaday, which is why accounts of its economic nature remain startling. Valerie Forman has recently refuted this division, arguing for the essential role of late romance plays like *The Winter's Tale* in laying the groundwork for

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 6. "All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind" refers to *The Tempest* Act IV, scene i.

<sup>20</sup> Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" in *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 33-65. On Marx's blindness to imperialism, see Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*, trans. Joan Pinkham (New York: Monthly Review, 2001), 86.

<sup>21</sup> For example, in Ariosto's Canto 8 and Spenser's *Faerie Queene* Book III, Cantos 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> Marx and Engels, *Manifesto*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994) and Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

capitalism: their modeling of a structural alchemy transforming loss into gain while smuggling away costs.<sup>24</sup> While relying on Forman's vision of the costless, profit-centric world of tragicomedy, I propose that unlike these plays the *Orlando furioso* does not simply silently smuggle out costs but also exposes the romance genre in the act of smuggling. By placing moments of total loss conspicuously throughout the narrative, Ariosto allows the costs of romance to re-enter the equation, revealing its avowed endlessness to be a charade. His romance visibly decouples profit and cost, assigning certain marginal characters to suffer so that others can act out a fantasy of perpetual advancement.

This dynamic is common across romances, but what is unique to the *Furioso* is the way in which moments of incidental suffering are rendered conspicuous. Why write in this way? Ariosto's status as a favored court poet depended on his production of palatable romance. For a poet with misgivings, exiting the genre would have been unfeasible; condemning it while producing more of the same would be hypocritical.<sup>25</sup> I suggest that the Ferrarese poet navigates a quandary of conscience by overperforming conventional material, drawing the reader's attention to moments of exacted price by creating a narrative so excessively romantic that it blurs the line between reproduction and parody.<sup>26</sup> In later works—notably Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Sir John Harington's English translation of Ariosto—the romance mechanism of hidden costs is itself obfuscated, and the erasure is itself

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<sup>24</sup> Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

<sup>25</sup> Jo Ann Cavallo reductively frames the romance poet's two options as an "aspiration to change society" or "unproductive resignation to the status quo," consigning Ariosto to the latter heap. *The Romance Epics of Boiardo, Ariosto, and Tasso: From Public Duty to Private Pleasure* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 230.

<sup>26</sup> On the subversive potential of repetitive reproduction see Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 43-45.

erased. The *Furioso* rejects this opacity: in Ariosto's poem, the brutal inner workings of romance are subjected to a discomfiting transparency, its dirtiest cogs encased in glass.

I have so far attempted to outline my position regarding the broader structural significance of the *Furioso*: the poem pushes against the current of early modern romance by exposing a strain of violent losses that sustain the genre's spiraling rhetoric and seemingly limitless possibilities. My specific route into this problematic is animals. I believe that this seemingly oblique methodological approach is justified by a strong subterranean pattern of association in the *Furioso*, which fuses animals to the poem's vital themes: erotic violence, mad excess, the relation between *l'arme* and *gli amori*. This affiliation is explicitly addressed in the proem to Canto 5, following the famous tirade by the knight Rinaldo against sexual double standards:<sup>27</sup>

Tutti gli altri animai che sono in terra,  
 o che vivon quieti e stanno in pace,  
 o se vengono a rissa e si fan guerra,  
 alla femina il maschio non la face:  
 l'orsa con l'orso al bosco sicura erra,  
 la leonessa appresso il leon giace;  
 col lupo vive la lupa sicura,  
 né la iuvenca ha del torel paura.

[No creatures on the earth, no matter whether  
 Of peaceful disposition, mild and kind,  
 Or fierce and merciless as wintry weather  
 Are hostile to the females of their kind.  
 The she-bear and her mate in sport together,  
 The lion and the lioness, we find;

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<sup>27</sup> For the tirade itself see *OF*, 4.63.1-4.67.8



The she-wolf and the wolf at peace appear  
The heifer from the bull has naught to fear.]<sup>28</sup>

Critics have debated whether the Rinaldo sequence can be read as protofeminist, or whether it should be written off as a cynical depiction of male self-interest.<sup>29</sup> I am less concerned with Rinaldo's opinions than with the proem: l'orsa, la leonessa, la lupa, and la iuvenca join a group of female animals that enjoys extraordinary prominence in the *Furioso*. One early Ariosto reader, the Neapolitan writer Laura Terracina, lifted this passage for use as a refrain in a poem cycle of her own, *Discorso sopra il Principio di Tutti I Canti di Orlando Furioso*.<sup>30</sup> In this lively tribute to Ariosto, Terracina deploys this sequence of female animals to question the prevalence of violence against women ("Onde ti vien questo tuo ardir strano?"), taking seriously the Canto 5 suggestion that assault motivated by gender is unique to the human species.

This project germinated in my early sense that Ariosto's animals were both stranger and more conspicuous than those in other sixteenth-century romances. A study of female animals in the *Furioso* proved a surprisingly direct path to understanding the poem's approach to erotic assault, and the relevance of gendered-based brutality to larger questions of structure. Any account of romance must, by definition, be an account of violence and sex. This is clear from the poem's first line. Desire is the coinage of romance, and it follows naturally that the genre's costs are exacted through this currency. Rape is the point at which *arme* and *amori* become indistinguishable. Yet despite the dictating role of violent desire in romance, and despite the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.1.1-8. For block quotations the Italian text will lead (Einaudi) followed by the English (Reynolds) in brackets.

<sup>29</sup> Deanna Shemek argues that the *Furioso* destabilizes the querelle itself by tying all claims about gender to characters' blatant self-interest in *Ladies Errant: Wayward Women and Social Order in Early Modern Italy*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 10. See also Miranda Johnson-Haddad, "Englishing Ariosto: 'Orlando Furioso' at the Court of Elizabeth I," *Comparative Literature Studies* 31 (1994): 323-350; and Constance Jordan, "Beyond the Querelle: Gender and History in *Orlando furioso*" in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 295-315.

<sup>30</sup> "Where does this strange impulse of yours come from?" Laura Terracina, *Discorso sopra il Principio di Tutti I Canti di Orlando Furioso* (Venice: Ferrari, 1554), B3v-B4v.

near-constant threat of violation throughout the poem, there is hardly any rape in Ariosto. Something always ransoms the threatened lady before the moment of consummation, whether flight (Angelica, *ad infinitum*), suicide (Issabella), murder (Olimpia), or dubious expressions of consent (Doralice, Dalinda).

Even if we accept that romance *amore* is transactional in nature, it does not immediately follow that female animals and scenes of sexual violation fit snugly within the structures of openness and buried costs proposed above. Yet a reading of the *Orlando furioso* suggests that it is on these figures that the costs of romance predominantly fall. Rape in its modern guise refers specifically to forcible sexual intercourse, but the term has a long history of pecuniary association: the "act of taking something by force; *esp.* the seizure of *property* by violent means; robbery, plundering" (*OED*). The economic status of women as objects of possession and exchange is a commonplace of feminist criticism, a paradigm that only adds fuel to the conceptualization of rape as a form of theft—one party's profit from another's loss. Animals have likewise always been tied to market forces, whether as domestic livestock, quarry, or exotic court ornament. Sexualized violence inflicted on marginal female figures is the cost sustaining romance's rich web of error, delay, and expansion. The *Orlando furioso* bears witness to a process which places the weight of the open system on particular bodies, turns their loss into value, and hides their suffering in plain sight.

This study is situated between poststructuralist accounts of romance, early modern animal studies, and feminist Ariosto criticism. I am indebted to the thinkers who laid rigorous and innovative groundwork in these fields. Patricia Parker's *Inescapable Romance* (1979) has defined romance scholarship in the decades since its publication, even spawning a notorious roman à clef tribute. Parker's account of error and errancy, the endless postponement of the quest objective,

was instrumental in establishing the classic narrative of the genre as open system, the tensions between the epic's linear agenda and the bower's sensuous delay. Parker studied with A. Bartlett Giamatti, whose reading of the structures of "restraint and release" as a symbol of humanist doctrine in Ariosto, Boiardo, and Pulci is one of the few direct discussions of the role of animal figures in these poems.<sup>31</sup> David Quint's *Epic and Empire* (1993) and introduction to the modern English critical translation of Ariosto's *Cinque Canti* fragment (1996) situate romance structures in relation to their classical predecessors; these studies, particularly Quint's attention to the influence of Lucan on Ariosto's attitudes toward victory and cost, made a strong impact on this piece.<sup>32</sup> Finally, Albert Ascoli's *Bitter Harmony* (1987) brings Parker's insights to bear on a book-length analysis of structure in the *Furioso*, which altered my own understanding of the poem's relation to its broader political context.<sup>33</sup>

Animal studies would not exist in its current form without the prolific scholarship of Erica Fudge, whose writing on animal automatism and the role of pain in the history of scientific empiricism has shaped my analysis throughout this project.<sup>34</sup> Laurie Shannon's incisive "Invisible Parts" and Bruce Boehrer's lucid exploration of the changing class valences of horses have exerted similar influence, while Susan Crane and Joyce Salisbury provided bracing introductions to the terrifically uncouth cosmos of medieval animal lore.<sup>35</sup> Animal studies seeks

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<sup>31</sup> A. Bartlett Giamatti, "Headlong Horses and Headless Horsemen" in *Exile and Change in Renaissance Literature* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 33-75.

<sup>32</sup> David Quint, *Epic and Empire* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993); and "Introduction" in *Cinque Canti*, trans. Alexander Sheers and David Quint (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 1-44.

<sup>33</sup> Albert Ascoli, *Ariosto's Bitter Harmony: Crisis and Evasion in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

<sup>34</sup> For representative samples see Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Fudge, *Animal* (London: Reaktion, 2002); and Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> Laurie Shannon, "Invisible Parts: Animals and the Renaissance Anatomies of Human Exceptionalism," in *Animal Encounters*, eds. Tom Tyler and Manuela Rossini, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 137-158; Bruce Boehrer, *Animal Characters: Nonhuman Beings in Early Modern Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania

to upend Cartesian critical biases and move toward horizontal, multivalent assessments of human/beast relations. Some of this project is simply the increased presence of animals in literary analysis; Fudge cautions that to write about the construction of the early modern subject without writing about animals is anachronistic.<sup>36</sup> These newly animalized analyses remain in constant tension with the spectre of anthropocentrism, which is necessary to making the crucial link between animal treatment and "discussions of colonialism, racism, and patriarchy"—the human/animal binary as basis of all oppression.<sup>37</sup> Animals are inextricable from human constructs of race and gender, both because of the way that animals are gendered and the ways that men and women are animalized; the nonhuman makes up the spine of philosophical navigations of human sex, power, and violence. Even so, beyond this initial gesture early modern animal studies critics rarely pay much attention to gender, just as early modern gender critics often fail to sufficiently analyze animal presences. I intend to combine the tools and insights of both traditions in my analysis of the *Furioso*.

Although there is wide acknowledgement that gender and sexuality are central to Ariosto's subject, to date there has been no sustained analysis of gender/sexuality and animals in the *Orlando furioso*. This study seeks to fill that gap, proposing that the insights of early modern animal studies can function as a catalyst propelling Ariostan gender criticism beyond its current plateau.<sup>38</sup> Early feminists debated the Italian poet's position in the ubiquitous *querelle des femmes*, with many critics concluding that Ariosto was radically profeminist; other scholars

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Press, 2010); Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013); Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1994), particularly 82.

<sup>36</sup> Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*, 179.

<sup>37</sup> Fudge, *Animal*, 129. See also Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (London: Routledge, 1989).

<sup>38</sup> On the catalytic nature of animal metaphor see Jeanne Addison Roberts, *The Shakespearean Wild: Geography, Genus, and Gender* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1991), 75.

have lauded the text's bedtricks, crossdressing, and scenes of gender ambiguity as a cornucopia of queerness.<sup>39</sup> These gyno- and queer-positive readings inevitably prompted pushback: a later group of deconstructionists have argued that Ariosto constantly undermines any profeminist moments in the poem, producing irresolvable ambivalence.<sup>40</sup> This critical current takes for granted that the *querelle* is a stylized form, that the Ariostan text is dissonant, that the poem produces nothing so simple as a pro-woman position.<sup>41</sup> These claims litter feminist Ariostan criticism of the past fifteen years, and are difficult to dispute. Yet the deconstructive chokehold has heralded a kind of regression, as critics certain that dissonance is the end-all begin cautiously reinserting the moves of a bygone era: the ranking of Ariosto's heroines, the resuscitation of binaries, the desire to reclaim examples of positive female agency, a return to the question of whether Ariosto ought to be blamed for his text's misogyny.

Within this stagnant landscape, Albert Ascoli's article "Erichthonius's Secret" stands out. Ascoli is wary of both the profeminist approach and the turn to undecidability. In response, he pivots away from the woman question and proposes that Ariosto's subject is actually something else: a *querelle des hommes*. Ariosto is not in the business of theorizing women, but rather of exposing something radically monstrous about masculine behavior. The poem's female characters, he claims, are just "male...simulacra" anyway—if you want to see where the real

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<sup>39</sup> Albert Ascoli's "Erichthonius's Secret: Body Politics in Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*," in *A Local Habitation and a Name: Imagining Histories in the Italian Renaissance* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2011), 243-281, provides a good summary of critics taking this position. One notable example can be found in Joan Kelly's "Did Women Have a Renaissance?" which cites Ariosto and Boccaccio as lonely exceptions to treatises constraining female behavior (*Women, History & Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984], 177). The *Furioso*'s status as queer icon is indicated by the title of at least one contemporary anthology, *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall*.

<sup>40</sup> See Ascoli, "Erichthonius's Secret," for discussion of this position.

<sup>41</sup> The first chapter of Ita Mac Carthy, *Women and the Making of Poetry in Ariosto's Orlando furioso* (Leicester: Troubador, 2007) provides an excellent critique of this state of affairs. Linda Woodbridge's early warning that the *querelle* is not genuine debate would be a good reminder to these later critics. *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Sussex: Harvester, 1984), 4-6.

work is happening, look to the men.<sup>42</sup> Ascoli's suggestion that Ariosto is exposing something, but not in the expected place, resonates with my own findings regarding the poet's conspicuous exposure of romance costs.

While the majority of this study focuses on Ariosto, the project is intrinsically comparative, contrasting the Ferrarese poet's conspicuous staging of losses with the conspicuous absence of these losses in three romances of the later sixteenth century: Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Sir John Harington's translation of the *Furioso*. It is widely accepted in contemporary Ariosto criticism that Harington took on an active editorializing role in his self-described "Englishing" of the Italian poem, particularly in the "Moral, Historie, Allegorie, Allusion" section appended to each canto. Jason Scott-Warren's *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* is the most comprehensive account of Harington's interventions in Ariosto's text, placing the translator among the Elizabethan prodigals and proposing that his Ariosto is mediated almost entirely through personal machinations of advancement.<sup>43</sup> This instrumentalization of the poem required heightening the *Furioso's* moral import: Colin Burrow suggests that Harington adds Virgilian imperial overtones to the first half of the romance epic, bringing the cantos in line with the more sober latter half.<sup>44</sup> My own position towards Harington's work is largely impacted by Selene Scarsi's *Translating Women in Early Modern England*, which through meticulous close-readings brings to light a pattern of misogynistic addendums and substitutions in the translated poem—an increased emphasis on negative female exempla, a minimization of positive female exempla, as well as the assignation

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<sup>42</sup> Ascoli, "Erichthonius's Secret," 85.

<sup>43</sup> Jason Scott-Warren, *Sir John Harington and the Book as Gift* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Broadly, my understanding of Harington's interventions is informed by Anne Coldiron, *English Printing, Verse Translation, and the Battle of the Sexes, 1476-1557* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), particularly 4).

<sup>44</sup> Colin Burrow, *Epic Romance: Homer to Milton* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 157.

of female gender to what Ariosto presents as universal human flaws.<sup>45</sup> Because of these major interventions, as well as the 1591 date of Harington's work, I group the translated *Furioso* with the late-Elizabethan romances rather than with Ariosto himself.

The work of the following scholars was essential to my navigation of certain subfields pertaining to the core concerns of this study: Colin Burrow, Daniel Javitch, and David Quint for the *Orlando furioso*'s relationship to the classics; Michael Murrin for the depiction of medieval warfare and war technologies in romance epic; Karen Raber, Jonathan Sawday, and Laurie Shannon for early modern dissection and vivisection; Emma Smith and T.J. Clark for approaches to marginalia and engravings in archival material.<sup>46</sup> Finally, it would be remiss to omit the role of Fredric Jameson's *Political Unconscious* as a signpost throughout the project, encouraging both my trust in the relevance and strange transformative potentialities of romance, and my certainty that romance has something to hide.<sup>47</sup>

My first chapter addresses a scene that lies latent behind one of the most common romance similes: a knight's fury is compared to that of a mother predator, whose offspring has been stolen by a human poacher. Maternal rage functions as a type of ur-rage, love-based, the justice of which is placed beyond question or reproach. The potent response of the violated mother is annexed by another violent male, the romance warrior; comparison to the maternal predator functions to both *explain* his violence (by attaching it to natural and irreproachable

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<sup>45</sup> Selene Scarsi, *Translating Women in Early Modern England: Gender in the Elizabethan Versions of Boiardo, Ariosto and Tasso* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), 59.

<sup>46</sup> Burrow, *Epic Romance*; Daniel Javitch, *Proclaiming a Classic: The Canonization of the Orlando furioso* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Quint, *Epic and Empire*; Michael Murrin, *History and Warfare in Renaissance Epic* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Karen Raber, "Resisting Bodies: Renaissance Animal Anatomies" in *Animal Bodies, Renaissance Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 31-74; Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995); Shannon, "Invisible Parts"; Emma Smith, *Shakespeare's First Folio* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016); T.J. Clark, *The Sight of Death: An Experiment in Art Writing* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>47</sup> Fredric Jameson, "Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism," in *The Political Unconscious* (London: Routledge, 2002), 89-136.

impulses) and to *enhance* his violence (by increasing hyperbole and expanding romance's rhetorical capacity). She is appropriated as totem by the very systems that caused her injury. It is worth noting that most if not all early modern European knowledge of exotic predators was predicated on this act of rapine, the cub stolen from the den and placed in a gilded court zoo or public baiting pit.<sup>48</sup> This initial scene of gendered violation sustains the romance form, injecting it with exotic value and expanding the boundaries of its emotional register, building up the genre's rhetorical store out of a natural resource perceived as infinite. Ariosto discloses this structure in its full complexity. In later epics, the scene of maternal *raptus* becomes opaque, placing the violence it sustains beyond question, perennially justified.

The second chapter orbits around Ariosto's most brutal and compelling sequence, the death of Angelica's mare in Canto 29. First, I explore Ariosto's horses more generally, establishing their almost hysterical overdetermination. Next, I focus on interpreting the Canto 29 mare, responding particularly to Giamatti's proposal that the mare is a symbol of humanist dialectic progress. I contend that Giamatti's analysis conflates the profit experienced by one character with the costs born by another, and misrecognizes the suffering of the horse as the advancement of the male humanist subject. Ariosto's text resists this interpretation by ventriloquizing it, placing a similar claim satirically in the mouth of the abuser: Orlando himself misrecognizes pain as comfort, and conflates loss (a dead horse) with value (a live horse, a fleeing woman). Again and again, Ariosto mercilessly displays who bears the cost and who inflicts it; the latter portion of the chapter discusses similar moments elsewhere in the poem, supporting my claim that the cynical exposure of the hidden costs of romance is a uniquely Ariostan move, a small resistance. Finally, I discuss the ways in which these costs are put firmly

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<sup>48</sup> See Sarah Cockram, "Interspecies understanding: exotic animals and their handlers at the Italian Renaissance court," *Renaissance Studies* 31 (2017): 277-296.



out of view in later epics, even as these poets draw upon *Furioso* material—Ariosto is one of the last poets to make this costly dynamic visible before it is obscured in the high moment of English romance.

This reading of Ariosto requires a certain decoupling of morality and sobriety. One common rejoinder to attempts to identify social critique in early modern literature is the parody defense—a writer produced satires, was a known wit, therefore he said nothing serious. Sixteenth-century audiences would have laughed at a wife being beaten onstage, so the anachronistic moral compass of twenty-first century progressive critics simply cannot apply. In the face of this allegation, I think often of the *London Journal of Alessandro Magno* (1562) which is discussed by Erica Fudge in her *Perceiving Animals*. Alessandro, a young Italian merchant visiting London, visits a bear garden. He describes the entertainment, in particular a stunt wherein a monkey mounted on a horse is attacked by a pack of dogs. This is clearly a chivalric parody, but Alessandro is still troubled, noting that the trick "often results in the death of the horse."<sup>49</sup> It is a mistake to pretend that the only prototype for an ethical writer in the early modern period is some sort of sententious and labored Protestantism. We accept that contemporary comedy can be troubling, can be brutal, can ask real and uncomfortable questions; I reject the proposition that Ariosto's famous urbanity and cynicism preclude deep feeling or the capacity for social critique; in fact, there is critical consensus that violence the poet witnessed in the aftermath of the Battle of Ravenna (1512) exerted a profound influence on the *Furioso*'s author, and on the third edition of the poem.<sup>50</sup> In a brief coda, I address Ariosto's Ravenna as a

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<sup>49</sup> Caroline Barron, Christopher Coleman and Claire Gobbi, "The London Journal of Alessandro Magno 1562," *The London Journal* 9, 2 (1983): 143-144. For discussion see Fudge, *Perceiving Animals*, 11-13.

<sup>50</sup> Recently summarized in Alberto Casadei, "The History of the *Furioso*" and Antonio Franceschetti, "The *Orlando innamorato* and the Genesis of the *Furioso*," both in *Ariosto Today: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella, Roberto Fedi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), 55-70 and 32-54 respectively.

example of the poet's preoccupation with exposing the costs of "Le donne, i cavallier, l'arme, gli amori, / le cortesie, l'audaci imprese"—both in Charlemagne's France and in his own Estensi Italy.

## CHAPTER 1

### The Bestiary with Two Backs

#### I. Ariostan Lions, Tigers, and Bears

##### rape, *n.*<sup>3</sup>

1. The act of taking something by force; *esp.* the seizure of property by violent means; robbery, plundering. Also as a count noun: an instance of this, a robbery, a raid.

Now *rare* (chiefly *arch.* and *literary*).

##### rape, *v.*<sup>2</sup>

**Etymology:** Probably < classical Latin *rapere* to seize, take by force, to carry off, snatch away, to violate, to sack, plunder < the same Indo-European base as Lithuanian *aprėpti* to grasp, Albanian *rrjep* to peel, pluck, skin, rob, and perhaps ancient Greek *ἐρεπτόμενος* feeding on. Compare Old French *rapir* to seize a woman (13th cent.).

1. *a. trans.* and *intr.* To take or seize (something) by force (cf. RAPE *n.*<sup>3</sup> 1). In early use occasionally of an animal: †to seize or devour prey (*obs.*) (cf. RAPING *adj.* 2).

3. *trans.* To violate (a person) sexually; to commit rape against (a person); *esp.* (of a man) to force (a woman) to have sexual intercourse against her will. See RAPE *n.*<sup>3</sup> 2a.  
Now the usual sense<sup>1</sup>

In early modern terms, rape means theft with an extra dose of savagery. It is the appropriation of property by particularly "violent means," often employed as a tool of war, when the goal is to punish a population as much as it is to acquire loot. The word has probably always been freighted with erotic implications, but in the past it was connected to animal violence ("raptor") as much as to sexual violence, suggesting the savage despoilment and consumption of prey. Rape of human females in the modern sense has usually been understood as an act of theft, as well—theft of a daughter from a father, theft of a wife from a husband, theft of reputation, and social value. Females are always both stolen-from and stolen. In literary studies we are used to considering the generative potencies of this act. There is Lucrece, whose violation leads to the founding of the Republic; there are Philomel and her reflection Lavinia, whose broken speech leads to the fall of tyrants; there is Proserpine, whose abduction leads, tortuously, to spring and

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<sup>1</sup> Selections from "rape," entries *n*<sup>3</sup> and *v*<sup>2</sup>, *OED*.

renewal.<sup>2</sup> Rape is useful to narrative.

Violation is a particularly powerful motive force in the romance. At any given moment, half the cast of characters is running one way intent on inflicting it, while the other half flees in the other direction. For all this threat, very few people are actually violated: the poem's small army of pursued aristocratic *donne* are ransomed by flight, by magical devices, by suicide. This exhausting structural mechanism prompts staged exasperation from Ariosto's narrator, who at the end of Canto 29 wishes that all the world's women were in the hands of his naked and raging titular knight. Orlando's madness, he says, would provide just vengeance for women's many erotic wrongs. Yet this universal vengeance is never enacted—the poem's aristocratic females remain protected from loss and from the mounting passions of their male peers.

In this chapter, I suggest that this pattern of eternally deferred violation accounts for one of the *Furioso's* idiosyncracies: Ariosto's startling comparison of his knights, in elaborate epic similes, to mother animals. In this formula, a perceived slight prompts a knight to greater heights of wrath than his accustomed state of high dander, and he conducts himself like a lion/tiger/bear whose cub has just been seized by a human hunter. This scene of rapine was common in bestiaries and other collections of animal behavior, probably originating in actual poaching practices. Its presence in fable is notable for the attention paid to the female predator's own affective capacity, in stark contrast to the poacher's callous acquisitiveness. By deploying this scene as an analogy, the romance instrumentalizes the mother animal's response to the abduction of her young, using her wrath to expand the male knight's emotional register. This analogy justifies the knight's own violent agenda, since there is little more righteous than a wild mother's instinctive defense of her offspring. Maternal rage is converted into an infinite rhetorical

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<sup>2</sup> See Stephanie Jed, *Chaste Thinking: The Rape of Lucretia and the Birth of Humanism* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989).

resource, helping to sustain spiraling hyperbole and flooding the genre's closed structure with added value.<sup>3</sup> Yet this inflation derives ultimately from stolen goods, violation, and pain. Ariosto exposes this dependence in intricate similes spanning stanzas—Algerian king Rodomonte as mother tigress, Saracen footsoldier Medoro as mother bear, and Frankish emperor Charlemagne as old mother lioness—which place the troubling scene on which these high romance passions depend on full display.<sup>4</sup>

These sequences are particularly provocative when compared to the restricted animal figures deployed by the poem's late-century successors: Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, and Sir John Harington's *Orlando furioso in English Heroical Verse*. Like the *Furioso*, these extravagant narratives are full of animal analogies; yet the violation underpinning these exotic presences—the *raptus* of young which furnished the courtly menageries—is invisible, allowing the figures to be more efficiently instrumentalized. In Spenser, animal analogies enforce strict taxonomies of gender, class, and race; in Tasso's capability-oriented poem, animals are deployed as epithets indicating violent capacity. These authors subtly realign characters with their figurative bestial counterparts, eliminating much of the challenging disjuncture of Ariosto's similes. In these later texts, men must correspond to male animals, women to females, noblemen to invulnerable predators, peasants to quivering prey.

These shifts mimic the logic of commonplacing, the mechanism by which early modern literates mined rhetorical material for their own contemplation and use. Quotations are stripped of specificity (names, places, situations) and slotted into pre-existing categories on assorted

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<sup>3</sup> On Ariostan hyperbole see Giamatti, "Headlong Horses," 53.

<sup>4</sup> Kristen Murtaugh discusses the relation of two of these similes to classical precedent in "Ariosto and the Classical Simile" (PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1980), 100-113. For analysis of the poem's human maternal analogies see John McLucas, "Men as Mothers" in "Ariosto and the Androgyne: Symmetries of Sex in the 'Orlando furioso,'" PhD diss., Yale University, 1983; Burrow, *Epic Romance*, 72-74; and Albert Ascoli, "Like a Virgin: Male Fantasies of the Body in *Orlando furioso*" in *The Body in Early Modern Italy*, ed. Julia L. Hairston and Walter Stephens (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 142-143.

sententious subjects: On Love, On Fealty, On Women. This is a rough description of what happens to the animals of epic romance over the course of the sixteenth century: what was a battle-scarred lioness, entrapped alongside her young for human spectacle becomes Spenser's versatile 'Lion wood,' an animal commonplace deployed easily any time the narrative requires an illustration of superiority or a natural justification for a character's savagery. In this process of Erasmian value-creation, the losses that endless romance cannot admit are displaced downward and outward, onto females, onto animals, and carefully forgotten.

i. Come tigre

In a feat of superhuman athleticism, Rodomonte leaps the moat and scales the walls of a besieged Paris, where he proceeds to wreak havoc and kindle fires until he is finally repulsed by Charlemagne and a bevy of courageous Parisians. After beating a regal retreat, Rodomonte meets a personification of Jealousy, who informs him that his rival Mandricardo has abducted his paramour Doralice. Describing the Algerian king's response, Ariosto turns to an epic simile:

Come la tigre, poi ch'invan discende  
 nel voto albergo, e per tutto s'aggira,  
 e i cari figli all'ultimo comprende  
 essergli tolti, avampa di tant'ira,  
 a tanta rabbia, a tal furor s'estende,  
 che né a monte né a rio né a notte mira;  
 né lunga via, né grandine raffrena  
 l'odio che dietro al predator la mena:

[As when a tigress to her empty lair  
 Returns at length to find her offspring gone  
 And, seeking for them vainly here and there,  
 She senses what some predator has done,  
 Her fury knows no bounds, and without care

For mountain, river, night or midday sun,  
 She tracks the malefactor down, come hail,  
 Come rain, come shine, however long the trail...]<sup>5</sup>

"It hath beene falsely beleued, that all Tigers be females, and that there are no males among them," remarks Edward Topsell in his early seventeenth-century *Historie of Four-footed Beastes*.<sup>6</sup> Italian—which, like most Romance languages, genders nouns—accords with this apocryphal zoology: "tiger" is grammatically female by default. Ariosto's striking image of the tigress reflects this gendering, and is rooted in its underlying mythology. The tale itself is a conventional anecdote, rehashed in numerous animal fable collections, bestiaries, and natural histories. In the notable bestiary manuscript Ashmole 1511, the canny hunter steals a whole litter of cubs; when the tigress pursues him, he drops her offspring one at a time, delaying her and ensuring that he will have at least one prize remaining by the time he reaches his escape vessel.<sup>7</sup> The Aberdeen Bestiary introduces an even more ingenious hunter, who manages to avoid the sacrifice of his prizes entirely by dropping a mirror behind him as he flees; the tigress sees her own reflection in the mirror and stops, thinking it to be that of her child.<sup>8</sup>

Variations on this abduction narrative appear throughout classical, medieval, and Renaissance literature. In the *Punica*, Silius Italicus compares Hannibal to a tigress in order to emphasize the speed of the general's return to the besieged town of Capua.<sup>9</sup> In the *Stanze* of Poliziano, a contemporary of Boiardo, the mirror trick is introduced to characterize a character's enamorment with a nymph.<sup>10</sup> Like Ariosto, Poliziano invokes the tigress in order to inform an

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<sup>5</sup> *OF*, 18.35.1-8.

<sup>6</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 708.

<sup>7</sup> Ashmole 1511, 28r.

<sup>8</sup> Aberdeen 24, 8r.

<sup>9</sup> 12.458

<sup>10</sup> Angelo Poliziano, *The Stanze of Angelo Poliziano* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1993), 1.39.

erotic description, yet the implications differ profoundly. In Ariosto, the lady corresponds to the tigress's young; in Poliziano, she corresponds to the mirror-like body of water in which the tigress is caught. The emotional tenor produced by the two scenes is distinct: in Poliziano, the tigress is trapped not by a hunter's trick, but her own explicit foolishness ("mentre di tal vista s'innamora la sciocca" [while the fool is enamored of that sight]) or narcissism, as David Quint suggests in his commentary on the figure.<sup>11</sup> Rather than this parody, Ariosto's tigress produces pathos, in line with the poignancy that the bestiaries assign to the anecdote. The Aberdeen bestiary in particular emphasizes the tigress's helplessness in the face of this trap, noting that the hunter is able to repeat his deceptive device since

[t]he memory of the trick does not banish the mother's devotion. She turns over the empty likeness and settles down as if she were about to suckle her cub. And thus, trapped by the intensity of her sense of duty, she loses both her revenge and her child.<sup>12</sup>

In her boundless fury and disregard for the elements, Ariosto's mother tiger is invoked as a typically hyperbolic gesture amplifying Rodomonte's frenzy. Yet the bellicose champion scarcely needs a simile to convince readers of the intensity of his fury. He is after all the perpetrator of what Barbara Reynolds translates as a "raging holocaust" within the walls of Paris, the poem's primary antagonist or "archpagan."<sup>13</sup> In this sense, the tigress is a redundant set piece. Instead, her presence adds complexity to the characterization of the knight, paradoxically suggesting his vulnerabilities. The tiger-like power is derived from a moment of failure: as with Silius Italicus's Hannibal, "shame and wrath" are united in the act of pursuit.<sup>14</sup> The simile's folkloric baggage underlines the knight's helplessness: like the mother hearing of the potential

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<sup>11</sup> Quint, introduction to *Stanze*, xviii.

<sup>12</sup> Aberdeen 24, 8v.

<sup>13</sup> *OF*, 15.4.2; Ascoli, "Virgin," 148.

<sup>14</sup> 12.455



death of a child, Rodomonte's actions are predetermined as soon as he hears of the potential demise of Doralice's virginity. On the one hand, the equation of defloration and infant death indisputably enweirds the erotics between knight and lady; on the other hand, it seems justified—the outcome of either is a threat to the subject's patrilineal interests.

Like the tigress, the strength of Rodomonte's love for Doralice makes him an easy target for manipulation. Topsell's account emphasizes the tiger mother's devotion to her offspring, "which she nourisheth...very carefully, loving them."<sup>15</sup> Yet it is this love which is the tigress's primary weakness, the means by which she is "many times ensnared and taken."<sup>16</sup> Indeed, Topsell claims that female tigers are "*neuer* taken but in defense of their young ones" (added italics).<sup>17</sup> Is the hunter's object the cubs or the grown tiger, the more dangerous and potentially more desirable prize? Mandricardo's presumable motivation is lust for Doralice, but the lady also serves as a site onto which relations of power between her two suitors are mapped—she is a way of getting at Rodomonte. The tale of the tigress expresses the knight's susceptibility to manipulation through his desire for Doralice, suggesting parallels between the tiger mother gazing desperately in the mirror and the impotent knights frantically seeking their lovers inside the labyrinthine confines of Atlante's Canto 12 palace of illusion. The simile, like much of the *Furioso*, situates erotic love as a source of both strength and vulnerability.

Significantly, the simile troubles traditional borders between human character and beast analogue. The stanza locates perspective firmly with the tigress, establishing interiority through psychological terms: *comprende* (understands), *odio* (hatred), *ira* (rage). This final noun evokes an emotion with a precise classical lineage: *ira* is the word most often used by Italian vernacular translators of Homer for *mēnin*, the notorious first word of the *Iliad*, and is of course equally

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<sup>15</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 709.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

crucial to the *Aeneid*.<sup>18</sup> The tigress is humanized, Achillean; by contrast, her presumably human aggressor, "il predator," becomes animalized and anonymous. This twists the human/animal hierarchy, even potentially reversing it. Topsell suggests that if a tigress is able to recover her cubs alive "shee departeth with vnspeakeable ioy," without taking revenge on the hunter.<sup>19</sup> Like other "noble" animals (such as the lion) routinely mythologized as merciful, the tigress embodies a model of limited warfare that is a deeply humanist, classical aspiration.

The figure of the deprived tigress suggests the disquieting potential of wild beasts to be more human than mankind. Ariosto invokes this capability at two other points in the poem: in Canto 1, when Sacripante laments the loss of Angelica with tears that would have made "una tigre crudel...clemente"; and in Canto 8, when naked Angelica awaits a ravenous sea-orc on the cliffs of Ebuda.<sup>20</sup> The poet assures his readers that neither "li squalidi colubri" (abhorrent snakes) nor "l'orba tigre accessa in maggior rabbia" (the deprived tiger ignited to worst rage) could fail to show compassion for the princess.<sup>21</sup> The description of the tiger is efficient, evoking the scenario of the hunter and cubs through mere implication. *Orba* means blind, but also deprived of children; *maggior rabbia* successfully combines euphemism and hyperbole, meaning both *the* worst rage possible and the far more specific *her* worst rage, the fury of the deprived mother. This is an admonishment, using the animal's wildness and stock cruelty to prompt pity in the human reader. If a tiger would pity Angelica, how could you, a human, demur?

If the tigress contains the potential for limited warfare and for mercy, she also contains the potential for the opposite. Topsell recounts a narrative in which hunters kill a male tiger and

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<sup>18</sup> See for example Vincenzo Monti, Melchiorre Cesarotti, and Ugo Foscolo, *Esperimento di traduzione della Iliade di Omero* (Brescia: Bettoni, 1807).

<sup>19</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 709.

<sup>20</sup> *OF*, 1.40.6. In her rendition of this Orphean image, Reynolds suggests that Sacripante's tears "might have wooed a tigress from her cub," a translation that presents its own set of problems.

<sup>21</sup> *OF*, 8.67.3-4.

chain his offspring up in the den. They return to find the cubs gone, the chains intact: "it was conceived that the envious mother had killed and torne her young ones in pieces, rather then they should fall into the handes of the hunters...so that this beastly loue of hers, ended in horrible cruelty."<sup>22</sup> As Topsell suggests, this is Medean love, capable of breathtaking violence. There is of course no way of knowing with which versions of the myth of the tigress Ariosto was familiar, but this particular telling in relation to Rodomonte is an arresting augur of the notorious Canto 29 episode in which the pagan knight beheads Issabella in lieu of raping her. This occurs at Issabella's initiative, but the result is the same: beastly love ending in horrible cruelty. The tigress serves as a locus for the tension between *amore* and *guerra*, an illustration of the rapidity with which love turns to violence, as well as the thin membrane separating the two.

ii. Come orsa

In the following canto, two boys are running through a tangled wood at dawn. Medoro moves more slowly than his companion Cloridano; he carries the dead body of their lord Dardinello, killed on the battlefield before Paris earlier that day.<sup>23</sup> He is pursued by a band of Christian knights, led by the Scottish prince Zerbino, who block his escape at every turn. Exhausted, the young soldier places the corpse, that "caro peso" (dear weight), on the forest floor. He turns on his attackers, keeping the body behind him:

come orsa, che l'alpestre cacciatore  
 ne la pietrosa tana assalita abbia,  
 sta sopra i figli con incerto core,  
 e freme in suono di pietà e di rabbia:  
 ira la 'nvita e natural furore  
 a spiegar l'ugne e a insanguinar le labbia;

<sup>22</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 710.

<sup>23</sup> The episode is derived from Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus episode (*Aeneid* IX, 176-449) and an imitation in *Thebaid* X, 414-419.

amor la 'ntenerisce, e la ritira  
a riguardare ai figli in mezzo l'ira.

[...as a she-bear on the mountains, when,  
Beside her helpless offspring keeping guard,  
By a bold hunter threatened in her den,  
She roars, her heart 'twixt rage and pity shared,  
Her natural enmity against all men  
Urging attack with fangs and claws well bared,  
By love is drawn to turn towards her young  
With tender glances, yet by fury stung...]<sup>24</sup>

The roles in this maternal animal simile should be familiar: the mother, the hunter, the young. The bear does not return to find her cubs missing, but instead must defend them against the intruder. Like the tigress, the she-bear's *ira* blurs boundaries between human and animal behavior. The vocabulary of this passage goes further than the previous in insisting upon the animal's interiority and psychological depth. The key word tying the bear to classical anger is repeated twice. In the first instance, its psychological weight is emphasized by the structure of the poetic line: by moving the verb *invitare* between the two nouns which are the subject of the phrase, *ira* and *furore*, Ariosto draws attention to the difference between them. Modifying *furore* with the adjective *natural* unbalances the parallelism of the line, and suggests that the standalone *ira* indeed derives not from the natural world, but from civilization.

Barbara Reynolds combines these distinct forms of rage into one: the bear's "natural enmity against all men." This phrasing elides the tension between the two types of fury, one of the many ways the bear is trapped and uncertain. This uncertainty is, at several points, expressed physically: the bear's roar "freme," shakes, and in the line introducing the stanza she is said to

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<sup>24</sup> *OF*, 18.7.1-8.

"va intorno errando," range in circles around the corpse. The bear stands over her cubs with uncertain heart, she gives a trembling roar of both pity and rage, she turns to look at her cubs "in mezzo l'ira" as if unable to sustain her anger uninterrupted. Reynolds presents a much steadier bear, whose heart is "shared" between pity and rage, rather than shaking with these competing emotions, whose ire and bestial fury become a unified "natural enmity," predetermined. The language of the Italian preserves the bear's frenetic movement across registers of emotion, as she is shaken, invited, made tender. The very potency of her "fangs and claws" seems compromised by her tender backward glances toward her young. The bear's "incerto core" is deeply riven by human fury and animal instinct, by her competing gender commitments, the simultaneous and paradoxical expectation of maternal vengeance and maternal care.

The convention of the she-bear is at least as ancient as that of the tigress. In Hoseah 13:8, the Lord threatens to meet the people of Israel "as a bear that is bereaved of her whelps, [who] will rend the caul of their heart." In 2 Samuel 17:8, Hushai advises Absalom that David and his men are "chafed in their minds, as a bear robbed of her whelps in the field." In his *Historie*, Topsell justifies scripture by noting that "a shee beare is more couragious then a male."<sup>25</sup> The male bear is apparently not much to speak of, with "a most venereous and lustfull disposition," easily provoked to copulation either by the "ardent inflamed desires" of his mate or by the presence of unwilling human virgins, which he occasionally abducts.<sup>26</sup> Yet when it comes to the mother bear, the bestiaries agree that the male is peculiarly restrained. MS Ashmole 1511 observes that male bears do not touch females during pregnancy, while the Aberdeen Bestiary interprets the same behavior in human terms, remarking that the males "respect" and "honor"

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<sup>25</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 43.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

their pregnant mates by leaving them in peace.<sup>27</sup>

Topsell agrees that "[t]he males giue great honor to the females great with young, during the time of their secrecie."<sup>28</sup> This is not the only example of ursine courtesy to which the author makes reference; reputedly, bears will also "bury one another being dead."<sup>29</sup> This convention has significance in relation to Medoro, who is after all attempting a proper burial of Dardinello. A few stanzas later, Medoro begs Zerbino to let him bury his prince, explicitly imploring the Christian captain to renounce the behavior of "teban Creonte," the most notorious obstacle to classical burial rights.<sup>30</sup> In the simile's terms, bear-mother implores hunter to pity, to permit a vital cultural ritual to occur. Once again, an animal challenges a man's claim to humanity by its exemplary enactment of ethics and norms constitutive of human behavior. The plea is particularly resonant as voiced by a baseborn pagan soldier (who has just been described as a female animal) toward a famed Christian prince; religion, class, gender, and species all demand that Zerbino be the better man.

This reading assumes that the she-bear is Medoro and the cub is Dardinello's corpse, but the Reynolds translation suggests the potential ambiguity of this identification. Instead of closing stanza 7 with a period and grammatically connecting it with the subject of stanza 6 ("l'infelice," Medoro) Reynolds places the period at the end of stanza 6, connecting the bear simile to Cloridano, the subject of stanza 8. With this small shift, Cloridano becomes the mother bear struggling to protect his cub Medoro. Sixteenth-century punctuation is notoriously capricious; rather than resulting from a simple error of translation, I would argue that the Reynolds version points to ambiguity in the Italian original. The simile is situated between stanzas referring to the

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<sup>27</sup> Ashmole 1511, 11v; Aberdeen 24, 15v.

<sup>28</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 37.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

<sup>30</sup> *OF*, 18.12.2.

two young men in much the same terms: Medoro hesitates in his protection of a beloved captain, while Cloridano hesitates in his protection of a beloved friend. This parallelism is not, I think, accidental. It enacts textually the very hesitation and ambiguity embodied by the she-bear, her "incerto core." If the bear is Medoro, then the contrast between living cub (in the simile) and dead cub (Dardinello) makes her movements and hesitation seem even more futile, heightening the pathos of the scene. If the bear is Cloridano, then the trembling roar and tender glances become more urgent, even potentially homoerotic. Neither reading invalidates the bear; she is equally troublesome and remarkable when emblemizing the friendship between two young men as when symbolizing a soldier and his captain. Either way, she interrogates the motivations and emotional justifications of violence.

### iii. Come antiqua leonessa

Canto 18. Rodomonte is over the walls of Paris. Charlemagne appears. Cut, suddenly, to an old lioness....

Come se dentro a ben rinchiusa gabbia  
 d'antiqua leonessa usata in guerra,  
 perch'averne piacere il popul abbia,  
 talvolta il tauro indomito si serra;  
 i leoncin che veggion per la sabbia  
 come altiero e mugliando animoso erra,  
 e veder sì gran corna non son usi,  
 stanno da parte timidi e confusi:

ma se la fiera madre a quel si lancia,  
 e ne l'orecchio attacca il crudel dente,  
 vogliono anch'essi insanguinar la guancia,  
 e vengono in soccorso arditamente;  
 chi morde al tauro il dosso e chi la pancia:

così contra il pagan fa quella gente.

[As sometimes in a cage, securely barred,  
Wherein is kept an aged lioness  
In many a grim encounter battle-scarred,  
To please a gaping crowd which round it press,  
A bull, abstracted from a stable-yard,  
Is introduced: the cubs who watch it pace,  
Proud and untamed, at those great horns take fright,  
And cower in a corner out of sight.

But if their dam ferociously attack  
And sink her teeth in the intruder's ear,  
The cubs, likewise, no longer courage lack,  
But, emulating her, draw boldly near.  
One bites it in the paunch, one in the back:  
Just so the citizens abandon fear...]<sup>31</sup>

On its surface, this is the most appurtenant of the mother animal similes discussed. The lion appears as King of Beasts in bestiaries at least as far back as the *Physiologus*, but the association between lions and royalty almost certainly predates written literature. Topsell notes the lion's reluctance to destroy women and children, his ability to distinguish between men and beasts or Christians and nonbelievers, his susceptibility to flattery—all traits which map easily onto an ideal human prince.<sup>32</sup> The lion was not an official emblem of the Frankish emperor, who antedated the advent of official heraldry in Europe, but the association would have made particular sense to sixteenth-century English readers, whose own monarchs had been lionized, as it were, since Richard I.

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<sup>31</sup> *OF*, 18.14.1-18.15.6.

<sup>32</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 467.



That this simile confers kingliness is affirmed by a reference, in the following stanza, to the crowd of Parisians who follow Charles "spessa come ape," thick as a swarm of bees.<sup>33</sup>

Renaissance readers would have immediately recognized this as a political image; bees were frequently invoked in bestiaries and sermons as exempla of natural hierarchy, industry, and government. According to the Aberdeen Bestiary, bees alone among living creatures "are enclosed within a single homeland" and "are subject to the king." Bees signify an idealized vision of voluntary monarchy: although he is chosen for "outstanding natural characteristics...the size and appearance of his body," subjects "have the right of selecting [the king] and of offering him their loyalty, because they love him." Like the royal lion, the bee king may be distinguished by his mercy: "even if he has a sting, he does not use it for revenge, for there are laws of nature...that those who are endowed with the greatest power should be more lenient in administering punishment."<sup>34</sup> This extended political interpretation is an expansion of Isidore, who merely says that the bees "have armies and kings; they wage battle; they flee smoke."<sup>35</sup>

Nor is it unusual to style the monarch parent to the Parisians, even in animal form; the medieval and early modern sovereign-subject relationship was frequently articulated in explicitly patriarchal terms. Yet Charlemagne is not analogized as patriarch but as grand dame, joining the now-familiar series of maternal animal figures. The usual arguments about tropes of maternal ferocity might explain the crossgendering: while the male lion is the designated King of Beasts, there is "no Beast more vehement" than the lioness.<sup>36</sup> Topsell includes an anecdote about the mythical royal Semiramis, who "esteemed not the slaughter of a Male Lion or a Libbard" but

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<sup>33</sup> *OF*, 18.16.4.

<sup>34</sup> Aberdeen 24, 63v.

<sup>35</sup> Isidore, *Etymologies*, XII.vii.1.

<sup>36</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 462.

rejoiced in capturing a lioness.<sup>37</sup> Like the female bear or tigress, she is particularly vehement regarding her cubs, in whose defense she "fighteth...receauing the wounds of many darts, & the stroakes of many stones, the one opening hir bleeding body, & the other pressing the bloud out of the wounds, standing inuincible neuer yeelding till death, yea death it selfe were nothing vnto her."<sup>38</sup> This staggering description is certainly majestic enough to apply to a warrior of Charlemagne's renown.

Yet the choice of sex remains odd. There is far more mythical precedent for father lions than for father tigers or bears, meaning that comparing the emperor to a ferocious leonine sire, rather than an elderly dam, would be a thoroughly viable option. There is, notably, Achilles responding to Patroclus's death like a lion robbed of his young; he is "bearded," aggressively and unmistakably male.<sup>39</sup> Even Topsell reports the involvement of the male lion in childrearing, although the author scoffs at the possibility that he might "leade abroad the yong ones" to hunt and thereby "abase his noble spirit."<sup>40</sup> The male is certainly involved in myths of abduction and vengeance. In one unlikely anecdote, a bear kills several lion cubs; *both* parents chase the offender, and the father lion engages a human carpenter on contract to cut down the tree where the miscreant bear is hiding. Ariosto's crossgendering of Charlemagne is accordingly deliberate, especially given that the default grammatical gender of the noun in Italian is in this case male, "il leone." Much like Homer emphasizing the lion's beard, Ariosto employs adjectives which affirm the noun's gender and leave no doubt as to the lion's femininity. Does casting such an illustrious man as an old, female animal diminish him? Certainly, if this were a simile out of Pulci: the parodic deflation of chivalric figures was an established Italian Renaissance pastime, and

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 466.

<sup>39</sup> 18.318. See Murtaugh, "Classical Simile," 111.

<sup>40</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 466.

Ariosto's predecessor would not pass up a chance to take a pot shot at the harried emperor.<sup>41</sup> However, the details of the passage contain too much pathos and too much intricacy to fit the mold of a mock-epic simile. Kristen Murtaugh proposes that Ariosto rejects both Pulci's mockery and Boiardo's respectful imitation of classical sources, creating virtuoso similes that wed deflation and amplification in order to bring to life a "more substantial reality."<sup>42</sup> I would argue that this simile in particular treads this difficult line between pathos and parody.

The lioness's age, like Charlemagne's, is both vulnerability and asset, weakening her yet simultaneously providing the experience which enables her to lead the cubs in repelling the bull/Rodomonte. The bull's youth and virility are accentuated by Ariosto's description: he is "indomito," pacing and bellowing belligerently, threatening mother and young with his "gran corna." By contrast, the "antiqua" lioness seems exhausted: Barbara Reynolds's translation of the descriptive phrase "usata in guerra" as "battle-scarred" emphasizes the physical toll that the lioness's fighting days have taken on her body. This is not a direct translation, but it suggests a meaning that is latent in the Italian, which would normally translate as the more neutral "experienced in fighting." The lioness has been *used* by war, whether by human trainers or by the demands of the violent natural world. Because she has been used *by*, she is used *to*, able and willing to throw her scarred, practiced body at the bull so that her offspring may learn to scar the flesh of their own enemies.

The fierce bull is presumably the enemy of the lioness and her cubs, or at least the most urgent target of her wrath. However, the particularities of the scene immediately undermine this characterization, by moving the traditional mother animal encounter inside the "ben rinchiussa gabbia." The tigress returns to an empty lair to find her cubs missing; the bear is threatened in

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<sup>41</sup> See Daniel Javitch, "Grafting of Virgilian Epic" in *Renaissance Transactions: Ariosto and Tasso*, ed. Valeria Finucci (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999), 72.

<sup>42</sup> Murtaugh, "Classical Simile," 117.

front of her "tana pietrosa," her stony den. This third version of the tale postdates both of these moments in the conventional narrative, showing the outcome of the earlier scene, the animal mother and young loaded onto the hunter's trading ship and transferred for a few pieces of silver into the bear pit or royal menagerie. The bull's presence is similarly fabricated, his violence as much the product of the crowd's expectant pleasure as of any innate animosity. Neither animal is clearly the aggressor, unlike the human hunter or anonymous "predator" of the other two similes—this is fabricated spectacle.

Recasting the usual mother animal encounter as theater does more than compromise the premise of the enmity between Christian emperor and pagan champion. It destabilizes all of the usual points of correspondence between characters and their analogues, rendering the comparison fundamentally off-kilter. This is the longest maternal animal simile in the *Orlando furioso*. While the similes discussed in the previous two sections each fit within an ottava rima stanza's eight lines, this image stretches to thirteen. It is also more densely populated.

Rodomonte the tigress is alone with his anger, while Medoro the she-bear is accompanied by cubs (the corpse of Dardinello) and faces a hunter (Zerbino); the lioness is surrounded by cubs, bull, and gaping crowd, not to mention the unnamed hunter who presumably captured her brood in the first place, as well as any other facilitators who introduced the bull into the ring. The lioness obviously corresponds to Charlemagne, the cubs correspond to Parisians, the bull corresponds to Rodomonte, and the watchers correspond to... exactly no-one.<sup>43</sup>

Who are the human watchers? Who put lions and bull in the cage? At this point, the simile ceases to coincide with itself. The *Furioso* is famous for ironic recursivity; it is not inconceivable that the cage is a gesture to the device of the poem, which traps and displays its characters, and

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<sup>43</sup> For a point of comparison, see Geoffrey Hartman's discussion of Milton's *ab extra* figures in "Milton's Counterplot," *ELH* 25, vol. 1 (1958): 1-12.

that the cage-maker is therefore the wry Ferrarese poet himself. The cubs are the primary audience for their mother's instructive performance, but their own reception of and reaction to her behavior is in turn performative fodder for the external human watchers. This is not the only point of less-than-total coincidence: unlike Charlemagne, Rodomonte, and the Parisians, the violence of the lions and bull will not bring about their release from the cage, the end of their employment as exotic entertainment. They will perform the following day's matinee, or they will die, in either case forever subject to the whims of their human captors and observers. Unlike the tigress and bear similes which keep the reader more or less insulated from the action, the simile of the lioness acts as a subtle rebuke: the "gaping crowd" surely corresponds to nothing so well as to the external reader, on whose pleasure the violence between characters ultimately turns.

The poet's choice of the "antiqua leonessa" may have a simple explanation: a footnote in the Einaudi edition claims that "Il paragone è tratto da uno spettacolo osservato dall'Ariosto" ("The comparison is based on a show observed once by Ariosto"). If this comparison is indeed taken from the poet's observed experience, this may go some way toward explaining why Ariosto's lioness-Charlemagne is so much more startling than lion analogies in the poems of his predecessors and successors. I think it would be unwise to discount this potential verisimilitude as mere scene-setting; it does not preclude the complex theoretical concerns of spectacle and control outlined above. Any court animals that Ariosto observed would have been themselves tied up in dynastic power mechanisms, functioning as means by which princes displayed wealth and favor, and exerted authority.<sup>44</sup> Whatever her origin, the old mother lioness opens both chivalric poetry and the Carolingian imperial project to scrutiny, insisting on the spectacle of power and the power of spectacle.

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<sup>44</sup> See Cockram, "Interspecies understanding," particularly on the caged lioness which Ercole d'Este kept at the entrance to his palace (279).

## II. New Taxonomies: Tasso, Spenser, and Harington

"The animal imagery is conventional," notes legendary *Faerie Queene* editor A. C. Hamilton in a Book I footnote.<sup>45</sup> This in fact tells the reader very little; conventionality is a relative classification, dependent on shifting cultural codes. While crafty foxes, predatory eagles, and cruel bears, the images referred to by Hamilton's gloss, might strike a contemporary or even late sixteenth-century reader as conventional, readers weaned on Isidore of Seville's highly apocryphal *Etymologies* or sermons derived from the influential bestiaries might be more familiar with the homosexual partridge, the weasel's otic birth method, the stone-dissolving blood of the lascivious he-goat, or the anal regeneration of the humble hare.<sup>46</sup> Conventions are fickle, and I want to suggest in this section that Hamilton's footnote reflects a framework of conventionality in romance epic that was reset over the course of the sixteenth century.

Ariosto's maternal animal similes evoke complex psychologies of loss, troubling subject boundaries and provoking readers to reassess the acts of violence they presumably justify. They are lavish, drawing attention to structures of substitution and displaced costs which sustain the romance's plenty. The animal similes of the *Gerusalemme liberata* and *The Faerie Queene* are a different beast: virile males fighting over females and leadership, a predator crushing prey, a serpent striking. The analogies are compact and unassuming; though ubiquitous, they rarely invite attention. Instead, they subtly affirm and police boundaries, leading away from the provocative ethical introspection of the *Furioso's* animal figures. In the first simile of the rutting males, lust replaces maternal love as the primary motivation for force, effectively suggesting that (sexual) violence motivates violence. In the second, this suggestion becomes explicit: strength—the potential for violence—motivates violence. Brutality becomes a given. I discuss the

<sup>45</sup> Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*. 2nd ed., ed. A.C. Hamilton (New York: Routledge, 2013), 1.8.48n.

<sup>46</sup> Isidore, *Etymologies*, XII.vii.63; XII.i.14. For more of these gems see Salisbury, 82; also Wendy Doniger, *The Bedtrick: Tales of Sex and Masquerade* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 130.

realignment of gender in these later animal similes, a move towards figurative decorum that annuls the challenges presented by Ariosto's indecorous mismatching. I suggest that Spenser and Tasso reverse Ariosto's privileging of animal interiority, placing humans at the center of the analogy and relocating beasts to the margin. Animal references are condensed and generalized, dislocated from mythological context, recast as commonplaces deployed strategically to reinforce social divisions and corroborate power. Finally, I trace how animal imagery migrates from introspective language exploring motives for warfare into descriptive language describing the means of warfare: the lexicon of arms and siege machinery.

i. De-gendering, re-gendering

Selene Scarsi's *Translating Women* argues that in the 1591 translation of the *Furioso*, John Harington introduces misogyny without precedent in Ariosto's ironically equitable text.<sup>47</sup> In translating Ariosto's mother animals, Harington minimizes and occasionally corrects the disconcerting crossgendering of the original. He cuts the simile comparing Rodomonte to a raging tigress in half, from eight lines to four; the Medoro/she-bear analogy is condensed even further, from an appropriately epic eight lines to two.<sup>48</sup> The "orba tigre in maggior rabbia" which Barbara Reynolds translates as the "tigress of her progeny deprived" becomes the gender-neutral "Tyger in their greatest wrath and rage."<sup>49</sup> Given that the neuter singular third-person is difficult to the point of controversy in English and that using "her" in place of "their" would be metrically identical, this pronoun selection seems like another deliberate step away from the tiger-mother.

The most aggressive re-gendering appears during the Charlemagne/lioness comparison:

Ev'n as the Lions whelps that see a Bull

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<sup>47</sup> Scarsi, *Translating*, 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ludovico Ariosto's Orlando Furioso: Translated into English Heroical Verse by Sir John Harington*, ed. Robert McNulty (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 18.16.1-4; 19.5.7-8.

<sup>49</sup> *OF*, 8.67.4; *OEHV*, 8.59.4.

Are at the first of his great strength affraid,  
 But when they see their sire to teare or pull  
 His throte and sides, they run their sire to aid  
 And flie upon his face and horned scull  
 Till prostrate on the ground they have him laid...<sup>50</sup>

Ariosto's original language, especially the gendering of his evocative adjectives (*antiqua leonessa*, *la fiera madre*, *usata in guerra*), leaves no doubt that this is a female lion. Harington transforms her into an explicitly male lion, a change which hardly seems accidental or unmotivated: "sire," the word recasting the lion as male, appears twice. The Elizabethan translator makes two other important changes. The syntactic subject of the phrase becomes the male cubs, rather than the old lioness, who has in any case vanished. Finally, the gawping crowd disappears, leaving a decontextualized combat that occludes the questions of spectacle and control raised by the Italian text.

The only pair of maternal animal similes left untouched occur in Canto 2, both concerning the treacherous knight Pinabel. The first likens Pinabel's loss of his beloved to the abduction of a vixen's young by an eagle. Harington provides an uncharacteristically exact translation:

Ah lasso! che poss'io più che mirare  
 la rocca lungi, ove il mio ben m'è chiuso?  
 come la volpe, che 'l figlio gridare  
 nel nido oda de l'aquila di giuso,  
 s'aggira intorno, e non sa che si fare,  
 poi che l'ali non ha da gir là suso.

[Ah wo was me, in vaine I sought to helpe.  
 I see the place that keeps that I love best  
 Even as a foxe that crying heres her whelpe

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<sup>50</sup> *OEHV*, 18.7.1-6.



Now borne aloft into the Eagles nest;  
 About the tree she goes and faine would helpe  
 But is constrained for want of wings to rest...]<sup>51</sup>

I propose that Harington allows this simile passes unaltered because it is already a deliberate parody, aimed at undermining the traitor. While the crossgendering of heroic Charlemagne might strike the Elizabethan as uncouth, it is perfectly warranted and appropriate to diminish an already-pathetic character like Pinabel through misgendering. These are, moreover, Pinabel's own words; the knight also compares himself to a "chiocca," a broody hen, squawking in distress when her chick is stolen by a predator.<sup>52</sup> Pinabel uses the similes as intentional self-deprecation, a verbal strategy probably intended to elicit pity from his listener Bradamante. Comparing the compression/re-gendering of the lion, tiger, and bear similes to the faithful rendering of Pinabel the mother chicken supports Selene Scarsi's claim that Harington minimizes instances of admirable femininity, and replicates or expands images which show females in a negative light.<sup>53</sup> However, Harington's gender revisions are less idiosyncratic than Scarsi suggests; rather, they accord with the treatment of animal figures in the Ariosto-influenced romances of his predecessor Torquato Tasso and his more-famous English contemporary Edmund Spenser.

The richly figurative *Faerie Queene* is rife with similes of animal parents, yet with a few notable exceptions the gender of the animal analogue always matches the gender of the character described. Prince Arthur is likened to "a Lyon, which hath long time sought / His robbed whelpes"; if any doubt remains as to the Prince's masculinity, it is expunged by his comparison a few stanzas later to a "saluage Bull...with his dreadfull hornes."<sup>54</sup> The Ariostan animal mother

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<sup>51</sup> *OF*, 2.44.1-6; *OEHV*, 2.44.1-6.

<sup>52</sup> *OF*, 2.39.2.

<sup>53</sup> Scarsi, *Translating*, 48.

<sup>54</sup> *FQ* 2.5.8; 2.8.42.

image is reserved for angry females like Book V's Adicia, who runs at Samient "like an enraged cow, / That is berobbed of her youngling dere."<sup>55</sup> Like the Rodomonte/tigress analogy, this figure situates Adicia's lover as her young, but the similarities between the two figures end there. Book III also employs a maternal simile to describe an erotic relation, but the warrior in question is once again female (Britomart).<sup>56</sup> The one instance of full crossgendering casts the imposter Braggadocchio as a female bird hiding from a hawk, fluffing herself up once the danger has passed.<sup>57</sup> Like the description of Pinabel, this gendered disparagement is applied to an already risible character, and accordingly presents no threat to the poem's decorum.

In Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, the gender of animal similes is determined by the role of the character described: the noncombatant Lady Fortune is like a "gentle and amorous turtledove" while warriors, male and female, Christian and pagan, are compared to male predators.<sup>58</sup> Tancred is a raging bear beset by hunters, Aladine is a lion awakened to "native fury," Clorinda is a "silent wolf."<sup>59</sup> The major exception is in Canto 9, when the warrior Latinus leads his sons against the enemy like a "feroce lionessa."<sup>60</sup> Unlike Ariosto's distinctive description of Charlemagne, this simile is a faithful rendering of classical precedent: in the *Punica*, Crista's sons defend their father against Hannibal like Libyan lions defending their mother from Moorish hunters.<sup>61</sup> The scene, like Harington's translation of the *Furioso*, places male cubs rather than female parent at the center of the syntax and action, and the classical referent goes a long way towards justifying the presence of this crossgendered animal simile in

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 5.8.46.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 3.2.11.

<sup>57</sup> *OF*, 2.3.36.1-8.

<sup>58</sup> Torquato Tasso, *Il Gierusalemme*, ed. Lanfranco Curetti (Parma: Zara, 1993); *Jerusalem Delivered*, trans. Anthony Esolen (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 15.5.2

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 6.45.1-4; 1.85.8; 12.51.1.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 9.29.1.

<sup>61</sup> 10.123-127.

the midst of Tasso's more conventional images.

Spenser's recasting of Ariosto's Charlemagne simile is slightly more oblique. In Canto V, the Amazon queen Radigund flies at Sir Terpin "[l]ike a fell Lionesse."<sup>62</sup> Radigund's royalty, like Charlemagne's, associates her properly with the lioness. However, this alone would not be enough to demonstrate the probable influence of Ariosto's analogy. To make this connection, it is necessary to move back a few stanzas in the poem, where Radigund's subjects "like a sort of Bees in clusters swarmed: / Ere long their Queen her selfe... / Came forth into the rout."<sup>63</sup> The rapid transition from queen bee to lioness is unique enough to establish a probable link between Radigund and the Frankish emperor: as discussed in the previous section, Ariosto describes the Parisian citizens crowding around the pagan warrior "spessa come ape," "thick like bees," immediately following the lioness comparison. Perhaps recognizing that this same swarm of bees was formerly the pack of lion cubs, Barbara Reynolds reintroduces Charlemagne into the analogy, albeit once again crossgendered. The crowd is not just "spessa come ape" but "dense as the swarm that follows a *queen bee*" (italics added).<sup>64</sup>

The suggestion of queen bees might not faze modern readers of the Reynolds translation or the *Faerie Queene*, since this term for the leading hive-dweller is grade-school science. Yet the terminology is in fact an anachronism. Sources from Isidore in the sixth century to Edward Topsell in the early seventeenth refer exclusively to the "king bee"; this convention dates at least as far back as the fourth book of Virgil's *Georgics*, which describes the bees' male monarch in a gorgeous and intricate section comparing apian society to human politics. Even in Ariosto, who habitually crossgenders animal similes, this term never appears: the leader bee remains implicit, and the passage refers only to the swarm. Spenser's Radigund, Queen Bee of the Amazons, is in

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<sup>62</sup> *FQ* 5.4.39.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.4.36.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.18.16.

fact a major departure from the established convention of the king bee, but it seems unlikely that the phrase is a moment of scientific prescience on the part of the poet. Instead, the gendering follows a pattern already established in Spenser, of consistently matching animal gender to character gender regardless of associated mythology. The choice of this comparison serves to emphasize the character's unconventionality as an Amazon warrior and female ruler. The queen bee, like Radigund, violates gender norms; this simile emphasizes and polices that transgression.

ii. The hunter recuperated

Insistence on gender alignment sometimes troubles Spenser's characterizations. When the huntress Belpheobe encounters the lustful Faunus after a day ranging through the woods "hartlesse Hynd and Robucke to dismay," she is compared to a female deer: "As Hynd from her, so she fled from her enemy."<sup>65</sup> Within a single stanza, this conscious reversal demonstrates the precarity of Belpheobe's identity as hunter-pursuer. Belpheobe's occupational identity gives way easily in the face of male pursuit, as the huntress is erased and merges with the animal sign for all ladies: prey. In Book II, Amavia is also likened to a "gentle Hynd" dying of puncture wounds.<sup>66</sup> Florimell, Spenser's most continually pursued lady, is a "light-foot hare...goodly pray" or "fearfull Doue" depending on whether the pursuing male is figured as a hound or a falcon.<sup>67</sup> Even the formidable Britomart is "an Hynd within some couert glade" to Artegall's "eger hound" when they trade blows.<sup>68</sup> This last simile in particular, describing two similarly-skilled opponents rather than a fleeing lady and pursuer, suggests that Spenser's predator/prey similes act to enforce gender boundaries.

These depictions are part of a broad move in Spenser to present hunting as an image of

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 2.2.7.4; 2.2.7.9.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 2.1.38.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 3.4.46; 3.4.49.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 4.6.12.

both normal amorous relations and of a knight's usual work.<sup>69</sup> This requires recuperation of the hunter figure, whose cruelty in Ariosto prompts the righteous aggression of the mother animal. In Book I, the knight Satyrane's mother Thyamis witnesses the outcome of the conventional *raptus* sequence: her son chased by a lioness who "roaring all with rage...lowd requere[s] / Her children deare, whom he away had wonne."<sup>70</sup> Like Achilles, the classical precedent for this encounter, Satyrane is "trayned" in "bloody game" with animals before he tries his skill against human opponents; as practice, his satyr father teaches him both "from the she Beares teats her whelps to teare," and to "ryde [bulls'] backs not made to beare."<sup>71</sup> While Satyrane is presented as a hybrid character, equal parts man and brute, this particular manifestation of brutality is explicitly linked to his human side. It is this savagery practiced on animals that allows the young hunter to become a successful knight and take up his place in civilization. Satyrane's father is himself a "beastly" character who captured and raped the "forlorne mayd" Thyamis while hunting in the woods, a liaison resulting in Satyrane himself.<sup>72</sup> As Hamilton's gloss to stanzas 27-8 suggests, the irony of Thyamis's fear for her powerful son's safety creates a "humorous interlude," but her witness of her son's savagery towards the tiger-mother is disturbing when read in the context of Thyamis's own history. The sequence establishes firm equivalencies between sexual violence and hunting, and between hunting and knighthood. The perpetrator of the animal *raptus* is recuperated as analogue of the virtuous male knight.

While drawing equivalence between sexual violence and hunting might serve to vilify either pursuit, Spenser in fact seems to suggest that both behaviors are justified by their origin in

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<sup>69</sup> For discussion of sexuality and the hunt in Spenser, see Catherine Bates, "Hunt, Quest, and Desire in *The Faerie Queene*," in *Masculinity and the Hunt: Wyatt to Spenser* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 238-324.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.27.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.29; 1.6.24.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.29; 1.6.22.

the natural world. This positions Spenser against Rinaldo's Canto 5 monologue, which references animals in order to protest human gender violence. This is the idea taken up and expanded upon by Laura Terracina in her rendering of Canto 5 in *Discorso*: men cannot rely on natural precedent to justify their cruelty towards women.<sup>73</sup> This critique is absent in Spenser, who not only aligns animals with rape threat rather than spousal accord but puts the lust of male animals in the position that the love of mother animals occupies in Ariosto: as corresponding to the central motive for human warfare.<sup>74</sup> Satyrane encounters Bruncheal as one of "two fierce Bulls, that striue the rule to get / Of all the heard."<sup>75</sup> Hamilton remarks that this is "The first of the animal images to define male sexuality"; clearly, rule of the herd functions in practical terms as sexual control over the herd's females, whether this is made explicit or not.<sup>76</sup> While Satyrane's alignment with beasts seems to invite this comparison, the analogy applies equally to the poem's most "civilized" knights: Redcrosse and Sansfoy are described as "two rams stird with ambitious pride" fighting for control of the flock.<sup>77</sup> Hamilton's footnote observes that this simile "reduces [Redcrosse] to the same brute level as his antagonist." Cambell is one of "two Tygers prickt with hungers rage" battling Diamond for the "fresh spoyle" of Canace; all incestuous implications aside, animal hunger appears to substitute as easily for sibling affection as it does for sexual fervor.<sup>78</sup> The knights slip easily between these analogies; *pace* Hamilton, comparisons to rutting male animals do not unequivocally reduce them but make up a standard pillar of knightly behavior, authorizing lust as a motive force for violence.

Within romance epic, lust is the opposite of chaste love, frequently manifesting as

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<sup>73</sup> See Shemek, *Ladies*, 150-57 for discussion.

<sup>74</sup> *FQ* 3.7.49.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.4.18.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.4.18n3-5

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.2.16.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.16.

nonconsensual assault. Unlike maternal love, motive lust renders force an *a priori*, positing violence as the root cause of violence. This becomes more explicit in another set of characteristically Spenserian similes, scenes of avian predation which seem to authorize the mere possession of superior force as an acceptable root motive for the use of violence. Arthur is an eagle to Maleger's heron, while in Book V Artegall is also "an Eagle in his kingly pride" attacking Radigund the "Goshauke."<sup>79</sup> If a character is compared to a bird, the reader can be sure that a bigger bird will turn up: whether another goshawk giving up a small dove in order to fight an eagle, or a "gentle Faulcon" savaged by a "Puttocke."<sup>80</sup> In many cases, Spenser's animal analogies move beyond ranking species into contrasting taxonomical classes or families of animals, in order to evoke different social classes. Beyond authorizing superior force as a legitimate motive for violence, these similes reaffirm class boundaries and cite natural precedent to reassure readers of the inevitable outcome of class struggle. Arthur and Guyon are a lion and tiger among "scattered Sheepe" as they rout the peasant force attacking Alma's castle; as elsewhere, sheep stand conventionally in for "th'vnruly preace / Of people."<sup>81</sup> Often there is a wolf among these herd animals, a lion among the deer, or a large beast swatting flies.<sup>82</sup> In some places, these analogies denote mere military superiority, a skilled knight among unskilled knightly opponents. Yet in many instances, they bear significant social implications as well. At the end of Book V, Artegall sends the iron automaton Talus against the "lawless multitude," the supporters of the Giant with the Scales. The argument between the knight and the giant has been discussed extensively in Spenser criticism; my focus is rather on how easily Talus becomes "a

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 2.11.43; 5.4.42.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 3.7.39; 5.5.15.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 2.9.14; 4.3.41.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 4.4.35; 6.11.48-9.

Faulcon [which] hath with nimble flight / Flowne at a flush of Ducks."<sup>83</sup> This sequence scrutinizes class and gender aggressively: the Giant is "admired much of fooles, women, and boys" and attracts "the vulgar."<sup>84</sup> Artegall is "loth...his noble hands t'embrew / In the base blood of such a rascall crew," for which reason he sends Talus.<sup>85</sup> The ease with which this larger allegory interfaces with Spenser's general store of animal similes is remarkable, and suggests that the poet's analogical menagerie functions broadly as a site for reaffirming conventional human hierarchies, confirming that the rabble are always on the losing side. Noble predator versus brutish predator, man versus woman, genteel warrior versus vulgar masses: Spenser's animals reiterate and patrol these borders.

Besides pacing out human social divisions, *The Faerie Queene's* animals patrol the perimeters of humanity itself. This is a central tenet of animals' role within philosophy writ large, and it is unsurprising that a literary allegory of human virtue is encircled by images of animalistic transgression. For Christian knights, the threat of despoilment represents a fate worse than death should they lose the field: Cymochles invokes God's curse in Deuteronomy when he boasts to Guyon that "the fowles in aire / Doe flocke, awaiting shortly to obtain / Thy carcas for their pray."<sup>86</sup> Later in the same book, "birds of rauenous race" await "spoile of wretches," the usurers.<sup>87</sup> For female characters, the threat of postmortem mutilation-by-animal is supplanted by the fear of rape-by-animal while still alive, as in Thyamis's violation by the "brutish" and "beastly" satyr.<sup>88</sup> The monstrosity of Argante is represented by her presumably consensual

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<sup>83</sup> *FQ*, 5.2.1-2. For a recent summary see Andrew Hadfield, "The Death of the Knight with the Scales and the Question of Justice in *The Faerie Queene*," *Essays in Criticism* 65, vol. 1 (2015): 12-29.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.2.30; 5.2.33.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.2.52.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.6.28.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.12.8.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.7; 1.6.9.



participation in this activity, as she "suffred beastes her body to deflowre."<sup>89</sup> Beastly consumption, in whichever form, marks the edges of civilization and reaffirms human-animal hierarchy.<sup>90</sup>

The result of this redrawing of boundaries is the casting out of the mother animal, from the heart of epic to the wasteland beyond its perimeter. She becomes the origin point outside of humanity justifying human characters' lack of compassion, rather than a figure for expressing and interrogating human love. In Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* "Your mother was a tiger" even becomes a sort of stock schoolyard insult. Arguing on behalf of the enchantress Armida to Godfrey, the Christian soldiers charge their leader: "If even now she gains no mercy, then / a savage tiger gave our captain suck."<sup>91</sup> Armida herself accuses her departing lover Rinaldo of the same: "a tiger gave you suck, for cruelty!"<sup>92</sup> Elsewhere the "lying counselor" Love accuses the pagan princess Erminia of having been "born of a voracious bear" if she does not heal the warrior Tancred, while in Canto 12, we learn that the woman-warrior Clorinda actually *was* suckled by a tigress, like her predecessor Marfisa.<sup>93</sup> These accusations rely on the reductive symbolism asserted by Hamilton, that the tiger is "a beast noted for its cruelty."<sup>94</sup> When Ariosto makes reference to this characterization, as in the description of Angelica on the rock discussed in the first part of this chapter, the stock epithet engages instead with acute ethical questions. "L'orba tigre" is not a figure of innate but of provoked savagery; she is invoked not to demonstrate cruelty, but the universal reach of compassion. Her love, so central to the *Furioso*, in later poems

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 3.7.49.

<sup>90</sup> On the nuances of animal degree see Rebecca Ann Bach, "The Animal Continuum in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," *Textual Practice* 24, vol. 1 (2010): 123-147.

<sup>91</sup> *GL*, 4.77.3-4. For discussion of this motif's classical lineage see David Gibbons, "Tasso Petroso: Beyond Petrarchan and Dantean Metaphor in the *Gerusalemme liberata*," *Italian Studies* 25 (2000): 83-98.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 16.57.4.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 6.73.3; 12.29-31. Marfisa and Ruggiero were suckled by a lioness constrained by the enchanter Atlante (*OF*, 36.62.7).

<sup>94</sup> *FQ*, 5.7.30n.

becomes a sign of natural, sine qua non violence.

In Spenser, the culmination of this reversal of the animal mother's position is the Pastorella episode. Taking a temporary hiatus from his pursuit of the Blatant Beast to dwell among shepherds, the knight Calidore falls in love with the shepherdess Pastorella, and vies with fellow herder Coridon for her heart. One day, while Calidore gathers strawberries with his beloved and his rival, a tiger with "fell claws...And greedy mouth, wide gaping like hell gate" emerges from the forest and abducts the girl.<sup>95</sup> Coridon flees the scene, but Calidore smacks "the monster" with his shepherd's crook, managing to hew off its head (apparently with the same blunt instrument) and laying it at Pastorella's feet.<sup>96</sup> Naturally, this thoughtful gift softens the lady's affections. This is a profound shift, from animal whelps stolen by a cruel human predator to a human girl abducted by a cruel animal predator. The tiger mother has become the rapacious hunter who menaces her. In his note on the episode, Hamilton reiterates that "The Tigre is always associated with savage cruelty and fierce greediness."<sup>97</sup> Is this the same tiger as Topsell's, who "nourisheth [her cubs]...very carefully, loving them" and "departeth with vnspeakeable ioy" after she recovers them from the hunter? Is it the tigress standing in for Hannibal in the *Punica*, motivated by "shame and wrath"? Is it Ariosto's tiger, caught in wrenching comprehension of what the predator has done? In this scene and in its critical apparatus, the tiger has ceased to be a tool for exploring the complex motivations of violence, and instead become a symbol of violence itself.

### iii. Animal commonplacing

As figures of social taxonomy and authorized violence, these late sixteenth century animal analogies are stripped of Ariostan local detail, truncated and repurposed for describing

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 6.10.34.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 6.11.35-36.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 6.10.34n.

broad types: The Nubile Lady, the Noble Warrior, the Peasant Rabble. Spenser and Tasso compress the animals' complex mythological baggage into one characteristic, easier to slot into existing paradigms. This is a process which resembles Elizabethan commonplacing, the mechanism by which readers cut sententious quotations out of their original context and removed identifying details so that the selections could be fit into the set categories of a commonplace book: e.g. *On Love, On Friendship, On Treachery*.<sup>98</sup> Tasso's pagan king Aladine is like a hibernating serpent awakening, whereas the warrior Clorinda steals away from battle like "a silent wolf...after his stealthy crime."<sup>99</sup> Argante is a bull "whom jealous love has goaded," while Tancred becomes an enraged, wounded bear.<sup>100</sup> Instead of opening up digressive narrative space and troubling sympathetic identification, as Ariosto's animal similes so often do, these analogies confirm already-knowns: Soliman compares the possibility of peace with the Christians to sheep bedding down with wolves, or doves nestling with serpents.<sup>101</sup> These images resemble epic epithets more than epic similes: the sly fox, the proud lion, the lying snake.

Sometimes, the formulae seem automatic, as in *The Faerie Queene* when a chariot is pulled by a team of dolphins "as swifte as swallows."<sup>102</sup> The natural speed of dolphins is inadequate; their pace must be bolstered by reference to animals more conventionally glossed as representing speed. In fact, the commonplaced animal analogies struggle to sustain more than one characteristic, regardless of mythical precedent: Hamilton's footnote to a Book V equation of Arthur to a lion fearing a "flaming brand" admits that this is traditional lore, but also calls it a "startling comparison"—what would he make of the *antiqua leonessa* Charlemagne? The "Lyon

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<sup>98</sup> See Smith, *First Folio*, 142. On humanist reading practices see Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, "Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy," *Past & Present* 129 (1990): 30-78.

<sup>99</sup> *GL.*, 1.85.4-8.; 12.51.1-2.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.55.1-8; 6.45.1.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.51.5-6;

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.4.33.5.

wood" is a particularly favored analogy in Spenser, but is applied so indiscriminately as to become unintelligible. A lion can equally mean Arthur, Cambell, Britomart, or an allegory of Bourbon.<sup>103</sup> Often the lion stands for a royal character or at least signifies an instance of nobility oppressed, but it certainly does not have to. The requirements for being a lion are indeed quite minimal. In Book I, the simile is even applied to multiple characters in the space of a single sequence: Sansloy has killed Una's lion protector, but then keeps her captive with "Lyons clawes" himself.<sup>104</sup> Almost immediately, the figure of the lion is transferred to the troupe of fauns who rescue Una; fear of this new potential aggressor displaces fear of the earlier assailant Sansloy, who is by this point "a greedy Wolfe."<sup>105</sup> The lion is indeed so stripped of specificity—detached from gender, setting, kinship structures, and other identity markers—that it becomes interchangeable, mobile, and proliferates to the point of incoherence.

Tasso's King Aladine is likened to a "tamed and captive lion, vexed, harassed, / [who] resumes the native fury in his breast."<sup>106</sup> While Ariosto's and even Spenser's animal analogies most often depict interactions between two animals or in the wild, Tasso is fascinated by caged animals, domesticated animals, animals brought into human contexts. The seditious warrior Argillan is also compared to a lion, but one who has been totally mastered by "the tamer" and "humble yoke"—his native fury does not serve him against his human "governor."<sup>107</sup> Clorinda is "a bull in the amphitheater," harried by dogs for human entertainment.<sup>108</sup> Tancred is compared to a fish fleeing the rough seas, finding refuge inside "that amazing cage," the "prison marsh,"

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<sup>103</sup> *FQ* 5.8.35; 4.4.32; 5.7.30; 5.11.45.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.7.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.6.10.

<sup>106</sup> *GL* 1.85.7-8.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.83.1-8.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.32.1.

while Argante boasts that the Christians will "die like beasts caught in the lair."<sup>109</sup> There is an overwhelming sense of human control and intervention: amphitheaters, baiting rings, and chains. *Gerusalemme liberata* begins to insert commonplace animals into a discourse of technology, using them to introduce instruments of captivity that fuse seamlessly into the machinery of war. Although Tasso seems more concerned with technical warfare than Spenser, there is one notable exception: in the previous section, I briefly discussed Talus dispersing the defenders of the Giant with the Scales like a hawk scattering ducks. The hawk is a particularly apt organic image for the inorganic iron automaton; like a hunting hawk, Talus is functionally a prosthetic of his master Artegall, a war machine. The transition from Ariosto to Tasso and Spenser is a shift from emotional correspondences to these instrumental correspondences, from violence that is interrogated to a violence that is presupposed. The iron warrior seems like an apogee of this shift, a depthless character whose brutality is an unalterable given, whose motivations are unquestioned and unquestionable, who is not so much man as mechanism—but whose meaning continues to depend on animal figuration.

#### iv. Big cats to bigger cats

Talus is obviously not the only iron man in Renaissance epic romance. Orlando enacts his own existential dissolution by deconstructing his iron body, tearing the armor from his back and scattering his chivalric corpus in the forest.<sup>110</sup> This is part of the provocation of the figure of Talus, who echoes the mechanistic armored bodies of the poem's living knights. While the implications of armor as structural device, psychic symbol, gender construct, and material object have been rigorously explored, the implications of animal imagery for this early modern iron

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<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.46.4-8; 11.36.8.

<sup>110</sup> *OF*, 23.132.

body have not.<sup>111</sup> As discussed, by the end of the sixteenth century animal images ceased to describe the warrior's interior motivations in any meaningful way; instead, increased fascination with the means of war repurposed the animal for "gli arme," the technology of war. Engravings for the *Furioso* often carve animals directly onto the knights' armor. Lion heads form Astolfo's pauldrons (Fig. 1), and scowl forth from Rinaldo's knees (Fig. 2). An ostentatious phoenix adorns Marfisa's helmet (Fig. 3), and a similar bird is displayed on Ruggiero's shield (Fig. 4).<sup>112</sup> Many of these figures do not seem to be associated with an individual's heraldry, but form a standard part of plate armor for characters of both armies. They are reminiscent of sixteenth-century armor styles still extant in museum collections, such as the Lion Armor parade attire currently held at Leeds. In the engraving for Canto 11, depicting Ruggiero's failed rape of Angelica, there are no less than six face carvings visible in the knight's armor, seeming to weld his breastplate to his upper arms and his greaves to his shins (Fig. 4). It is no wonder that he struggles to remove the equipment. These figures, like Hercules's Nemean hide, signal the human symbolic appropriation of animal capability—the lion's strength, the phoenix's regenerative power. Yet in these gaping engravings it is difficult to avoid a sense that the animals are not so much protecting as devouring the knights, that metal is beginning to consume man.

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<sup>111</sup> See Murrin, *Warfare*, 123-7; Ascoli, "Like a Virgin," 153-155; Bryce, "Gender and Myth," 42.

<sup>112</sup> For discussion of animals in Ariostan heraldry see Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 215.



Figure 1. Canto 34 engraving (Venice: Valgrisi, 1558)



Figure 2 (left). Canto 6 engraving (Venice: Franceschi, 1584)



Figure 3 (right). Canto 36 engraving (Venice: Franceschi, 1584)



Figure 4. Canto 11 engraving (Venice: Franceschi, 1584)

Ariosto's critique of Cimosco's gun, which Orlando casts dramatically into the North Sea at the close of the Olimpia episode, is an iconic representation of early modern technological anxiety. While the poet's treatment of the device may be interpreted in light of personal history, through the Battle of Ravenna and Alfonso d'Este's artillery, it also emblemizes broader tensions regarding the use of firearms in the Renaissance. Ariosto's other references to machinery reinforce his ambivalence towards the gun: when siege machines appear, they are "infernal," their sounds combined with those of "barbari stromenti" (barbaric instruments) and "tormenti" (torments), associated with "danno" (hurt).<sup>113</sup> Torquato Tasso, by contrast, seems positively gleeful about this sort of devilish innovation. It is difficult to detect any disapproval in the designation of Godfrey's Christian forces as "inventor[s] of machines of war" who "depend

<sup>113</sup> *OF*, 11.33.1; 16.69.5, 39; 40.19.4.



on weapons never seen before," and in subsequent zealous descriptions of the machines, their construction, and their capabilities.<sup>114</sup> Guns and siege engines are as central to Tasso's elaborate battles as human soldiers. "[C]h'ivi non pur fra gli uomini si pugna, ma le machine insieme anco fan pugna," writes Tasso.<sup>115</sup> Anthony Esolen interprets this phrase as "man against man, machine against machine," making the implied parallelism even more explicit. "Le machine" are ubiquitous in Tasso's poem; the word itself appears no less than thirty-five times, in stark contrast to its seven appearances in the *Furioso*.

Commonplacing is a form of salvage, taking scrap material, refurbishing it, and fixing it to a new rhetorical design. Godfrey's armies build their newfangled siege machines out of wood taken from the enchanted grove, but also out of animal scraps: figures which have been stripped down and repainted so that they fit into the new technologized discourse. The Christians approach the walls of Jerusalem with "catapulte, monton, gatti, e balliste," huddled in the "testugine di scudi" that Rinaldo orders his soldiers to form.<sup>116</sup> These are, of course, technical terms for a siege engine and an infantry formation respectively. But they are also, crucially, animal metaphors: cats and tortoise shells. These particular terms appear in Ariosto as well, but only in passing, in one of the numerous battlefield catalogues.<sup>117</sup> Ariosto's "gatti" are much more frequently paired with mice than with projectiles and guns.<sup>118</sup>

Tasso's engines of war take center stage in Canto 18; the "mirabil torre" (marvelous tower) produced by the Christian master carpenter is the culmination of the Lucan-derived enchanted wood episode.<sup>119</sup> The poet describes the cat in loving detail, its "subtle joints" and battering ram,

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<sup>114</sup> *GL*, 19.3.4-6.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.79.7-8

<sup>116</sup> *GL*, 18.64.8; 18.73.8.

<sup>117</sup> *OF*, 40.18.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.22; 22.22; 29.10.

<sup>119</sup> *GL* 18.43.5.

its crowning tower and middle bridge.<sup>120</sup> The machine is not only nominally animalized; it is also "wound about with strips of hide," a common technique to ensure fire protection for the device using the skins of freshly-slaughtered animals.<sup>121</sup> The name "cat" probably derives from the device's arm, which could be moved to claw at castle walls; however, a small host of animal names were used for the same device: sow, tortoise, mouse. These apparently interchangeable terms suggest that the animal name refers not only to the machine's offensive capabilities, but to its protective potential. Jim Bradbury even suggests that the terminology derives from "comparing men under the shelter to piglets suckling under their mother."<sup>122</sup> This is a shocking twist of Ariosto's familiar maternal animals. Esolen's translation draws out this potential etymology: the Christian attackers "shelter under the great 'cats,' and take / upon the cat's back the battering arrow hail."<sup>123</sup> Alongside the poem's procession of tamed lions and stealthy wolves, this gentle, covert analogy becomes one of Tasso's most evocative. Throughout the *Gerusalemme*, the poet invokes animals that are constrained, trapped, caged, tamed, and used. It is hard to shake a sense that Tasso is more enamored with the technology of captivity than with the wild captives themselves; his finest beasts are, ultimately, beast-machines.

The "incerto core" of the she-bear and the *ira* of the tigress expand the *Orlando furioso*'s emotional register, furnishing the fable of the hunter's *raptus* with rich local detail and raising complex ethical questions. To be repurposed for Tasso's technical discourse or Spenser's social taxonomy, animals are stripped of these emotive capacities, impoverished, dislocated, and commonplacéd. Instead, these romances make use of animal physical capabilities to enrich the rhetoric of human warfare. Rinaldo takes on the deceptive threat of the serpent when he fights,

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 18.44.1-8.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 18.43.8. This corresponds to the bales of wool with which the infidels shore up the gates of Jerusalem against impact, another instance of animal bodies turned to technological advantage (18.70.4).

<sup>122</sup> Jim Bradbury, *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Warfare* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 301; 305.

<sup>123</sup> *GL*, 18.71.3-4.

the speed of his sword creating a quintessentially snakelike illusion of multiplicity; this suggests a resemblance of violent potential, not emotional parity between soldier and serpent.<sup>124</sup> Animals become part of the discourse of how rather than the discourse of why, of effect rather than affect. Unlike Ariosto's elaborate analogies, these figures are unremarkable, practically invisible; they bear the weight of the poems' extravagant violence without calling attention to the conventions they sustain.

### III. The Animal Mother, Declawed

Tasso frequently invokes a conventional contrast, derived from *Aeneid* 4, between a wakeful hero and the slumbering animal kingdom:

The night seemed to envelop the whole world,  
 and all the winds and the waves were deep in rest;  
 the weary creatures who dwell in the wave-swept sea  
 or those who find the dark lake bottoms best,  
 those who lie hidden in the den or fold,  
 and the dappled birds, plunged in forgetfulness  
 under the awful silence of the night,  
 gave respite to their troubles, soothed the heart

but neither sleep nor rest so sweet  
 eased Godfrey or his army in the least<sup>125</sup>

Esolen's translation captures the yearning beauty of Tasso's scenery, which reminds the reader that a pastoral world—"goats and deer frisk[ing] in the dell, / and the fish in this river flashing by, / and the small birds ruffling their feathers to the sky"—always circumscribes the Jerusalem

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 20.55.2-8. For a discussion of animals, prosthetics, and human negative exceptionalism see Laurie Shannon, "The Eight Animals in Shakespeare; or, Before the Human," *PMLA* 124, vol. 2 (2009): 472-479.

<sup>125</sup> *GL*, 2.96-97.

battlefield.<sup>126</sup> Yet the larger themes of the *Gerusalemme* render this convention odd, almost nostalgic. There may be animals in the dell, but the forest will soon give way to Christian axes and the wheels of siege engines—tortoises will lend their shells to soldiers, big cats will leave the woods and turn their claws on the city's walls. Ariosto taps into an older, wilder literary cosmos, in which interrogations of sexuality, violence, and love are often displaced into an apocryphal world of animals (lion, tiger, and bear; but also beaver, goat, partridge, chicken). As this creaturely cosmos vanishes with the turn to modernity, human doings once again command priority. Unlike tigers looking forlornly in mirrors and deferentially espoused bears, the angry bull or stealthy fox does not declare its presence; indeed, these compressed and conventional analogies barely register, enriching the poem's rhetoric in silence. The ancient lioness, oppressed but still able to spur on her cubs, becomes Spenser's fluid stock lion, becomes Tasso's iron-and-wood "cat." These figures are less animals than abbreviated social signals, conjuring the authority of common knowledge.

In the midst of the inexorable march of commonplacing, two faint echoes of Ariosto's animal mothers emerge. Overcome with sorrow upon discovering Florimell's captivity in Proteus's sea-cage, Spenser's aquatic hero Marinell languishes:

Like as an Hynd whose calfe is falne vnwares  
 Into some pit, where she him heares complaine,  
 An hundred times about the pit side fares,  
 Right sorrowfully mourning her bereaued cares.<sup>127</sup>

After accidentally killing his beloved Clorinda, Tasso's Tancred mourns:

as a nightingale whose chicks still furred with down  
 the thieving hard-hearted farmer would not spare,

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 7.11.6-8.

<sup>127</sup> *FQ* 4.12.17.

sings all the night in misery alone  
and fills with sadness all the woodland air.<sup>128</sup>

These are tremendously moving images, I think, because they retain an echo of the same pathos that Ariosto's maternal animals evoke. The latter simile can be traced to Virgil's retelling of the Orpheus myth, the singer mourning the loss of Eurydice like a nightingale lamenting murdered chicks whom "a heartless ploughman/Has...plundered."<sup>129</sup> However, these similes are distinct from their Ariostan counterparts in that neither hind nor nightingale is a predator. Neither is capable of "standing inuincible neuer yeelding till death" or of "avampa di tant'ira," blazing with such rage, in vengeance for the lost young. Indeed, in *Georgics* the nightingale occurs just before the Thracian bacchantes tear apart Orpheus's body and behead him, in a frenzied rebuke of his impotence. In these two mother animal analogies, the power of Ariosto's lamenting females to navigate this most potent kind of rage disappears. The result of this dilution of the animal impacts the treatment of major romance themes—love, rage, violence, sexuality—at the very moment of their entry into the English literary tradition.

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<sup>128</sup> *GL* 12.90.3-6.

<sup>129</sup> Virgil, *The Georgics*, tr. L.P. Wilkinson (New York: Penguin, 1982), 513-514.

## CHAPTER 2

### Four Horses of the Anthropocalypse

#### I. Paragon of Animals

A few stanzas before Spenser compares the sea-knight Marinell to a mother hind, grieving impotently beside the pit entrapping her calf, he likens the character to another animal: a horse, constrained with bridle and iron bit, bestridden by "Dame Venus sonne."<sup>1</sup> Horses shape the etymology, the narrative, as well as the figurative apparatus of epic romance. In criticism of the genre, Malory's tart observation is axiomatic: "What is a knyght but whan he is on horseback? I sett not by a knyght whanne he is on fote."<sup>2</sup> A knight need not have encountered the lion, tiger, or bear in order to warrant comparison to one; horses, on the other hand, he can hardly avoid.

There have been several notable recent attempts to situate this figure in relation to the emergent field of medieval animal studies. Susan Crane offers a compelling article on knight and horse as a postmodern assemblage, which was expanded into a chapter for her *Animal Encounters*; she responds to J. J. Cohen, who reads the horse as compromising knightly subjectivity.<sup>3</sup> Laurie Shannon addresses the horse's role in the dissection practices of Vesalius and William Harvey, bringing animal studies into dialogue with Jonathan Sawday's account of Renaissance dissection culture, while Karen Raber expands Sawday's approach to address the treatment of the horse itself as vivisected subject.<sup>4</sup> A few accounts touch on specifically Ariostan horses: Bruce Boehrer devotes a chapter to the literary history of Bayard, Rinaldo's famous mount, Valeria Finucci addresses horse comparisons in her foundational study of Angelica, and

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<sup>1</sup> *FQ*, 4.7.13.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.2.11n, reference to Malory 10.48.

<sup>3</sup> Susan Crane, "Chivalry and the Pre-Postmodern," *postmedieval* 2 (2011): 69-87; Jeffrey J. Cohen, "Chevalerie" in *Medieval Identity Machines* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 35-77.

<sup>4</sup> Shannon, "Invisible Parts"; Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*; Raber, *Animal Bodies*.

David Quint discusses Charlemagne's mount in his introduction to the translated *Cinque Canti*.<sup>5</sup> However, the classic study of the Ariostan steed is A. Bartlett Giamatti's "Headlong Horses and Headless Horsemen," which proposes restraint of the horse as a dialectical emblem for proper humanist development of the soul.

In the footsteps of such company, this discussion aims to do several things. While my previous chapter was largely diachronic and comparative, outlining a process of obfuscation over the course of sixteenth-century romance, this chapter remains largely with Ariosto in an attempt to show one crucial way in which this poet is distinct from his successors. First, I unpack the copious meanings of the heroic steed—his many implications in romance, and Ariosto's aggressively visible rendering of his excessive signification. Next, I analyze a second horse, unique to Ariosto: the dead mare of Canto 29. I read this anonymous female packhorse as a troubling retort to the exceptional figure of Baiardo, the horse that has been the focus of most prior studies of equine dynamics in the *Furioso* and other Carolingian romances. I expand upon and dispute Giamatti's reading of this scene, arguing that the critic's attempt to resolve the signification crisis of the horse in fact curtails the challenge that Ariosto offers to later poets of the genre, and evades the scene's disturbing revelations about sexual violence and chivalry. I contend that instead of signifying normal humanist development and a dark elegy for the disappearing chivalric narrative, the dead mare is Ariosto's most important moment of self-display, a revelation of the interior cost of romance which destabilizes and critiques the genre's vision of androcentric humanism.

While the first chapter examined the role of female animals in violence between men, the second chapter explores the role of one particular animal—the horse—in violence directed towards women. The previous chapter investigated violence motivated by love; this chapter

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<sup>5</sup> Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, 28-70; Finucci, *Lady Vanishes*, 112; Quint, *Cinque Canti*, 8 and 42-43.

pushes the question of causation further, considering what happens when the object of devotion and the object of ire merge, and violence is done in love's name. In a way, this is an attempt to make an answer to Rinaldo's urgent and critically divisive Canto 5 speech, wherein the she-bear lives in peace with the bear. Is sexual violence, the ultimate conflation of *arme* and *amori*, a precondition of epic romance? This is an old question, and Ariosto addresses it using old material: classical animal analogies, figures worn by convention. Yet in doing so, the poet foments a crisis of analogy that, in its visibility, is uniquely provocative: If man is to woman as bear is to she-bear, why does he hurt her? If chivalry is the horse and the horse is a woman, what is the woman to chivalry? Ariosto's animal figures, when read together, present a sharp rebuke both to the genre and to its interpreters, by conspicuously staging ethical questions that later romance obscures.

I argue, following Giamatti, that the Canto 29 scene forms the heart of Ariosto's poem. Far from asserting its essential singularity or universality, however, I contend that the mare should be read alongside the poem's other treatments of erotic substitution, gendered violence, and animal analogy. I begin with a close reading of the mare's death. I then relate this sequence to the Marganorre episode of Canto 37, which is more typically read alongside the island of the Amazons. I draw an unusual parallel between Canto 29 and Cantos 5-6, using Angelica's escape scene to illuminate the Ginevra/Ariodante tale. The scene, and what leads from it, makes visible a displacement of suffering that is erased in the romance's later sixteenth-century heritage, from Spenser to Shakespeare. The mare's death is not an aberration or safety valve, but an explicit and intentionally visible ritual sacrifice: a pattern of erotic brutality which inheres in romance's rhetorical economy, sustaining the poem's superstructure of copious enrichment and infinite deferral. She is a sign of the cost of romance that the later poets assiduously seek to forget.



## i. Horses errant

The *Furioso* is a tremendously horsey poem, even by romance standards, full of destriers, palfreys, nags, carthorses, winged horses, lunar horses, dead horses, rock horses, horses falling from bridges, horses on boats, horses underwater. The warhorses have names: Rinaldo's mythic Baiardo, along with Ruggiero's Frontino and Orlando's Brigliadoro, Astolfo's Rabicano, and Atlante's winged hippogriff. These "famous" horses are deemed significant enough by Barbara Reynolds to receive their own section in her character list, as well as more extensive descriptions than those allotted to their masters or, indeed, to God. The movement of these horses is crucial to the plot, as critics from Boehrer to Giamatti have observed. Although Ariosto optimistically suggests that "a rein has often served to check / The impetus of a careering horse," the poem's action belies this generalization.<sup>6</sup> Bolting is a far more frequent pace than the staid trot or even vigorous gallop, whether a horse is possessed by actual "demons straight from Lucifer," or by that far more pernicious demon, free will.<sup>7</sup> The disruption often proves a frustration to human characters: Logistilla constructs a bit by which Ruggiero "may control and master" the hippogriff but, predictably, the winged animal has slipped this device by the beginning of the following canto.<sup>8</sup> Occasionally, the horse's unruliness is serendipitous: Zerbino thanks God because Gabrina's palfrey "hearing hoofs, had pricked its ears / And galloped at full speed across the plain/To join its kind," delivering its villainous rider into the knight's grasp.<sup>9</sup>

Sometimes bolting is prompted by an external force, as when a monstrous bird attacks Baiardo and brings Rinaldo's combat with Gradasso to a halt, or when Malagigi sends a demon

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<sup>6</sup> *OF*, 11.1.1-2.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.32.4.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.66.8; 11.13.7-8.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.36.1-3.

into Doralice's nag.<sup>10</sup> Sometimes unruliness is internally motivated, as when Sacripante's mount wanders off while the knight rescues a drowning lady, "Not waiting for him to complete his deed" and further delaying his comical pursuit of Rodomonte.<sup>11</sup> In freeing Frontino as "reward" for his service at the end of the poem, Ruggiero assumes that all horses naturally prefer the unharnessed state.<sup>12</sup> The poem itself depends on this assumption, as the horse's capacity to balk and flee assumes the narrative role traditionally occupied by the romance shipwreck, of disrupting characters' plans and transporting them to uncharted locales. This analogue renders the image of Frontino, drifting alone on the Mediterranean after Ruggiero's shipwreck, incongruous: for once, the horse has been beaten at his own game, and is just as subject to the whims of plot as his master. Girolamo Porro's 1584 engraving for Canto 40, not of Frontino but of Agramante's and Sobrino's mounts, captures this crossspecies surrender to the whims of boats—horse and man appear equally resigned and exasperated (Fig. 5).



Figure 5. Canto 40 engraving (Venice, Franceschi: 1584)

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.84-88; 26.128-129.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.115-2-3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.92.

When not bolting, the horses of the *Orlando furioso* are subject to various other forms of truancy, whether stolen or exchanged, as prize, loan, or gift.<sup>13</sup> Harington's "Exact and Necessarie Table" summarizes the horse Frontino's tortuous trajectory: kept by *Bradamant*...sent by her to *Rogero*...taken by *Rodomont*...recovered by *Bradamant*...sent agayne to *Rogero*...found by *Orlando* in a ship...restored to *Rogero*...his prayse."<sup>14</sup> When Ruggiero first departs on the hippogriff he leaves Frontino on terra firma, where Bradamante "resolves that she will not abandon" the horse and sends him to stable at her family home of Montalbano.<sup>15</sup> In this transaction, treatment of Frontino stems from Bradamante's affection for his master; the horse is an extension of Ruggiero that his beloved holds in trust during the knight's absence. Bradamante sends Frontino in this capacity of lover's token back to Ruggiero with her maid Ippalca, assuring the servant that Ruggiero's name will be sufficient deterrent to any aspiring thieves.<sup>16</sup> This is, of course, only the lovesick paladin's hopeful projection; when Rodomonte appears, the invocation of Frontino's master does not deter his fellow pagan in the slightest. In fact, it seems to pique his interest: "This charger he can claim for me ere long...Tell him I'm Rodomonte."<sup>17</sup> From a lover's token, the horse becomes a pawn in the maneuvering between the two men. Rodomonte's dare is subsequently met as part of the complex round robin between the two knights and Mandricardo over the horse, Ruggiero's heraldic standard, the affections of Doralice, and whether Marfisa ought to be abducted like a lady.<sup>18</sup> In the next canto, the dispute is further complicated by the steed's Boiardan genealogy: readers learn that he was once named Frontalette, and belonged to

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<sup>13</sup> On "horse-bodies as social currency" see Gary Lim, "A Stede Gode and Lel': Valuing Arondel in *Bevis of Hampton*," *postmedieval* 2 (2011): 50-68.

<sup>14</sup> *OEHV*, 583.

<sup>15</sup> *OF*, 4.49.1.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.31.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.36.3-5.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.96.

Sacripante until he was stolen by the dwarf Brunello.<sup>19</sup> Sacripante is content to leave Frontino with Rodomonte on loan—this time, as a token of friendship between the men—but Rodomonte rejects the offer, insisting that his "unparalleled display of force" in the acquisition of Frontino trumps the other knight's claim of prior ownership.<sup>20</sup> A lover's trust, a challenge to combat, an offer of friendship, a dispute over competing views of property: all are mapped easily onto the horse.

Within the logic of romance, Rodomonte's tendentious assertion carries water. Horses, like tropes or exempla, are always-already stolen. It seems unlikely that even the righteously indignant Sacripante did not himself acquire Frontino by equally degenerate means. Even Angelica engages in whimsical pastoral theft after her attempted rape by Ruggiero: "To choose a mare out of the herd her will is, / Whose speed from all entanglements may free her."<sup>21</sup> In the aftermath of the sea-orc ordeal and assault, to make off with one of a herdsman's "many mares" seems a small transgression.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes, knights acquire new steeds by default rather than design: Bradamante inherits a (stolen) horse from Pinabello after "Her sword a hundred times in scornful style / Pierced through his body-armour and cuirass."<sup>23</sup> On her way home with the dead knight's steed, Bradamante meets her cousin Astolfo, who is about to depart on the hippogriff and is in need of someone to look after his mount Rabicano in his absence. The proffering of the horse and Bradamante's easy acceptance emblemizes the fraternal affection between the two knights, further cementing their bond and the connection between their families. This type of social circulation—the use of horses as temporary or permanent gift capital to shore up trust between individuals and communities—is what Sacripante offers and Rodomonte scorns.

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.71-72.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.76.7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.12.5-6.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.10.1.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.97.3-4.

## ii. Masterful mounts

Horses convey relations between men, but they also stand in for the men themselves. According to Isidore, horses "have a great deal of liveliness, for they revel in open country; they scent out war; they are roused to battle by the sound of the trumpet; when incited by a voice they are challenged to race, grieving when they are defeated, and exultant when they are victorious. Some recognize the enemy in war and seek to bite the foe."<sup>24</sup> Sans (presumably) biting, this could substitute easily for a portrait not of horse but of human soldier. Like the knight, the horse is exceptional, granted the "enhanced subjectivity," interiority, and motivational depth that romance awards to "certain privileged exemplars."<sup>25</sup> Horses like Baiardo, Bevis's Arondel, or Alexander's Bucephalus are heroic figures with complex histories rivaling those of their masters. When Ruggiero prepares to fight Bradamante, he leaves Frontino behind, knowing that the Maid would recognize him through the horse; however the knight disguises himself, the horse proclaims his identity. Horse and rider are a physical assemblage, but also united metaphysically, and rhetorically—when Redcrosse fights the dragon in the Book I of *The Faerie Queene*, he and his mount occupy a single nominative refrain: "...horse and man to ground did rush/Both horse and man vp lightly rose againe, / And fresh encounter towards him address."<sup>26</sup> In the following stanza, also out of Spenser, pronouns and antecedents drift apart and it becomes nearly impossible to follow which descriptions apply to Sansloy, which to his courser:

They had not ridden far, when they might see  
 One pricking towards them with hastie heat,  
 Full strongly armd, and on a courser free,  
 That through his fierceness fomed all with sweat,  
 And the sharpe yron did for anger eat,

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<sup>24</sup> Isidore, *Etymologies*, XII.I.43.

<sup>25</sup> Bohrer, *Animal Characters*, 31.

<sup>26</sup> *FQ*, 1.11.16.9-17.2.

When his hot ryder spurd his chauffed side;  
 His looke was sterne, and seemed still to threat  
 Cruell reuenge, which he in hart did hyde  
 And on his shield Sans loy in bloody lynes was dyde.<sup>27</sup>

The *Chanson de Roland* provides a similar instance of momentary confusion, as the pagan captain Baligant mounts his warhorse:

Baligant mounted his war-horse,  
 His stirrup was held by Marcule from Outremer;  
 His crotch is very large  
 And he has slender hips and broad ribs;  
 His chest is large and handsomely formed,  
 His shoulders are broad and his face is very fair,  
 His look is fierce and his hair curly.  
 It was as white as a flower in summer;  
 His courage has often been tested in battle.  
 O God, what a noble baron, if only he were a Christian!<sup>28</sup>

Until the last line of each excerpt, it is impossible to fully determine whose look is stern, whose crotch is large. As Isidore informs us, horses as well as knights are warlike and battle-tested. For a moment, ambiguous pronouns unify knight and charger, baron and war-horse; the behavior and motivations of the horse are barely distinguishable from those of his master. This emotional mirroring of knight and horse produces a mildly comical effect at several points in the Porro engravings, from the lascivious knight-and-horse duo pursuing fearful Doralice-and-horse in the Canto 27 engraving (Fig. 7), to Brigliadoro and Orlando jointly staring down a guard on their way through the pagan encampment in Canto 9 (Fig. 8). In the opening section of the *Furioso*, is it Baiardo or Rinaldo who seeks Angelica? The horse may be acting according to his

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 1.3.33.

<sup>28</sup> *The Song of Roland*, tr. Glyn Burgess (London: Penguin, 1990), 3155-3160.

master's interests when he bucks Angelica's rival suitor Sacripante, but Baiardo's treatment of Angelica stems as much from his own affection for her as it does from his master's: "For often she would feed him from her hand / When in Albracca."<sup>29</sup> The horse's love for the lady in fact predates Rinaldo's, but in this moment their interests are fully aligned—indeed, Baiardo acts initially in Rinaldo's stead, repulsing rival suitor and charming Angelica, her horse in shining *croupiere*.

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<sup>29</sup> *OF*, 1.75.6-7. Baiardo bucking Sacripante is reproduced in detail for Porro's Canto 2 engraving. In the University of St. Andrews copy of the 1584 Franceschi *Furioso*, this heroic behavior inspired one reader to pen a small imitation of the horse, rearing valiantly in the margin (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Canto 2 engraving and marginal sketch (Venice, Franceschi: 1584)





Figure 7. Canto 27 engraving (Venice, Franceschi: 1584)



Figure 8. Canto 9 engraving (Venice, Franceschi: 1584)

### iii. Portrait of the beloved as horse

Sometimes, a mount stands in for the damsel herself. In Canto 12, Orlando is lured into Atlante's palace of illusion by the vision of Angelica, "[w]eeping and struggling and in great

alarm," abducted by a strange knight.<sup>30</sup> Ruggiero is likewise led into the trap by "A giant brutal and immensely tall, / Carrying his lady."<sup>31</sup> As readers quickly discern, the palace traps victims by providing a simulacrum of a knight's most closely held (usually sexual, and unsatisfied) desire, "the sight he burns / To see."<sup>32</sup> Astolfo is lured in by his horse.<sup>33</sup> This is a highly amusing reflection of the bachelor knight's priorities, but also conveys a larger truth of the poem: that *cavalli* often bear the same meanings, and receive the same treatment, as *donne*. Despite their functional use as weapons and frequent surrogacy for their masters, horses officially enjoy the same status as ladies on the battlefield: as innocents, feminized bystanders protected from intentional attack.<sup>34</sup> When a horse is killed it begs vengeance, as when Guidon challenges Rinaldo on behalf of his charger, whose back the other knight has broken.<sup>35</sup> Like ladies, horses distract a knight from the duty owed to his liege lord: Gradasso's eagerness to possess Baiardo even causes him to attack his own army.<sup>36</sup> As he and Rinaldo commence their duel over the horse, the men come to a temporary truce when Malagigi's bird spooks Baiardo into flight.<sup>37</sup> This scenario echoes the pact reached by Rinaldo and Ferrau when Angelica flees in Canto 1—mutual desire leads to temporary peace and camaraderie between the men.<sup>38</sup> Frontino prompts similar strife in Canto 26, when he and Doralice are caught between the competing desire of two knights. These parallels are mobilized to strategic advantage by Rinaldo, who in Canto 42 asks Charlemagne for consent to leave camp and seek the long-fled Angelica, "[m]aking his horse

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.5.3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.17.3-4.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.10.5-6.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.14.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.50.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.15. This is more than simple parody: in the *Chanson*, Roland swears to defend horses in precisely the same language that he uses in his pledge to defend women (755-9).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.93.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.88.

<sup>38</sup> For the foundational treatment of this dynamic see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

Baiardo an excuse."<sup>39</sup>

Bruce Boehrer reads this "conflation of women and horses" as "a powerful antichivalric image...an antidote to the heroic dyad."<sup>40</sup> The feminized positioning of horses in the *Furioso*—as motive for vengeance, as civilian bystander, as erotic object—certainly supports this reading. Yet horses stand figuratively for both halves of another heroic dyad, the *arme* and *amori* of the poem's first lines. In the field, a horse can represent the masculine arms without abandoning his associations with ladies and love. In the *Gerusalemme liberata*, one horse is useful as *arme* precisely because of his association with *amor*: Aquilane, Rinaldo's mount, is son of the "[I]usty mother of the warlike drove." This startling epithet refers to Aquilane's speed, deriving from a mother who literally copulated with the West Wind in an act which seems to be common among female horses and which Topsell's *Historie* describes, following the Persian philosopher Avicenna, in rather explicit terms: "it is the property of these Mares (saith *Auicen*) by kicking against the wind with their hinder legs, to open their owne wombe, and to receiue in that delectable aire, wherewithall they are satisfied."<sup>41</sup> This convention of equine lust holds court in Ariosto, Tasso, Spenser, and numerous other authors, whether it is Malecasta "giving the bridle to her wanton will," Duessa's "wanton palfrey," or desire as a "fat and slow" stallion.<sup>42</sup> In the scandalous Canto 28, horses make the leap from fairly refined descriptions of desire in abstract, to descriptions of actual sex acts and the bodies in question: the Lombardian queen is a "stolen mare" driven "to high curvets" by her dwarf lover, and the cuckolded comrades of the tale later gallop upon the "filly" Giamatta, in an extended bawdy metaphor that lasts several stanzas.<sup>43</sup> Even more ribald is the comparison of the lecherous hermit's flaccid member to a "lazy courser"

<sup>39</sup> *OF*, 42.42.2.

<sup>40</sup> Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, 44.

<sup>41</sup> Topsell, *Historie*, 298.

<sup>42</sup> *FQ*, 3.1.50; 1.2.13; *GL*, 5.70.6.

<sup>43</sup> *OF*, 28.43.7-8; 28.64-67.

as he fails in his attempt to rape Angelica, mirrored by the comparison of Angelica herself to a horse during another attempted rape, by Ruggiero: "One horse he'd curbed, and yet to a new height / Upon another he would fain have mounted."<sup>44</sup>

In early modern attempts to establish one-for-one allegorical correspondence, horses are often glossed as appetite or sexual desire, but this association remains frustratingly evasive: Is it the ravishing organ which is a horse, or its object of assault? Is Desire itself a horse, or is it mounting a series of horsly victims as rider? Does the equine figure signify feminized wantonness, or masculine virile potential?<sup>45</sup> Conversely, Susan Crane suggests that the "noble horse of chivalry *reverses* philosophical and religious traditions that associate the horse with the passionate body," allying itself instead with moral and cerebral realms (*italics added*).<sup>46</sup> The horse may be the most recognizable icon of romance, but it is also romance's most confused symbol—an utterly flexible sign, capable of sustaining whatever meaning the narrative requires. It seems possible, in fact, to stage romance with an all-horse cast: a horse wooing a horse, a horse fleeing a horse, a horse driving a horse against a horsly foe, a horse mounting a horse. To me your horse was assuredly what the brain of Zeus was to the Persians: equine meaning abounds to the point of crisis.

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<sup>44</sup> *OF*, 10.114.3-4; 8.50.2. Joyce Salisbury discusses a law punishing a nobleman's animals if he is found guilty of rape, which suggests that the horse's function as a figurative sexual prosthetic might be affirmed by the legal code. See Salisbury *Beast Within*, 40.

<sup>45</sup> For Harington's glosses on Baiardo, see Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, 40.

<sup>46</sup> Crane, *Animal Encounters*, 72.

## II. Ariosto at the Horse Market

### i. Equine analogy

Romance was far from the only early modern genre to concern itself with what a horse could mean. Anatomists dissected animal corpses in lieu of human cadavers, which were often in short supply; the result was a broadly Galenic approach of "cross-species analogy," the assumption that one might learn something about man by looking into the porcine or equine heart.<sup>47</sup> In "Invisible Parts," Laurie Shannon argues that while later Vesalian practitioners identified the errors arising from a strict application of this assumption and championed a new anthropocentric model, these anatomists nevertheless depended upon an invisible tradition of animal dissection and vivisection to sustain their practice. In Shannon's view, later anatomists like William Harvey, in their more overt reliance on vivisection, openly situated "how and whether animal and human bodies pertain to one another; whether they exist in some state of analogy" at the center of emergent medical practices.<sup>48</sup> The question of invisible costs and "states of analogy" between animal and human are of course also pertinent to romance, and to the concerns of this piece.

The object of early dissection was an understanding of the male aristocratic body, but placing a deceased earl or baron under the knife would have been unthinkable; anatomists had to work by proxy. They relied on a familiar analogy: the supposed resemblance between nobleman and noble mount popularized by Isidore and others, which "anthropomorphized [the horse] as a warrior in his own right."<sup>49</sup> Socially, the gentleman probably had more in common with his

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<sup>47</sup> Shannon, "Invisible Parts," 146. See Descartes's suggestion that his reader open up a large animal to learn about arterial motion. *Discourse on Method and The Meditations*, tr. F.E. Sutcliffe (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), 66.

<sup>48</sup> Shannon, "Invisible Parts," 142.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. The most notable "other" being God, Job 39:19-25.

cosseted horse than with his most readily available human substitute on the table, the baseborn and often criminal cadaver.<sup>50</sup> In this area as in many, "rank trumps species."<sup>51</sup> Raber's chapter responds most directly to Jonathan Sawday's assertion that the "self-displaying" human corpses in Renaissance anatomy books are arranged so as to create an illusion of consenting, bloodless dissection.<sup>52</sup> Through a reading of diagrams in Carlo Ruini's *Anatomia del Cavallo* (1618) and Andrew Snape's *Anatomy of a Horse* (1683) (Fig. 9), Raber asserts that "[a]nimal anatomy, unlike human anatomy, does not uniformly hide the violence of the dissector's hand."<sup>53</sup> The critic suggests that the depiction of the warhorse's resistance to his own violent vivisection is as critical to the diagrams as the internal organs revealed. The warhorse's analogue, the nobleman, would certainly never go down quietly in the face of his own dismemberment; in order to represent him accurately, the horse *must* resist.<sup>54</sup> The heroic mount is appropriate subject for the anatomy theater not in spite of but precisely because of this conspicuous truculence.

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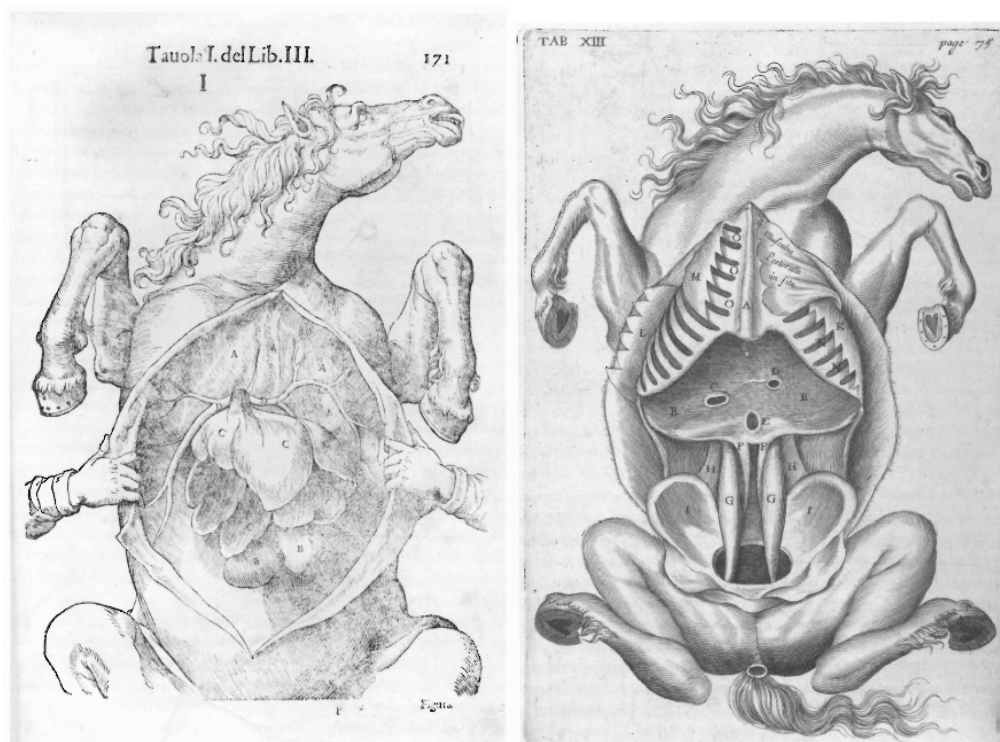
<sup>50</sup> The Este court retained a single physician for both human and animal members of the household, as was common in the period—he would have treated both warrior and warhorse. Vivian Nutton, "Rise of Medical Humanism: Ferrara, 1460-1555," *Renaissance Studies* 11, no. 1 (1997): 2-19.

<sup>51</sup> Bohrer, *Animal Characters*, 31. See also Bach, "Continuum," 124.

<sup>52</sup> Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*.

<sup>53</sup> Raber, *Animal Bodies*, 66.

<sup>54</sup> See Bruce Bohrer on the "calculated resistance" of Baiardo (*Animal Characters*, 34).



**Figure 9.** Carlo Ruini, *Anatomia del Cavallo* (1618) (left) and Andrew Snape, *Anatomy of a Horse* (1683) (right)

ii. A pound of horseflesh

Ruini's illustrations "are not carthorses or workhorses....Their eviscerated bodies carry the signs of equine nobility."<sup>55</sup> The horses are glossy and convex, with flowing manes and musculature accentuating the power of their flailing limbs. In one *Anatomia* diagram depicting a horse's brain, the pieces of the dissected skull are even arranged in a semblance of equine parade armor. So far, so *chevaleresque*. Yet a few pages later, Raber remarks "A war horse is clearly never likely to be the subject of a vivisection, expensive and unrestrainable as it must be."<sup>56</sup> Raber's otherwise provocative argument fails to fully engage with the paradox that these two statements imply. If warhorses were not usually vivisected, and the anatomy books show vivisected warhorses, then something is awry. The two treatises might be a simple exception to

<sup>55</sup> Raber, *Animal Bodies*, 57.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

this likelihood. Ruini and Snape could have, for the purposes of their illustrations, gathered funds and invested in an expensive military mount of prime age to draw, quarter, and draw. However, I want to explore a second possibility latent in Raber's analysis: that the warhorse *is* a carthorse or workhorse, an economically viable dissection subject, that the signs of "equine nobility" are consciously created on the page *ex post facto*, muscles enhanced and carriage corrected by the engraver. This is speculation unsupported by archival evidence, though Raber admits that the contorted and stylized images of the anatomy books often "require[ ] the distortion of the artist's imagination."<sup>57</sup> It nevertheless makes for a generative thought experiment to speculate that the substitution of a common horse for the astronomically expensive chivalric steed would be a pragmatic cost-saving measure, the traces of which could be easily occluded by the enhancements of any competent illustrator.<sup>58</sup> This implicit double substitution has startling effects on the value correspondence underpinning the equine anatomy book itself: if the inner workings of the gentleman are displayed via his affinity to his warhorse who is represented by a stand-in carthorse, then the nobleman comes to be understood in terms of an equation with his presumable antithesis.

In the *Chanson de Roland*, treacherous Ganelon threatens to set Marile on "neither palfrey nor war-horse" and instead fling him "upon some wretched pack-horse."<sup>59</sup> The salience of a mount's social degree becomes clear when Ganelon himself is captured: "to his shame they set him upon a packhorse."<sup>60</sup> The duke's disdain survives in later versions of the betrayal, and so in

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> My reading was influenced by discussion of two posthumously improved horse portraits in R.H.C. Davis, *The Medieval Warhorse: Origin, Development and Redevelopment* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1989), 123. See also 69-97 for the enormous costs associated with keeping a warhorse.

<sup>59</sup> *Roland*, 479-81.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 1829.



Ariosto's *Cinque Canti* the character is captured on "a weak nag."<sup>61</sup> The noble horse was integral to sustaining social rank: the acquisition, care, and training of a fine steed proclaimed that the owner had surplus means and ample time to invest in the endeavor.<sup>62</sup> Ariosto understood this: in the *Cinque Canti* there is "no greater and more general task than finding horses: hardships and sword wounds had taken nine out of ten of them: those that were left (for good ones were rare), cost as dearly as life and blood."<sup>63</sup> Baiardo is too expensive to slice up, even in the name of anatomizing Rinaldo. Economically, the subject on the table cannot to be a warhorse—yet philosophically, it cannot but be a warhorse. The resolution to this paradox is the brutal substitution that Raber brings to light but does not fully explore: the horse on the table is a packhorse, Ganelon's weak nag, transformed via illustration into the warhorse, fit analogue for the noble gentleman at the center of the anatomical enterprise.

The analogy between warhorse and nobleman advertises their mutual virility. The ideal horse resembles his ideal master, both physically and affectively: he is "strong enough... tall enough... steady enough... brave enough... fierce enough" for the battlefield.<sup>64</sup> European warhorses were almost exclusively stallions, and their military efficacy was conceptually tied to their virile capacity.<sup>65</sup> Superior equine bloodlines, like superior human bloodlines, were jealously preserved. Breeders and fathers alike worried that their young fillies might be covered by lesser studs, and limited access to females accordingly.<sup>66</sup> During the peak of the "great horse" in European armies, a prized stallion would typically travel alongside many steeds of a baser

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<sup>61</sup> *Cinque Canti*, 3.94.2-3.

<sup>62</sup> Susan Crane points out that Gawain, like Ganelon, is reduced by his placement upon a workhorse in Troyes (*Animal Encounters*, 74); Boehrer discusses the implications of riding particular horse breeds, as well as of not riding at all (*Animal Characters*, 18).

<sup>63</sup> *Cinque Canti*, 2.48.3-8.

<sup>64</sup> Davis, *Warhorse*, 11.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 18 for discussion of this linkage as pictorially represented in the Bayeux tapestry.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 34. Davis has a fascinating aside of the effects of civil unrest on horse breeding. During war, "[f]ences will be broken down, mares will escape or be stolen, and be covered by every chance stallion they encounter" (37). This pattern should not be unfamiliar to the attentive reader of romance.

variety, a riding palfrey and packhorses which would carry the knight's gear and preserve the strength of the favored mount for cavalry charges.<sup>67</sup> In chivalric literature, these supporting figures usually disappear, producing the evocative knight-errant ranging alone with his single beloved warhorse, emphasizing the depth of the bond between man and mount.

The military stallion's legible masculinity made him an ideal analogical subject for the anatomical treatise, but also presented a problem for the anatomist: testosterone would increase the warhorse's volatility and make him difficult to restrain, while his genetic and subsequent economic value further decreased the chances that he would ever be placed on the anatomy table. This position was much more likely to be occupied by a more placid and workaday animal, the gelded carthorse or mare. Dissection itself is emasculating, figuratively and literally; in a vivisection, the subject is restrained, then physically penetrated, all subject boundaries irrevocably dissolved. In his study of Vesalian anatomies, Sawday pays careful attention to the feminization of the body's interior and to the erotics of dissection more generally.<sup>68</sup> By contrast, Raber chooses not to engage with the gendering of the Ruini and Snape diagrams, saving her discussion of erotics for a later chapter on the rhythms of riding. This seems a peculiar oversight in relation to the two gaping equine abdomens that, with their many folds and oblong shape, are unavoidably vaginal. The resisting bodies that Raber describes may indeed "carry the signs of equine nobility," but they are by no means unequivocal emblems of the male warhorse. The animal's periphery is wild, thrashing, muscular, parlous; its interior is vaginal, feminized, flagrantly eroticized and exposed. The subject on the table embodies violation and resistance that is incoherent, compromised, and ambivalent.

Raber argues that the visibility of bodily pain in these illustrations is a site of provocative

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>68</sup> Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*, particularly 9.

resistance to publishers' attempts to elide the brutality of dissection. In Ruini's illustration, two hands pull the horse's abdomen open to display the internal organs to the reader, a metatextual gesture which contextualizes the animal's desperate thrashing as a struggle to resist the vivisection. In Snape's version the hands disappear, leaving a horse who "thrashes against an invisible force."<sup>69</sup> Raber interprets this erasure as an attempt to dissociate the anatomist from the violence of the act, in a move similar to that made through Sawday's acquiescent corpses. However, the animal diagrams diverge from Sawday's human models because they "emphatically do[ ] *not* cooperate": even when the hands disappear, the suffering of the desecrated horse in Snape's diagram remains apparent, resisting elision.<sup>70</sup>

But whose resistance do we witness in these diagrams? The principal philosophical analogy demands a nonconsenting male warhorse. Anatomy requires, in practical terms, a consenting horse, or at least one whose resistance can be easily contained and whose suffering can be readily erased. Economic pragmatism incentivizes the acquisition of anything besides a destrier for the dissection table—a lower-quality mount, perhaps a female. In this final case, consent is immaterial: due to differing physiology and divergent conditioning, horses of this sort are far easier to restrain. Regardless of which type of horse Ruini and Snape used to model their illustrations, their anatomical practice rests on the foundation provided by this last, base subject. The immaterial consent and futile resistance of the common, feminized cadaver sustains the ostentatious struggle of the exceptional virile specimen who appears in the diagrams, just as the labor of innumerable packhorses, riding horses, and draft horses silently support the exceptionalism of a Baiardo or Bucephalus. The visible resistance of the archetypal warhorse in fact occludes early anatomy's dependence on this baser subject, whose access to the dignity of

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<sup>69</sup> Raber, *Animal Bodies*, 69.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

violent struggle is sharply constrained. Like the romance, these treatises understand the male subject through the heroic horse, while relying on submerged violent displacements for value and meaning.

### III. Baiardo's Shadow

#### i. La giumenta

*Anatomie dei cavalli* are not the only texts of the early modern period to boast lavish engravings of horses. Illustration plates accompanied the *Orlando furioso* from early in its publication history; while the small woodcuts of the 1542 Ferrari edition feature perhaps one horse apiece, the expansion to full-page copper engravings in the 1558 Valgrisi and ornate 1584 Franceschi printings increased the number of equine figures drastically. In Girolamo Porro's 1584 engravings, the basis for Harington's English edition seven years later, single horses are subjected to diachronic multiplication, creating the illusion of progression: Brigliadoro charges up one path and down another, Baiardo rears in the foreground at the same moment as he gallops into the background. The engravings are emblematic of the crescendo of Erasmian copia discussed in the first part of this chapter: the horse is everywhere, is all things, proliferating endlessly and meaning too much. In Erasmian terms, this is the point at which enrichment can turn quickly to bankruptcy, to "futile and amorphous loquacity" when Protean capacity cannot settle on a stable—and bankable—form.<sup>71</sup>

A. Bartlett Giamatti attempts to sidestep this crisis by pushing the horse's meaning even further, claiming that the chivalric steed encompasses the entire system of signification: the romance, chivalry itself. Giamatti musters examples from the *Georgics*, from the *Aeneid*, and from Dante and Boethius to establish the horse as a figure of the "restraint and release" dialectic

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<sup>71</sup> Erasmus, *De Copia*, 13.

necessary for humanist advancement and the production of epic poetry.<sup>72</sup> He provides a small taste of the horse's functions as a symbol of unrestrained feminized libido, and as a stand-in for the Christian male subject. The core of Giamatti's piece compares this *sfrenatura* dynamic in Pulci's *Morgante*, Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato*, and the *Furioso*: Pulci's willingness to explore the boundaries of excess before reining it in, Boiardo's "deep fears of diversity and decay," Ariosto's exploration of a release miles beyond the pale.<sup>73</sup> This is both a humanist interpretation of romance and a romancing of humanism, which acts as both knight and horse. Giamatti's poet-subject may go too far, but his excesses are always redeemable; indeed, they are presented as necessary surplus expenditures on the road to rhetorical and moral profit.

In Pulci's *Morgante*, Rinaldo sends Baiardo alone into combat against a rampaging, murderous horse that has already racked up a body count in the hundreds. The strange horse batters Baiardo to the point of death for two hours, at which point the knight finally intervenes, punching the wild horse in the head and tethering it effortlessly. Giamatti informs his reader that this scene shows "what Pulci will always see a man as having to do...us[ing] his hands to reshape the situation."<sup>74</sup> Rinaldo, like the author, proves his ability to "assert his control" while affirming "the necessity of play in human life" by allowing the combat to initially go forward.<sup>75</sup> Later, the newly broken and tamed wild horse takes on a symbolic role in the knight's nuptials. The defeated, unconscious animal is "transformed by the miraculous hand of the man into a symbol of peace...and into a figure for love between man and woman."<sup>76</sup>

Giamatti then shifts to a discussion of Ariosto's Canto 29, the nadir point of the *Orlando furioso*'s eponymous frenzy. Having descended into insanity following his discovery of the

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<sup>72</sup> Giamatti, "Headlong Horses," 33; 66.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 40; 45.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

marriage of Angelica to the baseborn soldier (and onetime she-bear) Medoro, Orlando coincidentally encounters the couple on the Spanish shoreline, headed to the princess's native land. He attacks them, Angelica uses her magical ring to disappear, and Orlando beats Angelica's mare to death in lieu of the lady, hauling the corpse along the coast. According to Giamatti, "it is clear that [Orlando] has released on the mare the sexual energy that, according to social and 'poetic' custom, he had to restrain with her mistress."<sup>77</sup> The critic reads the horse recursively, as an instance of textual self-reference, "chivalry as a dead weight to be borne" by the knight like the moribund romance genre borne by the poet himself.<sup>78</sup> This interpretation is canonical Ariosto criticism. In his thoughtful introduction to the *Cinque Canti*, David Quint presents the final image of the poetic fragment, in which Charlemagne's horse saves him from a shipwreck, as the neat reversal of Canto 29's chivalry-as-burden: "The wan hope of the poem that some remnants of chivalry may still be salvaged...rests on the lone figures of man and horse that struggle to the shore."<sup>79</sup> The knight carrying chivalry, chivalry carrying the knight. A horse gradually dying and a horse struggling to survive. In Giamatti's view, all of these scenes are controlled by the *sfrenatura* dialectic. "These were the poets who understood how deep into our common humanity the simple image and act of restraining a horse could go."<sup>80</sup>

Giamatti's interpretation of these two scenes raises any number of questions. The claim that Orlando beating a mare to death signifies the dissolution of chivalry deserves full analysis, with attention to the implications that it creates for the genre and for the proposed humanist project of advancement through excess and restraint. Just how simple is the image of restraining a horse? Does it matter if the horse is a violent stallion or a cooperative mare? If the act of

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 72.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Quint, *Cinque Canti*, 44.

<sup>80</sup> Giamatti, "Headlong Horses," 75.

restraint in the sequence from Pulci is Rinaldo's blow to the wild horse, then what should we make of Baiardo's collateral battering? For that matter, what is Baiardo's role in the scene? The wild horse represents unrestrained appetite and Rinaldo presumably embodies reason, but where does the warhorse fit in? Giamatti never makes this clear. The knight watches the strange horse abuse his companion not for minutes, but for two hours before intervening. Why not sooner? Why does Rinaldo pit Baiardo against the wild horse at all, instead of facing it himself? Giamatti's ambiguous explanation, that Pulci is "interested in paradigms of behavior," fails to address Rinaldo's role in creating the situation in the first place, his capricious decision to put his horse in the ring for two long hours, despite his own capacity to easily defeat the "wild thing...killing Baiardo."<sup>81</sup> Nor does the critic elucidate precisely how Rinaldo's "miraculous hand" renders the staged abuse of one horse and the violent defeat of another a symbol of normative heterosexual love.

The interpretation of the Canto 29 scene is similarly perplexing. "This is Ariosto's most arresting vision of man's sexual need spurring him beyond reason, and of chivalry as a dead weight to be borne even when it is without life or significance," Giamatti claims.<sup>82</sup> Yet the relation between violent sexual desire and the death of chivalry remains unclear. The connection between these two halves—"sexual need" and "chivalry as a dead weight"—should be taken seriously, and situated in relation to the poem's other images of animals, violence, and sex. How can the battered dead mare be both the object of Orlando's eroticized assault and the elegiac symbol of chivalry itself? Chivalry, as etymology insists, is the heroic *cavallo* Baiardo, not a base and anonymous *giumenta*, yet it is not his own Brigliadoro or Rinaldo's famous steed which

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 73.

Orlando drags along the rocky Spanish coast.<sup>83</sup> These survive. Ariosto's mare may stand for chivalry and the humanist subject, but in order to do so she must be misrecognized, reinscribed like the chivalric warhorse in Ruini's and Snape's diagrams.

Giamatti's reading subordinates the mare to her meaning for "common humanity." In the process of this interpretation, the mare's baseness and femininity are erased. This conflation is a kind of embodied commonplacing: the local specificity distinguishing a valuable, recognizable male warhorse from a worthless, anonymous female packhorse disappears. Both become simply Horse, fodder for Erasmian prolixity on the subject of Chivalry or Humanism. Commonplacing comes from the Latin *locus communis*, a figurative location that is common to all readers. Defining the *locus communis* inevitably also delimits the *communitas*—who has access to the common space, who is expected to benefit from its *sententiae* and *exempla*. In short, who precisely comprises "common humanity." "Headlong Horses" describes an analogical displacement but also enacts displacement—of bodies, of women, of animals—from the interpretive space.<sup>84</sup> As elegant as these recursive interpretive moves are, reflective of the natural "capacity of romance to generate metaphors for its own description," the practice can elide what is truly troubling or challenging in the text.<sup>85</sup> Jameson, in *The Political Unconscious*, warns against casting romance itself as a romantic hero—a resistance to allegorizing also taken up by many animal studies critics.<sup>86</sup> These scholars are wary of the danger inherent in attempting to craft a common (as in universal) body of meaning: that in the process, common (as in base) bodies may disappear.

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<sup>83</sup> The neutral feminine of *cavallo* is *cavalla*; *giumenta*, the term Ariosto uses in this scene, is the feminine *giumento* or "pack-horse." The mare is doubly marginalized, along both gender and class axes.

<sup>84</sup> "[T]he gesture of an aesthetic substitution is such that what is literally represented—femininity and death—often entirely escapes observation." Elisabeth Bronfen, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity, and the Aesthetic* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), xi.

<sup>85</sup> Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Jameson, *Political Unconscious*, 136.



Even accepting that the scene is best read as a metaphor for genre, Giamatti still absolves Orlando, like Rinaldo, from his role in the act. As in the dissection diagrams discussed by Karen Raber, the violent hand is made invisible. Orlando's excesses represent the author's poetic excesses, according to Giamatti, yet there is no accountability for the damage caused by this "release." Excess is mitigated by restraint, then profitably converted into humanist advancement: "the self-imposed limitations that will be [man's] salvation."<sup>87</sup> This criticism erases Ariosto's own resistant exposure of the costs of romance—the structurally embedded brutalities of his genre—and obscures the more radical implications of the poem. A purely recursive approach to this scene hides the horse's corpse, hides the knight's battering hand, and does disservice to Angelica, to the mare, to all the concrete bodies in pain during this sequence. It presents a vision of common humanity, but a humanity that is deeply scarred and compromised when the human in question is a woman, when the common horse is equated to a woman, and when the horse/woman has just been beaten to death.

Orlando, driven insane by his discovery of Angelica's union with Medoro, encounters the couple as they prepare to depart from Spain. "Consumed with greed" for Angelica's "sweet form," the mad knight fells Medoro before pursuing the princess, who is fleeing in terror on her mare.<sup>88</sup> Angelica swallows her ring of invisibility and vanishes. In the act of disappearance she falls, legs obscenely splayed, from her mount. Orlando thankfully steps over his invisible quarry, yet "His rage and fury do not disappear / Simply because the lady vanishes."<sup>89</sup> Valeria Finucci's psychoanalytical study of the *Furioso* takes its name from the latter half of this crucial sentence, focusing on the disappearing female; I would like to draw attention to the former, to the surplus rage and fury left behind. Undeterred, Orlando switches targets to Angelica's mare. He grasps her

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<sup>87</sup> Giamatti, "Headlong Horses," 75.

<sup>88</sup> *OF*, 29.61.3-4.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.67.3-4.

rein, "tak[ing] her with the same delight/As when a lover takes a fair young maid."<sup>90</sup> Mounting her, he rides "unmercifully" for many days and miles. The mare is prevented from eating, from resting. Attempting to leap a ditch, the horse falls; Orlando pulls her limping along after him. She is too slow for the knight's "insane desire"; he ties her bridle to her back right hoof and drags her along after him.<sup>91</sup> The jagged coastal rocks "strip[ ] hair and hide from her," until this "tattered remnant of a mare" expires.<sup>92</sup> Orlando pays no heed, but "[a]lthough the mare is dead, he drags her still."<sup>93</sup>

This heavily erotic language in combination with Ariosto's narrative asides provide all the tools necessary to interpret this sequence as a brutal rape. Ariosto states overtly that the mare functions as Angelica's substitute, frightened animal taking the beating for frightened mistress.<sup>94</sup> Even if the poet were less explicit about this substitution, there is abundant precedent for Angelica's horsiness, particularly in sexual contexts: Ruggiero compares the princess to a horse as he attempts to rape her in Canto 10, while Finucci dedicates a fantastic section of her reading of Angelica's narcissism to the princess's impact on suitors' horses—and of course as demonstrated previously, horses stand for females throughout the poem.<sup>95</sup> Angelica's escape is unique, however, in that it requires a more-than-figurative surrogacy: male fury is vented physically on the body of a lower-status female. In order to read the mare properly, I argue that Angelica's escape should be read alongside other scenes of erotic substitution and sexualized violence. The remainder of this chapter attempts to redress the oversights implicit in Giamatti's reading of Canto 29, and recover Ariosto's radical exposures of the relation between eroticism,

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 29.68.1-2.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 30.70.6-8.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 30.71.3-6.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 30.72.1

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 29.73.1-2.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 10.114.1-8; Finucci, *Lady Vanishes*, 112.

violence, and chivalry.

ii. Il corpo esangue

Giamatti's recursive interpretation is only possible if the mare is a singularity, detached from the *Furioso's* other depictions of animals, women, and erotic violence. In fact, elements of the sequence resonate strongly with other scenes in the poem. The bleak image of naked Orlando hauling the mare's carcass finds an odd contrasting counterpart in Medoro, who also carries a corpse for miles before tenderly placing the "caro peso" (dear weight) of his captain Dardinello on the forest floor "quando regger nol puote" (when he can no longer bear it). More congruent in tone is the tale of Marganorre, the woman-hating king of Canto 37 added for the 1532 edition. Gender critics have generally read Marganorre's misogynist kingdom as naturally paired with the island of the Amazons, the polis of misandry; I propose that bringing Marganorre into dialogue with the dead mare sequence unbalances this *querelle des femmes* pairing and suggests that Ariosto's vision of codified sex discrimination is not in fact as symmetrical as it first appears.

Marfisa, her long-lost brother Ruggiero, and his beloved Bradamante happen upon a group of scantily clad Icelandic ladies, who provide the sordid and circuitous tale of their dishabille: Cilandro, son of King Marganorre, lusts after an unreceptive visiting lady. Burning with "frenzied passion" he seeks to abduct her as she departs the kingdom.<sup>96</sup> During the ambush, the lady's lover manages to overcome the attack and kill the prince. Within a year, Cilandro's brother Tanacro finds himself likewise smitten with a visiting lady, the married baroness Drusilla. Like his unfortunate brother, Tanacro arranges an ambush to facilitate his suit, and succeeds in murdering Drusilla's husband Olindro. Drusilla attempts suicide, flinging herself from a high cliff; to her chagrin she fails to die but "with a broken skull... linger[s], frail and

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 37.49.5.

bruised and sorrowful."<sup>97</sup> Still optimistic, Tanacro woos the baroness during her convalescence; Drusilla, unconvinced, feigns love while plotting the death of her husband's murderer. During the wedding ceremony, bride tricks groom into quaffing poison with her, neatly effecting both her looked-for demise and her revenge. This is the standard stuff of Continental revenge tales, but what follows is not. King Marganorre discovers the loss of his second rapacious offspring and

Per vendicarsi va a Drusilla, e mira  
che di sua vita ha chiuse l'ore estreme;  
e come il punge e sferza l'odio ardente,  
cerca offendere il corpo che non sente.

Qual serpe che ne l'asta ch'alla sabbia  
la tenga fissa, indarno i denti metta;  
o qual mastin ch'al ciottolo che gli abbia  
gittato il viandante, corra in fretta,  
e morda invano con stizza e con rabbia,  
né se ne voglia andar senza vendetta:  
tal Marganor d'ogni mastin, d'ogni angue  
via più crudel, fa contra il corpo esangue.

[...his pain unable to assuage,  
Drusilla's body, now insensible,  
Goaded and stung by burning spite he tries  
To desecrate and ravage where it lies.

Just as a snake in vain the spike will bite  
Which, piercing it, has pinned it to the ground,  
Just as a mastiff vents its futile spite  
Upon a pebble with a snarling sound,  
Maddened by bestial rage or appetite,

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 37.56.6-8.

So Marganorre—worse than any hound  
 Or snake—continues his assault upon  
 That helpless body from which life has gone]<sup>98</sup>

After brutalizing the corpse, Marganorre turns and cuts down every woman in the church "as a peasant scythes a field of hay," blaming the female sex writ large for his sons' demise.<sup>99</sup> The king issues a decree exiling the city's women, and declares that any female who ventures within the kingdom's boundaries will be whipped, stripped, and "sent beyond the pale" among other punishments.<sup>100</sup> The Icelandic ladies, it appears, have fallen afoul of this sensational plot.

Analyses of this episode have usually concentrated on its structural opposition to the Amazons, and on Marfisa's role in the tale's resolution. There has been relatively little attention paid to the formulaic revenge tale itself. Yet the broad contours of the narrative, in light of Canto 29, are striking: the ambush of two couples departing the country (Cilandro's hauberk, like the head of Medoro's horse, breaks "come di vetro"), assaulted by lust beyond the bounds of reason ("amoroso fuoco," Cilandro's frenzied passion, is a fair match for the "desiderio insano" of Orlando). However, it is Marganorre's response to his second son's poisoning which provides the clearest link to the mare episode: a desperate man beating a female corpse.<sup>101</sup> King, like knight, is explicitly bestialized, his fury blending with lustful appetite, ravagement with ravishment. The next action of both men is to expand the assault, leaving a pile of dead women and a trail of dead horses. Finally, and crucially, Marganorre codifies Ariosto's wish that "all the women in the

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 37.77.5–37.78.8

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., 37.79.6.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 37.83.3.

<sup>101</sup> On corpse mutilation as a displacement of desire see Marc Schachter, "'Quanto concede la guerra': Epic Masculinity and the Education of Desire in Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*," in *The Poetics of Masculinity in Early Modern Italy and Spain*, eds. Jane Tylus and Gerry Milligan (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 213-39.

world today" could receive the same treatment that Orlando gives the mare, legally instituting the assault and explicit sacrifice of any lady who enters his domain.

The connections between Cantos 37 and 29 do not end with the mare. Canto 29 is also the locus of another critical touchstone of the poem, the beheading of Issabella. Like this icon of chastity, Drusilla is a widow who chooses to engineer her own death rather than acquiesce to violation and abandon fidelity to a deceased spouse. Of course, Drusilla also manages to kill her attempted rapist, which is perhaps why she is positioned within conventional paradigms of vengeance rather than as an exemplar of wifely martyrdom like Issabella.<sup>102</sup> Yet this connection perhaps casts some light on the terminus of Canto 29. There is no suggestion, in the case of either Issabella or Drusilla, that the women have provoked the violence they experience. In both cases, male desire is superfluous and self-sustaining. Drusilla's assault is bookended by excess, illicit, violent masculine desire. The connection with Cilandro, Tanacro, and Marganorre destabilizes the supposed causal chain of the dead mare sequence, making it even more difficult to believe that Orlando's "desiderio insano" has been precipitated by Angelica's rejection in any meaningful way. Ariosto's tongue-in-cheek editorial comments locate culpability for the knight's madness squarely with the princess (as do a number of critical accounts, both past and present), but the text is clear: insane male desire both pre-exists and postdates female action.

iii. Dalinda or, What hath Handel to do with a horse?

Unprecipitated desire is the stated motivation for damage done by yet a third male figure, the Scottish duke Polinesso. Polinesso is the villain of the much-adapted Ginevra plot: a maidservant (Dalinda) meets with her lover (Polinesso), who has arranged for the meeting to be

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<sup>102</sup> Olimpia, too, is excluded from this schema; Ita Mac Carthy reads her patriotism- and passion-fueled murder of a potential violator as sign of her unruliness, not chastity. "Olimpia: Faithful or Foolhardy?" *Oliphant* 22, no. 1-4 (2003): 103-118.

witnessed by a gentleman (Ariodante) who thinks that he sees his fiancée (Ginevra), the maidservant's mistress, betraying him.<sup>103</sup> This misrecognition is then leveraged into a slanderous accusation against the noble lady, who is spurned by her suitor before the scheme is revealed and her reputation restored. This tale is familiar to contemporary theatre- and operagoers from Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing* and Handel's *Ariodante*, both adaptations of Ariosto. The critical mainstream has primarily concentrated on the female aristocrat, the Ginevra or Hero figure (just as most readings of Canto 29 have focused on Angelica).<sup>104</sup> In this section as in my thesis more broadly, I would like to redirect attention to the base female body, the deceiving maidservant. The Ginevra tale is a comedy, culminating in a wedding between the Scottish princess and her true love Ariodante. It presents the classic paradox of the romance genre, that of the passionate virgin: the noblewoman must burn with boundless desire while remaining utterly virtuous, endlessly postponing erotic consummation. Yet even the simple presence of this desire, however crucial to the narrative, casts aspersions on the woman's unblemished state and necessitates correction. In order to exculpate the lady and defer the question of her chastity, the required punishment for an aristocratic woman's eroticism is displaced onto her servant's body. Reading Polinesso's treatment of Dalinda against Orlando's treatment of the dead mare illuminates how the costs of romance are transferred to lower-class females, suggesting that Angelica's freedom and Ginevra's exoneration come at the same ruthless price.

Amidst his ongoing liaison with Dalinda, Polinesso discloses his plans to woo and marry the princess. To Dalinda, he frames his love for Ginevra as dissimulation, a stratagem of social ascendancy. Polinesso's political appetite is presented as intrinsic, detached from the events and

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<sup>103</sup> Charles Prouty counts at least eighteen pre-1600 versions in *The Sources of Much Ado About Nothing: A Critical Study* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1950), 11-15.

<sup>104</sup> See C.S. Clegg, "Truth, Lies and the Law of Slander in *Much Ado About Nothing*," in *The Law in Shakespeare*, eds. Constance Jordan and Karen Cunningham (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 167-188.

timeline of the tale: "I cannot tell you whether he was fired / With this ambition after or before / The love he feigned for me," Dalinda admits.<sup>105</sup> For her part, Dalinda is content to aid the Duke in his suit, appeased by her lover's continued assurance that his devotion to her is real, and the ardor he exhibits for Ginevra mere design. Yet after repeated rejections from the princess, the Duke's story shifts. Piqued by "injured pride," Polinesso tells Dalinda that his "ill-starred enamourment... Still burgeons with new longing and desire": his furious desire does not disappear simply because the lady vanishes.<sup>106</sup> He longs for Ginevra "not so much for pleasure" but "to obtain [his] way," and begs his lover to dress herself in the princess's clothes so that he may "bring imagination into play" and obtain relief from his psychosexual cravings.<sup>107</sup> The reader, pulled like Dalinda by the Duke's twisted logic, may not notice the nearly imperceptible shift here. Polinesso initially declares his motivation rational, considered; by the time he lures Dalinda into participating in the bedtrick, his plotting has been reframed as longing. The Duke presents this desire in terms of power, a wish to "obtain [his] way" and overmaster the princess.<sup>108</sup> Yet far from extricating Polinesso's longing from the attendant sexual implications, this framing serves to make doubly clear that the Duke is not simply cajoling Dalinda into taking Ginevra's place sexually. He is asking her to role-play the princess's rape.

Erotic deception ensues, and Polinesso's voyeur-plant Ariodante is gulled into mistaking Dalinda for his own lady. Romances are full of sexual intrigue of this sort. Substitution is indeed a central trope of the genre, sustaining it at a structural level: loathly ladies taking the place of lovely ones and vice versa, vanishment substituting for presence, later substituting for now.<sup>109</sup> The *Furioso's* ties to epic provide even more instances of substitution: the epic simile, which

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<sup>105</sup> *OF*, 5.12.3-5.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.21.7; 5.23.5-7.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.24.1-2; 5.24.4.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.24.2.

<sup>109</sup> Parker, *Inescapable Romance*.



causes wrathful bears and dying poppies to appear in the midst of the battlefield; as well as the substitution at the center of the Trojan war, Patroclus sallying forth in Achilles' armor, and the havoc which unfurls from that exchange. So far in these chapters I have explored substitutions created by the animal analogue, from Ariosto's maternal predator similes to the warhorse on the dissection table. This final segment investigates the intersection of animal analogy with another substitution, the bedtrick, and examines the patterns of sexual violence which pervade both.

In the classic bedtrick, one partner sleeps with a person that he or she presumes is someone else: Leah taking the place of Rachel, Uther replacing Gorlois in Igraine's bed. Wendy Doniger's voluminous study of the form expands this definition to include adjacent acts of sexual deception involving animals, transformations, and exploitations. Ariosto and his successors provide several examples of the conventional bedtrick (the tale of Bradamante, Ricardietto, and Fiordispina is perhaps the most recognizable) but also numerous twists on the usual form: Alcina the hag, Fiamatta the innkeeper's daughter, Florimell and False Florimell. The Ginevra narrative is a voyeuristic bedtrick. Polinesso and Dalinda recognize each other (although Dalinda misrecognizes the Duke's intentions), but the watcher Ariodante is deceived. Yet this scene also enacts another more traditional form: the mistress who places a surrogate body—often a maid, sister, or animal—in bed as substitute recipient of a rape or a husband's unwanted lust. Doniger discusses the maid Brangane, who in many versions of the Tristan and Iseult tale takes Iseult's place in King Mark's chamber, sacrificing her own chastity for her mistress's fidelity to her lover; the critic also notes but does not analyze a second substitution, that of an animal for Brangane herself when the maid is sent to be killed by a huntsman in the forest.<sup>110</sup> Doniger is attentive to the "chain of subjugation" produced by these substitutions, as sexual oppression directed at one

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<sup>110</sup> Doniger, *Bedtrick*, 277. For the maidservant surrogate, see also Mark Thornton Burnett, "Women, Patriarchy, and Service," in *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 118-154.

woman is displaced onto a lower-status female.<sup>111</sup> Polinesso transposes his intended violation of another woman onto Dalinda's body. Although Ginevra is unaware of the sacrificial substitution, she benefits from Dalinda's act (avoiding the renewal of forceful sexual attentions) and is implicated in the subjugating sequence.

Lovesick Dalinda agrees to role-play the princess's violation, in a moment of abject and sickening pathos. She expresses earnest passion for the Duke, repeatedly declaring "How truly Polinesso [she] adore[s]."<sup>112</sup> The maid's consent to her own sacrifice is wrenching, one of the saddest moments of Ariosto's poem. Some critics read Dalinda as a "fool for love" who agrees to her own exploitation in a gesture of unalloyed emotional masochism.<sup>113</sup> Yet while she repeatedly declares how ardently she adores Polinesso, she insists equally upon "How much he owe[s]" her, attempting to establish leverage through "love's recompense."<sup>114</sup> This move recalls the "reciproco amor" discussed in the introduction to this study; despite the impassioned courtship language that Ariosto's characters employ, sexual love is unrelentingly mercenary, a space for consolidating social power. The stakes involved in a maid's relationship with a duke are high enough that Dalinda may be willing to put aside her own emotional dignity for the sake of an ambition that matches the Duke's own. Dalinda leverages these expectations at the same time as she insists on the sincerity of her love, reminding the powerful Duke of what he owes her.

This is not to say that Dalinda's love for Polinesso is calculated or that she herself is dissembling when she claims to be "unaware of his design" or in "mind and heart distraught."<sup>115</sup> In an episode which foregrounds deception, role-play, and self-delusion, it is fully probable that

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid. 275. See 209 and 118 for women putting goats into bed in their place.

<sup>112</sup> *OF.*, 5.72.3.

<sup>113</sup> See Lawrence Rhu, "Agons of Interpretation: Ariostan Source and Elizabethan Meaning in Spenser, Harington, and Shakespeare," *Renaissance Drama* 24 (1993): 176.

<sup>114</sup> *OF.*, 5.72.3-8.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 5.26.2 and 5.46.8.

Dalinda sustains genuine desire for Polinesso alongside awareness that her ascendancy is linked to his, while clinging to the ignorance which is necessary to maintain her innocence and provide some measure of emotional protection. However, these traces of Dalinda's ambition compromise her victimization, implying that she might have done the same, for the sake of power, even if she had known what would happen to Ginevra. Like Sawday's anatomical corpses, the maidservant's tale is arranged so as to suggest her consent, mitigating the brutality she experiences. Does she consent to the exploitation? Is the mare on the dissection table wanton, or terrified? In the end, Dalinda's actual experience hardly matters: the mere imputation of the maidservant's motives allows her to justifiably bear the tale's cost. Ariosto nevertheless reveals how compromised this consent really is, allowing the maidservant to convey the story in her own adamant words, making brutally visible her trust, her aspirations, and her agonizing betrayal.

#### iv. Cold comforts

In W.B. Yeats's ballad sequence "The Three Bushes," yet another mistress requires a servant's bodily sacrifice. She presents the paradox to her maid:

'I love a man in secret,  
 Dear chambermaid,' said she.  
 I know that I must drop down dead  
 If he stop loving me  
 Yet what could I but drop down dead  
 If I lost my chastity?  
 O my dear, O my dear.<sup>116</sup>

To navigate the romance plot, the aristocratic woman must embrace passion while remaining sexually virtuous; the penalty for failing at either is death. The resolution of this conundrum is

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<sup>116</sup> W. B. Yeats, *The Poems*, ed. Daniel Albright (London: Everyman's Library, 1990), 344.

the astigmatic conflation of the bedtrick. "So you must lie beside him / And let him think me there," Yeats's unnamed lady tells her maid, introducing the ruse. "[M]aybe we are all the same/That strip the body bare," she muses. The exchange or substitution of women depends on their interchangeability, after all, the suspicion that "maybe we are all the same / Where no candles are."

After leaving the mare's carcass on the bank and crossing the river, Orlando initiates a trade with a passing shepherd. "I want that nag of yours," he says. "And in exchange I'll give you mine; she's dead...She has no other blemish."<sup>117</sup> This may be the poem's bleakest moment of stone cold madness, the raving knight who cannot distinguish between a dead mare and a living one. Orlando's lack of differentiation between the mare whose body has indeed been "stripped bare" by the rocky coast and another filly is merely an extreme extension of Ariodante's erring accusation of Ginevra, a manifestation of romance's stubborn indifference toward female bodies. The shepherd's incredulous refusal of Orlando's offer does not put an end to the knight's insane desire; the lunatic paladin kills the herdsman and rides a whole series of horses to death. The mare's carcass signals the closure of Angelica's story, but in doing so initiates more trauma. Doniger's "chain of subjugation" suggests that the bedtrick, like the romance, is a closed system: erotic victimization cannot dissipate, but must be displaced. Ginevra is vindicated by combat and Angelica escapes to coital bliss, yet someone must nevertheless "drop down dead," in Yeats's lady's words, for the net loss of chastity. There is a price to pay for the passion experienced by the good woman: someone must submit to the violent side of the lover's caress, wear the tattered hide or stolen gown, place her dissected interior on public display.

The epicenter of this displacement, in the *Furioso*, is the bruised corpse of a mare lying on a riverbank and a knight on the other side unseeing, deadpan, confident that he can get a live

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<sup>117</sup> *OF*, 30.5.7–30.6.5.

mount for a dead nag. This is deeply funny, and deeply horrifying. Like many early poets, Ariosto knows that violence and sexual violence especially makes audiences laugh. What makes this scene such a tour de force is the edge of discomfort within the humor, the combination of sickening pathos and black absurdity that brings readers up short in the midst of laughter. It takes a deft hand to play romance material this way, to infuse stylized stuff with a brutality that is full of real and terrible life. The mare's treatment is compounded by the poet's treatment of mounts like Baiardo, the affective portrayal of individual heroic horses contrasting with the mare's vicious negation; this is a poet using the agonist, subversive potency of conventional romance to its fullest.

Orlando's astigmatic treatment of the mare does not begin postmortem. He hurts her "perché non discernea il nero dal bianco" (because he cannot discern black from white): he thinks he is comforting the abused horse ("la conforta / che lo potrà seguir con maggior agio").<sup>118</sup> "Comfort," at least in English, is freighted with sexual implications. Within the context of the displaced rape of Angelica, the knight's transposition of hurt and comfort signals just how tangled the "love" impulse and the need to inflict pain become. Is Orlando's treatment of the horse the result of "rage and fury" or of a misdirected desire "di giovar," to do something good for the lady/mare?<sup>119</sup> One word frequently employed to describe Orlando's motivation, "l'impeto," bears this conflict internally, in its very definition: the term can mean an impulse, assault, or fit of love. Linguistic confusion reflects Orlando's own misperception, and bears witness to one of the fundamental tenets of chivalric romance: that you can commit rape and call it love, that the genre itself lends support to this conflation.<sup>120</sup> The roots of this question lie in an

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 29.71.1-2.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 29.73.4.

<sup>120</sup> See Judith Bryce, "Gender and Myth in the Orlando Furioso," *Italian Studies* 47, vol. 1 (1992): 41 on critical willingness to label the poem's sexual assaults "love."

older tale: Mars and Venus, *arme* and *amori*, what is war and what is love and who is capable of or responsible for disentangling the two. The fusion of these two abstracts is a classical convention, but one which Ariosto approaches in a provocative way, drawing the implications of the axiom along to their savage conclusion.

When profitability is defined as the judicious release and restraint of violence and sexual impulse, the strategic balancing of *arme* and *amori*, it follows that the costs of romance play out through erotic assault. The romance genre conceptualizes circulation as enrichment: Baiardo and Frontino circulate while increasing in value, like Erasmian exempla, theft or disobedient flight only gilding their worth in the eyes of their knight-masters. Like the warhorses, the mare is stolen, but she does not have access to Baiardo's exceptional overdetermination, his combination of inimitability and ubiquity. She is stripped bare by her circulation, dragged to death. Although both male and female horse can symbolize desire, only the mare is savaged for her eroticism (as Rinaldo, in another context, observes); unlike Baiardo, the archetypal stud, she is punished by "desiderio insano" regardless of whether she is willing or resistant. The *impeto* leading to her death exists before and outside of her. Postmortem, she is resuscitated as a Baiardan figure, a vision of chivalry battered by its own suicidal psychosis. The final ignominy that the mare experiences is interpretive, as she is dragged to a humanist common-place and left dead.

In British Library MS 18920, Harington's surviving autograph copy of the *Furioso* intended for his printer Richard Field, the death of Ariosto's *giumenta* sprawls over two pages. Yet the noun representing the horse herself is obscured by black marks in nearly every instance, as the translator oscillates between his options: mare, palfrey, beast. While this is likely just creative nitpicking, the choice has significant ramifications in the equine world, marking wide gaps in the horse's economic potential. This is why the mare's status as stolen property matters so

much. As discussed earlier in the chapter, a vivisected warhorse is impossibly costly. If chivalry must be viciously and publicly executed, its representative cannot be chivalric Baiardo. The death of a stolen female nag, by contrast, costs nothing. Unlike Baiardo/Frontino, whose value increases as he circulates, the mare is useful to the tale because she has no stated value. She can be circulated to death. Yet structurally, the mare is invaluable, supporting all of the excesses and hyperboles of her genre: Baiardo's exceptionalism, Angelica's escape, Giamatti's chivalric humanism. She is a stylization of systemic misogyny, implicating chivalric love, romance rhetoric, and even the rhetoric of romance criticism in the production of her suffering.

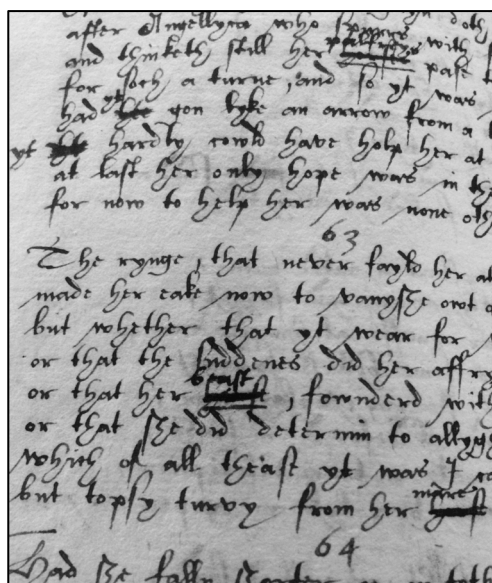


Figure 10. Canto 29, handwritten by Sir. John Harington (British Library MS 1892)

Orlando proposes a transaction: dead mare for live mount. The shepherd reacts with predictable disbelief to the knight's false logic of "infinite return in exchange for nothing."<sup>121</sup> Yet the shepherd's protestations prove impotent in the face of this inexorable mad economy: the knight makes off with the object of value, while the herdsman loses both his horse and his life.

<sup>121</sup> Forman, *Redemptions*, 13.

This is the underlying romance structure that Ariosto makes so shamelessly visible in this sequence. Valerie Forman suggests that sixteenth-century romance, unlike tragicomedy proper, is "not structurally dependent on redemption" because "[t]hough part of what is lost is found again, what is found does not exceed what is lost."<sup>122</sup> The worth of the horse or servingwoman does not exceed or even equal the worth of Ginevra or Angelica. In fact, her worth is precisely in her worthlessness, in her capacity to circulate and sustain value without taking any on herself. Who pays for the Erasmian proliferation of metaphor, romance's rich exchange of *giumenta* for *cheval*, *donna* for *donna*, *nero* for *bianco*? The bodies that are substituted, conflated, and divided in the process. In order to redeem the noblewomen's future, something has to be paid in the present. Something must be rendered irredeemable in the moment of substitution or exchange. Ginevra is redeemed, Angelica is redeemed; Dalinda and the mare are spent.

#### IV. Re-hatching (The Horse is Alright)

##### i. Hacks and hags

In canonical English romances following the *Orlando furioso*, the signs of this sacrificial sexual economy began to vanish. Two scenes in Spenser's *Faerie Queene* diverge sharply from Ariosto in their approach to questions of proxy violence and consent. This is perhaps most tangible in Spenser's version of the dead mare sequence in the Book of Chastity. Fair Florimell (English Angelica) is fleeing a hyena, sicced on her by a witch whose son was rejected by the retreating lady. The hyena is an embodiment of male lust "[t]hat feeds on wemens flesh, as others feede on gras."<sup>123</sup> Reaching the shore, Florimell abandons her mount and leaps into a boat (unfortunately containing a libidinous Proteus). The thwarted hyena, like Orlando, "transfers his

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>123</sup> *FQ*, 3.7.22. Hamilton's footnote observes that the hyena "is cited in the Geneva gloss to Ecclus. 13.19 as a wild beast that lures men out of their houses to devour them, which is how Florimell rightly regards all men except Marinell."



wrath to a more proximate object": "to auenge his deuilish despight,/ He set vpon her Palfrey tired lame, / And slew him cruelly, ere any reskew came."<sup>124</sup> Satyrane happens upon this scene and, recognizing the palfrey as belonging to the absent Florimell, conquers the hyena "to auenge the implacable wrong, / Which he supposed donne to *Florimell*."<sup>125</sup> The knight binds the hyena with Florimell's girdle and leads it along with him "like a lambe" as if the creature "had long bene learned to obey."<sup>126</sup>

This scene is clearly a rehashing of Ariosto's Canto 29, but it diverges from Ariostan precedent in several significant ways. Orlando may be wild, but he seeks to assuage his fury and appetite with his own human hands. The hyena figure, while linked to male lust, protects his human analogue (the witch's son) from culpability for the violence he inflicts. The creature is created by a woman, and enacts a separation of man from his own lust; sexual appetite becomes a second entity, and the violence it inflicts is no longer so clearly derived from the normal human psyche. The horse on the receiving end of the hyena's assault is markedly different as well. Initially, he protects Florimell as well as any knight, galloping "So long as breath, and hable puissance / Did natiue corage vnto him supply."<sup>127</sup> This valiant formula is repeated later in the canto: "whilest his breath did strength to him supply / From perill free he her away did beare."<sup>128</sup> This is, clearly, an exceptionally heroic male horse—just the kind of affective figure that the dead mare is not. Finally, whatever troublesome implications for masculinity remain in the sequence are expunged by the presence of Satyrane, the "goodly Swaine" who "rather ioyd to be,

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<sup>124</sup> Parker, *Inescapable Romance*, 91; *FQ*, 3.7.28. See also Deanna Shemek's discussion of a male sexuality 'manageable only through provision of *some* female object on which to vent itself' (*Ladies Errant*, 28).

<sup>125</sup> *FQ*, 3.7.35.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.6.6-8.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7.3.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7.24.

then seemen sich."<sup>129</sup> Good man negates bad beast. He even binds the hyena rather than killing it; like Pulci's murderous wild horse, Spenser's hyena is "transformed by the miraculous hand of...man."<sup>130</sup> Of course Satyrane is himself the poem's most visible abuser of animals but, as discussed in the first chapter, this all merely forms part of his civilized heroism. Ariosto's dead mare scene uses the dissolute quality of Orlando's madness to call masculine behavior into question; in Spenser, masculinity is celebrated and affirmed.

Pyrene inherits Dalinda's role in Spenser's truncated version of the Ginevra tale, but the subjugation of common female bodies by the intersection of male lust and female aristocratic interests is more properly addressed in another sequence: Lust's cave, in the Book of Friendship. Amoret is captured by a monster, who like the hyena "on the spoile of women...doth liue."<sup>131</sup> Unlike the hyena's relatively simple consumption agenda, this is a two-part operation: "He with his shamefull lust doth first deflowre, / And afterwards themselues doth cruelly deuoure."<sup>132</sup> In the monster's cave, Amoret meets fellow noblewoman Aemelia, who appears neither deflowered nor devoured. Asked how this came to be, Aemelia reveals the arrangement:

Through helpe (quoth she) of this old woman here  
I haue so done, as she to me hath showne.  
For euer when he burnt in lustfull fire,  
She in my stead supplide his bestiall desire.

Thus of their euils as they did discourse,  
And each did other much bewaile and mone...<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 3.7.29.

<sup>130</sup> Giamatti, "Headlong Horses," 50.

<sup>131</sup> *FQ*, 4.7.12.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., 4.7.19.

After revealing that the unnamed old woman has repeatedly offered up her body to "cursed vsage" each night to save Aemelia's chastity, the two girls move quickly into bemoaning their own evil plights.<sup>134</sup> This is a verbatim enactment of the bedtrick structure discussed by Doniger: to protect herself from rape, a female aristocrat places a lower-status female in bed in her stead. There is no mention of the Hag's motives, and both highborn girls appear to take for granted the "helpe...of this old woman."<sup>135</sup>

In fact, the poem's gentlewomen seem to unanimously attribute this substitution and sacrifice to the Hag's own desire. When the three are liberated from captivity, the Hag is mentioned only in terms of her ugliness, as a "foule and loathsome...leman fit for such a louer deare."<sup>136</sup> Belpheobe's acerbic remark asserting the suitability of the Hag to be raped nightly by Lust attempts to justify the substitution as, if not consensual, then at least not a violation. The alleged propriety of the arrangement absolves Aemelia and Amoret from expressing gratitude toward, or indeed acknowledging, the Hag's sacrifice. Moreover, the Hag herself is responsible for "mov[ing]" Belpheobe's revulsion and hatred.<sup>137</sup> Her function as the device by which Aemelia's "honor [is] sav'd" is required by the logic of the text, and therefore passes in acquiescent silence.

## ii. The body belowstairs

This thesis declares itself to be a study of the disappearance of structural brutalities in sixteenth-century poetic romances. *Much Ado about Nothing* was first performed in 1612 (though it may have been written as early as 1598). It is grouped with Shakespeare's comedies, not his romances; it is drama, not epic poetry. Nevertheless, my discussion of the substitution

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<sup>134</sup> Ibid., 4.7.12.

<sup>135</sup> Melissa Sanchez discusses consent in the Lust sequence, but surprisingly does not address the Hag. "Who Can Loue the Worker of Her Smart?": Tyrannous Seduction in *The Faerie Queene*," in *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 69-70.

<sup>136</sup> *FQ.*, 4.8.10.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 4.7.34.

and sacrifice of common females would be incomplete without some brief analysis of Hero's maidservant Margaret. The corpus of critical work treating this figure is somewhat larger than that surrounding Dalinda, although it is severely outweighed by the critical attention given to Hero (likewise Ginevra, and Angelica). While much gender criticism of the play addresses the question of Hero's slander, a small subset has debated the supposed "Margaret defect"; that is, the maidservant's silence regarding the bedtrick she helped execute during her mistress's abortive wedding and accusation by Claudio.

While Dalinda's silence can be easily attributed to her greater involvement in the Duke's plot and fear of reprisal from the king or Polinesso, Margaret's has troubled scholars, many of whom have sought explanations for this perceived incongruity in the play's textual genealogy.<sup>138</sup> What did the maidservant know, and when did she know it? Some critics assert that Margaret can honestly claim ignorance of Don John's conspiracy: her only sin was a liaison with Borachio. Yet how could an innocent Margaret see the consequences of her actions play out and keep mum? Of particular concern has been Act V Scene ii, which features Margaret in a droll and apparently unconcerned exchange with Benedick when she *ought*, critics fret, to be saving her mistress. Recently, Tracey Sedinger has given what would seem like an obvious answer to this dilemma, in an intersectional reading of gender and class dynamics in both *Much Ado* and Ariosto's tale: Would a servant really sacrifice her own interests, freedom, and potentially life for her mistress's reputation? Sedinger also gives a nuanced reading of Dalinda's and Margaret's social ambitions, arguing that both poem and play engage characters of both sexes in erotic social climbing and that "the ambitions of lower-status men are disguised and displaced onto the social ambitions of

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<sup>138</sup> Allan Gilbert attributes the "improbability of Margaret's silence" to a transmission error in his "Two Margarets: The Composition of *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Philological Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (1962): 61-71; see also John Traugott, "Creating a Rational Rinaldo: A Study in the Mixture of the Genres of Comedy and Romance in *Much Ado about Nothing*," *Genre* 15, 2-3 (1982): 162.

working girls."<sup>139</sup> I suggest that this compelling analysis brings Ariostan and Shakespearean maid too close, obscuring the visible brutality of Dalinda's experience in contrast with Margaret's narrative. Ariosto's text makes the violent substitution of Dalinda for her mistress legible; Shakespeare's version sacrifices Margaret while doing its best to conceal her exploitation behind an insistent mask of consent.

The environment of Ariosto's text permits Dalinda to express her desire for social mobility through sexual deception; her expectations of a transactional relationship are standard in the poem, and as such do not excuse or invite the Duke's treatment. Moreover, her hopes are pragmatic: Dalinda's beloved is the second most powerful man in Scotland. Shakespeare splits Polinesso's character into Don John and Borachio, assigning the former the Duke's social status and the latter his lust. This shift has severe implications for Margaret, whose downgraded bedtrick becomes part of a casual liaison with a disreputable manservant who presents little to offer in the way of social advancement. Borachio brags of the maidservant's sexual availability to his master Don John; at the masked ball, Margaret is any man's Margaret, flirting not with her lover but with Benedick and Balthasar.<sup>140</sup> Since there is no legitimate place for Dalinda's ambition in Messina, Margaret's muted aspirations move out of bounds and transform into signs of an innate promiscuity. In *Much Ado*, the preservation of aristocratic female honor requires the ignorant harlotry of the stock lusty chambermaid; expressions of Margaret's social ambition merely affirm her pre-litigated sluttish consent.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Tracey Sedinger, "Working Girls: Status, Sexual Difference, and Disguise in Ariosto, Spenser, and Shakespeare," in *The Single Woman in Medieval and Early Modern England: Her Life and Representation*, eds. Laurel Amtower and Dorothea Kehler (Tempe, AZ: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2003), 185.

<sup>140</sup> 2.2.13-14. All subsequent citations refer to *Much Ado about Nothing*, eds. Barbara A. Mowat and Paul Werstine (New York: Folger Shakespeare Library, 2010), accessed via Folger Digital Texts.

<sup>141</sup> For analysis of this trope as it relates to scenes of literary consumption in Thomas Overbury's character sketches, see Lori Humphrey Newcomb, *Reading Popular Romance in Early Modern England* (New York:

"God match me with a good dancer...and God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done."<sup>142</sup> Margaret's expressions of social ambition are impossible to differentiate from her expressions of sexuality, as in the case of this blasphemous and bawdy remark. Sedinger reads this, along with several other scenes in which Margaret asks Benedick for a sonnet and trades barbs with other characters, as the maidservant's slavish and failed imitation of aristocratic Beatrice.<sup>143</sup> Will you dance? Will you write me a poem? Look how witty I am! Will you call me a lady? The most elaborate instance of this behavior showcases the maid's fashion authority: she contradicts Hero's choice of wedding attire, citing her knowledge of the Duchess of Milan's trendsetting new gown.<sup>144</sup> Fashion knowledge characterizes this figure across multiple versions of the Ginevra tale: Philemon seduces Pyrene via her own vanity and sartorial lust in the *Faerie Queen*. Margaret praises the Duchess's dress lavishly before recalling her position and lauding Hero's clothes instead. This hasty turnaround is not without a touch of irony: after a meticulous description of the Duchess's outfit, it is easy to read Margaret's line "But for a fine, quaint, graceful, and excellent fashion, [Hero's gown] is worth ten on [the Duchess's]" as an indulgent concession.<sup>145</sup>

To Sedinger, this scene suggests that Margaret's erotic dress-up as Hero is like her dancing and sonnets: an appropriation of the signs of feminine aristocracy, an attempt to become Hero or Beatrice. The desire to put on the gown originates as much in her as in Borachio. Margaret's sartorial expertise, as well as the blurry line between her social and sexual lusts, allows Sedinger

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Columbia University Press, 2002), 89-90 and 106. For an economic account, see Mark Burnett, *Masters and Servants*, 129-130.

<sup>142</sup> *Much Ado*, 2.1.105-108.

<sup>143</sup> Sedinger, "Working Girls," 187.

<sup>144</sup> The play was written at the end of a period of Elizabethan sumptuary codes, which were debated in Parliament in 1597 and finally repealed in 1604. An early but useful reference is Wilfrid Hooper, "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws," *The English Historical Review* 30, vol. 119 (1915): 433-449. For a more contemporary account of Elizabethan fashion politics, see Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2000).

<sup>145</sup> *Much Ado*, 3.4.13-23.

to claim that Margaret and Borachio do conspire in the bedtrick—not as a deception of Claudio but as a consensual fantasy between two servants. They get off on it. Dalinda, by contrast, gets nothing from the bedtrick aside from brutal negation. Sedinger, following Valeria Finucci, proposes that Dalinda should be read in the same way as Margaret: she attaches her desire to become Ginevra to a desire to wear the princess's clothes, in simultaneous realization of her social and sexual hopes.<sup>146</sup> This is a conflation of the two texts and, I think, a misreading. Unlike Shakespeare's bedroom scene, Dalinda's bedtrick is not play, even ambitious play: it is brutal from the moment that it is proposed. Dalinda dons the clothing in full knowledge that Polinesso is not only satisfying a sexual enamorment through his use of her body, but inscribing her flesh with the rape of her mistress: *perché vorrei vincer la pruova*. It may be true that Dalinda's "desire to be Ginevra derives from Polinesso's desire for Ginevra" (178), but Sedinger misses just how violent and abject this round robin of desire is, the price it extracts from the maid. There is no overt indication that Dalinda relishes masquerading as Ginevra; it is the poem, not the servant, which lingers over clothing, describing the "crimson tassels" and "golden bands" of the outfit.<sup>147</sup> Dalinda's aspirations are at times perverse and confused, but they are not shallow, not the vanity of Pyrene or the carefully-constructed promiscuity of Margaret. They are visible expressions of the romance's system of sexual exchanges and violent costs.

What does this mean for Shakespeare's maid? My attention to Margaret's placement within a structure that requires her bodily subjugation strengthens Sedinger's case for her silence as the natural outgrowth of class contradictions, but it raises other possibilities as well. Margaret receives something more fraught from her Ariostan heritage than she might be aware of, which belies the play's attempted separation of questions of lust from questions of violence and power.

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<sup>146</sup> Sedinger, "Working Girls," 178.

<sup>147</sup> *OF*, 5.47.2-4.

*Much Ado* to some degree inherits the brutal sacrifice that is extant in Ariosto's poem; I suggest that this occluded inheritance helps cut through the façade of consensuality to explain Margaret's behavior. The key is in that presumably callous scene where Margaret exchanges "wit and bawdry" with Benedick for a full twenty-five lines when, as scholars have been quick to note, she ought to be confessing and saving her mistress: "To have no man come over me? Why, shall I always keep below stairs?"<sup>148</sup> This is crude foolery, but it is revealing. Margaret has already been sacrificed socioeconomically and sexually, remaining below to allow Hero to rise from her fabricated grave. Her mistress has, though unaware, traded the maid for Claudio, for her own freedom from unchastity and violence. Violent desire does not disappear, even when the lady vanishes into happy marriage or supposed tomb; the price of her disappearing act is Dalinda's pain, Margaret's silence, the body of a horse.

### iii. Etchings and Englishings

"Elizabethan translations are always more Elizabethan than translated," declare Tucker Brooke and Matthias Shaaber, an assertion which finds support in Sir John Harington's own claim that he was "englishing th'Italian Ariost."<sup>149</sup> This claim, combined with the translation's publication date a year post-Spenser and a full decade post-Tasso, has prompted scholarly interest in Harington's approach to translating a work through the lens of its literary successors. Most critics agree that Sir John is inveterate in his meddling and liberal in his editorializing, wrapping Ariosto's text in a moral agenda that is indeed more Elizabethan than the original. Selene Scarsi has demonstrated the "instinctive misogyny" which Harington adds to the Italian

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<sup>148</sup> *Much Ado*, 5.2.9-10.

<sup>149</sup> Tucker Brooke and Matthias Shaaber, *The Renaissance*, vol. 2 *A Literary History of England* (London: Routledge, 1967), 434; John Harington, *The Epigrams of Sir John Harington*, ed. Gerard Kilroy (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 111.



poem, Judith Lee has shown how the translator "domesticates Ariosto's magic" to accord with Elizabethan morality; Jason Scott-Warren has discussed the impact of Harington's social climbing on his work; and Bruce Boehrer has suggested that the translator "draw[s] the boundary between species with a firmer hand" than the original poet.<sup>150</sup> In my first chapter, I addressed the changes Harington makes to the gendering of Ariosto's animals; this section concerns alterations the translator makes to additional scenes discussed previously in this chapter. Harington blunts the impact of Ariosto's depictions of erotic violence: women become more willing, while the violent intent of men is muted. Like Spenser or Shakespeare Harington participates, during the golden age of bountiful English romance, in a reflexive erasure of its costs.

Like Shakespeare, Harington diminishes the role and pathos of Dalinda. Scarsi observes Dalinda's new garrulity, her eagerness to "straight recite" her tale in the Elizabethan version.<sup>151</sup> Rinaldo initially "g[ives] no eare nor from his horse allight[s]," mistaking the maidservant's urgency for simple feminine chatter.<sup>152</sup> It is not until the knight "mark[s] well her face," noting that she is attractive and displays signs of gentility, that she wins "a great deale more his favour" and permission to narrate her tale.<sup>153</sup> Harington's Dalinda seems more eager to convey her accessibility ("He gets my bodie, bed, and all the rest...I usd this practice in *Genevras* chamber") than Polinesso's dependence on her aid.<sup>154</sup> The liaison becomes "this our crime," heightening the sense that Dalinda is equally stained with Polinesso's guilt.<sup>155</sup> Meanwhile, Harington normalizes the Duke's behavior, calling his duplicitous seduction "A pollicie used sometime to woo the maid

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<sup>150</sup> Scarsi, *Translating Women*, 1; Judith Lee, "The English Ariosto: The Elizabethan Poet and the Marvelous," *Studies in Philology* 80, vol. 3 (1983): 287; Scott-Warren, *Book as Gift*; Boehrer, *Animal Characters*, 37.

<sup>151</sup> See Scarsi, *Translating Women*, 56.

<sup>152</sup> *OEHV*, 4.58.6.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.59.1.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.8.6-8.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.9.4.

to win the mistress" in a marginal gloss.<sup>156</sup> The bedtrick is no longer explicitly about power, "perché vorrei vincer la pruova," but about assuaging grief and fulfilling a "fond conceipt," "fancies foolish fit."<sup>157</sup> The result is a bedtrick which becomes merely another stage of "l'amoroso gioco" between lovers, without revealing the violence of Polinesso's intentions or Dalinda's wrenching emotional exploitation.

Harington tones down the rapacious implication of Canto 29 as well, deemphasizing both Orlando's savagery and his lust. In Ariosto, the head of Medoro's horse shatters "come fosse vetro" ("like shattered glass") upon contact with the knight's fist, whereas in Harington's version the mount is simply knocked to the ground "senceless."<sup>158</sup> The knight's cruelty towards the mare is also less explicit in the Englishman's translation; Harington's Orlando does not allow the mare to rest, but the Ariostan detail that he "né le lascia gustare erba né fieno" ("nor does he allow her to eat grass or hay") goes missing.<sup>159</sup> Barbara Reynolds translates Orlando's "desiderio insano" literally, and even accentuates the implication of lust with enjambment and capitalization ("insane/Desire");<sup>160</sup> Harington removes the reference to desire completely. Ariosto's direct comparison, "Con quella festa il paladin la piglia, ch'un altro avrebbe fatto una donzella" (The knight takes her with the same pleasure as another would have taken a young woman), also disappears, as does the crucial phrase about "l'impeto e la rabbia" outlasting the presence of the lady.<sup>161</sup> Harington not only blunts the sexual overtones of the passage but seeks to besmirch the proxy victim Angelica, who in the Italian does not notice her pursuer out of simple distraction

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>157</sup> *OF*, 5.24.2; *OEHV*, 5.24.3-5; 5.26.1.

<sup>158</sup> *OF* 29.63.5; *OEHV*, 29.61.8.

<sup>159</sup> *OF*, 29.68.8.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.70.6; *OEHV*, 29.69.1-8.

<sup>161</sup> *OEHV*, 29.68.1-2.

but in the English is to blame for inattention due to "Of her lorn lovers bosting" to Medoro.<sup>162</sup>

Orlando's interior motivations—his insanity, his lust, his inability to distinguish good from evil—are no longer on trial in Harington's poem.

Harington is known for his provision of a wide-ranging "Historie, Allegorie, and Morale" at the end of each canto. Curiously, the dead mare is not glossed in the allegory, despite her symbolic potential and Harington's usually generous allegorizing hand. His notes on Canto 29 deal only with Isabella, and his Canto 30 notes ruminate on the potency of madness; the escape scene is nowhere addressed. Harington's edition does situate the battered mare prominently in the engraved illustration for Canto 30, in keeping with the author's Porro-derived tendency to set "personages, of men, the shapes of horses, and such like" as perspectival devices in the bottom foreground.<sup>163</sup> "Shapes of horses" can indeed be found in every engraving for the Harington translation, and are frequently placed front and center. Usually, however, the horses are featured along with their human riders, who take up much of the perspectival attention: the dead mare is the only instance of a lone horse, and certainly the most arresting engraving in the collection.

In the 1591 version, reprinted with only minor changes in 1607, the dead mare is obviously emaciated, even spectral (Fig. 11).<sup>164</sup> Her visible ribs and her blank eyes contribute to the overall impression of abjection, of a fragmented and discomfiting corpse that retrieves some of the omitted brutality of Ariosto's original description. The plate bears some resemblance to the artistic vogue for placing the anatomized corpse in a landscape discussed by Sawday.<sup>165</sup> There is

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 29.57.6.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 17. This selection, from Harington's "Advertisement to the Reader," is often cited in discussions of Renaissance artistic perspective; see for example Alistair Fowler's discussion "Events in Time," *Renaissance Realism: Narrative Images in Literature and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 25.

<sup>164</sup> Digital illustrations are provided for reference, but the details are much more visible in physical copies, such as the editions held at the National Library of Scotland.

<sup>165</sup> Sawday, *Body Emblazoned*, 114. Compare particularly to the diagram from Charles Estienne's *De dissection* (1545), included in Sawday's volume as Figure 15, pp. 38-9.

something stark about the carcass, isolated on one side of the Stygian body of water into which Orlando has just plunged. Other horses in the engravings are in a state of constant motion, witnessing, judging, reflecting, bolting, rearing, fighting, acting and reacting, trading significant glances amongst themselves. They are accompanied by all the trappings of their chivalric roles, from elaborate headdresses and bridles to small curlicue nametags. The mare is still, contracted, anonymous, stripped bare. The carcass exudes the same sense of exhausted capitulation as Andrew Snape's dissected figure, refusing narrative and affective relation. The plate seems to invite the allegorization that later critics like Giamatti or Quint apply to the scene, "The Death of Chivalry" wrapped up and left on the shore. Yet she is still recognizably the mare, with the trauma of her death legibly inscribed in the cadaver.

In the 1634 edition, the fatal assault on the mare's body becomes obscured: the illustration plates, "cut in brasse" as Harington proudly declares, have been "re-hatched, wiping out and blurring many details."<sup>166</sup> In fact, the process may have involved more modification than simple blurring: the presence of new light areas, such as in the water and at the mare's groin, suggest that sections of the plates may have been ground down and re-carved. The result recalls the monumental live horses of an Albrecht Dürer, with newly-drawn pupils, ribs hidden underneath cross-hatching which gives the impression of musculature and volume (Fig. 12). This horse does not appear desperate for "erba é fieno." Finally, the new engraver may not have read the text closely (and would not have been overseen by Harington, who died in 1612): the 1634 horse's groin area shows new markings for what may be male genitalia. These artistic choices serve to elide trauma, covering the mare's protruding ribs with a new layer of fat and skin, etched indelibly into copper.

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<sup>166</sup> McNulty, introduction to *OEHV*, li.



Figure 11. Canto 30 engraving (London: Field, 1591)

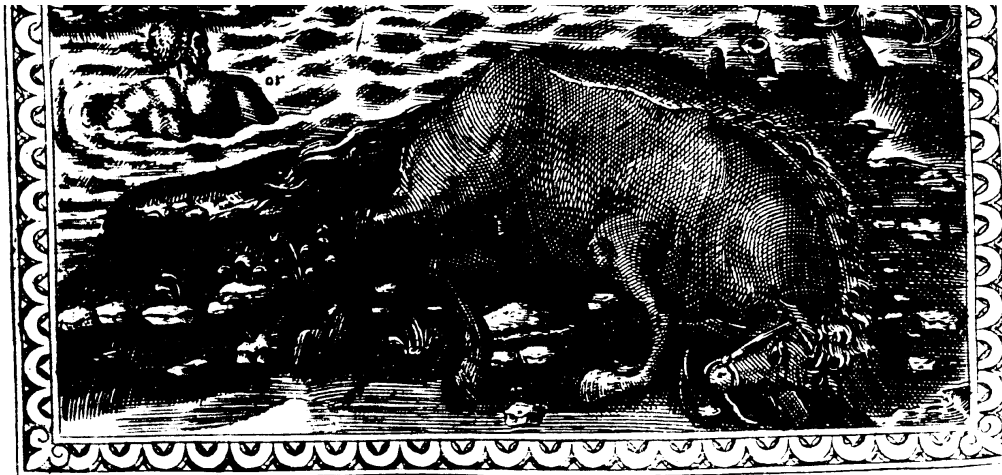


Figure 12. Canto 30 engraving (London: Miller, 1634)

## Coda

"She's dead, she has no other flaw." The two Harington engravings—one with the costs of Orlando's romantic madness visibly inscribed, the other embellished so as to conceal them—thematize the obfuscation that this study describes. The 1634 engraving presents a version of the mare that the mad knight insists on seeing, the one whose value he trades on in the lunatic and fatal transaction with the shepherd; the emaciated 1591 image is, of course, what the incredulous shepherd sees. In this exchange, Orlando succeeds in spinning value out of the mare's negation, turning her destruction to profit: her death engenders the "trail of dead horses" which carries the knight to his next destination, Tunisia, in a dark mimicry of romance's copious proliferation.<sup>1</sup> After this brush with savagery, Orlando returns to civilization: in Tunisia, Astolfo restores his fellow knight's wits and the two get back to the normal business of chivalry. Presumably, this is where the lunatic violence of the "furioso" episode stops, as the knights don their armor and resume proper romancing. Instead, the trail of horses leads to the Biserta episode, Ariosto's most explicit commentary on the victories of his patrons and most insistent revelation of his genre's costs.

### I. Charged on Account

***rape and pillage***: the commission of acts of rape and plunder on a large scale, esp. by members of an invading army. Hence in extended use: despoilment, destruction, or defilement of something, esp. for profit.

*Ekphrasis*, the rhetorical evocation of a picture in the mind's eye, was a familiar trope to Renaissance humanists.<sup>2</sup> Treatises like the *De Copia* derived their stock example of this

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<sup>1</sup> Ascoli, *Bitter Harmony*, 310n87.

<sup>2</sup> Claire Preston provides a good primer with "Ekphrasis: Painting in Words," in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, eds. Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander, and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 11-29; see also Richard Meek, *Narrating the Visual in Shakespeare* (London: Ashgate, 2009).

technique from Quintilian's famous passage on *enargeia*, in the eighth book of the *Institutio oratoria*:

No doubt, simply to say "the city was stormed" is to embrace everything implicit in such a disaster, but this brief communiqué, as it were, does not touch the emotions. If you expand everything which was implicit in the one word, there will come into view flames racing through houses and temples, the crash of falling roofs, the single sound made up of many cries, the blind flight of some, others clinging to their dear ones in a last embrace, shrieks of children and women, the old men whom an unkind fate has allowed to see this day; then will come the pillage of property, secular and sacred, the frenzied activity of plunderers carrying off their booty and going back for more, the prisoners driven in chains before their captors, the mother who tries to keep her child with her...<sup>3</sup>

The *locus classicus* of this pervasive description of a sacked city is always already Troy. The scene became associated with ekphrasis in particular because of its staging in *Aeneid* 1, when Aeneas views murals of his city's fall in the Temple of Juno.<sup>4</sup> Virgil's ekphrastic conjuring of the bloody past allows his itinerant hero to grieve.

As it entered into the rhetoric manuals, the example of the sacked city metamorphosed from threnody to augury. Erasmus tells his reader how this violent trope may be leveraged to the rhetorician's advantage, as a profitable tool in the consolidation of political power. If you do not surrender, the orator advises, this is the scene which will inevitably occur. If you resist, the blood of your city is not on my hands, but yours: "We will charge the war to your account."<sup>5</sup> This is how this conventional ekphrastic formula is used, to virtuoso effect, in Shakespeare, whether it is

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<sup>3</sup> 8.3.67-70. *The Orator's Education*, trans. Donald A. Russell, vols. 6-8 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 379.

<sup>4</sup> Itself derived in part from the songs in *Odyssey* 8. Of course by Quintilian's time there are plenty of other sources as well—Pliny's sack of Alba is suggested by the edition cited above.

<sup>5</sup> Erasmus, *De Copia*, 47.

Lucrece rehearsing her defense or Henry V threatening the Dauphin or mayor of Harfleur.<sup>6</sup> Surrender, Henry tells the Prince by way of Exeter. "Or else what follows?" "Bloody constraint," the messenger replies, charging the French aristocrat with all "the widows' tears, the orphans' cries, / The dead men's blood, the privèd maidens' groans."<sup>7</sup> Through this rhetorical maneuver, the English king absolves himself of blame for the violence of the war he wages:

What is it then to me if impious war,  
 Arrayed in flames like to the prince of fiends,  
 Do with his smirched complexion all fell feats  
 Enlinked to waste and desolation?  
 What is 't to me, when you yourselves are cause,  
 If your pure maidens fall into the hand  
 Of hot and forcing violation?<sup>8</sup>

The costs of war are charged, irreversibly, to the resistant mayor's account. Originally elegiac, ekphrasis is enlisted in the service of coercive futurity:

If not, why, in a moment look to see  
 The blind and bloody soldier with foul hand  
 Desire the locks of your shrill-shrieking daughters,  
 Your fathers taken by the silver beards  
 And their most reverend heads dashed to the walls,  
 Your naked infants spitted upon pikes  
 Whiles the mad mothers with their howls confused<sup>9</sup>

Having successfully established the Harfleurites "guilty in defense," Henry's hands are clean.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> For discussion of the former, see Lorna Hutson's remarkable chapter "'Imaginary Work': Opportunity in *Lucrece* and in *King Lear*," *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), esp. 93.

<sup>7</sup> *Henry V*, 2.4.103-4; 2.4.13-14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.15-21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.33-39.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.3.43.



## II. Ludovico's War

Reunited with wits intact, Orlando and Astolfo prepare to attack pagan forces quartered in the coastal town of Biserta, articulating their plans for the siege to the soldiery:

Come veri cristiani Astolfo e Orlando,  
 che senza Dio non vanno a rischio alcuno,  
 ne l'esercito fan publico bando,  
 che sieno orazion fatte e digiuno;  
 e che si trovi il terzo giorno, quando  
 si darà il segno, apparecchiato ognuno  
 per espugnar Biserta, che data hanno,  
 vinta che s'abbia, a fuoco e a saccomanno.

[True to their Christian faith, the paladins,  
 Who, facing peril, never fail to pray,  
 Give orders that before the siege begins  
 All troops shall fast and their devotions say  
 Then, armed with spears (or native javelins),  
 The signal shall await; on the third day  
 Biserta's time will come to be attacked  
 And, being captured, *to be burned and sacked.*]<sup>11</sup>

The siege is successful and the valiant Christian troops victorious, but the aftermath of the battle begins to take on familiar pyrrhic contours:

Di casa in casa un lungo incendio indutto  
 ardea palagi, portici e meschite.  
 Di pianti e d'urli e di battuti petti  
 suonano i voti e depredati tetti.

I vincitori uscir de le funeste

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<sup>11</sup> *OF*, 40.11.1-8. Italics added.

porte vedeansi di gran preda onusti,  
 chi con bei vasi e chi con ricche veste,  
 chi con rapiti argenti a' dei vetusti:  
 chi traea i figli, e chi le madri meste:  
 fur fatti stupri e mille altri atti ingiusti,  
 dei quali Orlando una gran parte intese,  
 né lo poté vietar, né 'l duca inglese.

[From house to house a trail of fire compounds  
 Destruction, burning mosques and palaces.  
 From houses plundered of possessions, cries  
 And shrieks and thuds of beaten breasts arise

Laden with booty, victors are seen leaving  
 Ill-omened doorways, silver figurines  
 Of household gods or vases in their thieving  
 Hands, or rich garments; pitiable scenes  
 Occur as children are dragged forth or grieving  
 Mothers raped; for here no mercy intervenes.  
 That day a thousand unjust deeds are done.  
 The Count, the duke, are powerless to stop one.]<sup>12</sup>

With a textbook demonstration of ekphrastic enargeia, Ariosto brings the sack of Biserta to life in high classical style: desecrated household gods, violated matrons.<sup>13</sup> The original Italian demonstrates how carefully crafted this segment is, spotted with anaphora and other techniques

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<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.33.5-34.8.

<sup>13</sup> Michael Murrin mentions that early readers of Ariosto noticed similarities between his poetry and visual art, but stops short of speculating as to the significance of the ekphrastic technique. *Warfare*, 81.

intended to augment the potency of the scene. Trails of fire, wailing, anguished children—this is Quintilian.<sup>14</sup>

But is the sequence leveraged in the way that the rhetorical manuals dictate? Stanza 11, the setup for the siege, bears strong traces of characteristic Ariostan irony. These are Christian captains ("Come veri cristiani") who "never fail to pray" before a bloody battle, who in the same order decree fasting, and sacking ("che s'abbia, a fuoco e a saccomanno"). The suggestion that the Count and the duke are powerless to stop the unjust deeds of common soldiers is ludicrous: they explicitly decreed the doing of unjust deeds.<sup>15</sup> Instead of assigning the violent scene of enargeia to one of the captains, as an effort to convince the population to surrender, Ariosto narrates the sequence himself: it is not a hypothetical, but bleak reality. Ariosto's treatment of the Biserta episode reverses the rhetorical trope which employs scenes of sack as absolution, instead using the rape of the city to take blistering aim at the violence and hypocrisy of heroes.

Biserta is a fictionalized account of the 1512 siege of Ravenna. The invading armies of the Holy League occupying the Italian city were besieged by a combination of French and Italian forces.<sup>16</sup> Ariosto describes his patron Alfonso d'Este's participation in this assault in carnal metonymic terms: "The red and yellow baton overpowered / But, owing to your thrusts so shrewd and bold, / The lily was not broken or deflowered."<sup>17</sup> Alfonso is presumably defending France's virginity with these thrusts, helping Colonna in "preserving shaft and capital intact."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> On impact of Quintilian in Ferrara, see Dennis Looney "Ariosto and the Classics" in *Ariosto Today: Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Donald Beecher, Massimo Ciavolella and Robert Fedi (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2003), 20-21.

<sup>15</sup> Harington's translation, typically, misses or ignores this irony. The phrase "mille altri atti ingiusti" never appears, and the description of battle-planning uncritically emphasizes the leaders' devotion to God. The order to burn and sack is less explicit ("raze it quite and beat it downe") and, significantly, condoned by Christ (40.10.8).

<sup>16</sup> some sort of acknowledgement that Italy was not unified, or rephrase this somehow.

<sup>17</sup> *OF*, 14.4.4-6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.5.2.

Ariosto lauds Alfonso's prowess, how the nobleman "made / Ravenna so regret [his] expertise."<sup>19</sup>

Yet this encomium is sharply and deliberately compromised by comparisons to the fictional Africans' assault on France ("So bloody were the pagan victories/Small reason to rejoice the victor has") and by a direct rebuke in a familiar formulaic passage:<sup>20</sup>

ma né goder potiam, né farne festa,  
sentendo i gran ramarichi e l'angosce,  
ch'in veste bruna e lacrimosa guancia  
le vedovelle fan per tutta Francia.

...castighino le man rapaci e ladre,  
che suore, e frati e bianchi e neri e bigi  
violato hanno, e sposa e figlia e madre;

[Yet we cannot rejoice at such a feat.  
We feel too much the anguish and the woe  
Of weeping women garbed in widows' weeds,  
The sad young victims of your valient deeds.

...[The French/Italian forces]  
Which neither convents spared, nor monasteries,  
No mercy showed to mother, daughter, bride]<sup>21</sup>

Ariosto formally invokes rhetorical conventions surrounding this trope ("Anguished Ravenna! Better it had been / By far, if no resistance you had made") but the sequence points repeatedly to culpability rather than exculpation.<sup>22</sup> Historical Ravenna allows Ariosto to sever the pillages of

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 14.2.4-5.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 14.1.1-2.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 14.7.1-8.5. In his translation, Harington contracts the reference to war-rape to "unchast and bloodie hands" (14.7.6), from Ariosto's extended "frati e bianchi e neri e bigi/ violato hanno, e sposa e figlia e madre" (14.8.5-6).

<sup>22</sup> *OF*, 14.9.1-2.

the *Furioso* from their rhetorical models, and thereby to point real fingers at real people doing real damage.

Commentators have gestured to the potential impact of Ravenna, as well as the sack of Rome fifteen years later, on Ariosto's psyche and poetic output.<sup>23</sup> It is not difficult to spot a connection between Orlando throwing Cimosco's gun into the depths and a battle featuring "the most violent cannonade between armies in the field that the world had yet seen."<sup>24</sup> In his *History and Warfare*, Michael Murrin untangles these links: anxiety about Alfonso's gun obsession, awareness of the impact of new artillery on cavalry, and discomfort with pillage as a tool of war all come together at Ravenna and play out in the *Furioso*. Murrin's discussion of Ravenna is embedded within a larger argument about how sixteenth-century poets responded to "new tactics of terror" and a changing landscape of warfare.<sup>25</sup> Some poets, like Ariosto, reacted to "the agonies of cities" with criticism of the victors, regardless of their own political connections to the conquerors.<sup>26</sup> Murrin offers a compelling reading of Ariosto's view of the siege which "marked his poetry" more than any other contemporary conflict: "For him the people of Ravenna were neighbors and could be allies at a future time. Alliances shifted among the city states, and a foe could easily become a friend, so the sack of Ravenna made no sense. The immediate strategic advantage of terror... would not outweigh the hatred caused."<sup>27</sup> This paints the picture of an author who is both politically astute and ethical, sufficiently concerned with the contemporary abuses of war to stage resounding rebukes of violence in his poetry.

Murrin, in focusing on the historicity of Renaissance epic, cordons his discussion to Ariosto's explicit depictions of warfare. Quint suggests that Ariostan warfare should be further

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<sup>23</sup> See discussion in, Casadei, "History," esp. 57; 68.

<sup>24</sup> F.L. Taylor, *The Art of War in Italy 1494-1529* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 188.

<sup>25</sup> Murrin, *Warfare*, 203; see 124-126 for discussion of Ravenna.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 83. "Ariosto condemned the French sack of Ravenna, though his duke acted as a French ally" (202).

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 124; 203.

divided into two periods: the "duels, sea tempests, and attempted rapes" of the romantic *Orlando furioso* and darker Lucanian scenes of the *Cinque Canti*.<sup>28</sup> Quint argues, following Albert Ascoli, that while the *Furioso* "discloses...a world of chivalry in considerable crisis," the poem is nevertheless characterized by "ironic containment" that is subsequently dissolved in the later fragment.<sup>29</sup> In fact, Ariosto's criticism of violence appears not only during explicit scenes of warfare, but also in the scenes of violent substitution presented throughout the poem. The darkness of the *Furioso* is not successfully contained by its irony, nor does containment appear to be the poet's purpose. Rather, the finished epic deliberately presages the dissolution that characterizes the fragment, by visibly staging the costs extracted by the victories of romance.

Ariosto inherits a rhetorical tradition that is conventionally leveraged to absolve the powerful, an abdication of responsibility that allows for the winners' victory to be costless. Drawing on his experience of the aftermath of Ravenna, the poet enacts the scene instead of placing it within an oration by one of the captains, separating the trope further from its function in rhetorical treatises and closer to its *locus classicus*, the actual sack of actual Troy. The result is a sequence deriving as much from Ravenna as from the ekphrastic exemplar, which reverses conventional deployment of the trope to critique rather than acquit captains. Indeed, Ariosto makes this poetic capability explicit in the lunar sequence, in a well-known section emphasizing the poet's ability to reverse a narrative and incriminate a patron: "The Greeks defeated, Troy victorious / And chaste Penelope notorious."<sup>30</sup> Ariosto implicates romance and rhetoric in the violence of the outside world. He shows that tropes can themselves be violent, can feed off, sustain, and legitimate abuses. Quint, like Giamatti, contends that the *Furioso's* assault of the

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<sup>28</sup> Quint, *Cinque Canti*, 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-26n20.

<sup>30</sup> *OF*, 35.27.7-8.

mare represents "chivalry's mad subconscious."<sup>31</sup> I am not so sure. Rather, this is Ariosto staging chivalry's consciousness, and his own conscience. The rape of Biserta, of Ravenna; the substitution of the mare or the female servant; the stolen cubs of the tigress—these sustain the genre. Routine brutality is the dark counterpoint to the exceptionalism of a Baiardo or an Orlando; it is what allows Charlemagne's horse to get out of the water, for chivalry to live another day.

Many of the figures discussed in this piece receive an encore at Biserta: tortoises and cats, mothers grieving lost children, dead horses and violated women. Animals and females are officially beyond the bounds of warfare, but it is on them that the costs intentionally fall. It is immaterial whether the denizens of this town—or Harfleur, or Ravenna, or Margaret or Dalinda or the anonymous mare—consent to the violence directed at them. Ariosto shows that consent is a pretext, helping to hide a ruthless extraction of value that proceeds regardless of resistance. He corrects the ekphrastic convention, putting culpability where it belongs. Unlike Spenser or Tasso, Ariosto is not particularly interested in virtuous exempla, but rather in scenes of virtue compromised. What he depicts with his substituted animals is not Giamatti's complacent humanist vision of excess and restraint, but romance's brittle system of excess and cost. He implicates the structural economy of romance in the violence that is its bread and butter, showing how the easy conflation of suffering and comfort, *nero e bianco*, sustain these loose facsimiles of a world where powerful men are free to treat *arme* and *amori* like the same thing.

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<sup>31</sup> Quint, *Cinque Canti*, 43.

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