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Caballos de papel y tinta: Equines and the Human-Equine Relationship in Latin American Literature

By

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

From the 16th century cartas sent back to the Iberian Peninsula by the Spanish to 20th century works by Clarice Lispector, horses walk, trot, and canter across the pages of many Latin American classics. In the subsequent five chapters, I explore representations of equines and the horse/human relationship as depicted in selected works of a diverse literary corpus in both Spanish and Portuguese. In Chapter 1, I analyze early colonial accounts to demonstrate that while the horse was frequently framed as a fearsome bioweapon, it was neither invincible nor exclusively advantageous to Spanish forces. Indigenous actors not only adapted to but also appropriated equine power, complicating traditional conquest narratives. In Chapter 2, I analyze the 19th century feminist and abolitionist novel *Sab* by Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda and trace how the horse is both symbol and metaphor that can foster discussions on race and class. Furthermore, there is an affective relationship between horse and Sab himself made up of liquid emotions—saliva, sweat, tears, and blood—that broker their inclusion in a community of the subaltern. In Chapter 3, my readings of the gauchesque tradition in *Martín Fierro*, *La vuelta de Martín Fierro*, and *O gaúcho* demonstrate how human-horse relationships are shaped by competing epistemologies. Notably, the prevalence of care-based interactions in certain texts both recalls ancient practices and anticipates contemporary frameworks in Animal Studies, particularly the concept of “making-kin.” Chapter 4 explores how the donkey is portrayed in two early 20th century Brazilian texts (*Fabulas* by Monteiro Lobato and “O burrinho pedrês” by João Guimaraes Rosa). Both invert the typical literary representation of this much-maligned animal and suggest a reconsideration of both humans and animals. In Chapter 5, the female narrators in Lispector’s texts undergo a “becoming-horse,” an expression of the narrator’s desire to escape the patriarchal capitalist society she lives in, a “becoming-animal” as conceived of by Gilles

Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Taken together, these texts reveal that equines are far more than a marginal presence in Latin American literary and cultural production: it is a dynamic figure through which questions of power, affect, identity, cosmology, and relationality are negotiated.

Introduction

With the possible exception of dogs, horses are arguably the domestic animal with the closest historical relationship with humans. Since equines were domesticated in Kazakhstan over 6000 years ago (Raulff 327), horses and humans have had a special and complex relationship, at times collaborative and at others exploitative. Horses have long been studied through the veterinary sciences and by historians. But in addition to being the subject of scholarly scientific and historical work, horses are also present in literature, especially Latin American literature. While there is a plethora of scientific and historical investigations on horses, scholarly works on representations of these animals in literature are more scarce. In Iberia and Latin America, horses have been everything from cart-pulling conveniences, to companions, to comrades in combat. The literary representations of such an animal reveal the human-animal relationships of societies at the time, in turn allowing us to reflect on their ethical, social, and political priorities.

From classic books like *The Horse of the Americas* by Robert Moorman Denhardt (1948) to more recent contributions such as *Une histoire du cheval* (2003) by Jean-Pierre Digard, *Farewell to the Horse: A Cultural History* (2017) by Ulrich Raulff, and most recently *Hoof Beats: How Horses Shaped Human History* (2024) by William Taylor, a variety of works have been written about the cultural and sociological history of the horse. Kathryn Renton even investigates how the human-horse relationship manifested in early modern Spain and Portugal in her 2024 book *Feral Empire: Horse and Human in the Early Modern Iberian World*. However, in addition to being the subject of scholarly historical work, horses are also present in literature, and merit study. Mario Ortiz-Robles argues in *Literature and Animal Studies*, “Animals have always been part of literature, but their presence [...] has been as marginal as it has been

constant” (1). Susan McHugh in “Literary Animal Agents” concurs: “Animals abound in literature across all ages and cultures, but only rarely have they been the focal point of systematic literary study” (487). Equines in particular have been present in literature since Antiquity, but literary studies have, until now, largely left them on the sidelines.¹

The horse has briefly been touched upon in Peninsular Spanish literature, particularly in Medieval and Golden Age contexts. This is perhaps unsurprising, given the history of *novelas de caballería* or chivalric romances. As Ortiz Robles points out, horses are “...the only animal after which a major literary genre, and indeed a whole era, is named—the cheval (horse in French) of the chivalric romance...” (29). Who can imagine Cid el Campeador without Babieca; or Don Quixote without Rocinante? Several essays including “El rocín terco y el caballo mágico: Don Quijote como jinete” by Wolfram Nitsch and “The Knight With No Horse: Defining Nobility in Late Medieval and Early Modern Castile” by Kathryn Renton exemplify the increasing scholarly interest on the horse in early Spanish literature.

Perhaps one of the most well-known and memorable literary equines in both Hispanic tradition and worldwide, Rocinante, shows up in the late Renaissance with the publication of the first modern novel *Don Quijote*. The protagonist Don Quixote would not be *un caballero andante* and, indeed, his adventures never would have taken place without Rocinante, his noble steed. Rocinante, whose name in Spanish is a play on words for “formerly a nag”, is a mirror of his rider and his similarly modest beginnings. Perhaps in a manifestation of the dictum “Dime con quién andas, decirte he quién eres” (635) this pattern in which steeds reflect their riders is present throughout the novel both physically (ex: the short and portly Sancho Panza rides a

¹ Books that do explore horses in literature and culture tend to focus more on the horse in Anglophone contexts (Shakespeare, etc) rather than Hispanic or Lusophone contexts. See *The Horse as Cultural Icon: The Real and Symbolic Horse in the Early Modern World* (2011) by Karl A.E. Enenkel and *The Culture of the Horse: Status, Discipline, and Identity in the Early Modern World* (2005) edited by Karen Raber and Treva Tucker.

humble donkey, the homely peasant girls also ride donkeys) and relationally (ex: Sancho's donkey and Rocinante have a friendship similar to that of their riders). Don Quixote's identity as a (poor) rider is explored in Wolfram Nitsch' "El rocín terco y el caballo mágico: Don Quijote como jinete". The sonnet at the beginning of the novel, "Diálogo entre Babieca y Rocinante," as Adrienne Martin points out, follows a tradition of equines critiquing their owners that is seen in other works of the time by Góngora and Quevedo ("Lectura comentada de los versos preliminares").² However, as *Don Quixote* is a Peninsular novel, these questions fall outside the scope of this dissertation. I will leave further discussion for a future investigation.

Similar research of literary analysis on horses in Latin American literature yield a small number of books and essays. One of the first results from an investigation of "literary horses in Latin America" is a book, *The Horse in Literature and Film: Uncovering a Transcultural Paradigm* (2017) (Francisco LaRubia-Prado), which has only one chapter on Hispanic literature, and that one chapter is Peninsular focused: "'Horses as Gift' - *Cantar de Mio Cid* [Poem of the Cid]. Where works on animals in Latin American literature do exist, studies specifically on the horse are scarce and seem mostly only in the context of broader investigation on animals: Manuel Larrú Salazar and Sara Viera Mendoza discuss animals, including the horse, in José María Arguedas's literary production in their article "Animales del aire, de la tierra y del subsuelo en la obra literaria de J.M. Arguedas" (2011). Liliana Colanzi's 2017 dissertation "Of Animals, Monsters, and Cyborgs. Alternative Bodies in Latin American Fiction (1961-2012)" briefly mentions the horse during her analysis of Argentine author Martín Felipe Castagnet's *Los cuerpos del verano*, focusing on the corporeality of the animal. Arguably the most-studied equine

² Further research suggests that this "*burla equina*" is also present in the New World, as seen in "Romance 2.º. Conversación de dos mulas y un caballo en la Plaza Mayor de Lima" by Peruvian Fray Francisco del Castillo. Refer to page 88 of *Antología de la literatura burlesca del Siglo de Oro: Burla y sátira en los virreinos de Indias* by Cabanillas-Cárdenas for more information.

representation in Latin American literature is that of Clarice Lispector: the Lispectorian horse has appeared in at least two dissertations and one article. However, the work done on horses in Clarice Lispector's oeuvre is an exception to the rule and it is clear that a more thorough study of the horse in Latin American literature is still lacking.

Horses are not as foreign to the New World as one might think. According to Paul S. Martin in *Twilight of the Mammoths: Ice Age Extinctions and the Rewilding of America (Organisms and Environments)*, prehistoric "...horses evolved here, flourished for tens of millions of years, and vanished around 13,000 years ago, their arrival with the Spanish [...] was a restoration, not an alien invasion" (56). In *Farewell to the Horse: A Cultural History* (2017), Ulrich Raulff concurs and highlights the importance of this "restoration": "...America was a continent without horses when the Spanish Conquistadores introduced them at the end of fifteenth century as domestic animals, thus setting in motion some of the most amazing dynamics of modern history, in both zoological and anthropological terms" (74). This return of horses to the New World was immediately reflected in literary and cultural production: first in the chronicles of the Iberian conquistadors and later in Latin American fiction.

While the horse has been present in Latin American literature since its very beginnings, the role of literary horses has only recently begun to be investigated. In 2022, scholar Elisabetta Rodio published "Desde Hernández hasta Haraway: Gaucho y Caballo como Companion Species," and in 2025, presented "The Forgotten Workforce: A Critical Examination of Horses in Baldomero Lillo's 'Sub Terra'" at the LASA (Latin American Studies Association) conference in San Francisco. Aside from Rodio, few scholars have published critical work analyzing the interstices of literature and horses. In my dissertation, I hope to bring the horse out from the margins and onto center stage. The prevailing tropes and symbolic uses of the horse, as well as

literary horses that defy and break free of said tropes to work in more elaborate ways, can illuminate the human- animal relationships of societies at the time and broaden our understanding of their ethical, social, and political priorities.

The present investigation of the horse and human-horse relationships in Latin American literature, falls under the umbrella of ecocriticism, particularly under Animal Studies in Literature. First, what is ecocriticism? According to Junquera et al. in *Ecocríticas: Literatura y medio ambiente*, ecocriticism as we know it today only emerged around the beginning of the 1990s when “[u]n grupo de jóvenes investigadores, ecologistas, se plantearon unir su interés por la literatura y por la naturaleza...” (15). So this theoretical framework is fairly recent, but exactly what is it? In *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*, Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm provide a simple definition: “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” (xvii). They also mention how ecocriticism expands the reach of established literary studies: “Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theories “the world” is synonymous with society - the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere” (xix). And this ecosphere is not limited to plants and landscapes: “...nature per se is not the only focus of ecocritical studies of representation” (Glotfelty and Fromm xxiii). Animals are among the numerous topics forming part of “nature” that ecocriticism can analyze and address (Glotfelty and Fromm xxiii). Second, what is Animal Studies in Literature? This dissertation falls into the category of Human-Animal Studies, which is slightly different from Animal Studies and Critical Animal Studies fields. As opposed to Critical Animal Studies, which centers on animal rights issues, this field has occasionally been criticized for not having a strong political or activist compromise (Gruen 11). However, its value lies elsewhere: the preface to

Literature and Animal Studies, Mario Ortiz Robles argues that “[...] literature, the discipline within the humanities best equipped to account for the figurative character of our engagement with the world, can tell us something valuable about animals that we would otherwise ignore” (ix - x). Similarly, Bough argues that “[h]ow we represent animals both reflects our attitudes towards them and affects our treatment of them” (56). I coincide with Ortiz Robles and Bough and go one step further to argue that literature can tell us something important not only about animals, but about ourselves as well.

In the subsequent five chapters, I employ key concepts from Animal Studies in my analysis of the horse and the human-horse relationship in selected literary works. These concepts include several which are present in the compendium *Critical Terms for Animal Studies*—anthropocentrism, biopolitics, empathy, kinship, and representation, to name a few—as well as related critical theories proposed by Donna Haraway (making-kin), and Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (becoming-animal). These concepts and critical theories allow us to reflect on both literary human-horse relationships and real human-horse relationships. According to Wolfe in the “Animal Studies,” Disciplinarity, and the (Post)Humanities” chapter of his book *What is Posthumanism?*, “...one can engage in a humanist or a posthumanist practice of a discipline” (123). Following the critic’s idea, in my project, I have also attempted to engage in a humanist practice of Animal Studies wherein I look at humans and horses in conjunction using Animal Studies frameworks.

In order to carry out my Animal Studies in Literature project, I make use of a variety of objects of study. The selected works in Spanish and Portuguese that serve my purpose are not new: they have been analyzed previously by scholars using frameworks from postcolonialism to gender studies. However, to this date, readings of these classics from the perspective of Animal

Studies in literature have been scarce, and readings focused on literary horses are almost nonexistent. The works chosen as the objects of my study were selected not only because of the mere presence of the horse in the text, but because previous critical approximations neglected to explore how the horse functions in the text (as symbol, for example) and/or how the human/horse relationship is depicted and the implications of that depiction.

In Chapter 1, I examine crónicas written by Spanish and mestizo authors as well as Indigenous accounts and artistic/cultural pieces in the 16th and 17th centuries. This chapter is unique in that it deals with nonfiction works, and consequently the interpretation of the horse and the human/horse relationship in the selected texts is not only literary but also historical. I found that the horse, while often depicted as a fearsome bioweapon by both parties (but not always), was also not necessarily an invincible creature. Nor did the advantages of equine power only benefit the Spanish—Indigenous actors overcame fear of the animal, learning to ride and leveraging the animal in mounted combat against the invaders. This chapter supports current postcolonial scholarship that questions the original narrative of the conquest.

In Chapter 2, I analyze the 19th century abolitionist novel *Sab* by Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda. While some might think that the horse and the human/horse relationship in this novel is a peripheral question, it is actually rich ground for multiple analyses that deal with questions of race, class, and affect. The horse mirrors the protagonists themselves, from Sab and Carlota to Enrique. Additionally, the affective relationship between Sab and his beloved jaco negro is constituted of liquid emotions—saliva, sweat, tears, and blood—that broker their inclusion in a community of the subaltern.

Chapter 3 examines classic 19th and 20th century gauchesque literature: *Martín Fierro* and *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* by José Hernández and *O gaúcho* by José de Alencar. I analyze

the human-horse relationship in these texts as it pertains to the gaucho process of breaking or taming horses. I identify actions and attitudes that reflect two methods, *doma gaucha* and *doma India*, which respectively relate to Judeo-Christian and Indigenous worldviews. This relationship reveals how cosmologies and religion can influence literary relationships with animals. In this chapter, I argue that the predominant method used by gaucho protagonists in *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* and *O gaúcho* depicts mutual care, reciprocity, and interconnectedness, and thus constitutes a prescient example of the modern Animal Studies concept of making-kin.

Chapter 4 pivots in order to focus on the representation of what is often considered a second-class equine: the donkey. I also switch genres; the objects of study for this chapter are a novella and a collection of fables from early 20th century Brazil. “O burrinho pedrês” by João Guimarães Rosa and *Fabulas* by Monteiro Lobato both problematize the trope of the “*burro*” or “stupid donkey”. The former inverts the trope and redeems the donkey as more intelligent than both horses and humans. The latter also adds further dimension to the humble *burro*; depicting donkeys as metaphorical figures for humans (complex, heterogenous) in many fables while characterizing them as dumb in others. The inversion of a negative trope is powerful and encourages readers to rethink their prejudices against both donkeys themselves and what they represent allegorically.

Finally, Chapter 5 looks at two 20th century works from Brazilian author Clarice Lispector. These two works; “Seco estudo de cavalos” from the published collection *Onde estivestes de noite* and a section of *A paixão segundo G.H.*, are almost identical. I explore how the seemingly bizarre and enigmatic human-horse relationship in the texts is actually a “becoming-horse”, a philosophical concept created by Deleuze and Guattari. Despite the somewhat misleading term, this is not a literal transfiguration into an equine body, but rather a

political act of non-identity. I use 5 key facets of “becoming-animal”, as identified by Woodward, to work through how the human-horse relationship in Lispector’s texts embodies this concept.

In future investigations, I envision expanding the scope of my project. I chose to focus my analysis on prose works rather than poetry.³ However, it bears mentioning that two very different poems represent the horse not only through content, but also form: “Mi caballero” by Cuban José Martí and “Rondó dos cavalinhos” by Brazilian Manuel Bandeira. While one poem is in Spanish and the other in Portuguese, and one touches on familial affection while the other comments on global politics, they can be looked at in conjunction. “Mi caballero” is a brief twenty line poem written in free verse. The topic of the poem is the poetic voice (presumably Martí himself) reflecting on playing with his young son: his son always wakes him with a kiss and then playfully pretends to ride him like a horse, using his father’s hair as reins and his own little heels as spurs. The poem is very tender and sweet. In addition to the horse’s obvious presence in the son’s play with his father, horses are inherent to the form of the poem itself. The rollicking rhythm of the poem created by five-syllable metric evokes the rhythm of a cantering or galloping horse, bringing the reader into the scene. In turn, “Rondó dos cavalinhos” is slightly longer, composed of four stanzas of four verses each before one closing stanza of seven verses. Its topic is also more complex. The poetic voice is at Rio de Janeiro’s Jockey Club, watching the horses race in style and luxury, as indicated by the five-times repeated refrain “Os cavalinhos correndo,/ E nós, cavalões, comendo...”. As it was published during the age of WWII, the poem is also a commentary on the elite. The elite here are compared to “cavalões” watching from the sidelines as the political state of the world descends into mayhem. Similarly to “Mi caballero”,

³ The exception is the epic poem *Martín Fierro*.

the form of the poem reflects its content, with the repetitive seven-syllable metric rhythm suggesting the galloping of the “cavalinhos correndo”.

In sum, this dissertation explores the representations of horses and the human-equine in selected fiction and nonfiction prose⁴ written in Latin America. To borrow a phrase from Podberscek et. al, the goal of this dissertation is to be “illustrative rather than exhaustive” (2).

⁴ In Chapter 1, I expand the definition of literature to include visual works. This was a conscious decision made in order to include not only Spanish voices in Latin America, but also Indigenous Latin American voices.

Chapter 1

Manipulation and Resistance: Horses in the Literature and Iconography of the Spanish Conquests of Peru and Mexico

The prevailing historical view is that horses were essential to the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Prominent twentieth-century historians, including Robert Denhardt and Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham, reiterate this understanding of the horse as indispensable. In *The Horse of the Americas* (1947), Denhardt quotes conquistador Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera, ““Horses are the most necessary things in the new country because they frighten the enemy most, and after God, to them belongs the victory”” (Denhardt 33). Other conquerors and chroniclers of the time including Bernal Díaz del Castillo, Hernán Cortés, Álvaro Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, Garcilaso de la Vega, and Pedro de Valdivia, to name only a few, made similar claims highlighting the importance of horses in intimidating the natives and conquering the Americas (Abbass 21-22). Denhardt goes so far as to assert that “Obviously the great conquest would have been impossible without horses” (33). Cunninghame Graham agrees with the previous assertion in *The Horses of the Conquest*, declaring that the Spaniards “... scarcely could have conquered empires as great as México, or as Peru, without their horses to assist them in the task” (11). Graham also points out that “...numerous accounts of the fear the Indians had of horses are to be found in all the accounts penned by the conquerors” (30). Like Denhardt, Graham refers to Hernán Cortés, Bernal Díaz del Castillo, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega as “chief authorities” on the topic of horses in the conquest. However, more recent scholarly work challenges this notion. Authors including D.K. Abbass, Marcy Norton, and Christopher Valesey all suggest a more nuanced explanation of the role of horses in the conquest of the Americas.

To begin with, Abbass opposes this historical narrative, arguing that the importance of the horse in the conquest revolves around a myth originating with the conquistadors themselves and perpetuated by Eurocentric views. Besides the Spaniards' obvious relationship with horses (stemming from a history of chivalric romances and mounted combat against the Moors), Spaniards had practical motivation to emphasize the role of horses in the conquest. In their written correspondence with royal audiences in Europe they requested authorization of more horses to be sent to the Americas (Abbass 39). She also explains that despite the common narrative that the native Americans were afraid of the horses, "[...] there are many reports of stalwart native American resistance to horses, and descriptions of incidents in which they [horses] were useless or even a disadvantage to the Spaniards" (21). Valesey asserts the same: that the horse's vulnerabilities were identified and taken advantage of by native combatants (13). Valesey also goes on to cite studies on Mesoamerican manuscripts showing that "[...] Spaniards' indigenous allies immediately fought alongside men on horse" and "[...] Nahuas' general response to horses could be better characterized as one of fascination and partnership rather than fear" (13). Norton reiterates the limits of equine power: "The ability of horses to assist in battle was largely dependent on attacks taking place on optimal terrain: open, dry, level ground" (81) and points out that "...in regions where horses could not be used effectively, Indigenous people had the advantage" (82). She also mentions that the traps and weapons invented by the Indigenous people to take down horses were as novel to the Europeans as the horses were to the Indigenous people (82). Like Valesey, Norton indicates that Indigenous people readily learned to ride and fought against the colonizers on horseback (82). These studies show that the 20th century notion of horses as virtually invincible military weapons is inaccurate.

This chapter will further investigate the veracity of the historical understanding of horses as crucial to the Mexican and Peruvian contexts. To do so, I will examine literary and cultural products from the initial colonial period from conquistadors, mestizo authors and Indigenous groups in Mexico and Peru. The principal objects of study for Mexico are written letters by Hernán Cortés, records by Bernal Díaz del Castillo, the Azcatitlan codex, and the Florentine Codex. For Peru, the objects of study are the oral testimonies from a 1571 trial, Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's written works *Comentarios reales de los Incas* and *Historia General del Perú*, and the pictorial art found on a four-handled bowl from the Vilcabamba, Cusco region.

While this dissertation's main focus is literary analysis, the definition of literature in this chapter has been extended to include oral and pictorial cultural artifacts from Indigenous people living in what is now Peru and Mexico. Had the focus remained only on traditional literature (i.e. the letters sent back to Spain by the colonizers, written records by mestizos), Indigenous voices from this time period would not have been heard, since neither the Incas nor the Mexica had what we would consider a traditional writing system pre-colonization. Instead, they had visual traditions. In the case of Mexico, as Fitzpatrick Sifford notes, Indigenous artists or *tlacuiloque* "...were trained in the Aztec-Mixtec writing tradition, a technique that combined ideographic, phonetic, pictographic, and mathematical elements to create what Miguel León-Portilla describes as 'true works of literature'" (227). To complement the Latin American literary works that I will analyze in this dissertation, I will also take into account these "true works of literature" and their representations of the horse. In this way, I will join contemporary scholarship and suggest a more complicated view than what historians have traditionally espoused. While much of Spanish literature does represent horses as indispensable in the colonial project, other literature and Indigenous cultural products of the time suggest that the initial phase of intimidation was brief.

Background

Looking at the representations of the horse in the context of the Spanish conquest is particularly revealing. First of all, the horse was likely not autochthonous to the New World at that time— although some fringe scholars would argue otherwise, as is explained in more detail in the following section.

Second, the two human groups involved—the Spanish conquistadors and the Indigenous Americans—likely had radically different worldviews concerning human and non-human animals. As Marcy Norton explains, Christianity traditionally holds a hierarchical view that starkly contrasts with many Indigenous worldviews:

Genesis presents the singularity of people—unique because they alone were made in the image of this God—whereas Indigenous creation stories show all kinds of beings possessing subjectivity or personhood. Genesis insists on humans’ superiority, given their proximity to God and preordained “dominion,” while Indigenous creation stories that tell of animals’ and plants’ human ancestry highlight kinship across species. (2)

Thus, the Christian Spanish conquistadors, despite seeing the horses’ “subjectivity” and considering them “essential collaborators” since they had higher status than “object” livestock animals (Norton 4), likely maintained that people (at least white, male, Christian people) were superior to horses. It is harder to ascertain Indigenous Peruvian or Mexican ontological understandings of these new animals due to lack of written record in the first years of interaction. However, Indigenous Peruvians were recorded talking to animals in the 17th century (O’Toole 53), a potential indicator of an alternative understanding of animals.

Third, the horse's introduction to the Americas and its Indigenous people was inextricably linked with violence, despite the horse's natural propensity towards flight over fight as Ulrich Raulff observes in *Farewell to the Horse* (2017):

We domesticate and breed horses, befriend them and use them for our own ends. The astonishing thing is that the whole process still functions even if mankind's end goals run contrary to the nature of his four-legged colleague. Unlike man, the horse is by nature a prey animal which flees at the slightest hint of danger. (8-9)

The horse, through human coercion, has been forced to abandon its propensity towards flight, instead being encouraged to fight alongside humans as a weapon in confrontations from wars to conquest and colonization in the Americas. The conquistadors overwhelmingly represent the horse as an indispensable, highly intimidating comrade in combat. As Raulff pointed out, horses made large scale conquest possible:

“...the horse paved the way, historically speaking, for a new kind of power politics, the politics of conquest, to be engaged in on a major scale. As a machine of speed, the horse was a first-rate weapon of war [...] In a word, as a vector in animal form, the horse became a political animal and the most important companion of Homo sapiens” (9).

The horse as a political animal, a fearsome and even supernatural bioweapon is one of the primary literary and iconographic representations examined in this chapter. However, horses were later represented as useful to the Indigenous people in their fight against the conquistadors. Cary Wolfe, in “Human, All Too Human: ‘Animal Studies’ and the Humanities” (2009) acknowledges that “...animals and our interactions with them have historically shaped our world quite apart from questions of the intentionality or understanding of the animals concerned” (569). While, as I will seek to demonstrate, the horses were perhaps unwitting collaborators and

bioweapons in the colonial project, they were also quickly adopted by some Indigenous groups as advantageous partners in resistance against the colonizers. The question, then, is how did horses end up in Peru and Mexico in the first place? The history of horses in the Western hemisphere is both older and more contested than could be assumed.

Horses in the Americas

From the Spanish conquistador cavalry to Indigenous warriors on horseback and gauchos on the pampas, the story of the Americas cannot be told without the horse. But exactly how and when did horses become so enmeshed in the American social imaginary?

On the one hand, the prevailing scientific theory states that horses originated in the Americas around 4 million years ago and spread first to South America and later to Asia, Europe, and Africa (Schmidt). They then went extinct in the Americas at the end of the Pleistocene epoch, around 10,000 years ago. The exact reasons behind the extinction are still unknown, but likely include climate change, overhunting by Paleo-Indians, and/or a miniature ice age (Raulff 74-75). Following this theory, horses were only brought back to America by Europeans when they arrived in the New World in the late 15th century and early 16th century. Scholars thus conceptualize the arrival of European horses to the Americas as a “return of the native” (Martin 38). Consequently, Christopher Columbus was effectively “reintroducing” equines to the Western hemisphere when he brought along two dozen horses on his second voyage in 1493 (Roos). In 1519, Hernán Cortés brought 16 horses (whose physical appearance and aptitude for battle were all meticulously described for posterity) to the shores of Mexico, as recorded by Bernal Díaz del Castillo. Finally, in late 1531, Francisco Pizarro arrived for the first time in Peru with 30 horses (“Exploring the Early Americas”), at long last bringing back horses to the South American

continent. This theory of “reintroduction” is omnipresent, found in reputable sources like the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian and perpetuated in recent works like Raulff’s *Farewell to the Horse* and William Taylor’s *Hoof Beats* (2024).

On the other hand, some scholars contest this theory. Most notably, Yvette Running Horse Collin argues in her dissertation “The Relationship Between the Indigenous Peoples of the Americas and the Horse: Deconstructing a Eurocentric Myth” (2017) that the aforementioned narrative of “reintroduction” is in fact inaccurate. Collin posits that native people of the Americas were living alongside horses in the period that they were supposedly extinct, that is, before the arrival of the Europeans to North and South American shores in the 15th and 16th centuries. To support this groundbreaking claim, Collin takes an interdisciplinary approach. She notes the existence of scientific fossil records in the United States and the Yucatan Peninsula that appear to contradict the dominant narrative. In addition to anomalous fossil records, Collin provides several colonial records that suggest the presence of horses prior to the conquest. For example, Don Juan de Onate reported seeing large herds of horses in New México in 1598- when previous expeditions to this area by other explorers had not reported losing live horses anywhere near the area (Collin 36). And these anomalies were not limited to Spanish Conquistadors: Collin cites Henry S. Burrage’s report that the explorer Sir Francis Drake was surprised to see wild horses on his trip to northern California and southern Oregon (Collin 39). Collin also conducted interviews with Indigenous Americans from a variety of tribe affiliations in order to obtain traditional knowledge and oral histories. Among several thought-provoking testimonies, one of the Indigenous interviewees, a member of the Blackfoot nation, asserts that they “always had the horse, way before the settlers came” (Collin 88). Collin closes by acknowledging the need for

further research and genetic testing to determine conclusively whether horses were present in the post-Pleistocene Americas.

Whether or not horses survived the Ice Age and were known to some native Americans in Pre-Columbian times is still up for debate. However, at least in the Indigenous Peruvian and Mexican contexts, it seems quite unlikely that the Incas or Mexicas had horses prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. In the case of Peru, the unfamiliarity with the animal and associated mystical beliefs which I will explore further in the section “Horses in the Conquest According to Indigenous Peruvians,” suggest that the Incans had never seen a horse before Pizarro’s arrival in Peru in the 16th century. This is also corroborated more than once in *Comentarios Reales de los Incas* by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, a 16th century mestizo chronicler born of an Incan mother and Spanish father, who records in Chapter XVII of Book 8 that “No tuvieron los indios del Perú, antes de los españoles, más diferencias de doméstico ganado que las dos que hemos dicho, *paco y huanacu...*” (194). As de la Vega notes, while the Indigenous Peruvians had domestic camelids, they were unfamiliar with domesticated equines like horses. In another chapter of the same work, XVI of Book 9, he enumerates the animals and plants they did not have in Peru prior to the Spaniards’ arrival. Out of many animals, including cows, sheep, goats, and hunting dogs, the very first to be listed is the horse, revealing the great value placed on the animal:

“Primeramente es de saber que no tuvieron caballos ni yeguas para sus guerras o fiestas, ni vacas ni bueyes para romper la tierra y hazer sus sementeras, ni camellos ni asnos...” (252). Both of these passages seem to confirm that at least in pre-Columbian Peru, horses were extinct.

Similarly, Díaz de Castillo describes the people of Cholula coming out of their homes to see them because they had never seen “...men like us nor horses”: “E era tanta la gente que nos salía a ver, que las calles e azoteas estaban llenas; e no me maravillo dello, porque no habían visto

hombres como nosotros ni caballos”⁵ (247). These passages imply that, as in Peru, the Indigenous people in México were unfamiliar with horses prior to their colonial arrival, helping to explain why their use in warfare and intimidation tactics had such initial success.

Horses are also noticeably absent from pre-Columbian Indigenous art, further suggesting that they were not present in Peru prior to the arrival of the Spaniards. The Museo Larco, located in Lima Peru, has an extensive collection of Indigenous Peruvian art that can be admired both in person and via their online catalog. Pre-Columbian and pre-Incan cultures depicted a variety of animals: for example, in the Mochica culture, ceramic art takes the shape of animals from frogs and lizards to snakes and deer while in Cupisnique culture, pottery represents coastal animals like crabs. It stands to reason that if horses were present in pre-Columbian Peru, they would have appeared alongside the myriad of other animals in Indigenous art. However, this is not the case: out of over 40,000 ceramic, textile, metalwork and other pre-Columbian pieces in the Larco museum, not a single one depicts equines. With the aforementioned sources in mind, once again, it seems that at least in Peru and Mexico, horses were extinct and not known to the native people prior to the arrival of the Spaniards.

Writings by Bernal Díaz del Castillo indicate that native Mexicans, like native Peruvians, were at first unfamiliar with and indeed very intimidated by this large quadruped brought by Cortés in 1519. In Mexico, Bernal Díaz del Castillo records in Chapter XLVI that the people of Quiaviztlán at first did not come out to greet them because they were afraid of them and of their horses: “...e que de miedo se habían ausentado, hasta ver qué cosas éramos, porque tenían miedo de nosotros y de los caballos” (Díaz del Castillo 143). He also records that the indigenous people of Tabasco believed the horse and rider to be one centaur-like creature: “E aquí creyeron los

⁵ “The tops of the houses and streets were everywhere crowded with people to gaze upon us. And who can wonder? They had never before seen men like ourselves, nor any horses!” (*The Memoirs of the Conquistador*, 195)

indios que caballo y el caballero eran todo uno, como jamás habían visto caballo” (Díaz del Castillo 105). In Peru, Don Diego Cayo Inga testified that Atahualpa and his men “...decían que el hombre y el caballo eran todo uno...” (Guillén Guillén 115). Valesey argues that this idea that Indigenous people thought the horse and rider were a centaur is actually a Spanish myth and is not corroborated by postconquest Nahuatl sources (Valesey 28). The centaur, a fictitious half-man half-horse dating back to Greek mythology, is here linked with the initial colonization of the Americas.

There are many theories about how the Greeks first invented this mythological creature (Nash 276). One of these theories supposes that the centaur has its roots in historical events and was conceived of when ancient Greeks “misperceived or misinterpreted the first skilled horseback riders that they beheld”, who were likely Thessalians, Cimmerians, or Scythians from the north (Nash 276-277). The Greeks, upon first seeing a man riding on top of an animal, may have understood this sight as one creature instead of two separate animals (one human and one non-human). While this could have potentially also been the case in both Peru and Mexico when inhabitants saw invading men on horseback for the first time, it is important to note that neither culture had centaur myths and that the idea of a centaur is a European one. Additionally, had they ever thought horse and rider were one, they would have quickly been disabused of that notion when they looked closer at the Spaniards seated on top of saddles or saw them dismount their horses.

Both of the prior examples are mediated through third parties (Díaz del Castillo and a translator, respectively), and are thus of questionable veracity. Due to a dearth of first-person Indigenous accounts, it is difficult to discern whether Indigenous people in Peru and Mexico initially believed the Spaniards and their horses to be one creature, or whether they were just

surprised by a large, unfamiliar creature being ridden by a human. In any case, it is clear that the horse was initially intimidating to Indigenous people both in Mexico and Peru.

Hernan Cortés

A review of the *Cartas de Relación* that Cortés sent to King Charles V between July 1519 and September 1526 affirms both the omnipresence and the importance of the horse in the conquistador's reports of the conquest of Mexico. When Cortés takes account of their resources prior to entering into battle, horses are repeatedly listed alongside men and arms. Similarly, when he makes note of losses after conflicts, horses lost in battle are included alongside soldiers killed in action. The horses were clearly valued as comrades in combat.

Similarly, in a passage in the second *Carta de Relación*, the value of the horse is reiterated:

“...los indios [...] nos mataron un caballo que, aunque sabe Dios cuánta falta nos hizo y cuánta pena rescebimos con habérnosle muerto, porque no teníamos después de Dios otra seguridad sino la de los caballos...” (285)⁶

Cortés states that the horse was much needed, and after God, their main source of help. He could have cited arms or other weapons, but he chose the horse as their primary earthly assistance. Even in death, the horse continues to support the military effort, this time via providing sustenance to hungry troops. Cortés represents the horse as valuable for its practicality: as a comrade in arms in life and a timely meal in death.

However, a passage in the third letter of Cortés' *Cartas de Relación* suggests that the conquistadors' regard for the horses went beyond merely valuing them for their practical use.

⁶ “One horse was killed and, although God knows how much we needed it, and how sorry we were to have lost it, for after God we had no help save from the horses...” (*Letters From Mexico* 141)

During a battle, a Spaniard fell off his horse and his horse ran to the enemy, who shot it with arrows. The mare, mortally wounded, returned to the Spaniards and later died that same night.

Cortés comments on the loss,

“...aunque nos pesó mucho porque los caballos y yeguas nos daban la vida, no fue tanto el pesar como si muriera en poder de los enemigos, como pensamos que de hecho pasara...”
(411)⁷

Cortés, unsurprisingly, first acknowledges the strategic value of the horses in the conquest (“los caballos y yeguas nos daban la vida”). However, he then shows concern for the horse herself, expressing relief that at least she didn’t die in the hands of the enemy, who would surely have taken pleasure in killing her. If his only concern was retaining his valuable bioweapon, he wouldn’t have cared *where* the mare died, only *if* she did. While the horses were indeed first and foremost represented as bioweapons, at least some Spaniards, including Cortés himself, also had compassion for them and did not want their esteemed equine comrades to suffer.

Díaz del Castillo

Díaz del Castillo, a soldier who joined Cortés in the 16th century conquest of México, wrote an account of said expedition: *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la nueva España* (1568). In this account, he first faithfully records the horses of the expedition in detail, and like Garcilaso de la Vega records the initial fear the animal caused, before later recounting a key incident that sheds light on how both the Spaniards and the indigenous people viewed horses in the context of the conquest.

⁷ “...although we were much grieved by this loss, for our lives were dependent on the horses, we were pleased that she had not perished at the hands of the enemy, as we thought would happen, for their joy at having captured her would have exceeded the grief caused by the death of their companions” (*Letters from Mexico* 252)

To begin with, Díaz del Castillo describes the horses brought by members of the expedition in painstaking detail (see pages 76-77 of *Historia verdadera de la conquista de la nueva España*). He meticulously records their size, the colors of their coats and their particular physical strengths and weaknesses in battle. The English version of the account, *The Memoirs of the Conquistador Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Vol 1 (of 2) Written by Himself Containing a True and Full Account of the Discovery and Conquest of Mexico and New Spain*, even includes a note from the translator, John Ingram Lockhart, that acknowledges and explains the almost excessive detail paid to the horses:

Some readers may at first feel inclined to censure our author for going into minute particulars in describing the fitting out of the expedition under Cortes; for instance, his describing the qualities and colours of the horses; but all this, it will be seen, was of the utmost importance to his history, and of the horses he was bound to take special notice, for they performed a conspicuous part in the conquest. (V)

As Lockhart points out, the Spaniards saw their horses as indispensable in their colonial project. Cunninghame Graham in *The Horses of the Conquest* also points out the importance of the location of this passage in *Historia Verdadera*: the description of the horses comes before any description of the conquerors, even Cortés himself (Graham 63).

Curiously, while sixteen horses are described in this lengthy passage, only two of them are mentioned by name: *la Rabona* and *el Arriero*, translated by Lockhart as “the short tailed” and “the muleteer”, respectively. If the others had names, Díaz del Castillo either did not see fit to record them for posterity, or had forgotten them, writing 40 or 50 years later. This suggests that while it is possible the conquistadors felt amity and compassion for their fellow equine combatants, as seen in Cortés’s account of the wounded mare, they likely still saw them

primarily as vassal animals. This term, used by Marcy Norton in her book *The Tame and the Wild* (2024), designates animals “...whose purposes are... to collaborate in hunting and warfare” (297). She also points out that “The affectionate relationships that may emerge are secondary effects rather than the animal’s purpose” (297). The descriptions of the horses, with the exception of their coat colors, seem to revolve mainly around their usefulness in battle: how large, fast, or well trained they were.

Other passages corroborate this type of representation. For example, the horse is mentioned by Díaz del Castillo in Chapter XXVI in the context of an inventory of troops and weapons, suggesting that the horse was viewed as a bioweapon, much like a soldier. For the Spaniards, their horses, no matter how prized, seem to have been fellow combatants before they were beloved companions. As I will demonstrate in the following section, their names and personalities perhaps did not matter so much as their ability to manipulate the enemy.

Horse Behavior: Cortés’s Ruse

Bernal Díaz del Castillo recorded a key episode in which the Spaniards manipulated the indigenous people using a horse. In Chapter XXXV of his account, the Spaniards are reeling from an attack, and Cortés calls the caciques for a meeting with the hopes of preventing future violence. Cortés had observed that the indigenous people in Mexico were afraid of the horses, and devised a way to substantiate this fear with the ultimate goal of intimidating them into submission (109). He records Cortés coming up with the idea:

“Y como Cortés en todo era muy avisado, nos dijo riendo a los soldados que allí nos hallamos teniéndole compañía: ‘¿Sabéis, señores, que me parece que estos indios

temerán mucho a los caballos, y deben de pensar que ellos solos hacen la guerra, y ansimismo las lombardas?⁸” (109).

Cortés identified that the indigenous people, at this early moment in the conquest, were afraid of both their horses and their firearms. So, hid a mare, a female horse, out of sight of the indigenous people but in range of a stallion described as particularly “*rijoso*”, or lusty (109). The stallion predictably became excited from smelling the mare, and neighed, stomped, and essentially appeared ferocious and intimidating:

Y en aquel instante trujeron el caballo, que había tomado olor de la yegua, y átanlo no muy lejos de donde estaba Cortés hablando con los caciques; y como la yegua la habían tenido en el mismo aposento a donde Cortés y los indios estaban hablando, pateaba el caballo y relinchaba y hacía bramuras, y siempre los ojos mirando a los indios y al aposento adonde había tomado olor de la yegua. Y los caciques creyeron que por ellos hacía aquellas bramuras, y estaban espantados.⁹ (110)

This was a calculated ruse, the express purpose of which was to encourage the caciques to believe that the horses were angry with them for previous attacks. Cortés even warned his compatriots to not let the caciques see the horses or hear them beforehand (109), because it would clearly spoil the scheme if they noticed that stallions are naturally apt to neigh and stomp, particularly when in the presence of a mare. It would be difficult to trick the natives into

⁸ “Cortes, who profited by every circumstance, said smilingly to us: ‘It appears to me, gentlemen, that the Indians stand in great awe of our horses, and imagine that these and our guns alone fight the battle. A thought has just struck me which will further confirm them in this notion.’” (*The Memoirs of the Conquistador* 79)

⁹ “At this moment the stallion was brought and fastened at a short distance from the spot where Cortes and the caziques were holding the conference: as the mare was likewise near at hand, the stallion immediately began to neigh, stamp the ground and rear itself, while its eyes were continually fixed on the Indians who stood in front of Cortes's tent, as the mare was placed behind it. The caziques, however, thought the animal was making all these movements against them and appeared greatly agitated. When Cortes found what effect this scene had made upon the Indians, he rose from his seat, and walking to the horse, took hold of the bridle, and desired his servant to lead it away.” (*The Memoirs of the Conquistador* 79)

believing that the horses were angry with them if they were to find out that these are natural horse behaviors unrelated to their actions and unindicative of anger.

Y desde Cortés los vio de aquel arte, se levantó de la silla y se fue para el caballo, y mandó a dos mozos de espuelas que luego le llevasen de allí lejos; y dijo a los indios que ya mandó al caballo que no estuviese enojado, pues ellos venían de paz y eran buenos (110)¹⁰

Essentially, Cortés used his knowledge of horse behavior to trick and take advantage of the indigenous people. Norton, in a discussion of this same passage (2024), mentioned that this was actually the first of many ruses involving horses concocted by the conquistadors:

“Pleased with these outcomes, Cortés and other conquistadores orchestrated similar theatrical displays in Mesoamerica, and beyond, that featured equine power and, no less importantly, their human masters’ ability to deploy and constrain it” (80).

These power plays involving horses capitalize on the horse’s significant size and therefore inherent capacity to cause (purposeful or inadvertent) harm to humans. They also take advantage of the fact that the Indigenous people were not well versed in horse behavior, which can appear intimidating, but usually tends towards flight over fight.

Horses in Indigenous Mexican cultural products: Florentine Codex and Azcatitlan Codex

The Florentine Codex, comprising 12 books in total, is an invaluable 16th century compendium of information on Indigenous Mexican life before and during the conquest. Books 1 through 11 of the Codex cover pre-Columbian society before recounting the arrival of the

¹⁰ The caziques, however, thought the animal was making all these movements against them and appeared greatly agitated. When Cortes found what effect this scene had made upon the Indians, he rose from his seat, and walking to the horse, took hold of the bridle, and desired his servant to lead it away. Aguilar, however, was to make the Indians believe that he had ordered the horse not to do them any injury. (*The Memoirs of the Conquistador* 79)

Spaniards and the conflict between the colonizers and the Indigenous Mexicans in Book 12. The Codex was created by Spanish friar Bernardino de Sahagún and Nahua scholars and artists in the mid to late 16th century (Richter and Houtrouw). While the codex contains two columns of text, one in Nahuatl and one in Spanish, it also contains 2,472 images that combine European and Mexica artistic traditions (Richter and Houtrouw). The Nahuatl texts were written first, and then the Spanish, but it is important to note that the Spanish is not a faithful translation of the Nahuatl, rather, it both adds and omits information (Richter and Houtrouw). As both Richter and Houtrouw and Renton point out, there are really three narratives present: Nahuatl, Spanish, and pictorial.

Horses appear overwhelmingly in the twelfth book of the Florentine Codex by Bernardino de Sahagún et al. This stands to reason, as the final book relates the conquest by the Spaniards, while the preceding eleven books depict aspects of pre-columbian Indigenous life, including religion and social structure. This is another indication in favor of the traditional scientific theory that Indigenous Americans, at least in Mexico, were unfamiliar with horses before the conquest. The only mention of horses outside of Book 12, the section on the conquest, is on folio 16r of Book 11. Book 11 contains descriptions of native flora and fauna. Animals including fish, crustaceans, snakes, lizards, insects, butterflies, foxes, and pigs all make appearances within its over 500 pages. However, horses are conspicuously absent in all ways except for in a passing description of a Mexican deer. The deer's young are said to stand up and walk as soon as they are born, "...like lambs and colts do." This indicates that someone with knowledge of horses wrote this passage, either a Spaniard or an Indigenous person who had had close contact with foals.

The Florentine Codex contains a total of 45 images of horses, all of which appear in Book 12. As Renton points out (3), approximately one-third of the 157 total images in Book 12 contain horses. While some of these images corroborate the advantage that the Spanish enjoyed by employing horses in combat¹¹, many others show the natives engaged in combat with the mounted Spaniards¹². Still others depict native victory over both invaders¹³. The latter image, found in Folio 68r, is especially significant. In this macabre folio, a *tzompantli* or skull rack is loaded with a total of twelve decapitated heads. Eight are human, belonging to either Spaniards or their allies, and four are equine. This image is key to redefining the traditional understanding of how Indigenous people viewed horses in the early colonial era. Evidently, the Mexica who killed and decapitated the horses were not incapacitated by fear or by any beliefs about the horse's supernatural abilities. Instead, the equine enemies were taken down alongside their human riders. Clearly, at least some Indigenous authors depicted horses as conquerable foes rather than supernatural, insurmountable creatures. Kathryn Renton corroborates this view by indicating the intricacies of horse behavior that are depicted in the Codex, and concludes that "...the horse is not just a fearsome tool of Spanish conquest, but also the object of curiosity and careful observation, rendering the horse's life forces – sweat, saliva, breath, and vulnerability – alongside the violence" (Renton 11). Similarly, Vasey maintains that the Florentine codex "does not describe horses as devastating instruments of war" (45). The same appears to be true for the Azcatitlan codex.

The Azcatitlan codex was created in order to not only to record the history of the Mexica people by the Mexica, but also to depict this history to a European audience with power over

¹¹ Book 12, Folio 58r: "A Spanish horseman lances a Tlatelolcan warrior"

¹² Book 12, Folio 43r "Mexica warriors pursue the retreating Spaniards and their Indigenous allies"; Book 12, Folio 51r "Mexica warriors battle Spaniards near Mount Tonan"

¹³ Book 12, Folio 58r "Mexica warriors unhorse and kill a Spaniard"; Book 12, Folio 68r "The heads of sacrificed Spaniards, their allies, and four horses displayed on a tzompantli (skull rack) at Yacacolco" (Digital Florentine Codex, Getty)

them (Navarrete 145). Two artists, a master and an apprentice, worked together to create the Azcatitlan Codex, using both pre-Hispanic and European traditions (Rajagopalan 44). The exact date of creation is disputed. While the Library of Congress lists the year of creation as 1530, historian María Castañeda de la Paz argues it was created in the mid to late 1600s (Rajagopalan 13). Horses appear in two separate instances of the Azcatitlan codex: images 29 and 32.



Fig. 1 (Image 29. *Codex Azcatitlan*, 31 May 2025,

https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_15280/?sp=29)



Fig. 2 (Image 32. *Codex Azcatitlan*, 31 May 2025,

https://www.loc.gov/resource/gdcwdl.wdl_15280/?sp=32&st=image&r=-0.367,-0.08,1.805,0.863

0)

In the Florentine Codex, “...the horse is never depicted alone; throughout the codex horses are always mounted and accompanying the Spanish rider” (Renton 8). Similarly, when horses appear in the Azcatitlan codex, they are being led or ridden by Spaniards. The horse in image 29 of the codex is being led by a Black man, likely African conquistador Juan Garrido (Gutiérrez Flores 2025). The four horses in image 32 of the codex are being ridden by four Spaniards. In both of the Azcatitlan images, horses are never on their own, nor are they ever separated from the Spaniards. Horses are never depicted interacting directly with Indigenous

people. They are not depicted engaged in natural equine behaviors like grazing or playing. The animal only appears in the codices when it is relevant to the Spanish conquest, indicating that it was seen as inextricably linked with the Spaniards at this time period.

A closer look at Image 32 shows that three of the Spanish riders are mounted traditionally, facing forward, and one appears to be riding sidesaddle. Due to this traditionally feminine style of riding, this figure is likely a woman (Gutiérrez Flores 2025). The fact that a woman is present implies that the scene is not one of war. Additionally, all four horses are walking peacefully, and are depicted with expressive faces that almost appear to be smiling. This is in contrast to the argument that horses were solely depicted as weapons of war.

Other details suggest that the artists of the Azcatitlan Codex were familiar with horses by this time. First, the artists of the Azcatitlan Codex accurately depicted horses moving at a trot, showing a front leg and the opposite back leg moving together in both Image 29 and Image 32. Another detail is that the horse in Image 29 and one of the four horses in Image 32 are clearly shod with horseshoes. The nails holding the shoes to the outer hoof wall are clearly depicted with small dots. This detail suggests the author was familiar with the animals and their care and keeping, and perhaps was even involved with these processes. Even small details of horse anatomy, like the tufts of hair on the back of the fetlocks, are seen on some of the horses in the Azcatitlan codex. This is in contrast to inaccurate pictorial depictions by some Indigenous Peruvian groups that will be mentioned later.

In summary, horses are not depicted as insurmountable, wholly violent weapons of war in either the Florentine or Azcatitlan codex. In the Azcatitlan codex, neither of the two images depicts the horse actively engaged in violence. Instead, details like accurate gaits and horseshoes indicate that the artists were familiar with horses by this time, and not intimidated by them. In

the Florentine codex, while horses are depicted in combat, Folio 58 and Folio 68r clearly demonstrate that the horses were seen as mortal foes like any other.

Horses in the Conquest According to the Conquistadors of Peru

As mentioned previously, many Spanish conquistadors wrote about the horse and extolled its role in the conquest as nigh indispensable— chief among them Hernán Cortés, Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, and Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera (Abbass). In the case of Peru, the aforementioned mestizo chronicler Inca Garcilaso de la Vega famously said “‘Mi tierra se ganó a la jineta’, ‘My land was conquered a la jineta’”; jineta being a style of riding (Denhardt 20).

However, it is more challenging to find sources from the indigenous victims of the conquest. How did the indigenous people respond to the horse, and how did they represent it in their traditions? The lack of primary sources is partly explained by the fact that Indigenous cultures were of oral transmission, as Luis Millones points out in *Perú indígena: poder y religión en los Andes centrales*: “... el quechua, el aymara o el muchik eran idiomas de ejercicio oral, cuyas técnicas de transmisión nos son desconocidas”¹⁴ (130-131). However, the first depictions of the horse by native Peruvians can be traced through unexpected sources, which I will explore in the following sections.

Horses in the Conquest According to Indigenous Peruvians

1571 Testimonies

In *Versión inca de la conquista* (1974), Edmundo Guillén Guillén compiles eighteen testimonies from indigenous Peruvians given during a 1571 trial against Francisca Pizarro and

¹⁴ “...quechua, aymara, and muchik were oral languages, whose transmission techniques are unknown to us” (translation mine)

Hernando Pizarro. While the aim of the testimonies was to determine whether the Pizarros had misused funds during the Incan uprisings, the testimonies serve as a valuable first-person indigenous account of the Spanish conquest of Peru, as indicated by the title of Guillén Guillén's *Versión inca de la conquista* or, in English, *Incan Version of the Conquest*. These 1571 testimonies constitute an important primary source from the native perspective at a time when they were few and far between. Several of the testimonies also inadvertently reveal an initial native view of the horse, the animal perhaps most symbolic of Iberian colonialism.

Among the eighteen testimonies compiled by Guillén Guillén, five (almost one-third) mention the Spaniards' horses and their "*poder sobrenatural*"¹⁵ (Guillén Guillén 7). Witnesses Francisco Caroallaille, Don Gonzalo Zapayco, García Tocari, Hernando Curi Huaranga, and Don Diego Cayo Inga all recalled the horse in their testimonies. In all except for Curi Huaranga's account (which focused on the tactical advantage of the horse on certain terrain), mystical beliefs surrounding the horse are central. In the following section, I will examine those beliefs—from believing they had monstrous powers, to conflating horse anatomy with Spanish weapons, to misunderstanding that horses ate metal—and their associated implications.

To begin with, Don Gonzalo Zapayco reveals fantastical impressions of the horse in his testimony: namely, that horses breathed fire and could cut a man in half with their tails. Zapayco testifies:

"...cómo aquellos hombres que le habían preso al dicho Atauallipa que traían unas ovejas en que ellos se metían y que de un soplo echaban fuego y mataban muchos indios aunque

¹⁵ "supernatural power" (translation mine)

*estuviesen lejos donde estaba(n) y que con la cola cortaba un hombre por medio...*¹⁶

(Guillén Guillén 79-80).

Similarly to Zapayco's testimony, Don Diego Cayo Inga reiterates the belief that the horses' tails were arcabuses or swords used as weapons of war, and adds that the horse and human rider were thought to be one, centaur-like creature. Cayo Inga explains how even Atahualpa, the great Incan emperor, was initially intimidated by these animals: "...*el dicho Atabalipa ni la gente que con él iba hiciese resistencia alguna de armas ni de otra cosa porque luego se rindieron porque decían que el hombre y el caballo eran todo uno y que sacando el caballo la cola mataban los indios que pensaban que el arcabuz era la cola del propio caballo y lo mismo la espada*"¹⁷ (Guillén Guillén 115).

In three of the testimonies (those of Caroallaille, Zapayco, and Tocari) an important belief is seen: that horses ate precious metals, specifically gold and silver. Francisco Caroallaille mentions this belief, adding that the Spaniards themselves supposedly also ate these metals:

*"...habían venido a Caxamarca los españoles y que ellos y sus caballos comían oro y plata..."*¹⁸

(Guillén Guillén 41). Similarly, Zapayco refers to the "sheep" that ate gold and silver, and how the fear of them provoked the natives to gather all the treasure they could for the Spaniards

*"...aquellas ovejas comían oro y plata y así con el el gran miedo de esta nueva luego los dichos caciques e indios de esta provincia vio que juntaron todo lo que pudieron de joyas..."*¹⁹(Guillén

¹⁶ "...how those men that had captured the aforementioned Atahualpa brought some sheep which they rode that breathed fire and killed many indians, even at a distance, and with their tail cut men in half and that these sheep ate gold and silver and so with the great fear of this news the aforementioned chiefs and indians of this province saw to it to put together all the treasure they could..." (translation mine)

¹⁷ "neither the aforementioned Atabalipa nor the people who were with him put up any resistance with weapons nor any other thing because they then surrendered because they said that the man and the horse were all one and that the horse, taking its tail, killed the Indians who thought that the arquebus and the sword were the tail of the horse itself" (translation mine)

¹⁸ "...the Spaniards had come to Caxamarca and that they and their horses ate gold and silver..." (translation mine)

¹⁹ "those sheep ate gold and silver and with the great fear of this news the aforementioned caciques and Indians of this province saw to collecting all the treasure they could..." (translation mine)

Guillén 79-80). Finally, García Tocari mentions that the Spaniards explicitly furthered this belief, asking for the precious metals to “feed” their horses: “...*pedían que le diesen mucha más cantidad porque de ello tenían muy gran necesidad que sus caballos (33) no comían otra cosa ...*”²⁰ (Guillén Guillén 101). Garcilaso de la Vega corroborates the above in Chapter XVII (“Una embajada con grandes presentes que el Inca hizo a los españoles”) of *Historia general del Perú* (1617). De la Vega records how the natives noticed the horses’ metal bits, the part of the bridle that goes in the horse’s mouth, and mistakenly took this to mean that the animals ate metal: “...viendo los caballos con frenos de hierro, entendiendo que era manjar de ellos, trajeron mucho oro y plata en tejos para labrar, y los pusieron en las pesebreras, diciendo a los caballos comiesen de aquello que era mejor pasto que el hierro²¹” (63).

This belief, clearly beneficial to the Spaniards in their imperial project, was actively encouraged: “*Los españoles, riendo la simplicidad de los indios, les decían que les diesen mucho de aquello si querían aplacar los caballos y hacerlos sus amigos*”²² (63). This credence, prevalent in the 1571 testimonies, is more than just a mere erroneous understanding by a group of people who were unfamiliar with equines. It is a significant example of how the Spaniards used the horse to actively manipulate the natives in order to further their own economic and social interests. This manipulation involving horses is reminiscent of the aforementioned occurrence in Mexico in which Cortés orchestrated a ruse leading the Mexicas to believe that a horse was angry with them. In both episodes, there is an inequality of knowledge about the horse. The Spaniards were skilled horsemen, familiar with both the natural physical behaviors and eating patterns of the horse, while the Indigenous people in what is now Peru and Mexico

²⁰ “they asked that they give them much more because they had great need of it, given that their horses ate nothing else” (translation mine)

²¹ “...seeing the horses with iron bits, understanding that it was their food, brought much gold and silver in blocks and put it in the mangers, telling the horses to eat it because it was better food than iron” (translation mine)

²² “The Spaniards, laughing at the simplicity of the Indians, told them to give the horses lots of it [precious metal] if they wanted to appease the horses and make them their friends” (translation mine)

were heretofore completely unfamiliar with equines in any capacity. In each case, the Spaniards exploit this inequality of knowledge to manipulate the Indigenous people and further their own economic, military, and social interests.

Records by Inca Garcilaso de la Vega

As mentioned previously, Garcilaso de la Vega was of Incan ancestry and Spanish upbringing. This uniquely positioned him to record Incan history, passed down orally, in the written word in his *Comentarios reales de los incas* (1609) and *Historia general del Perú*. Both the initial and later native views of the horse can be traced throughout these works.

In chapter XXI of Book 7 of *Comentarios reales de los incas*, Garcilaso de la Vega details the arrival of the Spaniards and the rebellion of the natives in territory that is now Chile. Similar to the 1571 testimonies, in this section, the chronicler recorded the Indigenous people's doubts about the horse and mystical theories. However, here, rather than believing that the horses ate silver and gold, both the horses and their riders were suspected to be immortal and made of iron and steel:

Llegado a un alto, de donde descubría los dos ejércitos, viendo el aloxamiento de los suyos tan largo y estendido y el de los españoles tan pequeño y recogido, estuvo mucho rato considerando qué fuese la causa de que tan pocos venciessen a tantos, y habiendo mirado bien el sitio del campo, se había ido a los suyos y llamado a consejo, y después de largos razonamientos de todo lo hasta allí sucedido, entre otras muchas preguntas les había hecho éstas: Si aquellos españoles eran hombres mortales como ellos o si eran inmortales como el Sol y la luna; si sentían hambre, sed y cansancio; si tenían necesidad de dormir y descansar. En suma, preguntó si eran de carne y hueso o de hierro y azero; y

de los cavallos hizo las mismas preguntas. Y siéndole respondido a todas que eran hombres como ellos y de la misma compostura y naturaleza, les había dicho: "Pues idos todos a descansar, y mañana veremos en la batalla quién son más hombres, ellos o nosotros"²³ (135)

In this passage, the natives contemplated the reason for their defeat despite their far greater military forces, and wondered whether the Spaniards might not be mortal like themselves. Significantly, they also had this same doubt about the Spaniards' horses. This suggests that contrary to Abbass's theory—that the importance of the horse in the conquest was overstated—the natives of what is now Chile were in fact quite impressed by the military power of these animals and they thought that both horse and rider might both be otherworldly.

The horse was represented repeatedly in the Peruvian contexts as a bioweapon: an instrument of violence wielded against the native people by the conquering Spaniards. Seemingly in contrast to Abbass's thesis, Garcilaso de la Vega emphasizes this violence and the associated extreme fear of the horse that the natives initially experienced in a later passage of Chapter XVI of Book 9 of *Comentarios Reales*:

Comúnmente los indios tienen grandísimo miedo a los cavallos; en viéndolos correr, se desatan de tal manera que, por ancha que sea la calle, no saben arrimarse a una de las paredes y dexarle passar, sino que les parece que dondequiera que estén (como sea en el suelo) los han de trompillar, y así, viendo venir el cavallo corriendo, cruzan la calle dos

²³Having arrived to a high points, where the two armies could be seen, seeing the lodgings of their own army so long and extended and those of the Spaniards so small, he spent quite a while considering what the cause was for why so few vanquished so many, and having taken a good look at the field site, had gone to his people and called for counsel, and after long reasonings of all that had happened, among many other questions, he asked them: If those Spaniards were mortal men like themselves or if they were immortal like the Sun and the moon; if they experienced hunger, thirst, and fatigue; if they needed to sleep and rest. In short, they asked if they were made of flesh and blood or iron and steel; and of the horses they asked the same questions. And having received the response to all these questions that they were men like themselves and of the same composure and nature, he said to them: "Well go rest, all of you, and tomorrow in the battle we'll see who's the better man, them or us." (translation mine)

y tres veces de una parte a otra, huyendo dél, y tan presto como llegan a la una pared, tan presto les parece que estaban más seguros a la otra y buelven corriendo a ella.²⁴ 254

This passage emphasizes the fear that the horses instilled in the natives, here related to the sheer size of the animal and the prospect of being trampled underfoot. As discussed previously, the natives of South America were unfamiliar with horses prior to the conquest and did not have autochthonous animals of this size. The domestic creatures closest to this size were camelids like llamas and alpacas. However, even the largest llamas are still nowhere near the height and weight of the smallest horse.

The violence of the horse is seen throughout Garcilaso's writings. In addition to the aforementioned explicit threat of trampling, equines are also involved tacitly in the last days of Tupac Amaru, the Incan heir to the throne who was condemned to death by the Spaniards for being a traitor to the Crown. In capítulo XIX of Book 8 of Vol. 3 of *Historia general del Perú* (1617), Tupac Amaru is bound and forced to ride a mule (a typically sterile hybrid between a horse and donkey) to the stage where he is eventually beheaded (249). This last, shameful ride is part of a European tradition dating back to the Middle Ages in which criminals were forced to ride backwards to their execution on a donkey, infirm horse, or ram, depending on their crime (Kalof 60). Here, the equine is literally roped into the state violence enacted against the legitimate Incan ruler. It is also worth mentioning that the Peruvian revolutionary and descendent of the prince who adopted his name almost 200 years later, Tupac Amaru II, also met his end at the hand of the Spaniards and the horse: he was drawn and quartered, a horrific ending brought about by a horse tied to each of his four limbs (Britannica). Thinking about both Tupac Amaru I

²⁴ "Commonly the Indians were greatly afraid of the horses, in seeing them run they lose their minds in such a way that, no matter how wide the road might be, they don't know to move close to the walls and let it pass, but it seems to them that no matter where they might be (even on the ground), they will be trampled, and in this way, seeing the horse running, they cross the road from one side to the other two and three times, fleeing from it, and as soon as they arrive to a wall, they immediately feel that they were safer at the other and run back to it." (translation mine)

and II, it is clear that the horse was used as an instrument of violence and intimidation not only in the initial stages of the conquest, but for hundreds of years afterward. Willing participants or not, horses were complicit in state sponsored violence against Indigenous Peruvians for centuries.

In *Historia general del Perú*, horses are frequently mentioned alongside “armas” y “gente”, suggesting that they were considered as essential to the Spanish imperial mission as their weapons and soldiers were. Again, this importance appears to be strongly linked to the fear that these novel animals instilled in the natives:

Dijo que eran unos hombres tan extraños que tenían barbas en la cara y que andaban en unos animales que llamaban caballos, que eran tan fuertes y recios, que mil ni dos mil indios no eran parte para resistir un caballo, que solo con la furia del correr, les causaba tanto miedo que les hacían huir.²⁵ (123)

This passage indicates that the fear of the horse was so intense that not even a thousand or two thousand natives could resist one horse.

Finally, in *Comentarios Reales*, a passage in Chapter XXV (“Nuevos sucesos desgraciados del reino de Chili”) of Book 7 reveals a crucial shift in the Indigenous perception of the horse, which previously was one of fear and unfamiliarity. Garcilaso de la Vega mentions a letter sent to him by the priest Diego de Alcobaza in 1601 which stated that “... y los indios [son] tan diestros y resabiados en la guerra, que no hay indio que con una langa y a cavallo [sic] no salga a cualquiera soldado español, por valiente que sea...”²⁶ (143). This passing comment in a larger paragraph about the general state of affairs in Chile reveals important information. It affirms that by 1601, some Indigenous people had clearly overcome the previously mentioned

²⁵ “He said that they were strange men who had beards on their faces and went about on some animals called horses, that were so strong and tough that not a thousand nor two thousand Indians were enough to resist a horse, that only their furious running caused so much fear that it caused them to flee” (translation mine)

²⁶ “...and the Indians [are] so skilled and experienced in war that there’s no Indian who with a *langa* and on horseback who doesn’t beat any Spanish soldier, no matter how brave he may be...” (translation mine)

fear of the horse as a mystical, immortal, fearsome beast in order to adopt it as a weapon of war in the fight against the invading Spaniards. This passage is particularly illuminating because it suggests that the initial fear of the horse turned into recognition of its mortality and, crucially, usefulness. The Indigenous warriors not only started to ride, but rode so skillfully that they could bring down Spanish soldiers who had centuries more experience in mounted warfare.

Unfortunately, Garcilaso de la Vega does not explain exactly how or why the perception of equines changed. Most likely, it had to do with proximity: “Because native Americans commonly performed the various chores to care for horses, they had easy access to the animals and the related cultural complexes of riding, including Spanish gear, terminology, and equestrian habits” (Abbass 35). However it came to pass, it is clear that native Peruvians quickly overcame their initial fear of the horse and adopted it as a powerful ally in their fight against the Spanish.

Late 1500s Ceramic Piece

In the 2019 article by Artzi et. al, “Los fragmentos de Vilcabamba, Perú: un testimonio iconográfico excepcional de la visión andina sobre el enfrentamiento entre indígenas y españoles,” researchers meticulously analyze the different human and non-human animals depicted on an unusual post-Conquest, late 1500s ceramic piece. The *cuenco de cuatro asas* or four-handled bowl was found in Vilcabamba, a town in the Cusco region of Peru and is an important pictorial representation of equines by the native Peruvian people, in contrast to the written representation of the horse seen in Garcilaso de la Vega’s writings and the oral testimonies recorded in Guillen Guillen’s book. In this section, I will summarize the findings of the article and then propose a closer look at the depictions of the horses.

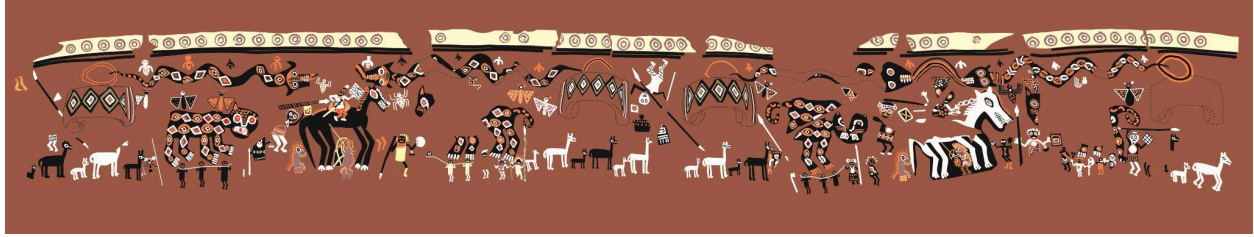


Fig. 3. Image of the iconography on the *cuenco de cuatro asas* by Arturo Rivera, available on page 161 of Artzi et al.'s article "Los fragmentos de Vilcabamba, Perú"²⁷



Fig. 4. Image of a rider on a black horse by Arturo Rivera, available on page 163 of Artzi et al.'s article "Los fragmentos de Vilcabamba, Perú"

²⁷ Special thanks to Bat-Ami Artzi and her coauthors Amnon Nir and Javier Fonseca Santa Cruz for permission to reproduce these images.



Fig. 5. Image of a rider on a white horse by Arturo Rivera, available on page 164 of Artzi et al.'s article "Los fragmentos de Vilcabamba, Perú"

In the article, the researchers identify 39 humans and 57 animals depicted on the post-conquest ceramic bowl (Artzi et al. 158). Of those 57 animals, two are horses being ridden by Spaniards (see fig. 4 and 5). These two horses, one black and one white, are crucial to the meaning of the piece. Researchers interpret the overall iconography of the piece as representative of a hoped-for future in which the conquest is reversed and the "...los vencidos son los españoles y los vencedores son los incas..."²⁸ (173-174). The researchers identify pictorial representations

²⁸ "...the vanquished are the Spanish and the conquerors are the Incas..." (173-174)

of both powers, Spanish and Inca, via two animals on the *cuenco*: horses and felines (173-174). While the felines symbolize the Incas, the horses represent the Spanish (173-174). The fact that the horses and the felines are approximately the same size suggests a “...lucha de dos poderes...” or fight between two powers (173). Inca warriors also appear to fight against the horses (166). Horses, alongside the sword and the invention of writing, were the three key elements the natives saw as crucial to the Spaniards' success, as they recount the invasion from the Indigenous point of view (173). Both figures depicted riding the horses are holding swords, and one is holding what appears to be a piece of paper or book. From this ceramic piece and the accompanying article, we can glean an understanding of how horses were seen and represented by indigenous Peruvians post-Conquest in the late 1500s.

John López, specialist in Art and Architecture of the Ancient Americas and Latin America, points out that the Inca did not have a figural tradition prior to the conquest, only geometric (López 2024). Consequently, it is clear that the artist(s) of the Vilcabamba piece have clearly acquired an understanding of the European figural tradition and learned enough of it to push back against the colonizer via their art (2024). As López asserts, the artist is using the language of the Europeans, figural representation, to “engage with the powers at play in this historical moment” (2024).

I argue that in addition to the importance of the horse as an animal symbolic of the Spanish, it is also seen by the native Peruvians as an essentially violent, threatening being. This visual representation of the horse as violent is similar to the written representations found in Garcilaso's writings. On the ceramic piece, several details of the horses suggest that the Indigenous artist(s) saw them as malevolent creatures. Several of these details have to do with the horses' facial expressions, and one pertains to their tails. Beginning with their faces, both

horses are depicted with open mouths filled with rows of menacing, bared, gleaming white teeth. Additionally, both horses' eyes appear to be narrowed, a potential anthropomorphization that could express anger and hostility. Moreover, the artist(s) also took special care to draw each horse's nostrils, a very specific detail in an otherwise rather stylized depiction. A possible explanation for this detail is that the horses are represented in an agitated state. Since horses obligate nasal breathers and can't breathe through their mouths, their nostrils flare when they breathe heavily and with physical exertion. Perhaps the artists had observed charging horses and recorded this detail faithfully in their artistic rendering. Moreover, while not a facial expression, both horses' tails appear to be pointed at the end. This could be a mere stylistic choice, but I believe it could also be a reference to the mystical beliefs around the horse's tail that were also seen in the 1571 testimonies. As mentioned previously, Don Gonzalo Zapayco and Don Diego Cayo Inga both mentioned that the horses' tails were initially understood to be swords that cut people in half (Guillén Guillén 79-80, 115). Perhaps the Vilcabamba artist(s) were unfamiliar with horses and still held this misconception about their physicality.

Finally, neither horse is accurately depicted in terms of physical characteristics. The legs of the horses on the *cuenco* all bend at the knee like human legs. Furthermore, they are depicted with three-toed, cloven hooves instead of the single-toed hooves that those familiar with equines would expect to see. There are a variety of explanations for these curious discrepancies. In an unpublished manuscript on Conquest-era pictorial depictions of horses in Mexico in the Florentine Codex that was presented at the 2024 Ethnohistory conference in Fargo, North Dakota, Kathryn Renton mentions that

“...it is important to note that challenges in representing equine anatomy and movement were also present in European art, varying based on the intentions of the artist, their

familiarity with horses, and the actual complexity of depicting horse gaits (the sequence of which at top speed was not fully confirmed until the use of photography in the nineteenth century) ”(5).

Perhaps the Vilcabamba artists were influenced by the two-toed camelids common to the region (llamas, alpacas, etc). In any case, these anomalies suggest that this particular indigenous group in Vilcabamba was not very familiar with the horse, or at least had not had numerous up-close and personal experiences with them in the late 1500s, unlike the groups further south mentioned in *Comentarios reales* that were reported to be skilled warriors on horseback by 1601.

To conclude, the representation of the horses on the *cuenco de dos asas* can be understood in at least three different ways. First, as Artzi et. al. explained, the Indigenous artist(s) saw the horses as a symbolic animal representative of the Spanish powers as a whole. Second, as López points out, the figures on the *cuenco* are part of an artistic tradition that was new to the Incas— the mere fact that horses and other animals (both human and non-human) appear on the *cuenco* constitutes an anticolonial sentiment expressed via a figural artistic tradition adopted from colonial influences. Third, a detailed examination of the images of the horses suggests that the artists in Vilcabamba still viewed the horse in and of itself as a threatening creature and source of violence.

Conclusion

While authors like Cunninghame Graham and Robert Denhardt concluded that horses were indispensable bioweapons, their sources were limited to written records by conquistadors and mestizos. Supplementing European historical records with pictorial works by Indigenous peoples reveals a more nuanced representation of the horse in colonial Peru and Mexico.

While Cortés and Díaz del Castillo occasionally portray the horse as a cherished companion, they represented the horse as primarily a vassal animal and bioweapon that could be leveraged to intimidate and manipulate the Indigenous people for their own gain. However, the Florentine and Azcatitlan codexes do not entirely coincide in this representation. While the Florentine codex shows the animals in combat, they are vanquished by the Indigenous people in several of the folios. The Azcatitlan codex shows horses accompanying Spaniards in colonizing contexts, but not engaged in overt violence, and several details indicate that the native people were quite familiar with horses.

The 1571 testimonies, Garcilaso de la Vega's writings, and the *cuenco de dos asas* are multimedia puzzle pieces that provide an idea of how the Indigenous people of Peru understood the horse in the Conquest and immediate post-Conquest periods. In the 1571 testimonies, the Indigenous Peruvians remembered horses as fearsome beasts who at that time were believed to possess supernatural powers. Similarly, testimonies and passages from Garcilaso de la Vega, who would have heard the oral histories of the Incas, detail initial misunderstandings of the horse and great fear, suggesting that contrary to Abbass's theory, the horse's importance in the Peruvian conquest was not overstated and that the native people were in fact quite intimidated – at least at first. However, the letter mentioned in *Comentarios Reales* suggests that horses were adopted by the Indigenous people as early as 1601. From analyzing the representations of the horse in these cultural products, we can understand that it was a powerful bioweapon employed first by the Spaniards and later by the natives in the struggle for control. The same animal that was a tool of manipulation and intimidation employed by the Spaniards was used against them by their Indigenous adversaries. In the *cuenco de dos asas*, Indigenous Peruvians embraced the European artistic figural tradition to push back against colonization and represent an alternative

outcome where the Incas emerge victorious. Similarly, texts like *Comentarios Reales* indicate that they also embraced the European view of the horse as a weapon of war— an entirely new concept to a group of people who had no such vassal animal previously— in order to resist colonization through mounted combat.

To conclude, an analysis of not only conquistadors' accounts but also Indigenous cultural products result in findings that echo the studies of Abbass, Norton, and Valesey: that Indigenous people were not universally daunted by the horse in the conquests of Mexico and Peru. While Indigenous people may have initially been intimidated by and subject to manipulation via the previously unknown animal, they obviously overcame this fear in order to resist the mounted invaders.

Chapter 2

Affects, Passions, and the Horse in *Sab* (1841)

Sab has been the subject of discussion since its first publication in 1841, and considerable critical analysis in the last fifty years (Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga, 1993, 1). The novel is extraordinary for many reasons, including the fact that it is “the only feminist-abolitionist novel published by a woman in nineteenth-century Spain or its slaveholding colony Cuba” (Davies, 1), was written by a woman in the early 19th century, is a superb example of Romanticism in the Latin American literary canon, and contains revolutionarily feminist and antislavery sentiment for its time. The novel follows the story of the titular protagonist, Sab, a mixed-race slave who serves as the *mayoral* on the sugar plantation Bellavista directing the work of the other slaves. Sab is desperately in love with Carlota, his former childhood companion, a white woman, and the eldest daughter of Sab’s owner Señor Carlos de B-. When Carlota is engaged to be married to Enrique, the avaricious son of a European businessman, Sab is beside himself and must confront his secret passion.

Emotions from love to loathing run high throughout the novel. Recent readings of *Sab* tackle these very emotions. Ana Peluffo, in both her essay “La erotización de las lágrimas en *Sab* de Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda (1814-1873)” (2014) and book chapter ““‘Bienaventurados los que lloran’: amor líquido y necro-afectividad en *Sab*”, (2016) argues that emotions, in the form of sweat, blood, and most prominently tears, create a community of shared suffering that goes beyond the characters’ physical differences of race or gender.

In addition to the aforementioned reading concerning affect, *Sab* has also been analyzed within the theoretical framework of ecocriticism. For example, Jennifer French and Gisela

Heffes argue that the garden that Sab tends for Carlota, mentioned in chapter VI of the first part of the novel, is a space that “[...] reminds readers of the “natural” beauty and abundance of Cuba, which contribute to the shining moral and personal qualities of its inhabitants” (98). French and Heffes also mention the role of the garden as a “nationalist trope” of Cuba, “[...] invisibly wedding the affective experience of human communities to the physical features of the territories they occupy” (74). In their reading, the garden has a “natural order” that contradicts the “hierarchically structured” Cuban society (75). In another essay linking nature to national identity, Steven Skattebo argues that the representations of nature in *Sab* are tied to Avellaneda’s multicultural (Cuban and Spanish) identity (187). While the three aforementioned interpretations focus on affect, plants, and landscapes, I propose a new reading that focuses on animals, specifically horses, and emotions in *Sab*.²⁹

Sab is set in a simultaneously bucolic and untamed Cuban paradise where wild and domestic animals live alongside humans. One of the most common domestic animals in the novel is the horse, specifically Sab’s *jaco negro*. This is unsurprising, as after horses were first introduced to Hispaniola by Columbus, Cuba quickly became one of the four main islands that supplied horses for the Spanish conquest of the Americas (Johnson 587). By the 19th century, equines were integral to life and travel in pre-Industrial Revolution Cuba. I believe that analyzing not only the literary forms in which the horse appears, but also the content regarding the animal can enrich our understanding of the novel.

²⁹ In academic circles, in addition to affective and ecocritical perspectives, the most well-known readings of *Sab* analyze the novel’s feminist and antislavery themes. For example, Brígida Pastor tackles the intersections of race and gender in *Sab* in several articles. In both “Symbiosis between slavery and feminism” (195) and “A Legacy to the World: Race and Gender in *Sab*” (58), Pastor argues that the topic of slavery in *Sab* is actually a metaphor for the author’s main feminist argument (195). Another academic, Doris Sommer, in her article “Sab c’est moi” argues that Sab is a feminized hero (29) and an identification of Avellaneda herself (25). These are just a few of the many readings that discuss race, gender, and class.

Focus on Form

If measured by mere number of mentions, horses are indeed peripheral in *Sab*. The *jaco* in particular, Sab's beloved black pony, is mentioned even more infrequently. The word "*jaco*" appears only eight times total, and he is involved in only three disparate episodes. While Enrique appears riding his *brioso alazán* in Part I, Chapter 1, Sab is on foot. The *jaco* is absent for Part I, Chapters I to IV, appearing for the first time in Part I, Chapter V when Enrique and Sab set out on horseback for Puerto Principe. He is immediately present again in the subsequent Chapter VI. The *jaco* is mentioned in passing in the last sentence of Part I, Chapter X³⁰. Then, he is absent yet again for three chapters (Part I Chapter XI, and Part I Chapters I and II) until Sab rides him to Guanaja in Chapter III. However, while mentions are few, they are significant. The *jaco* is present only in moments of great narrative importance: 1) he is there when Sab decides to save Enrique; 2) he is present when Sab laments his fate and verbalizes the impossibility of his love for Carlota; and 3) he appears, again, when Sab sacrifices his own happiness for Carlota's, and facilitates it with the sacrifice of his own life.

It is also worth noting that the *jaco*, like the other horses in the novel, does not have a name. He is only referred to by "*jaco*" or "*jaco negro*", referencing his coat color. Initially this may seem to negate his importance in the novel— after all, even the dog has a name. Similarly, in the field of Animal Studies, some critics suggest that talking about "the animal" as a category would be problematic. Cary Wolfe in "Human, All Too Human: 'Animal Studies' and the Humanities" argues that "[...] scholars in animal studies [...] now appear to be challenged [...] by the specificity of nonhuman animals, their nongeneric nature... (567). He cites Derrida and his concept of "animot": "[...] which is why, as Derrida puts it, it is 'asinine' to talk about 'the

³⁰ "Sab, todo turbado, murmuró una excusa insignificante y tomando su jaco se adelantó a paso largo, sirviendo de guía a los viajeros." See Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga] (2001), p. 188.

Animal' in the singular (567). That is to say, "the animal" presupposes sameness and erases difference. It goes to follow that talking about "the horse" could also be seen as generalizing an entire species, and that not naming a specific horse could be negating any kind of individuality or personhood. However, the fact that the *jaco* is unnamed or referred to only by his color is significant. It makes it easier to interpret him as a traditional literary symbol, an allegory for Sab himself instead of an individual animal with agency and a personality of his own.

Romanticism is associated with strongly delineated dichotomies, particularly the duality of good and evil. This doubleness is seen not only in the main characters but also in their respective horses. The two main horses are Sab's *jaco negro* and Enrique's Sab's *alazán* (Carlota's white horse is mentioned only very briefly). The former is constructed as a counterpart to the *brioso* (101) or *fogoso* (134) *alazán*. The sorrel horse is implied to be both more athletic and beautiful: [...] el uno en su fogoso alazán, y el otro en un jaco negro como el ébano, más ligero que vigoroso" (134). Despite the energy and beauty of the spirited sorrel horse, it is implied to be morally inferior in comparison to the *jaco*. As Sab says to his loyal steed; "Tú respetas tu inútil carga mientras ese hermoso animal sacude la suya, y arroja y pisotea al hombre feliz, cuya vida es querida, cuya muerte sería llorada. ¡Pobre jaco mío!" (147)³¹. As Sab suggests here, the *jaco* respects his task and his rider– he calmly carried Sab safely through the storm. In contrast, the sorrel, while beautiful, is unreliable. He spooked and became frightened when lightning struck a nearby branch, taking off into the trees. Enrique lost his seat and fell, bloodied and unconscious. In the same way that Sab is constructed as an "alma superior" in comparison with Enrique, the *jaco* is a superior mount in comparison to the *alazán*.

³¹ While you respect your worthless burden, this handsome animal rids himself of his, throwing and trampling the fortunate man whose life is cherished and whose death would be mourned. My poor pony!" (58)

The Romantic tradition values emotions and feelings over logic and reason, and *Sab* is no exception. In Chapter VI, Sab is talking to his *jaco* and exclaims: “¡ay! tu suerte es más dichosa que la mía, pobre animal; menos cruel contigo el destino no te ha dado el funesto privilegio del pensamiento. Nada te grita en tu interior que merecías más noble suerte, y sufres la tuya con resignación”³² (148). In the Romantic tradition, lacking reason or being irrational is not necessarily a defect. Indeed, here it is quite the opposite and is positioned as a potential advantage. As we can see in the text, Sab positions reason and thought as a “funesto privilegio”³³, an oxymoron suggesting the disadvantages inherent in being able to think and reason. Sab claims the *jaco* is an unthinking creature. He goes as far as to assert that this is actually a blessing in disguise. Unlike Sab, the *jaco* is merely resigned to his fate and does not torture himself thinking about what could have been. This anticipates the twentieth century philosophic notion of nihilism. For example, “[Schopenhauer] further argues that the capacity for suffering increases the more the nervous system is developed, and the more intelligent the animal becomes. From this it follows that human beings experience maximum suffering” (Stewart 130). Basically, to think is to suffer.

There are two “dialogues” with the horse throughout the novel, the first in Part I, Chapter 6 and the second in Part 2, Chapter III. Dialogues are usually conversations between two humans, who participate via speaking and/or gesturing with each other. However, in this case, as the *jaco* cannot reply in words, these dialogues are more Romantic soliloquies that reveal Sab’s inner thoughts and feelings. In both cases, the *jaco* responds with a look: “El caballo levantaba la cabeza y le miraba como si **quisiera comprenderle**” (Gomez & Servera 148, emphasis mine)

³² ...oh! poor animal! Your fate is kinder than mine. Destiny has been less cruel to you, for it has not given you the unfortunate privilege of thought. No voice cries from within you that you deserved a more noble fate, and so you endure yours with resignation.” (58)

³³ “unfortunate privilege of thought” (p. 58)

“[...] levantando lentamente la cabeza miró aún una vez a su amo, como si **quisiera responderle** [...]” (148, emphasis mine). In the first “dialogue,” the horse “[...] looked at him as though wishing to understand him [...]” (58) and in the second, he is “[...] looking one last time at his master as though wanting to answer him [...]” (116). This is a clear personification of the animal where the horse is humanized through similes. John Berger explains that humanizing language demonstrates the closeness between two species: “[u]ntil the 19th century [...] anthropomorphism was integral to the relation between man and animal and was an expression of their proximity” (9). In both of these dialogues, the anthropomorphized horse is as active a participant in the conversation as he can possibly be, taking into account the species divide.

Focus on Content

The three main horses, belonging to three of the main characters, are described by their coat color. Enrique’s horse is a “*brioso alazán*” (101) , which translates to a “spirited” sorrel or chestnut. Carlota’s horse is “*hermoso caballo blanco*” (164) or beautiful white horse. Sab rides a pony as black as ebony, “*un jaco negro como el ébano, más ligero que vigoroso*” (134). Each horse is clearly representative of his rider. Enrique’s sorrel horse is a reflection of his golden-haired European rider. Carlota’s white horse represents her defining goodness, purity, and innocence. Sab’s pony can be interpreted as representative of Sab in two ways. Its dark color could be an overt reference to Sab’s skin color. The pony’s smaller stature, indicated by the word *jaco* rather than *caballo*, could also indicate Sab’s lower social position in comparison to Carlota and Enrique, who ride imposing horses. This harkens back to what Newcomb (209), citing Griffith, refers to as the “classical equine hierarchy,” in which horses are positioned as superior

to other, inferior equines like donkeys. Here the humble *jaco* is positioned as inferior to the horse, reflecting Sab's inferior social status in comparison to that of Carlota and Enrique.

To begin with, in this novel horses are inextricably linked to questions of class. Horses are owned by those privileged enough to afford the not insignificant costs to feed, house, and maintain them. This creates a riding social class in opposition to those who cannot afford this mode of transportation. In the opening scene of the novel, Enrique is riding his horse into Cubitas and comes across Sab, who is on foot. The implications of their modes of transport, one astride and the other walking, cannot be ignored and harken back to the arrival of the Spaniards on horseback. Enrique, mounted on his spirited sorrel, is positioned above Sab and with more (horse)power. Floôr Kosby et. al sums it up nicely: “[...] além do valor laboral e bélico, [o cavalo] emprestou ao homem seu porte, sua postura, fortificando-o, engrandecendo-o sobre um pedestal, o que é capaz de criar a distinção entre os que têm poder e os que a estes estão subjugados”³⁴ (198). In a subsequent scene in Part I, Chapter V, the two are both on horseback. The narrator relates, tellingly, that as they ride Enrique is thinking about his love for Carlota but also his greed: “Pero esta pasión no siendo única era contrastada evidentemente por otra pasión rival y a veces victoriosa: la codicia” (135). A storm rolls in and before they can reach safety, Enrique's horse is spooked by a bolt of lightning and Enrique falls to the ground. This fall from horseback can be interpreted as a literal fall from grace paralleling his fall from status and money. But it can also be seen as positioning him figuratively below Sab. Sab now has the high ground, morally and literally.

I adopt Peluffo's concept of a community of shared suffering in the form of liquid emotion and argue that it extends even to the equine, bringing Sab's *jaco negro* into this

³⁴ In addition to [its] labor and war-related value, [the horse] lent man his size, his posture, fortifying him, glorifying him on a pedestal, creating a distinction that sets apart those who have power from those who are subject to it.” (translation mine)

community of the subaltern. The critic proposes that the main characters in *Sab* are united by their shared suffering, specifically their tears:

[...] las lágrimas van delineando alianzas interraciales entre los sujetos marginales, subvirtiendo de forma no verbal, las regulaciones biopolíticas de la colonia. La alegoría sentimental basada en la estetización del afecto desemboca en una necro-utopía que se construye a partir del sufrimiento compartido. El lema cristiano de “Bienaventurados los que lloran porque de ellos será el reino de los cielos” remite a una comunidad de almas elegidas que depende paradójicamente de la eliminación de la diferencia de sus cuerpos³⁵
(*En clave emocional*, 66)

The characters are situated within the Spanish colony of Cuba in the 19th century, a heavily racialized context. Following their Christian worldview, they are only free to be together after death, in a heaven where their bodily barriers of race and class no longer exist. The main characters –with the exception of Carlota whose death is only metaphorical (her soul is killed by her loveless marriage to Enrique)– all die before the end of the book. Teresa dies of consumption in the convent and Sab dies from a broken heart. Even more minor characters meet equally tragic ends: Carlota’s father Don Carlos de B-, his son, Martina, and her grandson Luis all die of illness. Death comes for all in *Sab*, and animals are not exempt: Martina’s dog, Leal, dies, and Sab’s *jaco negro* dies in Guanaja after being ridden to death. I argue that these animal actors are also positioned as part of this community of shared suffering. In this chapter I will explore the bodily fluids (and associated emotions) of saliva, sweat, tears, and blood circulating between Sab

³⁵ [...] tears outline interracial alliances between marginal subjects, nonverbally subverting the biopolitical regulations of the colony. The sentimental allegory based in the aestheticization of affect results in a necro-utopia that is constructed by shared suffering. The Christian motto of “Blessed be those who weep because theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven” refers to a community of chosen souls that paradoxically depends on the elimination of the differences of their bodies” (66) (translation mine)

and his *jaco negro* and how the horse subsequently enters into the community of shared suffering.

Bodily Fluids

Bodies are not hermetically sealed, closed systems. Bodily fluids like saliva, sweat, tears, and blood pass from inside the body to outside, positioning the body as permeable, rather than a discrete entity. Fluids circulate between bodies much as emotions do. These properties are not unique to human bodies. Other mammals also share in the secretion of all of these bodily fluids, with the notable exception of tears. While the question of whether animals cry has been hotly contested, Tom Lutz insists that there are no substantiated claims of animals weeping (18).

Crying sets humans apart, as Helen King (6) points out: "Pliny the Elder had claimed the capacity to shed tears as something that defined human beings against other animals, stating that 'Man alone Nature deposits naked on the naked ground at the time of his birth, immediately to wail and cry' [...]"'. In any case, while they don't cry, animals sweat, salivate, and bleed like the rest of us. These bodily fluids have been the subject of recent academic scholarship. Amy Coker states that "All bodies, female and male, past and present, leak" (17). She also points out that these fluids have long been disregarded, relegated to the side, despite them being natural and, in fact, essential to life. She cites Harris and Robb:

It is part of [...] the 'everyday invisible strangeness' of the body that the passing of various substances in and out of it is fundamental to the body's proper functioning but that this is a fact we nevertheless attempt to forget. There is a constant threat that the corporeal envelope may break open, either by real or imagined rupture, and remind us of

our animal nature; humans are plagued by the knowledge of their own animalistic nature... (Coker 17)

In *Sab*, humanity's innate animality is quite salient. It is expressed in four different bodily fluids that circulate between Sab and his *jaco negro*: saliva, sweat, tears, and blood. All of these are related to suffering, connection, or both. In the following sections I will explore these bodily fluids and their associated liquid emotions.

Saliva

One of the main scenes with the horse and liquid emotion is found in Part 1, Chapter 6, which starts with the fitting epigraph: "Y mirando enternecido / al generoso animal / le repite: —Mientras viva / mi fiel amigo serás"³⁶. The lines are attributed to a "*romance anónimo*", but may have been invented by Avellaneda as a way of foreshadowing the interspecies friendship between Sab and his *jaco negro* that is highlighted in the chapter. Then, the *jaco negro*, while it does not speak, (keeping in the Romantic but realistic tradition of the novel) is clearly humanized. He lifts his head and looks at Sab "as though wishing to understand him" (58). Words are also put in the horse's mouth: when the horse licks Sab's hands, the narrator says that the horse "seemed to be saying" (58). There is a sort of conversation between the two, and Sab draws a comparison between their lots:

El caballo levantaba la cabeza y le miraba como si quisiera comprenderle. Luego le lamía las manos y parecía decirle con aquellas caricias: "Te amo mucho para poder complacerte: de ninguna otra mano que la tuya recibo con gusto el sustento." Sab recibía sus caricias con visible conmoción y comenzó a enjaezarlo diciéndole con voz por instantes más triste: —Tú eres el único ser en la tierra que quiera acariciar estas manos

³⁶ "And tenderly regarding / the noble animal / he repeats: 'While I live / you will be my faithful friend' (55).

tostadas y ásperas: tú el único que no se avergüenza de amarme: lo mismo que yo naciste condenado a la servidumbre..., pero ¡ay! tu suerte es más dichosa que la mía, pobre animal; menos cruel contigo el destino no te ha dado el funesto privilegio del pensamiento. Nada te grita en tu interior que merecías más noble suerte, y sufres la tuya con resignación.³⁷ (Gomez and Servera 148)

This passage is key for several reasons. The horse licks him, an unusual behavior typically more associated with canines than equines, and the licks are described as “*caricias*” or “caresses.” This display of caring emotion is expressed via the sharing of a bodily fluid, saliva. Sab is visibly moved by the horse’s affection towards him: “recibía sus caricias con visible conmoción (148). As Sab himself points out, the horse is the “only being on the earth” willing to touch him, the only one who “is not ashamed to love him.” (58). The horse is exempt from the human racial constructions of the time that prohibit contact between bodies of different colors. As such, he is the only being that Sab is allowed to share touch with. This positions the horse as extremely important to Sab emotionally, as he is deprived of physical contact. As Peluffo points out, Sab misses his and Carlota’s shared childhood and “los contactos físicos que podía tener entonces con su ama blanca” (*En clave emocional*, 72), as now that they are adults he cannot enter into physical contact with her (*En clave emocional*, 72). Even a tear falling from one’s cheek to the other’s skin is a transgression: “En la lógica victoriana de la novela, las lágrimas del esclavo nunca pueden entrar en contacto con el cuerpo blanco de su ama” (Peluffo, *En clave emocional*, 71-72). The horse’s “kisses” are the liquid affect of compassion, and the only physical show of

³⁷ “The horse lifted its head and looked at him as though wishing to understand him and thereupon licked Sab’s hands; by this the animal seemed to be saying “I love you a great deal so as to please you; from no other hand but yours do I gladly accept food.”

Sab received the pony’s affection with obvious emotion and began to saddle him, saying in an increasingly mournful voice, “ You are the only being on earth willing to caress these rough, sunburned hands; you are the only one not ashamed to love me; just as I, you were born to servitude... but oh! poor animal! Your fate is kinder than mine. Destiny has been less cruel to you, for it has not given you the unfortunate privilege of thought. No voice cries from within you that you deserved a more noble fate, and so you endure yours with resignation.” (58)

love that Sab can receive. In the classic Animal Studies book *When Species Meet*, Donna Haraway describes her relationship with her pet dog Cayenne with a similar exchange of saliva:

Ms Cayenne Pepper continues to colonize all my cells—a sure case of what the biologist Lynn Margulis calls symbiogenesis. I bet if you were to check our DNA, you’d find some potent transfections between us. Her saliva must have the viral vectors. Surely, her darter-tongue kisses have been irresistible. Even though we share placement in the phylum of vertebrates, we inhabit not just different genera and divergent families but altogether different orders (15).

Haraway positions saliva, here shared from her Australian shepherd via kisses, as a carrier of “viral vectors”. She goes on to say that “[the dog’s] quick and lithe tongue has swabbed the tissues of my tonsils, with all their eager immune system receptors. Who knows where my chemical receptors carried her messages or what she took from my cellular system for distinguishing self from other and binding outside to inside?” (15). This idea of bodily fluids blurring the lines between self and other is not unique to Haraway. Bodily fluids like saliva are conceptualized by Emily Martin as “....slimy substances, of and not of the body, [that] dramatically blur self-non-self lines” (98). When the horse licks Sab, he leaves a physical trace of his affection on Sab’s skin and the lines between master and horse are blurred.

Sweat

The second scene concerning Sab and the horse is also inextricably tied to liquid emotion. In Part II, chapter 3, Sab rides the distance of ten leagues (30 miles or over 48 kilometers) in just four hours in order to deliver a letter to Enrique. The letter explains that Enrique must return immediately to marry Carlota before Don Carlos de B- leaves to attend to

his dying son in Havana. The postscript, which the reader understands to actually be written by Sab, the true winner of the lottery, mentions that Carlota has won the prize of 40 thousand *duros*. As Peluffo has mentioned, Sab is “...un personaje masoquista (aparentemente irracional) que rechaza todo lo que aparentemente le conviene...” (*En clave emocional*, 77).

Peluffo explains that this apparently self-destructive pattern is actually logical: in the Christian paradigm, access to the postracial utopian heaven requires *Sab* to sacrifice and suffer on Earth (*En clave emocional*, 77). Chapter 3 is a twofold example of martyrdom on Sab’s part: he gives Carlota his lottery winnings and effectively rides his beloved *jaco* into the ground both in order to achieve Carlota’s marriage to Enrique— a man he doesn’t even like. The *jaco*, exhausted from overexertion, collapses upon arrival: “[...] el jinete echaba pie a tierra y el caballo cubierto de espuma vacilaba, cayendo por fin a sus pies [...]” (232). The horse, loyal to its last moment, holds out until Sab has set foot safely on solid ground before finally collapsing. The horse is worked up into a lather, covered in “*espuma*” or “foam”, the physical manifestation of exertion. Sab is also sweating after riding hard for such a distance; Enrique remarks that he looks feverish: “El sudor empapaba su cabeza y corría por su rostro en gruesas gotas [...] En toda su fisonomía se notaba aquella especie de vivacidad triste y extraña que presta comúnmente la fiebre”³⁸ (233).

The horse and the human are united by their shared sweat. As Peluffo points out about Sab, “[...] el sudor que recubre sus músculos lo vincula a una comunidad de esclavos cuyo maltrato físico aparece desdibujado en el resto de la novela”³⁹ (*En clave emocional*, 66). The liquid connects Sab not only to the sweating horse pushed to its breaking point but also to the

³⁸ “Perspiration covered his head and ran down his face in thick drops: his eyes had an extraordinary brightness, and his color appeared darker than usual. In his face one could see the type of sad and strange brilliance that is often the result of a fever.” (116)

³⁹ “...the sweat that covers his muscles links him to a community of slaves whose physical mistreatment is depicted in the rest of the novel.” (translation mine)

perspiring physically abused slaves. The entire triad (Sab, the other slaves, and the horse) enter into the liquid community of shared suffering.

Tears

When the horse collapses and dies in Part II, Chapter 3, Sab leans over the horse, speaking to him and crying over his body.

[...] el hombre se inclinó sobre él, y parecióle a Enrique que hablaba al pobre animal, el cual levantando lentamente la cabeza miró aún una vez a su amo, como si quisiera responderle, y dejándola caer al momento se estremeció en todo su cuerpo por dos o tres veces, y en seguida quedóse inmóvil. El hombre permaneció inclinado, y Enrique que se acercaba pudo percibir **dos hondos y ahogados gemidos**. Detúvose, sin poder defenderse de una cierta conmoción, y como el hombre inclinado levantase al mismo tiempo la cabeza, pudo reconocer al mulato.⁴⁰ (232-233, emphasis mine)

Here, the bodily fluid is tears and the corresponding liquid emotion is surely sorrow.

Curiously, the phrase “como si quisiera responderle”, first seen in Part I Chapter 6, appears for a second time, humanizing the horse. It is a private moment, as Enrique, watching from a distance, still does not recognize Sab. Sab does not cry at length, but rather in two deep, choked cries (“dos hondos y ahogados gemidos”). These tears, by virtue of being private rather than a performance for an audience, take on a greater meaning: “As [...] Thomas à Kempis suggests, there is a time and place for crying, but it is quiet tears, shed inwardly in meditation, that are spiritually efficacious.” (Barbezat and Scott 6).

⁴⁰The man bent over the horse, and it seemed to Enrique that he was speaking to the poor animal which slowly raised its head, looking one last time at his master as though wanting to answer him, and then let it fall. The animal shuddered two or three times and then lay still. The man remained bent over, and Enrique, who was now approaching, could hear two deep and choking cries. He stopped, unable to avoid a kind of emotion, and as at that moment the man raised his head, he was able to recognize the mulatto. (116)

Peluffo identifies four different types of tears circulating in *Sab*. She pinpoints tears of sorrow, compassion, gratitude, and supplication individually (*En clave emocional*, 66-67). To complement her analysis of this fluid as flowing between the human characters, the tears Sab sheds over his *jaco negro* are distinctive due to 1) being a mixture of three of the four types and 2) being interspecies. Sab's tears, while primarily of sorrow, can also be understood as a mixture of the first three types: sorrow, compassion, and gratitude. Sab is above all sorrowful and in mourning over the loss of his horse, the only one who is not ashamed to love him⁴¹. These tears of sorrow, as Lutz articulates, not only "...signal our desire to turn back time and magically redeem our loss, as well as the bitter knowledge of the impossibility of that desire" (22). He has great compassion for his horse, referring to him as "*mi pobre amigo*" despite his being a different species, there is a profound connection between the two. But he is also likely grateful to his loyal companion for bringing him to Guanaja and both facilitating and matching his sacrifice. While other tears in the novel flow between human actors, here Sab is crying over the death of his best friend, who happens to be an animal.

Additionally, while, as previously mentioned, Sab's tears falling on white women were a transgression (Peluffo, *En clave emocional*, 71-72), Sab can cry freely around his horse. Since it is said twice that Sab was bent over the horse (*se inclinó, permaneció inclinado*) we can infer that his tears were falling on the horse's body. His tears fall from his eyes onto the horse's lifeless body in an example of the blurring of "self-non-self lines" that Emily Martin (98) proposes. The typical demarcations between two different bodies – here of two different species – are erased. Caterina Albano notes that "...sociologist Sara Ahmed suggests that emotions are key in defining body boundaries because they help to shape how we relate to each other, creating

⁴¹ See Part 1, Chapter 6

a cycle of affective actions and reactions” (Albano 494). Here, body boundaries are crossed and redefined.

Blood

Blood is present throughout the novel *Sab*. To mention only three examples: blood is rumoured to flow in rivers through the caves of Cubitas (174); Sab imagines blood spilling upon taking vengeance against his white oppressors (209); and blood is posed as an (insufficient) hypothetical payment for Carlota’s tears (225). This bodily fluid symbolizes both life and death (Meyer 14). Biblically, the life force of a person or animal is present in the blood: Leviticus 17:11 says “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life” (New International Version).

Peluffo sees the importance of blood in the novel as related to Sab’s status as a person of “divided” blood: “Dentro de la circulación de flujos corporales que Avellaneda estetiza en la novela (sangre, sudor, lágrimas), la cuestión sanguínea ocupa un lugar privilegiado” (*En clave emocional*, 68). She sees Sab, a mixed-race person of both white and African ancestry, as at the mercy of his “[sangre] revuelta, que lo empuja en direcciones opuestas” (70). In my reading, blood can also be seen as yet another fluid that is connected to emotion and brings both Sab and the horse into the shared community of suffering. As Meyer says, “Humans have extensively symbolized and ritualized blood as one of the most powerfully meaningful and multivocal bodily substances” (10). Blood is pumped through the heart and thus “...the heart is the organ most associated with emotion, both pleasurable and painful...” (Flaskerud 265).

Sab is inextricably related to blood throughout the latter part of the novel. As mentioned previously, by the end of Part II Chapter 3, Sab has completed his self sacrificial, martiristic goal to convince Enrique to marry Carlota straight away, and he has also lost his *jaco negro* in the process. It is important to note that the horse's death is described as "*reventado*"⁴² which translates not only to "run into the ground" but also "burst", which carries a connotation with the heart. Sab talks to the horse's cadaver as if it could understand him, saying "Mi corazón está reventado como tú, mi pobre amigo, pero tú no sufres ya y yo sufro todavía"⁴³ (235). Sab's heart is "*reventado*". The object of his affection is marrying someone else— someone entirely unworthy of her— and Sab's heart is bursting from sadness and jealousy. In this time period "*un corazón reventado*" was more than a mere metaphor or figure of speech, but a physiological explanation for illness. The humors of the body and their connection with one's passions or emotions is clearly present in *Sab*. While the theory of humors is often associated with the early modern period, it was in fact present into the 1800s: as Faith Lagay says in her article "The Legacy of Humoral Medicine," "[the] notion that 4 bodily fluids—blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile—caused illness persisted for more than 2000 years in the West until the rise of controlled empirical science in the mid-19th century" (206). According to humoral theory, illness could be provoked by external forces⁴⁴ but also, crucially, by emotions or "passions": "An excess of emotion [...] was understood to be potentially fatal, because [...] passions always caused 'some alteration in the body' (Kern Paster 11). Sab dies of this excess passion. According to Paster, humors and emotions were thought to be connected: "...emotions flood the body not metaphorically but literally, as the humors course through the bloodstream..." (Kern Paster 15).

⁴² "¡Está reventado! ¡Muerto!" (233)

⁴³ My heart is bursting as yours did, my poor friend, but you no longer suffer while I still do. (118)

⁴⁴ Illness resulted when an excess or a deficiency occurred in one or more of the humors. The disturbance could result from overindulgence in food or drink, too much or too little physical exertion, or changes in the so-called "naturals," ie, the uncontrollable environment and climate. (Lagay 206)

While it is never specified in the novel exactly what malady Sab suffers from—and eventually succumbs to—, it is heavily suggested that it is related to his emotions. From a historical perspective, it seems likely that the “*corazón reventado*” that kills Sab is tuberculosis, a disease subject to many Romantic beliefs regarding the character of the afflicted. In her classic book *Illness as Metaphor*, Susan Sontag investigates the historical beliefs surrounding tuberculosis, a “disease of passion” (20):

Fever in TB was a sign of an inward burning: the tubercular is someone "consumed" by ardor, that ardor leading to the dissolution of the body. The use of metaphors drawn from TB to describe love—the image of a "diseased" love, of a passion that "consumes"—long antedates the Romantic movement. Starting with the Romantics, the image was inverted, and TB was conceived as a variant of the disease of love (Sontag 20).

While the diagnosis of tuberculosis is never explicitly uttered in the book, Sab is portrayed as suffering from his passions, dying of the “disease of love.” Tellingly, Sab takes his last breath at the exact moment that Carlota and Enrique take their vows. When his hope for a romantic relationship with Carlota is extinguished, so is his life.

Blood is also explicitly mentioned at the end of Part II Chapter 3. Sab has an exchange with God. Sab resists the temptation to commit suicide in the sea, and God appears to reward him with the death he craves, as Sab suddenly feels his body become cold (236). He then rests his head on the cadaver of his faithful *jaco negro* and vomits blood over him, clearly suffering from some sort of internal hemorrhage. The text says that he “bathes” the horse with his blood: “Sab aceptó aquel vaticinio, miró al cielo con gratitud, dejó caer la cabeza sobre el cadáver de su caballo y le bañó con un caño de sangre que brotó de su boca” (236). Notably, Sab vomits his blood *onto* the body of the horse, again blurring self-non-self lines and covering him with the

physical manifestation of his suffering. A fisherman passes by and sees the man and horse lying together in a pool of blood: “[...] vio el extraño espectáculo de un hombre y un caballo tendidos, y sangre en derredor” (236). It is unclear whether the blood is entirely from Sab’s vomiting up blood or whether the horse also bled out as he died from overwork, their blood mixing.

Tuberculosis is, in Sontag’s words, characterized by the body’s gradual disintegration into blood which we see in Sab’s *corazón reventado* and vomiting blood: “[...] a disease of liquids—the body turning to phlegm and mucus and sputum and, finally, blood—” (Sontag 13).

In Katheryn Ann Thompson’s dissertation “A Romantic’s Search for God: The Religious Poetry of Gertrudis Gomez de Avellaneda”, she explains how Avellaneda flouted the religious societal expectations of the time: “[...] women were routinely expected to be devout [...] but not to pursue theology as an intellectual study” (23). Thompson goes on to say that Avellaneda indeed pursues theology in both her poetry and her *Devocionario* (23). I argue that Avellaneda’s Christianity also appears, albeit more as a subtle influence, in *Sab*. The blood spilled by both Sab and his *jaco negro* can be seen as a final sacrifice, a Christ-like martyrdom so that Carlota and Enrique can be together. Blood is integral to Christianity— in the Bible, seas turn to blood, Christ sheds blood from his side when lanced by a soldier, and wine is transubstantiated into Christ’s blood through the Eucharistic ritual, to give only a few examples. Above all, Christ’s death on the cross is the blood shed for the world. The “salvific role of Christ’s body and blood,” as phrased by Emily Kearns (193), is explained in Hebrews 9:14-15 “...the blood of Christ...[will] cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death [...] now that he [Jesus] has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant” (New International Version). Jesus is the sacrificial lamb of God, the offering that absolves Christians of their sins and grants

them eternal life in heaven. Avellaneda's Christian paradigm builds on that sacrifice. As Peluffo explains, Sab must sacrifice and suffer on Earth to access happiness in the afterlife (77).

As a principle, "the closer to death, the more virtuous," goes along with the idea of sacrifices on Earth earning one a place in heaven like Peluffo affirms in her book (80). It also coincides with Sontag's claim that "[a]nd the virtuous only become more so as they slide toward death (41)." The horse, by sacrificing himself for Sab's project to get Carlota and Enrique together, joins Sab in the moral high ground. This again positions the horse within the community of shared suffering alongside the rest of the moral characters who die.

Horse as Metaphor

In my reading, the *jaco negro* and Sab are both born into servitude and are at the mercy of their respective master's wills. Indeed, Sab himself draws this very comparison in Part I, Chapter 6: Sab sees himself in the *jaco negro*: "[...] lo mismo que yo naciste condenado a la servidumbre [...]". I argue that the *jaco negro* represents the typical slave, while Sab is portrayed as both an exceptional slave and as the possessor of an "*alma superior*" or "superior soul".

The concept of a "superior soul" was popular at the time (Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga, 1993, xi). Avellaneda introduces this belief in emotionally "superior souls" in *Sab*. In Part I, Chapter IV, Carlota realizes that "[...] hay almas superiores sobre la tierra, privilegiadas para el sentimiento y desconocidas de las almas vulgares: almas ricas de afectos, ricas de emociones...para las cuales están reservadas las pasiones terribles, las grandes virtudes, los inmensos pesares...y que el alma de Enrique no era una de ellas (Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga], 2001, 133)⁴⁵. A "superior soul" is associated with one who is able to feel deeply, both

⁴⁵ ...that there are loftier souls on the earth who are endowed with feelings unrecognizable to more common ones, souls rich in sentiment, rich in emotions for which are reserved terrible passions, terrible virtues, immense sorrows... and that Enrique's soul was not one of these" (Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga 48)

positive and negative emotions. Avellaneda believed she had one of these souls (Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga 1993, xi), and her protagonist Sab considers himself a “superior soul”⁴⁶. When Enrique falls and is knocked unconscious, Sab is tempted to take the opportunity to end his life, and he says out loud: “Una voluntad le reduciría a la nada, y esa voluntad es la mía...¡la mía, **pobre esclavo de quien él no sospecha que tenga una alma superior a la suya**...capaz de amar, capaz de aborrecer...una alma que supiera ser grande y virtuosa y que ahora puede ser criminal!” (Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga] 2001, 136-137, emphasis mine). Sab is constructed both as a superior soul in the aforementioned sense and an exceptional slave. Sab is extraordinary in his physical appearance; when Enrique first meets him he is surprised to learn that he is a slave: “Bien lo sospeché al principio; pero tienes un aire tan poco común en tu clase, que luego mudé de pensamiento”⁴⁷ (Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga] 2001, 108). Sab is also positioned as exceptional due to his education and access to books: “Con ella [Carlota] aprendí a leer y a escribir, porque nunca quiso recibir lección alguna sin que estuviese a su lado su pobre mulato Sab. Por ella cobré afición a la lectura, sus libros y aun los de su padre han estado siempre a mi disposición” (Gómez de Avellaneda [y Arteaga] 2001, 110). In sum, Sab is characterized as both an exceptional slave and an emotionally superior soul.

In turn, Sab’s *jaco negro* can be read as a veiled metaphor for the “typical slave”. In Part I, Chapter 6, just before the scene where Sab speaks to his *jaco negro*, Carlota greets the slaves working on her family’s plantation and then laments aloud the injustices of slavery before finally declaring she will never have slaves of her own: “—¡Pobres infelices! —exclamó—. Se juzgan afortunados, porque no se les prodigan palos e injurias, y comen tranquilamente el pan de la

⁴⁶This is one of many commonalities between the author, Gertrudis Gómez de Avellaneda, and her protagonist. See Doris Sommer’s 1987 article *Sab c’est moi* for more on Avellaneda’s identification with Sab.

⁴⁷ “Well, I suspected as much in the beginning, but you have a look so uncommon to your class that it caused me to think otherwise.” (Gómez de Avellaneda y Arteaga 30)

esclavitud. Se juzgan afortunados y son esclavos sus hijos antes de salir del vientre de sus madres, y los ven vender luego como a bestias irracionales...” (Gómez de Avellaneda [y Argteaga] 2001, 52)”. Here, the other “typical” slaves (as opposed to Sab, who as mentioned was constructed as an exceptional slave and a superior soul) are seen as “grateful”, despite their situation, because their master is not overtly violent. The *jaco negro* is also seen a grateful and loyal to his master, Sab, as seen in Part I Chapter 6.

Sab’s emotion and affection for the pony is similar to his emotion and affection for the enslaved people working under him. While some readers criticize *Sab* for portraying only “lukewarm” abolitionist sentiment, my reading suggests that while still problematic by today’s standards, the horse enters into the protonational cubanness. If we take the horse as a metaphor for the typical slave, then protonational Cubanness is not restricted solely to “superior” slaves such as Sab but extended to all enslaved people. Positioning an educated, supposedly emotionally superior slave as a valued Cuban would have already been controversial, so perhaps Avellaneda veiled her support for the “common” slave in metaphor.

Although modern readers may find this comparison between slavery and animals problematic due to the animalization of human subjects, in the 19th century there was a parallelism between the antislavery movement and the movement against animal cruelty (Kalof 132). The equivalence between slavery and animal cruelty was a convention of the time period. Kalof cites Diana Donald to indicate that “[...] the human–animal relationship was a recurring theme in popular mainstream publications of the early 1800s [...] and animal cruelty served as a reminder of human social problems (128). More specifically, “[...] the concern for animal welfare was part of a much wider movement which involved the spread of humane feelings towards

previously despised human beings, like [...] the enslaved. It thus became associated with a more general demand for reform, [like] the abolition of slavery [...]" (Kalof 128).⁴⁸

In conclusion, while the horse as symbol and the human/horse relationship in *Sab* might seem to be peripheral questions, they are actually essential to a full understanding of the novel. The horses mirror the protagonists themselves, from Sab and Carlota to Enrique. In particular, the long-suffering, hard-working *jaco negro* is representative of his rider, Sab and positioned as morally superior to his counterpart, the *brioso alazán* who represents his rider Enrique. a comparison between the circumstances of enslaved peoples and that of working equines that was common for the time period. Furthermore, I argue that beyond a mere symbolic relationship between horse and rider, the affective relationship between Sab and his beloved *jaco* is worthy of analysis. This relationship can be understood as composed of liquid emotions—saliva, sweat, tears, and blood—that broker the inclusion of both in a community of the subaltern. In sum, the relationship between horses and their masters in *Sab* interplays with questions of race, class, and affect in the 19th century.

⁴⁸ The comparison between Sab and his *jaco* is just one juxtaposition of equines and enslaved people seen in Latin American literature of the 19th century. In the preface to "The Spitting Image of a Man: Machado de Assis's *Crônicas* about Donkeys", Robert Patrick Newcomb compiles and translates several 19th century *crônicas* (newspaper columns) that take donkeys as their subject matter. He points out that the Afro-Brazilian author Machado de Assis inverts the usual symbolic use of these animals as unintelligent and brutish. Instead, the author of *Dom Casmurro* uses donkeys as sympathetic allegories for enslaved and formerly enslaved Afro-Brazilians. He compares their similar plights: both are taken advantage of for their labor by their respective masters: "By allegorizing Afro-Brazilians who are enslaved [...] Machado, with his characteristic irony, humanizes and defends them [...]" (Newcomb 211). While this comparison is shocking nowadays, and has even been explored in works like Marjorie Spiegel's 1988 book *The Dreaded Comparison*, it has a historical precedent. See Ch. 4 for more.

Chapter 3

“Paciencia sin igual”: Human-Equine Relationships in *O gaúcho* (1870) and *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1879)

This chapter will explore the literary representations of horsemanship in two gauchesca literary works from the 19th century: the second volume of the epic poem *Martín Fierro* (1872) by the Argentinian José Hernández, or *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* (1879); and the novel *O gaúcho* (1870) by the Brazilian José de Alencar. My main goal is to respond to the following question: How is the human-horse relationship, specifically in the context of horse-taming, represented in these regional works? In both works, the civilization-barbarism dichotomy found in some of the Latin American literature of the time is mirrored by the tame-domestic dichotomy of horses. In these two works, when the protagonists tame new horses to be their cow-herding partners on the *pampas*, they notably stray from the typical domestication methods of the time. Instead of employing the traditional “doma gaúcha⁴⁹”, which uses violence and “brute force” (Floôr Kosby et. al 201), they use Indigenous methods of animal taming or “familiarization” that prioritize cultivating an affective relationship with the wild animal. Valuing familiarization is countercultural to the traditional anthropocentric way of relating to animals. When Martín Fierro, for example, recognizes the advantages of the native way of breaking a horse, he reveals the beginning of the problematization of the strict civilization-barbarism polarity. These Indigenous methods of animal training harken back to ancient principles laid out by Greek philosopher Xenophon in his treatise “On Horsemanship” (350 BC) that recommend “gentle handling” and “kindness.” I argue that the horsemanship practiced by the protagonists of these two regional

⁴⁹ Note that “doma gaúcha” is written with a tilde over the “u” since it is a term in Portuguese.

works is a precursor to the ideas of making-kin and mutual care currently championed by Animal Studies scholars like Donna Haraway.

The relationship between gaucho and horse (or as the gaucho would affectionately call his mount, *pingo*) is a multi-faceted one that relates to questions of identity, self-worth, pride, and masculinity. This chapter will be focused mainly on the particular interspecies relationship between human and animal that results as a consequence of the process of “taming” or “breaking” the horse. It bears repeating that the horse is an animal that straddles the line between tame and untamed, domestic and wild. This begs the question: what does “taming” or “breaking” a horse actually mean? In Spanish this process, which necessarily precedes any gaucho equestrianism, is referred to as “*la doma*” or “*el amanse*” (Romero Carranza 119). As defined in *El gaucho y el recado*, this process

...consiste en la ancestral actividad de hacer que un caballo nacido y criado en libertad o un potro chúcaro que poco contacto ha tenido con el hombre hasta los cuatro años, se convierta en una útil y dócil herramienta para ser utilizado [*sic*] en las tareas camperas, mayormente a la actividad ganadera, que es la que en este trabajo le atribuimos al caballo criollo, aunque últimamente se lo adiestra y utiliza para varias actividades deportivas.

(Romero Carranza 119)⁵⁰

According to Romero Carranza, the gaucho must tame or break a horse before he is able to ride the animal and work with him as his partner on the *pampas*. However, there is more than one way to tame a horse and this diversity is reflected in the gauchesque fiction of the time. In this chapter, we will look at two opposing methods: “*doma gaúcha*” (a type of “*doma tradicional*”)

⁵⁰ “... consists in the ancestral activity of taking a horse born and raised in freedom or a wild colt that has had little contact with man until four years of age, and converting it into a useful and docile tool to be used in country tasks, mostly in working with cattle, which is the task that we attribute to the *criollo* horse, although recently he has been trained and used for various sporting activities” Translation mine.

and “*doma india*” (a type of “*doma racional*”). The following sections will describe each method.

Doma tradicional and Doma gaucha

“Doma tradicional” is a general term encompassing methods of breaking the horse to submit to human will, as Hering (293) explains: “Doma tradicional compreende uma série de ações realizadas para que o cavalo se submeta ao comando humano.⁵¹” “*Doma gaucha*” is a type of “*doma tradicional*” (Hering 293) and refers to a traditional, undeniably violent method of training that was regularly used by gauchos. What, exactly, did this method entail? Justo P. Saenz describes the process of traditional taming in eight detailed steps. First, in autumn, the young colt or filly is taken from the corral where it was living with the cattle (37). The tamer introduces a leather bit into the horse’s mouth in the interdental space and pulls the horse’s muzzle to his chest in order to soften his neck (37-38). The “*muy duros de cogote*” or “very stiff-necked” are even dragged through the dirt by their jaws (37-38). Second, the horse is brought to its feet with “*rebencazos*” or strong lashings of the whip (38). He is then saddled, all the while the trainer’s assistant hangs from the horse’s ears. Third, the horse’s hobbles are removed and the gaucho jumps lightly onto his back (38). Fourth, the gaucho rides the bucking bronco, employing spurs and whip, for a time until the horse is brought back to the corral (38). Fifth, the horse’s mouth is yanked on and he is tied to a post to “soften the neck”(38), while the sixth step is to take him out for gallops. Seventh is when the horse is started in “*rodeo*” and “*maniobras del lazo*” (39). The eighth and last step is to introduce the bit, at which point the partially trained animal or

⁵¹ “*Doma tradicional* consists in a series of actions carried out so that the horse submits to human command.” Translation mine.

“*redomón*” finally becomes a “*caballo*”(39)⁵². Saenz, concludes that “...no puede ser más sumario y brutal este sistema de doma. Escasamente se aplica la astucia humana, y en cuanto a la dulzura y la paciencia... ¿para qué, habiendo tantos caballos y siendo tan bien visto en todas partes, el ‘cristiano fuerte para el basto’?”⁵³ (Saenz 39-40). Saenz points out that while this method lacks patience, among other human virtues, it continues to be popular.

Similarly, when Charles Darwin visits Barquelo, Uruguay, he is witness to “*doma tradicional*” and describes the whole process in detail and with a tone sympathetic to the horse’s plight in his journal *A Naturalist’s Voyage Round the World*, as cited by both Lima and Hering⁵⁴. In this journal, Darwin comments that “Animals are so abundant in these countries, that humanity and self-interest are not closely united; therefore I fear it is that the former is here scarcely known” (page 161). Saenz and Darwin coincide in their observations that there is very little humanity in this vulgar and unrefined method of breaking horses.

Doma racional and Doma india

“Doma racional” is any generally nonviolent method of horse training, as opposed to “doma tradicional”. Hering describes “doma racional” as follows: “Seus preceitos, de modo geral, indicam que o cavalo deve ser iniciado no treinamento equestre sendo respeitado seu comportamento natural, sem a utilização de nenhum método violento, ou capaz de

⁵² The “technique” of merely leaping on the horse and holding on while it leaps and bucks, wearing itself out into submission, is used by some gauchos in *O Gaúcho*, but notably not by the protagonist Manuel Canho.

⁵³ “...this method of breaking couldn’t be more obvious and brutal. Human wit is scarcely applied, and as for sweetness and patience... for what, having so many horses and being so well viewed the ‘Christian ready for what comes’?” Translation mine.

⁵⁴ Lima in “Cada doma é um livro” (113) in 2015 and Hering in “Da dominação à tentativa de comunicação: uma análise dos métodos de doma para equitação” (295) in 2020.

infringir dor ao mesmo.⁵⁵” (297). She also mentions that the trainer should be in tune with the horse’s physical and mental state so that the activities are pleasing to him:

Durante os treinos, deve ser dada atenção à respiração, batimento cardíaco, condicionamento físico e estado psicológico do animal, para que o cavalo desenvolva uma boa relação com os exercícios (Rink, 2008, p. 318). Procura-se distinguir movimentos corporais e faciais, além de vocalizações (bufadas, resfôlegos, relinchos, roncões e guinchos) que indiquem medo, agressão, impulso à fuga, satisfação, calma, curiosidade, estresse etc. A partir daí, deve ser estabelecida com o cavalo uma comunicação não-violenta, buscando meios de fazê-lo cooperar com prazer.⁵⁶ (298)

“Doma racional” describes a method of training that is not only non-violent, but in tune with the horse’s emotions. Among many methods that fall under the umbrella of “doma racional” are “natural horsemanship” and “doma índia” (298). Hering cites a study on natural horsemanship done in the United States where participants “...desejam uma relação com os cavalos de parceria e amizade – uma interação na qual o cavalo e a pessoa **‘esforçam-se um pelo outro’**”⁵⁷ (Hering 307, emphasis mine). “Doma índia” involves the same kind of connection and reciprocity. Floôr Kosby cites Reyna Martínez who defines doma índia as “...una doma que nos

⁵⁵ “Its principles, in general, indicate that the horse should be initiated in equestrian training with his natural behavior respected, without the use of any method that is violent or that causes pain.” Translation mine.

⁵⁶ During the training sessions, attention should be paid to the breathing, heartbeat, physical condition and psychological state of the animal, so that the horse develops a positive relationship with the exercises (Rink, 2008, p. 318). Seek to distinguish body and facial movements, in addition to vocalizations (snorts, gasps, neighs, grunts and squeals) that indicate fear, aggression, desire to flee, satisfaction, calm, curiosity, stress, etc. From there, a nonviolent communication should be established with the horse, seeking out ways to make him cooperate with pleasure.” (Translation mine)

⁵⁷ “...desire a relationship with the horse of partnership and friendship – an interaction in which the horse and the person ‘go the extra mile for each other’” (Translation mine)

pone en el lugar del caballo, nos muestra su naturaleza, su comportamiento y de acuerdo a estas como tratarlo⁵⁸” (Floôr Kosby et al. 214).

As the name suggests, this is the method used by the Indigenous Ranquel people in the La Pampa region (Floôr Kosby et al. 213-214). Doma india is what is described by Martín Fierro in Canto X of *La Vuelta*. Hering discusses the process in detail:

Na doma índia, em um primeiro momento o equino é colocado em um redondel, no qual também está seu treinador. Este pode passar horas socializando-se com o animal, e procurando compreender seu estado mental e emocional por meio da observação de seu comportamento. Depois, o cavalo é colocado em uma baia ou estábulo, onde é tocado por seu treinador, que acaricia seu corpo, de modo [sica] criar um vínculo entre os dois, e acostumar o cavalo ao toque humano. Posteriormente, ao cavalo é atada uma corda no pescoço, ou colocado um cabresto, e seu treinador o pede para segui-lo. Tendo sucesso, o animal é então montado em pelo, sem o auxílio de nenhuma sela ou outro arreio. O passo seguinte é a monta com os arreios completos. (Hering 298).⁵⁹

Based on this description, “*doma índia*” is peaceful and does not involve forcing the animal to do anything against its will. Instead it involves observation, respect for the horse’s mental/emotional state and natural behaviors, and gentle touch to create a connection between human and animal.

Roots of doma gaucha vs doma india

⁵⁸ “...a breaking method that puts us in the horse’s position, shows us its nature and its behavior, and thus how to treat it.” (Translation mine)

⁵⁹ “In *doma india*, to start the horse is placed in a corral alongside its trainer. The trainer might spend hours socializing with the animal and trying to understand its mental and emotional state via observation of its behavior. Then, the horse is placed in a stall or stable, where its touched by its trainer, who caresses its body, in order to create a connection between the two and accustom the horse to human touch. Then, either a halter is put on or a cord is tied around the horse’s neck, and the trainer asks the horse to follow him. Having success, the animal is then ridden bareback, without the help or any saddle or other tack. The next step is to ride with full tack.” (Translation mine)

The first method of breaking the horse, “*doma gaucha*,” is rooted in the hierarchical Judeo-Christian view of human-animal relationships, which posits the human as above the animal, while “*doma india*” is based on Indigenous beliefs. In Genesis 1:28 of the King James Version of the Bible, God speaks to the first humans: “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.” The key words here are “subdue” and “dominion”⁶⁰: both of which suggest a vertical relationship where humans are superior to animals, rather than a horizontal one where humans and animals in many respects are similar. As Marcy Norton explains in *The Tame and the Wild* (2024),

Genesis presents the singularity of people—unique because they alone were made in the image of this God—whereas Indigenous creation stories show all kinds of beings possessing subjectivity or personhood. Genesis insists on humans’ superiority, given their proximity to God and preordained “dominion,” while Indigenous creation stories that tell of animals’ and plants’ human ancestry highlight kinship across species. In this system, animals and plants were relations, not resources (2).

The terms Norton uses, “resources” and “relations”, appropriately synthesize how the horse is viewed in different taming methods. In the previously discussed, violent “*doma gaúcha*” or “*doma tradicional*”, the horse is clearly seen as a “resource”. It is a “resource” that is useful in the task of working cattle, and a creature to assert dominance over and wrangle into submission via force. There is no consideration for the horse as a fellow being, nor thought given to the

⁶⁰ Some contemporary Protestant Christian traditions are notably moving away from this worldview and using alternative language in worship services (i.e. replacing references to “dominion over the Earth” with “stewardship of the Earth”, suggesting responsibility and reciprocal care rather than domination).

animal's emotions or suffering. In contrast, "*doma racional*" and "*doma india*" are alternative methods for breaking a horse that see the horse as a "relation", a peer, a creature with emotions.

The conceptions of human-animal relationships that Europeans brought to the Americas were not only influenced by the aforementioned Judeo-Christian theology, but also by different domestication practices. Marcy Norton points out that the Eurasian process of domesticating animals was not "fully embraced" in the Americas and that "...interactions generated by animal husbandry were an important 'cause' of Europeans' sense of separateness from other kinds of animals [...] In contrast, predation and familiarization in Indigenous America revealed commonalities across the species divide..." (8). Norton also explains that

...the naturalization of livestock has shaped historical scholarship by normalizing the objectification of animals and neglecting practices that emphasize nonhuman subjectivity. This perspective can be attested in the long tradition of scholarship that assumes an instrumental approach toward animals is more natural than one characterized by care and appreciation" (10).

This "instrumental approach" is clearly seen in the European-influenced *doma gaucha* while *doma india* shows influence of familiarization and appreciation.

The movement that defines the two gauchesque works in question, Romanticism, prioritizes human feelings and emotions, and it stands to reason that this concern would extend to animals' inner lives as well. Romantic literature also showed an interest in the autochthonous – like Indigenous ways of horse training. All of this to say that it is unsurprising that works falling in the Romantic tradition (*O gaúcho* and *La vuelta de Martin Fierro*) demonstrate more of "doma india" methodology and a horizontal human-animal worldview. The one exception to this

pattern, it would appear, is found in the first volume of *Martín Fierro*. Despite being a Romantic work, it depicts *doma gaucha* and a vertical human-animal worldview.⁶¹

El gaucho Martín Fierro

In the classic epic poem *El gaucho Martín Fierro*, the titular protagonist narrates his adventures on the *pampas*. Integral to those adventures is his loyal steed. Martín Fierro has an affective and affectionate relationship with his horse⁶²: in one part he mentions how his horse would come at a whistle to rub up against him: “y donde quiera que estaba / en cuanto yo lo silbaba / venía a refregarse en mí.” (144). Perhaps unsurprisingly then, is the fact that horse breaking appears in both the first part of the epic poem and its sequel. Before a horse can be a loyal mount and friend for a gaucho, he must be broken. However, the method of horse breaking, again, differs greatly between the two volumes.

In the first volume, in Canto 2 of the protagonist’s adventures, Fierro relates an episode of what we can understand to be “*doma gaucha*”. He describes a gaucho horse-breaker or “*domador*” leaping onto an unbroken horse and holding on as the horse bucks, using spurs or “*lloronas*” on the animal (14). Even if the horse fell on its back, the trainer would land on his feet with the horse’s halter in hand:

“¡Ah tiempos!...¡Si era un orgullo
ver jinetiar un paisano!
Cuando era gaucho baquiano,
aunque el potro se boliase,

⁶¹ On the other hand, later neo-Naturalist writers such as Ricardo Güiraldes who had a more scientific perspective are more likely to show a vertical human-animal worldview where animals are inferior to humans: in *Don Segundo Sombra*, we see *doma tradicional*.

⁶² Similar to Sab and his *jaco negro* in *Sab* (1841).

no había uno que no parase
con el cabresto en la mano”⁶³ (14).

This passage emphasizes the hardiness and agility of the *domador* and reveals the violence inherent to the process: the horse could fall on its back and the focus was still on the trainer and his skill, not the animal and its physical suffering.⁶⁴ In one English translation by Catherine E. Ward, a footnote in this section explains that “the gaucho method was to dominate and exhaust the horse by force and good balance. A good domador was immensely respected” (5). *Doma gaucha* can be accurately described as “domination by force”, and is not only present in Romantic gauchesque poetry like *Martín Fierro* but is also depicted in Naturalist prose works like Argentinean Ricardo Güiraldes’s novel *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926) and Brazilian Graciliano Ramos’s novel *Vidas Secas*⁶⁵. Unlike the *doma india*, this “domination by force” is an

⁶³ “Ah times agone! To see them ride /Was a goodly sight and grand;/ There was wilder horse-flesh then than now,/ And the men were harder too, I trow,/ For never a breaker but got him down,/ With the halter in his hand.” (9)
Translation by Walter Owen.

⁶⁴ Charles Darwin confirms this in *A Naturalist’s Voyage Round the World*, saying: “Their [the gauchos’] criterion of a good rider is, a man who can manage an untamed colt, or who, if his horse falls, alights on his own feet, or can perform other such exploits.” (162)

⁶⁵ In both *Don Segundo Sombra* (1926) and *Vidas secas* (1938), the male protagonists employ *doma tradicional* in order to tame their horses for cattle herding work. In the former, Chapter 4 and Chapter 22 describe the process of *doma tradicional*; keeping the animal from lowering its head and tugging on its mouth before leaving it panting and shaking (Güiraldes, 1990, 158-160) and lassoing and throwing the animals to the ground in order to tack them up (Güiraldes, 1990, 341). The use of the whip is emphasized in the “trabajo brutal, lleno de sutilezas y mañas” (Güiraldes, 1990, 161). In the latter, the chapter entitled “O menino mais novo” depicts *doma tradicional*, describing it as a “um redemoinho na catinga” and emphasizes the use of spurs or *rosetas*. In each, the violent act is tied to masculinity and seen as a display of skill and man’s domination over nature. As Floôr Kosby et al. points out, citing Ondina Fachel Leal,

[...] a constante afirmação da virilidade, da honra e da valentia, por meio da dominação da natureza (associada aos animais e às mulheres), profundamente experienciada na lida campeira, é atributo fundamental à construção da identidade masculina do gaúcho. Assim, ao mesmo passo em que o convívio contínuo com os animais aponta para sua domesticação e amansamento, há a necessidade de que os homens, para se tornarem homens, dominem os animais; quanto mais xucro for o animal, mais potência é atribuída àquele que o dominar.

([...] the constant affirmation of virility, honor, and bravery via domination over nature (associated with animals and women), deeply experienced in rural life, is a fundamental attribute in the construction of the gaucho’s masculine identity. Thus, at the same time that constantly living alongside animals points toward their domestication and taming, there is the necessity that men, in order to become men, dominate animals; the wilder the animal, the more power is attributed to the one who dominates it.) (translation mine)

inherently violent and anthropocentric method.

However, the apostrophe present in the first verse (“¡Ah tiempos!”) and the past tense used in the relevant verses and preceding and subsequent verses suggests that this is perhaps no longer an accepted method of horse breaking. Perhaps by the time this stanza was written this technique was relegated to times gone by and only remembered by certain gauchos with nostalgia. A later stanza “pero ha querido el destino / que todo aquello acabara” (16) immediately follows a description of the food they used to eat and precedes a lament on how the gaucho is now hassled by the authorities. A broader interpretation of “todo aquello” could take its referent to be all the traditions heretofore mentioned, including the “doma gaucha”. This interpretation would explain why a Romantic work would have such a Naturalist, hierarchical view of the human-animal relationship, and why its sequel would laud an opposite method of

In order for the protagonists to become men, to be real gauchos, they must assert their dominance over an untamed horse—the wilder the better.

In each novel, horse-taming is also undeniably a tradition passed on through the generations: children in both novels look up to the protagonists and admire their horse-training prowess. In *Don Segundo Sombra*, protagonist Fabio Cáceres observes the cyclical nature of boys admiring the older gauchos:

Un chico como de doce años se había sentado cerca mío y miraba mis espuelas, mis manos lastimadas en la jineteada, mi rostro cubierto por la tierra del arreo, con la misma admiración con que días antes observé yo a Valerio o a don Segundo. (190)

In *Vidas secas*, the “O menino mais novo”, who is unnamed in the novel, holds his father in particularly high esteem when he is breaking or taming a horse: “Naquele momento Fabiano lhe causava grande admiração. Metido nos couros, de perneiras, gibão e guarda-peito, era a criatura mais importante do mundo” (19). “O menino mais novo” sees taming the horse as a display of prowess and a sign of masculinity:

Quando fosse homem, caminharia assim, pesado, cambaio, importante, as rosetas das esporas tilintando. Saltaria no lombo de um cavalo brabo e voaria na catinga como pé de vento, levantando poeira. Ao regressar, apear-se-ia num pulo e andaria no pátio assim torto, de perneiras, gibão, guarda-peito e chapéu de couro com barbicacho. O menino mais velho e Baleia ficariam admirados. (20)

Horse-taming, in addition to being a tradition, is seen as essential to a good upbringing and education for Fabiano’s boys: “Indispensável os meninos entrarem no bom caminho, saberem cortar mandacaru para o gado, consertar cercas, **amansar brabos**. Precisavam ser duros, virar tatus” (11) (emphasis mine). Fabiano’s own identity is tied to horse-taming: “Tinha vindo ao mundo para **amansar brabo**, curar feridas com rezas, consertar cercas de inverno a verão” (33). Taming wild horses is integral to his identity and why he is in this world.

horse-breaking.⁶⁶

La vuelta de Martín Fierro (1879)

At first, in the second volume, the protagonist Fierro's hatred for the Indigenous people is still crystal clear: "He presenciado martirios, he visto muchas crueldades, crímenes y atrocidades que el cristiano no imagina, pues ni el indio ni la china sabe lo que son piedades." (131).

However, even Fierro himself admits that this is patently untrue when it comes to the horse. In

Canto 4 of *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* the narrator instead highlights the great care the

Indigenous people have for their horses:

El indio que tiene un pingo

que se llega a distinguir,

lo cuida hasta pa dormir;

de ese cuidado es esclavo;

se lo alquila a otro indio bravo

cuando vienen a invadir.⁶⁷ (114, emphasis mine)

[...]

Por vigilarlo no come

y ni aun el sueño concilia;

⁶⁶ Another possibility is that the historical context changed between the first and second volumes, and that this affected the content of each section. Emilio Carilla in his article "La vuelta de Martín Fierro" (as published in Cedomil Goic's *Historia y crítica de la literatura hispanoamericana 2: del romanticismo al modernismo*) points out that the second volume "...se distingue por un más sosegado ímpetu, mayor sosiego que no puede atribuirse únicamente al deseo del poeta de identificar personaje y edad..." (248). The second volume was written during the government of Avellaneda, whose term "...se caracterizó por una mayor estabilidad y sosiego que el de Sarmiento" (248). This "sosiego" or tranquility might extend to the horse breaking techniques, with the second volume written under Avellaneda recommending the more peaceful doma india while the first volume written under Sarmiento describes the more violent doma gaucha.

⁶⁷ "The Indian that owns a horse / That's out of the common run, / He waits on that animal hand and foot, / There's nothing he won't do for the brute, / And he hires it out to some raiding brave, / Until the raid is done." (120) Translation by Walter Owen.

sólo en eso no hay desidia:

de noche, les asiguro,

para tenerlo seguro

le hace cerco la familia.⁶⁸ (115, emphasis mine)

The Indigenous rider cares so much for his horse and prizes him such that he will go without food to watch over him, and at night even has his family sleep in a circle around him for protection. While Fierro's prejudice towards the Indigenous people is still very present, suggesting that this care for the horse is an exception and they are usually careless ("sólo en eso no hay desidia"), he does concede that they take exceptional care of their horses and that "todo pampa valiente / anda siempre bien montao"⁶⁹ (115). This protection and great valuation of the animals suggests that their horses are of exceptional quality and that extensive work has gone into breaking them, as will be seen in the following section.

In terms of Indigenous horse training methods, the brutal "doma gaucha" described in the first part (*El gaucho Martín Fierro*) is notably absent and instead a description of "doma india" is present. As mentioned previously, Martín Fierro in prior cantos is prone to anti-Indigenous sentiment and even racist remarks. However, in Canto 10 of *La vuelta*, our protagonist changes his tune. Here he dedicates 13 stanzas of Canto 10 to describing the horse of the pampas, and in these stanzas acknowledges the value in the Indigenous way of breaking these horses. The penultimate stanza on page 145 is particularly important:

Y aunque yo sobre los bastos

me sé sacudir el polvo,

⁶⁸ "He'll see it's fed when of food himself He's scarce got a single thing; / To watch it many a nap he'll miss;/ He's a sloven in every thing but this. / By night he makes his family sleep / All round it in a ring." (120) Translation by Walter Owen.

⁶⁹ "Rides a horse picked out of a hundred score / That can run like a streak of light." Translation by Walter Owen (120)

a esa costumbre me amoldo;

con pacencia lo manejan

y al día siguiente lo dejan

rienda arriba junto al toldo.⁷⁰ (emphasis mine)

We see in the first verses (“Y aunque yo sobre los bastos / me sé sacudir el polvo / a esa costumbre me amoldo”) that while Martín Fierro knows how to perform the “doma gaucha”⁷¹, he actually says that he will take up the Indigenous way: “a esa costumbre me amoldo”. This is diametrically opposed to his original attitude about the Indigenous people; that they are irredeemably evil. While he does not go so far as to outright criticize the “doma gaucha” described in volume one, he does say that he will take up the Indigenous way and goes on to praise its various elements. First, he says on one of their horses, there is no danger of falling (Hernández 145). Second, Indigenous horse training involves a trainer spending hours taming the horse (Hernández 145). Third, two key elements of this training method are particularly emphasized: nonviolence and patience. Martín Fierro underscores at least three times that the Indigenous horse trainer never hits his mount:

Jamás le sacude un golpe

porque lo trata al bagual

con pacencia sin igual;

al domarlo no le pega,

hasta que al fin se le entrega

ya dócil el animal. (145, emphasis mine)

⁷⁰ “Though at breaking a colt in our Christian style/I don’t waste sentiment, / It’s better I like the Indian way, / And the horse, once rid, the very next day, / You’ll see with the reins across his neck / At the flap of the Indian’s tent.” Translation by Walter Owen (160)

⁷¹ different English versions translate the verse as “And though I can sit a bucking colt and stir the dust to break it, I’ll adapt myself to the indian way .../” (19) or “Though at breaking a colt in our Christian style/I don’t waste sentiment,/It’s better I like the Indian way,/” Translation by Walter Owen (162)

Así todo el que procure
 tener un pingo modelo,
 lo ha de cuidar con desvelo,
 y **debe impedir también**
el que de golpes le den
o tironén en el suelo.”(145-146, emphasis mine)

Clearly nonviolence was as instrumental to the “doma india” breaking style as violence is to “doma gaucha”. The second key element, patience, is also mentioned repeatedly: “porque lo trata al bagual / **con paciencia sin igual**” (145, emphasis mine) and “es de mucha conocencia / y tiene mucho sentido; / es animal consentido: / **lo cautiva la pacencia.**” (146, emphasis mine). The latter verses the first time that the animal is seen as a sentient, intelligent being with feelings and emotions. Canto X of *La Vuelta* is particularly noteworthy because we see that Martín Fierro’s understanding of humanity widens, as he now considers the Indigenous people to have some worthy ideas and his understanding of animals becomes deeper and more posthumanistic as he considers the horse’s mind and emotions. It is important to note that while in other Cantos, Martín Fierro’s sons take turns narrating, it is indeed the father himself speaking here⁷². As previously discussed, it seems that in the initial Canto 2 of the first volume, Fierro is reminiscing on the *doma gaucha* and he no longer employs it. This interpretation indicates that even in the first half of Martín Fierro, before he explicitly praises *doma india* in the second half, the *doma gaúcha* is passé.

⁷² As Albarracín Sarmiento clarifies for us in his piece “Estructura del Martín Fierro: los narradores” (as published in Cedomil Goic’s *Historia y crítica de la literatura hispanoamericana 2: del romanticismo al modernismo*) “Martín Fierro canta, como narrador, desde el primer verso de *El gaúcho* hasta el verso 2.268” y “El canto autobiográfico de Fierro se reanuda en el primer verso de la *Vuelta* y concluye en el verso 1.556” (237). Both Cantos II and IV in *El Gaúcho* are within the range of verses 1 to 2,268. In la *Vuelta*, Verse 1,556 is the end of Canto X. That is to say, all the pertinent passages on horse training are sung by Martín Fierro himself.

The fact that Fierro now thinks highly of some aspects of Indigenous culture (specifically their horse taming methods) is a turning point in the epic poem. As Jennifer French points out in *Nature, Neo-Colonialism, and the Spanish American Regional Writers*:

...the crucial distinction between civilization and barbarism—a nineteenth-century thought-structure that was exceptionally strong and pervasive in Spanish America—becomes threatened as the hero recognizes admirable aspects of ‘primitive’ cultures as well as the savagery and violence of the colonists. (33-34)

While in this section, French is specifically referencing Pedro Prado’s *La reina de Rapa Nui*, the point is extremely applicable to *Martín Fierro*. The strict divide between civilization and barbarism wavers as our hero Fierro admires the exceptional horse training methods of the Indigenous people. It can also be argued that he criticizes the “savagery and violence of the colonists”. While it is not a direct criticism of the *doma gaúcha* method, Martín Fierro does denounces those who use violent methods to break the horse:

muchos quieren dominarlo
con el rigor y el azote [...]
dicen que es por quebrantarlo,
mas compriende cualquier bobo
que es de miedo del corcobo
y no quieren confesarlo” (146).

Our protagonist, who is generally unopposed to violence (he has killed two people by this point, a Black man and an Indigenous man) seems to now draw the line at violence towards equines, saying that those who use the whip are merely scared that the horse will buck. The central idea of employing kindness instead of violence to train horses was famously championed in ancient

Greece by philosopher Xenophon⁷³. The taming methods Fierro endorses not only show Indigenous influence, but also harken back to ancient principles of responsible horsemanship.

In his treatise *On Horsemanship* (also translated as *On Equitation*), Xenophon shares advice on choosing a horse to purchase, as well as horse care, keeping, breaking and riding. The sections on breaking a horse and proper riding are most relevant to this chapter's purpose.

Xenophon has a particular approach to breaking a horse. While he acknowledges that most men appointed to cavalry will have the financial means to have someone else train their horse, he says that in general, anyone handling the horse should:

...arrange it that the colt associates hunger and thirst and the attacks of insects with solitude, and eating and drinking and freedom from things that hurt him with men. For in these circumstances it must follow that the colt is not only friendly with human beings but actually longs for them (*Ancient Greek Horsemanship*, 159)

In general, Xenophon recommends treating the horse with patience and refraining from physical punishment: exactly how Martín Fierro describes the doma india. The Greek writer says a groom should “[...]lead the young horse through crowds and make him approach sights and sounds of all sorts. And whenever any of them frightens him he must be taught, not by rough treatment but by coaxing, that there is no danger” (*Ancient Greek Horsemanship*, 160). He also specifically recommends to refrain from physical violence when training:

⁷³ Xenophon was not the first in ancient Greek to record horse training methods. In *On Horsemanship*, Xenophon makes reference to a predecessor, Simon of Athens, whose writings were largely lost, with the exception of some fragments included in the *Hippiatrica*. The *Hippiatrica* is a Greek compendium of horse care and medicine. While the original text of the *Hippiatrica* is not readily available in English, Anne McCabe’s *A Byzantine Encyclopaedia of Horse Medicine: The Sources, Compilation, and Transmission of the Hippiatrica* is a good reference. The Greeks were also not the first to write down horse training methods. This distinction goes to the Hittites who wrote a manual on training of chariot horses referred to as the Kikkuli text around 2000 years ago (Raulwing 61). Hering describes the text: “O texto foca principalmente nos cuidados a serem dados aos cavalos puxadores de carros de guerra e de desfile do exército hitita, além de um programa de exercícios para os animais, com a duração de 184 dias. Para cada um destes dias é prescrita a quantidade de alimento, água, o número de exercícios e os períodos de descanso para o cavalo” (7). For other notable historical works on horsemanship, see section 2 of Hering (7-17), “Registros escritos deixados pelas sociedades pré-contemporâneas sobre equitação, doma e treino de cavalos”.

13. **Never to lose one's temper in treating the horse, this is the one best precept and custom in dealing with horses.** For anger is a thing without foresight, so that it often does deeds which afterwards demand repentance. 14. And when the horse suspects some object and is unwilling to approach it, you must explain to him that it is not terrible, especially to a courageous horse, and if this fails you must yourself touch the object that he thinks dangerous, and lead him up to it gently. 15. **But those who compel the horse with blows make him more frightened than ever.** For horses think, whenever they receive any harsh treatment in such circumstances, that the suspected objects are responsible for that too.” (*Ancient Greek Horsemanship*, 166) (emphasis mine)

The horse training method, doma india, that Fierro backs in Canto X of Part II is based not only in Indigenous beliefs but also in 2000 year old classic Greek philosophy.

O gaúcho

In *O gaúcho*, the story follows protagonist Brazilian gaucho Manuel Canho's adventures on horseback through Rio Grande do Sul. Similarly to Martin Fierro, Manuel Canho feels great affection for his horses, and the narrator says that “o cavalo é uma das fibras mais sensíveis do coração do gaúcho”⁷⁴ (11). Canho's relationships with his horses are central to the story, especially that with “*a baia*” or a bay mare. This mare, similar to Canho who lost his father, has also lost a loved one - her son, a young colt. In this section, I will analyze “Capítulo VI: A baia,” and “Capítulo VII: O amansador” focusing on their depictions of different styles of horse training and the human-horse relationship portrayed between Canho and the bay mare.

The mare is originally owned by a Chilean traveling peddler, Don Romero, who makes the boastful promise that anyone who can ride her, can keep her. The first thing the mare does

⁷⁴ “The horse is one of the most sensitive parts of the gaucho's heart” (translation mine)

when brought out by a young boy is buck twice and try to bite her handler. After a while, the gauchos realize that “era impossível levar sua avante pelos **meios ordinários**” (28) (emphasis mine) and they tie her up so she can’t move and harness her. A Paraguayan man tries to mount her and it results in an “eruption”- the horse bucks so aggressively that she breaks the harness and goes running off like a shot (28). Their methods, based in violence and similar to doma gaucha, have obviously failed.

Then Canho enters the scene, a type of horse whisperer who insists that the others merely “Não sabem levá-la” (29), or don’t know how to handle her. Instead of brute violence, he attempts patient interspecies communication. He employs a different technique that, while is is not named in the text, is likely a form of doma india as it involves touch and speaking to the horse kindly:

Lentamente, a passo e passo, aproximou-se o gaúcho, até que pode estender-lhe a mão sobre a espádua. A égua arisca arrufou-se de novo. Rápido foi o assomo; outra vez soara a seu ouvido, mais terno e plangente, o débil ornejo, ao tempo que a mão, instrumento e condutor da alma humana, alisava-lhe a anca e a selada com um doce afago.⁷⁵ (30)

Canho approaches the horse quietly, and extends his hand over the horse’s shoulder. Later in the process Canho goes on to stroke the animal’s chest and tail. In the same way that Martin Fierro’s description of doma india harkens back to Xenophon’s precepts, Canho’s method does the same. Xenophon says that “And one should touch those parts where a horse particularly enjoys being stroked, that is, the most hairy parts and those which the horse is least able to protect himself if anything troubles him” (*Ancient Greek Horsemanship* 159-160). This emphasis on gentle, kind

⁷⁵ “Slowly, step by step, the gaucho approached her, until he could extend his hand onto her shoulder. The skittish mare became ruffled again. She became irritated rapidly; a heehaw sounded to his ear again, more melancholically and tenderly, while his hand, that instrument and conductor of the human soul, smoothed over her hip and the saddle with a sweet caress.” (Translation mine)

touch, so critical to *doma india*, is also present in the concept of making-kin. As Haraway says, touch “ramifies and shapes accountability” (36)- here, touch is helping form a bond between horse and rider. As the narrator says, the human hand is the instrument and conductor of the human soul.

A large part of *doma india* has to do with touch. As previously described by Hering, in the process of *doma india*, the horse “... é tocado por seu treinador, que acaricia seu corpo, de modo [a] criar um vínculo entre os dois, e acostumar o cavalo ao toque humano”⁷⁶ (298). As Hering says, the idea is to use gentle, non violent touch to 1) create connection between the two species as well as 2.) to get the horse used to human touch. These are both indispensable tasks if the animal is going to eventually be ridden. Haraway mentions touch in her book *When Species Meet*, stating that

My premise is that touch ramifies and shapes accountability. Accountability, caring for, being affected, and entering into responsibility are not ethical abstractions; these mundane, prosaic things are the result of having truck with each other. [...] Touch and regard have consequences. (36)

While Haraway is speaking generally about touch and our relationships with animals, touch is especially important when it comes to the equine species. The horse’s language is one of the body, or as Vicki Hearne says in *Adam’s Task: Calling Animals by Name*, a “kinesthetic” language (107). As Hearne points out, horses don’t use their voices to communicate nearly as much as cowboy movies would lead one to believe (110). Instead, horses communicate with each other via touch and body language: for example, pinned back ears, a strategically positioned rump, a nip on the shoulder, are all non-verbal ways to say “back off”. Young horses will “clack”

⁷⁶ “...is touched by its trainer, who caresses its body in order to create a connection between the two and accustom the horse to human touch” Translation mine.

their teeth to indicate that they're just babies and don't constitute a threat. Content horses will groom each other with their lips and teeth. As human language is one of speech, this means that riders must learn a whole new language in order to communicate with horses. As Hearne says "...we communicate through horses largely through touch..." (107). Similarly, Porcher and Estebanez note that "For an experienced rider, the postures and movement of the horses with which they work becomes a truly articulate language, one that is totally invisible to the beginner" (29). Canho, years before these observations, used touch, the kinesthetic language to communicate with his horses.

In addition to touch, "Doma india" is based on other concepts of making-kin that have become popular in the last few decades. While disseminated in contemporary times by authors like Donna Haraway, the concept of "making kin" originates in traditional Indigenous cosmologies. Who do you make kinship and create bonds with? With which non-human animals do you practice mutual care? Making kin implies a reciprocal relationship and a recognition of interconnectedness and shared responsibility. As Haraway says in *Staying with the Trouble*, making-kin "...troubles important matters, like to whom one is actually responsible" (2). Robin Wall Kimmerer, a member of the Potawatomi nation, explains this concept in her book *Braiding Sweetgrass*. She says "Each person, human or no, is bound to every other in a reciprocal relationship. Just as all beings have a duty to me, I have a duty to them" (141). Alencar, over a century before Haraway and Kimmerer, highlighted this interspecies reciprocity and mutual care specifically in human-horse relationships.

This idea of mutual responsibility and reciprocity is present in Canho's relationship with his horses. First, they are referred to as members of the family, as "brothers and friends" (39)-

suggesting the horizontal Indigenous human-animal worldview rather than the hierarchical Judeo-Christian perspective.

Com os irmãos e amigos vivia em perfeita intimidade; consentia que lhe roçassem a cabeça pelo ombro, ou lambessem-lhe a face. Muitas vezes comiam em sua mão; andavam constantemente soltos; não havia cabresto nem soga para eles; era [*sic*] corceis livres.

Tinham esses membros da família suas vontades que o chefe respeitava por uma justa reciprocidade.⁷⁷ (33, emphasis mine)

Here, the reciprocity inherent to making-kin is stated outright. Canho respects the horses' wishes just as they respect his in a "fair reciprocity". Manuel's philosophy with regards to the human-horse relationship is also specifically stated:

Na opinião de Manuel **o cavalo e o homem contraíam obrigação recíproca; o cavalo de servir e transportar o homem; o homem de nutrir e defender o cavalo.** Se um dos dois faltasse ao compromisso, o outro tinha o direito de romper o vínculo. O homem devia expulsar o cavalo, o cavalo devia deixar o homem. (33, emphasis mine)

The relationship between human and animal that Canho describes is reminiscent of making-kin, as it involves reciprocal obligation. The "duty" that Kimmerer refers to is laid out clearly: the horse's duty is to serve as transport for the human while the human's duty is to protect and feed the horse.⁷⁸

In addition to touch and reciprocity, the interconnectedness that is fundamental to making kin is also especially pertinent to human-horse relationships. Horses and other equines are

⁷⁷ With his brothers and friends he lived in perfect intimacy; he allowed that they rest their head on his shoulder, or lick his face. Many times they would eat out of his hand; they went about freely, there was no halter or rope for them; they were free horses. Translation mine.

⁷⁸ Marcy Norton states that "[t]he essence of making kin is feeding" (7).

inherently prey animals prone to flight over fight. This means that they are naturally highly attuned to the emotions and behavior of the other members of their herd, who may alert them of danger at any given moment. This alertness towards and consciousness of the emotions of others extends beyond species- they are also attentive to the body language of their riders. Horses become tense and on edge when their riders are anxious, as they expect a threat to be coming over the horizon. This emotional intelligence is taken into account by *doma india*. Referring back to Hering (298), *doma india* involves an observation of the horse's mental and emotional state. In Chapter I of the third book of *O gaúcho*, the narrator emphasizes the horse's emotions by referencing a section of *Histoire naturelle, générale et particulière* (a 18th century French compendium of natural history written by scientist Georges-Louis Leclerc, count de Buffon). The narrator states that Buffon identified five different types of neighing in horses, and goes on to explain each type (neighs of happiness, anger, fear, pain, etc) (Alencar 89). This seemingly casual intertextual reference serves to highlight yet again the animal's highly emotional nature.

However, despite the influence of horizontal (non hierarchical) Indigenous worldviews regarding animals as peers with emotions of their own, the hierarchical worldview of humans dominating over unthinking animals is by no means absent. The narrator of *O gaúcho* often (four times in the chapter on "A baía" alone) describes the horse as "*o bruto*" or "the brute," relegating the horse to an unthinking beast. Additionally, the process of taming is hierarchical. It is described as follows: "Em profundo silêncio assistiam os companheiros ao colóquio do bruto com o homem. Essa luta da razão com a força é sempre eloquente e admirável; aí patenteia-se o homem, rei da criação: o triunfo não pertence unicamente ao indivíduo, mas à espécie"⁷⁹ (30).

Here, the narrator reveals influence of the Judeo-Christian worldview: he sees man as "king of

⁷⁹ "In profound silence the companions watched the conversation of the brute with the man. This fight of reason with strength is always eloquent and admirable; there the man stands out, king of creation: the triumph does not belong only to the individual, but to the species." Translation mine.

creation”, and that the human species as a whole has “triumphed” over the animal in this successful taming of the horse. Later, horse tamers are even compared to kings: “O baguá era para ele o símbolo da força e da fereza; domar o cavalo selvagem, o filho indômito dos pampas, significava o maior triunfo a que podia aspirar o homem. O amansador era o rei do deserto”⁸⁰ (55). In both passages, the word “triumph” appears, suggesting again a hierarchical relationship where the animal is “triumphed over”.

Another passage, while ostensibly positioning the horse as a fellow being, actually reveals a hierarchical view of the animal in relation to the human:

Enfim, o cavalo era para o gaúcho um próximo, não pela forma, mas pela magnanimidade e nobreza das paixões. Entendia ele que Deus havia feito os outros animais para vários fins recônditos em sua alta sabedoria; mas o cavalo, esse Deus o criara exclusivamente para companheiro e amigo do homem.

Tinha razão.

Se o homem é o rei da criação, o cavalo serve-lhe de trono. Veículo e arma ao mesmo tempo, ele nos suprime as distâncias pela rapidez, e centuplica nossas forças. Para o gaúcho, especialmente para o filho errante da campanha, esse vínculo se estreita.⁸¹ (33-34)

In the first paragraph, the horse is said to be a “próximo” or “neighbor” in the Biblical fellowship sense, suggesting an Indigenous worldview where animals are peers or siblings of humans.

⁸⁰ “For him, the wild horse was the symbol of strength and ferocity; taming the wild horse, the indomitable son of the pampas, represented the greatest triumph to which a man could aspire.” Translation mine.

⁸¹ “In short, the horse was a neighbor for the gaúcho, not by his form, but by the magnanimity and nobility of its passions. He understood that God had made the other animals for various mysterious purposes in his infinite knowledge; but the horse, that God created exclusively to be a companion and friend of man. He was right. If man is king of creation, the horse serves as his throne. Vehicle and weapon at the same time, he shortens distances with his speed and duplicates our strength by a hundred. For the gaúcho, especially for the wandering son of the countryside, this connection is even deeper.” Translation mine.

However, it is then said that horses were created by God exclusively to be man's companion, and that if man is king of creation, the horse is his throne. The animal is prized for what it can do for humans (i.e. be a vehicle and weapon at the same time), still reinforcing an anthropocentric view.

However, despite anthropocentric passages tying the horse's value to its usefulness to humans, *O gaúcho* at the same time radically positions the horse as equal to or above humans. Manuel Canho holds his horses in extremely high regard. In his estimation, they are positioned as equal to human beings— “o cavalo se elevava ao nível da criatura racional”⁸² (44)— or even above them: “[O cavalo] Tinha mais inteligência que muitas estátuas ermas de espírito; tinha mais coração que tantos bípedes implumes e acárdicos”⁸³ (44). Horses are explicitly stated to have more heart than so many “featherless and heartless bipeds”, a not-so-thinly veiled reference to so often insensitive human beings. Canho also feels a sense of brotherhood or “fraternidade” (44) with the horses: “Manuel considerava-se verdadeiro irmão do bruto generoso, bravo, cheio de brio e abnegação, que lhe dedicava sua existência e partilhava com ele trabalhos e perigos”⁸⁴ (44). He also has a clear preference for spending time with animals over fellow human beings: his “pouca estima” or “low regard” for the human race is mentioned twice (79, 168). Even human women can't measure up to his mare (47): “Onde acha você uma rapariga capaz de fazer o mesmo que a baia? Porque eu salvei-lhe o filho, tornou-se cativa; e para me acompanhar e me servir deixou sua terra, suas amigas e sua liberdade.”⁸⁵ Even the narrator comments on Canho's love for his horses over his family: “Que anomalia era a fibra cardíaca desse homem? Coração para uma raça bruta, músculo apenas para sua própria espécie e até para sua família. Quanto se

⁸² “...the horse was elevated to the level of a rational creature” Translation mine.

⁸³ “[The horse] was more intelligent than many statues barren of spirit; he had more heart than so many featherless and heartless bipeds” Translation mine.

⁸⁴ “Manuel considered himself a true brother of the generous, brave brute, full of dignity and self denial, that he dedicated his existence to him and shared work and danger with him.” Translation mine.

⁸⁵ “Where can you find a girl capable of doing the same as the bay? Because I saved her son, she became my captive; and in order to accompany and serve me, she left her land, her friends, and her freedom.” Translation mine.

expandia em amor e dedicação com os animais, seus prediletos, tanto se retraía com frieza e indiferença ante as mais doces afeições de sangue que o cercavam”⁸⁶ (55). Horses were clearly loved and valued beyond only usefulness, at least by the novel’s protagonist.

Conclusion

In conclusion, when we look at the human/horse relationship in the gauchesque literary classics *O gaúcho*, *Martín Fierro*, and *La vuelta de Martín Fierro*, horses are seen both as “resources” and “relations”, to use Marcy Norton’s terms. There is a balancing act between the influences of Judeo-Christian or Naturalist worldviews and Indigenous or Romantic worldviews in terms of human/animal relationships. In volume one of *Martín Fierro*, Canto 2 describes the violent, hierarchical doma gaucha. In Cantos 4 and 10 of volume 2 or *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* and *O gaúcho* the Indigenous and Romantic worldviews win out, with Fierro recommending and Canho actively using peaceful methods similar to doma india that evoke both the ancient precepts of Xenophon and the modern concept of making-kin. However, Judeo-Christian influence is not entirely absent in either of the latter works: Fierro still says he can tame a horse the gaucho way (Y aunque yo sobre los bastos/ me sé sacudir el polvo/) and the narration in *O gaúcho* reveals human over animal hierarchy, describing the horse as a throne for the human. That is to say, that while the training methods in *La vuelta de Martín Fierro* and *O gaúcho* are perhaps surprisingly nonviolent and both modern and ancient in their bases, the hierarchical worldview is still present.

⁸⁶ “What anomaly was this man’s heart? Heart for a brutish race, muscle barely exercised for his own species or even for his family. As much as it expanded in love and dedication with animals, his favorites, it contracted just as much with coldness and indifference towards the sweetest affections of blood relatives that surrounded him”
Translation mine.

Chapter 4

O burro burro?: Unpacking the Donkey's Reputation in Early 20th Century Brazilian Literature

The typical literary representation of donkeys is often a negative one. While donkeys are a humble, Christ-like symbol in the Bible, this seems to be the exception, as they are criticized and degraded in much Greek literature and Shakespeare (Bough “The Mirror Has Two Faces” 57-58, 61). Newcomb (citing Griffith) refers to the “classical equine hierarchy,” in which donkeys are positioned as inferior to horses in literature dating back to Ancient Greece (209). In this traditional view, donkeys are portrayed as unintelligent, stubborn, stupid, and a second class equine in comparison to the noble horse.

Although donkeys have been unfairly maligned in both real life and in literature, Texas A&M veterinarian Nora Matthews argues that they are not only as good as horses but, in many ways, superior: more intelligent, hardier, longer-lived, and less easily startled (Randall). They are also affectionate animals and receptive to training (Randall). Their reputation for being stubborn actually stems from the fact that they tend to freeze rather than fight or flee when faced with danger (Randall). Even considering these myriad merits and their labor as hard-working draft animals, and as Bough observes, “despite the service that donkeys have rendered to humans in all ages and societies, they have received little recognition in return [...]” (Bough, “Donkey”, 8).. A quotation from 18th century naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, is still apt today. In his *Histoire naturelle*⁸⁷ Buffon ponders:

Why, then, should an animal so good, so patient, so temperate, and so useful, be treated with the most sovereign contempt? Do men despise, even in the brute-creation, those who serve them best, and at the least expense? (Bough, “Donkey”, 14).

⁸⁷ See Chapter 3 for another reference to Buffon's *Histoire naturelle*.

Buffon poses a valid question. The donkey is indeed often treated with contempt, in real life and literature, in many cultures. In the Portuguese and Spanish languages, the word *burro* can mean both “donkey” and “stupid”, burdening the animal with yet another negative connotation. Curiously, this traditional negative representation of donkeys is inverted in several early 20th century Brazilian works of literature. For example, Robert Newcomb investigates the representation of donkeys in Machado de Assis’s *crônicas* in his essay “The Spitting Image of a Man: Machado de Assis’s Crônicas about Donkeys.” He argues that donkeys in de Assis’s *crônicas* are in fact allegories for enslaved Afro-Brazilians. De Assis garners sympathy for one marginalized figure, the donkey, and thereby calls for social justice for another marginalized group, Afro-Brazilians.

I argue that two other Brazilian authors, Monteiro Lobato and João Guimarães Rosa, complicate the “stupid donkey” or “*burro burro*” trope. Monteiro Lobato in his donkey themed children’s fables in the 1922 collection *Fábulas* challenges the trope in two ways: via metadiegetic conversation and by depicting donkeys as multifaceted allegories for human beings. In João Guimarães Rosa’s novella, “O burrinho pedrês” (part of his 1946 collection *Sagarana*), the donkey protagonist is actually the most intelligent of all.

“The Spitting Image of a Man”

Machado de Assis, a highly regarded Afro-Brazilian fiction author, was a prolific *cronista*⁸⁸. Notably, many of these works—published as newspaper columns—had to do with donkeys. Newcomb identifies and translates 9 *crônicas* featuring donkeys. As he argues, “Across Machado’s donkey-themed *crônicas* these animals are presumed to be stupid but are in fact

⁸⁸ The *crônica* is “a hybrid, flexible form in which the writer applies personal reflection to day-to-day ephemera, and blends observation and literary imagination” (Newcomb 203).

thoughtful, intelligent, even philosophical” (Newcomb 205). However, the author of *Dom Casmurro* goes beyond mere literary redemption of the species *Equus asinus*. Newcomb notes that Machado de Assis’s concern is not only for the donkeys themselves, but that “[...] the donkey’s function seems essentially allegorical or fabular, serving in particular to dramatize the condition of presently and formerly enslaved Afro-Brazilians” (Newcomb 211). As Newcomb argues,

Machado’s ironic, subversive intent in deploying donkeys as a vehicle for discussing slavery and oppression is confirmed by his descriptions of their mistreatment at the hands of their streetcar-driving “masters”: like enslaved humans, the donkeys are made to work and are physically abused. (Newcomb 205)

In this way, the writer takes a disenfranchised group, Afro-Brazilians, “[...] who suffer cruel abuse, who are threatened by technology-driven obsolescence and eventual abandonment, and who are presumed to be as stupid as donkeys, Machado, with his characteristic irony, humanizes and defends them [...]” (Newcomb 211).

As previously discussed in Chapter 2, historically it was not uncommon for the plight of enslaved people to be compared with that of working animals. Marjorie Spiegel explores this comparison in her 1989 book *The Dreaded Comparison*. Spiegel says

This book in no way attempts to make the case that these factors [that sustained slavery] are the same for animals [...] But as divergent as the cruelties and the supporting systems of oppression may be, there are commonalities between them. They share the same basic essence, they are built around the same basic relationship—that between oppressor and oppressed. (27-28)

Spiegel goes on to say that both Black people and animals “[...] have been “objectified,” treated as property rather than as feeling, self-directed individuals” (31). Porcher and Estebanez concur that animals are often objectified: “The dominant idea in the rare research that does explore the contribution made by animals to work is that they are tools, or biotechnologies. [...] They produce energy, manure and food, but they are no more than living instruments” (17). Spiegel also cites activists like Frederick Douglass and Harriet Beecher Stowe, who were also “acutely aware of the similarities between human and animal slavery” and she urges us to “follow their example and begin to reject oppression in all its forms” (32). In Machado de Assis’s *crônicas*, the comparison between enslaved people and equines is again made explicit. Perhaps the most salient examples are the October 16 1892 *crônica* published in the column “A Semana,” by the carioca daily *Gazeta de Notícias*, in which the narrator overhears a conversation between the two donkeys pulling his streetcar and the June 10, 1894 (also published in *A semana, Gazeta de notícias*) *crônica* in which a donkey approaches the narrator and asks for his help in advocating for donkey rights.

“O burrinho pedrês”

“O burrinho pedrês” is one of nine novellas that appear in João Guimarães Rosa’s collection *Sagarana*, first published in 1946. In this work, a group of *vaqueiros* in the backlands of Brazil are tasked with taking a herd of cattle across the sertão to be loaded onto train cars. When the *vaqueiros* are preparing their mounts for the journey, they find that some of their herd have escaped and they are short on horses. So, their leader, the *latifundiário*, Major Saulo, gives the order for a little donkey to be tacked up alongside the horses. *O burrinho pedrês*, named Sete-de-Ouros or Seven of Diamonds, is the object of much criticism, but Major Saulo insists on

his worth. They arrive at the train station and are able to corral the cattle without incident. On their way back home, they come across a great flood. The group decide to cross the flood waters, but tragedy ensues. The waters are too strong, and horses and riders alike are swept away. In the end, Seven of Diamonds is the only equine to survive, thanks to his intelligence. Badu and Francolim, two of the *vaqueiros*, also live because they held onto Seven of Diamonds.

Throughout the story, the donkey is spoken about favorably by both Major Saulo and the narrator. Even from the very first paragraph, the donkey is lauded: “[...] já fora tão bom, como outro não existiu e nem pode haver igual”⁸⁹ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 13). Later the narrator compliments not only Sete-de-Ouros but donkeys as a race:

Bem que Sete-de-Ouros se inventa, sempre no seu. Não a praça larga do claro, nem o cavouco do sono: só um remanso, pouso de pausa, com as pestanas meando os olhos, o mundo de fora feito um sossego, coado na quase-sombra, e, de dentro, funda certeza viva, subida de raiz; com as orelhas — espelhos da alma — tremulando, tais ponteiros de quadrante, aos episódios para a estrada, **pela ponte nebulosa por onde os burrinhos sabem ir, qual a qual, sem conversa, sem perguntas, cada um no seu lugar, devagar, por todos os séculos e seculórios, mansamente amém.**⁹⁰ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 39-40, emphasis mine)

In addition to “seeking himself out, discovering himself” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 28) in a sort of sleepy trance, In addition to Sete-de-Ouros is characterized as calm, almost imperturbable. He is

⁸⁹ “[...] he had been so good, so good that there was never another like him nor could his match be found.” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 3)

⁹⁰ Indeed, Seven of Diamonds was, perhaps, seeking himself out, discovering himself, finding some essence of his being. Not in a long stretch of clarity nor in the depths of sleep; merely a lull, a pause like a bird’s alighting, his lashes drooping over his eyes, the outside world, made calm, filtering through the semi-darkness, and within, a deep, quick assurance, welling up from his roots. His ears-the mirror of his soul-quivering like a compass needle in response to incidents along the road over that nebulous bridge by which donkeys go, one by one, without talking, without questions, each in its place, slowly, meekly, *per secula seculorum, amen*. (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 28)

unbothered by spurs and “maus tratos não lhe punham posse⁹¹” (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 54). Even when compared to a horse, the donkey as a species miraculously comes out on top: “E certo: Sete-de-Ouros dava para trás, incomovível, desaceitando argumentos e lambadas de pirai. Que, também, **burro que se preza não corre desembestado, como um qualquer cavalo, a não ser na vez de justa pressa, a serviço do rei ou em caso de sete razões**”⁹² (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 39, emphasis mine). The comparison to “qualquer cavalo” and the statement that a burro will only run in service of the king (or for seven other reasons) humorously suggests a code of conduct followed by all self-respecting burros. In any case, the donkey is portrayed as a dignified, stately animal who—unlike the horse—thinks for himself and will only exert himself for good reason. This is an inversion of the aforementioned typical equine hierarchy wherein horses are portrayed as smarter and therefore superior to donkeys.

However, the other characters (besides Major Saulo and the narrator) tend to disparage poor Sete-de-Ouros, upholding the equine hierarchy that positions donkeys as inferior to horses. First, after Major Saulo pairs equine and rider (here João Manico with Sete-de-Ouros), he asks João Manico if he does not agree that donkeys are worth more than horses: “E o Sete-de-Ouros é velho, mas é um burro bom, de gênio... Você não sabe que um burro vale mais do que um cavalo, Manico?...”⁹³ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 25). João Manico responds that he agrees that donkeys are good for long journeys but not for herding cattle: “—Compadre seô Major, para se viajar o dia inteiro, em marcha de estrada, estou mesmo com o senhor. Mas, para tocar boiada, eh, Deus me livre que eu quero um burrinho assim!...”⁹⁴ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 25). In a figure

⁹¹ “Ill treatment exerted no claim on him” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 42)

⁹² “Besides, a donkey that has any respect for itself does not gallop like a runaway horse unless there happens to be some justified reason for it, like the service of the king or one of seven other vital reasons” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 28).

⁹³ Seven of Diamonds is old, but he’s a jewel of a donkey. Didn’t you know, Manico, that a donkey is better than a horse? (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 15)

⁹⁴ “Mr. Major, to travel a whole day on the road, I completely agree with you. But to drive cattle, Lord deliver me from this kind of an animal! (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 15)

of speech, he even dramatically asks God to protect him from ending up with any kind of donkey. Second, Major Saulo asks João Manico if he thinks burros are stupid: “— Escuta uma pergunta séria, meu compadre João Manico: você acha que burro é burro?” (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 39)⁹⁵. João Manico responds that he does not think that, but he knows that they are “damned tricky” (Guimaraes Rosa 1966, 28): “— Seô Major meu compadre, isso até é que eu não acho, não. Sei que eles são ladinos demais...”⁹⁶ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 39). Third, when Major Saulo asks Francolim to swap with João Manico and ride Sete-de-Ouros, Francolim agrees but on the condition that he can have his horse back when they enter the village so he doesn’t look bad:

Em serviço do senhor, carrego pedras, seu Major. Só peço é ordem para o João Manico me dar de novo meu cavalinho, na entrada do arraial, para não ficar feio eu, como ajudante do senhor, o povo me ver amontado neste burro esmoralizado... sem querer com isso ofender, por ser criação de que o senhor gosta...⁹⁷ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 44)

Finally, when everyone else claims a horse and drunk Badú is left with the donkey, he exclaims: “— Que é do meu poldro?! Ô-quê!? Só deixaram para mim este burro desgraçado?... Só porque eu fui comprar uma prenda para a minha morena... Sete-de-Ouros mastigava, mais depressa. E pausa. — Ei, que nós dois somos mesmo burros, hem, pandorgas?”⁹⁸ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 53). These four episodes reveal that the *vaqueiros* still hold horses in higher esteem than donkeys

⁹⁵ ““Let me ask you something seriously, my friend, João Manico: do you think donkeys are stupid?” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 28)

⁹⁶ ““Mr. Major, my friend, no, that I don’t. What I do know is that they are damned tricky...” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 28)

⁹⁷ To serve you, Mr. Major, I would break rocks. The only thing I ask is for you to order João Manico to give me back my pony when we come to the village so people won’t see me in this sorry shape, me, your assistant, mounted on this no-account donkey— meaning no offense, since he happens to be an animal you have a liking for.” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 32)

⁹⁸ ““What’s become of my colt? Damn it, they’ve left me nothing but this worthless donkey! All because I went to buy a present for my girl!” Seven of Diamonds chewed away, faster. And paused. ““A fine pair of donkeys, the two of us. How about it, dumbbell?”” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 41)

and that for them, riding a donkey is linked with embarrassment and disgrace.

Unlike the *vaqueiros*, the narrator most often coincides with Major Saulo and paints the donkey in a positive light. However, he does occasionally complicate this narrative, characterizing the donkey neither positively or negatively but almost giving him human nature. For example, he notes that Sete-de-Ouros can be stubborn and hard to convince, that he will go but not easily:

Já encabrestado, Sete-de-Ouros não está disposto a entregar-se: “Vai, mas custa”!, quando outros o irritam, é a divisa de um burricoque ancião.⁹⁹ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 25)

The narrator also acknowledges the donkey’s defects, while noting that these defects are not his fault:

Pobre burrico Sete-de-Ouros, que não tem culpa de ser duro de boca, nem de ter o centro-de-gravidade avançado para o trem anterior do corpo...¹⁰⁰(Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 29)

In addition to treating Sete-de-Ouros with disdain, some of the *vaqueiros* are downright cruel to him. At one point, João Manico insults him and then, to add injury to insult, gives him a kick with the spurs: “—Burrico miserável!...— desabafa João Manico, cravando as esporas nos vazios de Sete-de-Ouros, que abana a cabeça, amolece as orelhas, e arranca, nada macio, no seu viageiro assendeirado, de ângulo escasso, pouca bulha e queda pronta”¹⁰¹ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 30). Later João Manico gets even more creative with the insults towards the donkey,

⁹⁹“Though already bridled, Seven of Diamonds had no intention of giving in. ‘He’ll go, but it won’t be easy,’ is the motto of an old donkey when he’s being annoyed. His ears swiftly assumed a vertical position as he watched the man out of the corner of his eye, taking careful aim to make sure his kick did not miss its mark.” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 14)

¹⁰⁰ Poor little Seven of Diamonds; it’s not his fault that he is hard-mouthed, or that his center of gravity has moved to the forward car of his body” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 18)

¹⁰¹ ““Worthless donkey!” João Manico relieves his feelings, digging his spurs into the flanks of Seven of Diamonds, who shakes his head, lets his ears go limp, and breaks, not at all gently, into his customary traveling gait, narrow-angled, with little noise and easy strokes, steady, relaxed” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 19).

saying nobody would miss him if he had died (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 39). When Francolim swaps equines and mounts Sete-de-Ouros, Major Saulo warns him not to use the spurs on him since he's “*animal de estimação*” or pet, suggesting that even Francolim might have been rough with him.

At the same time Sete-de-Ouros is disparaged and mistreated, the *vaqueiros* trust him with their lives. When returning home, the group comes across the *riacho Fome* once again, but this time its waters have overflowed its banks and turned into floodwaters. The men debate what to do; whether to cross the river or not. One of them declares that Sete-de-Ouros will make their decision for them and another agrees: “O burrinho é quem vai resolver: se ele entrar n’água, os cavalos acompanham, e nós podemos seguir sem susto. Burro não se mete em lugar de onde ele não sabe sair! — É isso! O que o burrinho fizer a gente também faz.”¹⁰² (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 64). When Sete-de-Ouros enters the waters on the next page, the men and their horses follow after him. Despite constantly denigrating the animal, deep down the men must believe in his wisdom, since they put their lives on the line based on the donkey’s actions.

The tragic events in the floodwaters are heavily foreshadowed at the beginning of the story. When the group first crosses “*o riacho da Fome*”, on the way to drop the cattle off at the train station, the narrator advises that come December and the rainy season, the inoffensive stream turns more dangerous than even a large river (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 38). Moreover, before plunging into the river with the cattle at the first crossing, one of the men comments that they should take care, as many have died here (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 38). The donkey’s survival is also prefigured. He is foreshadowed as a survivor from the beginning: in the first description of him, it is said that as a younger animal, he survived being bit on the muzzle by a

¹⁰² “The donkey is the one who is going to decide this business. If he goes into the water, the horses will follow him, and we have nothing to worry about. A donkey doesn’t go into a place he’s not sure he can get out of” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 51).

cobra (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 13). In addition to his run-in with a cobra, we learn that Sete-de-Ouros had a tumultuous foal-hood: “Na mocidade, muitas coisas lhe haviam acontecido. Fora comprado, dado, trocado e revendido, vezes, por bons e maus preços” (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 13). While Sete-de-Ouros is never explicitly compared to enslaved people in the novella, this instance exemplifies the commodification that donkeys share with enslaved people that Machado de Assis takes advantage of in order to make his social arguments. Both are living creatures turned into objects to be bought and sold, named and renamed.

In the scene in the floodwaters, it is revealed that the very traits that the donkey is derided for—his slowness, his tendency to close his eyes and “zone out”—are exactly what make him most valuable in an emergency.

Nenhuma pressa. Aqui, por ora, este poço doido, que barulha como um fogo, e faz medo não é novo: tudo é ruim e uma só coisa, no caminho: como os homens e os seus modos, costumeira confusão. **É só fechar os olhos. Como sempre.** Outra passada, na massa fria. E ir sem afã, à voga surda, amigo da água, bem com o escuro, filho do fundo, poupando forças para o fim. Nada mais, nada de graça; nem um arranco, fora de hora. Assim. (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 68, emphasis mine).

Furthermore, it is shown that Sete-de-Ouros is not stubborn or ornery when it matters most. As he is swimming through the floodwaters, Badu on his back and Francolim holding onto his tail, he gives himself up to the current instead of fighting against it:

E Sete-de-Ouros, sem susto a mais, sem hora marcada, soube que ali era o ponto de **se entregar, confiado, ao querer da correnteza.** Pouco fazia que esta o levasse de viagem, muito para baixo do lugar da travessia. **Deixou-se,** tomando tragos de ar. **Não resistia.** (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 69).

In this crucial moment, Sete-de-Ouros “doesn’t resist”, when we know from previous descriptions that he can and will be quite recalcitrant when he wants to be: when João Manico first mounts Sete-de-Ouros, it is said that Sete-de-Ouros “É calmo e comodista, mas de maneira alguma honesto. Quando João Manico monta, ele não pula, por preguiça. Mas tem o requinte de escoucear o estribo direito, primeiro com a pata de diante, depois com a de trás, cruzando fogos”¹⁰³ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 26). It is clear from this episode that Sete-de-Ouros has agency, an ornery streak, and is capable of pushing back when the situation requires. However, he also is intelligent, intelligent enough to know that resisting the current will only tire him out and lead to drowning. In response to donkey kicks to the stirrups in the former episode, João Manico first verbally disparages the animal and then declares that “Burro não amansa nunca de-todo, só se acostuma!...”¹⁰⁴ (Guimarães Rosa, 1970, 26). Manico’s insistence that donkeys are never fully tamed, they only pretend to be, is clearly meant as an insult. However, it suggests that Sete-de-Ouros still has a mind of his own, and it is precisely that independent thinking that saves them in the end.

Fábulas

Monteiro Lobato’s collection *Fábulas* consists of 74 short stories starring speaking animal protagonists, each concluding with a moral. This 1922 compendium, reminiscent of *Aesop’s Fables*, includes at least 13 fables in which equines (either horses, donkeys, or mules) are salient. As a genre, the fable is didactic, intended for children to learn from the morals offered by each one. The collection is also metafictional, as each fable is followed by a conversation about said

¹⁰³ “He is calm, self indulgent, but in nowise honest. When João Manico mounts, he does not buck, out of laziness. But with subtle refinement he kicks the right stirrup, first with his front hoof, then with his hind, in a crossfire” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 16).

¹⁰⁴ “A donkey is never completely broken. They just pretend to be” (Guimarães Rosa, 1966, 16).

fables held between other characters from Lobato's other fictional works. It is as if the tales were being recounted live and then discussed: the first diegetic level is that of the fables themselves and the second level is that in which they are discussed.

The representation of the burro in the fables themselves tends to be negative. For example, in the short fable "O burro juiz", a thrush and a magpie are arguing over who has the better singing voice. They decide to have a singing contest, and recruit a donkey as the judge since "nenhum animal possui orelhas daquele tamanho"¹⁰⁵ (Lobato 41). The thrush goes first and sings beautifully and melodically. The magpie follows, screeching so loudly and dissonantly it could "romper os timpanos aos próprios surdos"¹⁰⁶ (Lobato 42). The donkey names the magpie as the winner of the contest, since it sang louder than the thrush. The fable closes with the moral: "Quem burro nasce, togado ou não, burro morre"¹⁰⁷ (Lobato 42). The donkey is synonymous with stupidity and poor judgement.

In the fable "O burro na pele do leão?", the donkey is again portrayed as unintelligent. He decides he wants to be a lion, and puts on a lionskin and parades about the forest. His owner appears and the donkey wants to scare him with a roar. Of course, a bray comes out instead, and his owner quickly realizes that he has found his missing donkey. He takes the donkey back home and gives him a ferocious beating. The moral of the story is to be careful pretending to be someone you're not: "Quem vestir pele de leão, nem zurre nem deixe as orelhas de fora"¹⁰⁸ (Lobato 78).

However, in the post-fable conversation in the second diegetic level, one of the characters, Emilia takes umbrage with the "stupid donkey" trope:

¹⁰⁵ "no animal has greater ears" (translation mine)

¹⁰⁶ "burst the eardrums of the Deaf themselves" (translation mine)

¹⁰⁷ "Those born stupid, whether in judge's robes or not, die stupid." (translation mine)

¹⁰⁸ Donkeys who dress as lions should not bray or leave their ears out. (translation mine)

— Pois eu não gostei, berrou Emilia, porque trata com desprezo um animal tão inteligente e bom como o burro. Por que que esse fabulista fala em “estúpida creatura?” E por que chama o pobre burro de “animalejo?” Animalejo é a avó dele...

— Emilia! repreendeu dona Benta. Mais respeito com a avó dos outros.

— E’ que não suporto essa mania de insultar um ente tão sensato e precioso como é o burro. Quando um homem quer xingar outro, diz: “Burro! Você é um burro!” e no entanto ha burros que são verdadeiros Socrates de filosofia, como o Conselheiro¹⁰⁹. Quando um homem quiser xingar outro, o que dizer é uma coisa só: “Você é um homem, sabe? Um grandississimo homem!” Mas chamar de burro é, para mim, o maior dos elogios. E’ o mesmo que dizer: “Você é um Socrates! Você é um grandississimo Socrates...”¹¹⁰ (Lobato 78-79)

Emilia, like Buffon, recognizes the donkey’s intelligence and good nature and is rightfully rankled by the injustice of how they are treated in literature. Emilia also takes issue with the use of “burro” as an insult in the Portuguese language, arguing that “man” should be the insult rather than “donkey.” This is a curious metafictional take on the donkey: the animal is maligned in the fables themselves but appreciated and redeemed by those “listening” to the fables.

In the fable “O burrice,”¹¹¹ donkeys are an allegory for human beings, with some being more intelligent than others. A donkey carrying a load of sugar and a donkey with a load of

¹⁰⁹ O Conselheiro is a wise donkey who appears in other works by Lobato.

¹¹⁰ Well I didn’t like it, shouted Emilia, because it mistreats an animal so intelligent and good as the donkey. Why does the author of this fable talk about “stupid creature?” And why does he call the donkey a “stupid animal”? His grandmother is the stupid animal...

Emilia! reprimanded dona Benta. More respect with other people’s grandmother.

It’s that I can’t stand this habit of insulting a being as sensible and precious as the donkey. When a man wants to insult someone, he says “Donkey! You’re a donkey!” while there are donkeys that are true Socrates of philosophy, like the Conselor. When a man wants to insult someone, he should only say: “You’re a man, you know? A big old man!” But calling someone a donkey is, for me, the highest praise. It is the same as saying: “You are a Socrates! A big old Socrates...”(translation mine)

¹¹¹ “Burrice” is related to the word “burro” and translates to “stupidity.”

sponges are walking together. When the question of which path to take on the road comes up, the donkey with the sponges comments that he always follows what others do: “Que burrice! Eu sei viver, gabo-me disso, e minha ciencia toda se resume em só imitar o que os outros fazem¹¹²” (Lobato 35). The other responds “Nem sempre é assim, nem sempre é assim... continuou a filosofar o primeiro¹¹³” (Lobato 35). They then come to a river that they must ford. The donkey with the sugar crosses easily, as his load dissolves in the water. The donkey with the sponges surmises that if the other donkey crossed without issue, he too should be able too. However, his load of sponges soaks up so much water that he is immobilized and drowns. The moral is provided at the end by the other donkey: “Não basta querer imitar, é preciso poder imitar [...]”¹¹⁴ (36). The donkeys are unnamed in this fable, but the first (“o primeiro”) is clearly more intelligent than the second (“o segundo”). The donkey who carries the sugar and forges his own path is even said to “filosofar” or philosophize, reminiscent of Machado de Assis’ declaration (translated by Robert Newcomb) in a February 13, 1889, crônica published in the *Gazeta de notícias*: “[T]he donkey is not so much an animal as the spitting image of a man, but with four legs. The proof is that while the dog is friendly, the horse is proud, etc., **the only animal that is philosophical is the donkey**” (Newcomb 211) (emphasis mine). In this fable, the donkeys are “the spitting image of a man”: one is independent and intelligent and the other follows the pack and pays dearly for it. Just as humans are heterogeneous and unique, so are the donkeys in this fable.

Conclusion

¹¹² “What stupidity! I know how to live, I’m proud of that, and all my wisdom boils down to just imitating what others do” (translation mine)

¹¹³ “Not always, not always...the first continued to philosophize” (translation mine)

¹¹⁴ “The mere desire to imitate is insufficient, one must be able to imitate.” (translation mine)

As Newcomb has shown, Machado de Assis's "donkey chronicles" are noteworthy for inverting the typical negative representation of donkeys and allegorizing the animal to call for social justice for enslaved Afro-Brazilians. Notably, two works from the first half of the 20th century also reverse the negative representation of the donkey: *Fábulas* by Monteiro Lobato and the novela "O burrinho pedres" by Guimaraes Rosa. Curiously, *Fábulas* portrays the donkey as stupid in some fables, while other fables and the metadiegetic narrative argue their merits. "O burrinho pedrês" complicates the narrative of the donkey, almost humanizing it, and emphasizing his intelligence and value.

So why is the positive representation of a historically poorly appreciated animal so important? As Bough says, "Examining these cultural representations may [...] lead to a greater understanding of that animal and, ultimately, to better treatment of them" (Bough "The Mirror" 56). In addition to improving treatment of real donkeys, the inversion of a negative trope could encourage readers to rethink their prejudices against both donkeys themselves and what they represent allegorically: enslaved Afro-Brazilians in Machado de Assis's *cronicas*, underdogs in Guimaraes Rosa's novella, and humans in general in Lobato's fables.

Chapter 5

“Becoming-horse”: Politics and Non-Identity in Clarice Lispector’s *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* (1964) and “Seco estudo de cavalos” (1974)

From chickens to cockroaches, animals are widespread in Lispector’s oeuvre. Horses are no exception¹¹⁵. They appear not only as the main focus of the short story¹¹⁶ “Seco estudo de cavalos” from the collection *Onde Estivestes de Noite*¹¹⁷ (1974), but more minimally in other publications including *Água Viva* (1973) and *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* (1964). Cherpinski and Gonçalves (2) point out that the horse also figures in the earlier *Perto do Coração Selvagem* (1943) and *Uma Aprendizagem ou O Livro dos Prazeres* (1969). This chapter will focus primarily on the human/horse relationship as explored in a brief section of text that appears in the novel *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* and was also in the independently published short story “Seco estudo de cavalos” from the collection *Onde estivestes de noite*.¹¹⁸ This section of text is different from the objects of study of the three preceding chapters as it is not a straightforward narrative(s) where a clear human/horse relationship can be identified. Instead, I argue that the female narrators in these texts undergo a “becoming-horse”. This is neither a literal transmutation nor a mere imitation, but rather an expression of the narrator’s feminine desire to become undefinable and escape the patriarchal capitalist society she lives in, a “becoming-animal” as conceived of by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

¹¹⁵ In Clarice Lispector: *Fotobiografia*, Nádia Battella Gotlib shares various works from Lispector’s personal library. One of these works is the French language book on horses titled *Le Cheval: Dans la Nature, Dans L'Histoire & Dans L'Art* by Marcel Uze. Gotlib declares that “[...] os cavalos - na sua energia primitiva e selvagem - estão sempre presentes em suas crônicas, contos e romances” (311).

¹¹⁶ Despite being published as a short story in the volume *Onde estivestes de noite*, it is actually a fragmentary text.

¹¹⁷ The cover of the 1974 edition of *Onde estivestes de noite* by Editora Artenova features a rider mounted on a fantastical horse-like creature with wooly hair, glowing red eyes, and tusks. The illustration is by Salvio Negreiros.

¹¹⁸ The human/horse relationship in Lispector’s texts overall lends itself as the topic of a more extensive future investigation.

Readers familiar with Clarice Lispector will be unsurprised to learn that the formal aspects of “Seco estudo de cavalos” are enigmatic: it is not a simple narrative story, but rather a fragmentary text. It is divided into 15 sections, each with a subtitle in all capital letters:

DESPOJAMENTO
FALSA DOMESTICAÇÃO
FORMA
DOÇURA
OS OLHOS DO CAVALO
SENSIBILIDADE
ELE E EU
ADOLESCÊNCIA DA MENINA-POTRO
O ALARDE
O CAVALO PERIGOSO
NA RUA SECA DE SOL
NO PÔR DO SOL
NA MADRUGADA FRIA
NO MISTÉRIO DA NOITE
ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO

The last section, “Estudo do cavalo demoníaco”¹¹⁹ (approximately 580 words), will be the primary focus of this chapter. The edited version of this text which appears in *A paixão segundo*

¹¹⁹ The English translation of this subtitle is also in all capital letters: SKETCH OF THE DEMON HORSE.

G.H. is similarly fragmented, but is shorter, approximately 490 words. It appears without a title in what would be chapter 22, if Lispector had included chapter numbers. It also is not broken up into sections and does not have the subtitles. Consequently, we can conclude that Lispector expanded and edited the text in *A paixão segundo G.H.* to be published ten years later in the collection *Onde estivestes de noite* in “Seco estudo de cavalos” under the subtitle “Estudo do cavalo demoníaco”. In both iterations of the text, the narrator recounts events that take place over the course of one night. The narrator in *A paixão segundo G.H.* is the protagonist G.H. herself, while the full identity of the narrator of “Seco estudo de cavalos” is unknown, except that we know it has a feminine voice¹²⁰. The narrator has stolen the “cavalo de caçada” of a king and also talks about being chased by musical instruments, specifically flutes. This could be an intertextual reference to a poem by the Brazilian author Cecília Meireles. Meireles was prolific and wrote many poems about horses¹²¹, but one poem in particular is relevant here: “Miniatura do Duque de Breslau” (*Dispersos*). In this poem, a joyful scene is depicted: a duke returns from his campaigns and presents his lady with a flower crown. The scene is multisensorial, with stanzas that highlight music and dancing in a courtly love context:

Que os músicos toquem tamborins e flautas,
que os músicos toquem!

Que, azuis e vermelhos, os cavalos dancem,
azuis e vermelhos!

¹²⁰ See section of “Seco estudo de cavalos” titled ADOLESCÊNCIA DO MENINA-POTRO wherein the narrator reflects on herself and the horse as “a Moça e o Cavalo”, or, in the translation “ADOLESCENCE OF THE COLT-GIRL”.

¹²¹ To list only a sampling, see “O cavalo morto” (*Retrato Natural*), “Cavalo branco” (*Canções*), “Cavalgávamos uns cavalos” (*Sonhos*), “Cavalo à música” (*Dispersos*), “Cavalgada” (*Viagem*), “Cavalgada” (*Mar absoluto e outros poemas*), Lamento do oficial por seu cavalo morto (*Mar absoluto e outros poemas*), “Os jumentinhos” (*Poemas escritos na Índia*), Os cavaleiros de Dêlhi (*Poemas escritos na Índia*), Cavaleiros (*Poemas escritos na Índia*), Poema 43 (*Metal rosicler*), O cavaleiro branco (*Ou isto ou aquilo*).

Although we do not have any real evidence that Lispector was an assiduous reader of Meireles's poetry, I would like to propose that the shared images found in both her texts and Meireles' poem "Miniatura do Duque de Breslau", musical instruments and horses, suggest that she may have taken inspiration from this poem in particular. Meireles' poem features tambourines and flutes, and Lispector's texts feature drums, flutes, and a clarinet. Lispector takes the courtly, medieval image and makes it political. The horse, instead of dancing in gold "gualdrapas" embroidered with the word "AMOR", as it does in Meireles' poem, is instead the sinister but oh-so-tempting seductor who draws the narrator away from the status quo of the capitalist society into a new order.

Lispector was also likely influenced by the French book *Le Cheval: dans la nature dans l'histoire & dans l'art* by Marcel Uzé when writing the passages in question. Gotlib in her collection *Clarice fotobiografia* (311) includes a picture of Uzé's book and states that it was found in Lispector's library. Gotlib also comments that "[...] os cavalos — na sua energia primitiva e selvagem — estão sempre presentes em suas crônicas, contos e romances"¹²² (311). Uzé's book is rather artistic: the caption on one photo of a horse philosophically declares that it is "contemplating infinity" (31) (translation mine). We also know that Clarice loved animals and considered herself an "animal". In an interview given to João Salgueiro and Marina Colasanti in 1976 (reproduced in Benedito Nunes' edition of *A paixão segundo G.H.*), Lispector says "Hoje eu fui entrevistada por quatro menininhas de 11 anos, com fotografias e perguntas & perguntas & perguntas & perguntas, por causa da estória da mulher que matou os peixes. **E se era verdade que eu gostava de bicho. Eu disse, é claro. Também sou bicho.**"¹²³ (Lispector, *A paixão*

¹²² "[...] horses — in their primitive and wild energy — are ever present in her newspaper columns, stories, and novels"

¹²³ "Today I was interviewed by four little eleven-year-old girls, with photographs and questions and questions and questions and questions about the story of the woman who killed the fish. And if it was true that I liked animals. I said of course. I am also an animal." (translation mine)

segundo G.H. 298, emphasis mine). Similarly, Lispector declares that “Somente quem teme a própria animalidade não gosta de bichos. Eu adoro.”¹²⁴ (Gotlib, *Clarice: Uma vida que se conta*, 74). We see this affinity for animals in Lispector’s narrators throughout in many of her works, but particularly in *A paixão segundo G.H.* and “Seco estudo de cavalos”.

While there are formal differences between the twin passages as they appear in *A paixão segundo G.H.* and “Seco estudo de cavalos” from *Onde estivestes de noite*, they are essentially similar (See Table. 1). However, most importantly, the narrator steals the king’s hunting horse in both. She says she will never rest again, as she is awakened by the horse’s neighing. Without knowing what she’s done she finds herself next to an “enormous weary horse head” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457), then wonders why she is tired, asking what “we” did (“we” is specified as “eu e o cavalo” in “Seco estudo” and left unspecified in *A paixão*). This section, a clear depiction of becoming-animal, carries the subtitle “Estudo do cavalo demoniaco” in “Seco estudo de cavalos,” a subtitle which is missing in *A paixão segundo G.H.*

<i>A paixão segundo G.H.</i> (1964) Page 83 of Benedito Nunes edition	<i>Seco estudo de cavalos</i> (1974) Page 51-54, Onde estivestes de noite 3rd edition 1980, Editora Nova Fronteira
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¹²⁴ “Only those who fear their own animality don’t like animals. I adore them.” (translation mine)

... Eu nunca mais repousaria: eu havia roubado o cavalo de caçada de um rei da alegria. Eu era agora pior do que eu mesma! Nunca mais repousarei: roubei o cavalo de caçada de um rei do sabath. Se adormeço um instante, o eco de um relincho me desperta. E é inútil não ir. No escuro da noite o resfolegar me arrepia. Finjo que durmo mas no silêncio o ginete respira. Não diz nada mas respira, espera e respira. Todos os dias será a mesma coisa: já ao entardecer começo a ficar melancólica e pensativa. Sei que o primeiro tambor na montanha fará a noite, sei que o terceiro já me terá envolvido na sua trovoada. E ao quinto tambor já estarei inconsciente na minha cobiça. Até que de madrugada, aos últimos tambores levíssimos, me encontrarei sem saber como junto a um regato, sem jamais saber o que fiz, ao lado da enorme e cansada cabeça do cavalo.	ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO Nunca mais repousarei porque roubei o cavalo de caçada de um Rei. Eu sou agora pior do que eu mesma! Nunca mais repousarei: roubei o cavalo de caçada do Rei no enfeitado Sabath. Se adormeço um instante, o eco de um relincho me desperta. E é inútil tentar não ir. No escuro da noite o resfolegar me arrepia. Finjo que durmo mas no silêncio o ginete respira. Todos os dias será a mesma coisa: já ao entardecer começo a ficar melancólica e pensativa. Sei que o primeiro tambor na montanha do mal fará a noite, sei que o terceiro já me terá envolvido na sua trovoada. E no quinto tambor já estarei com a minha cobiça de cavalo fantasma. Até que de madrugada, aos últimos tambores levíssimos, me encontrarei sem saber como junto a um regato fresco, sem jamais saber o que fiz, ao lado da enorme cansada cabeça de cavalo.
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Cansada de que? Que fizemos nós, os que trotam no inferno da alegria? **Há dois séculos que** não vou. Da última vez que desci **da sela enfeitada**, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana que jurei que nunca mais. O trote porém continua em mim. Converso, arrumo a casa, sorrio, mas sei que o trote está em mim. Sinto falta como quem morre. Não posso **mais** deixar de ir.

E sei que de noite, quando ele me chamar, irei. Quero que ainda uma vez o cavalo conduza o meu pensamento. Foi com ele que aprendi. Se é pensamento esta hora entre latidos. **Os cães latem**, começo a entristecer porque sei, com o olho já resplandecendo, que irei.

Mas cansada de quê? Que fizemos, **eu e o cavalo, nós** os que trotam no inferno da alegria **de vampiro? Ele, o cavalo do Rei, me chama. Tenho resistido em crise de suor e** não vou. Da última vez **em** que desci **de sua sela de prata**, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana **por eu ter sido o que não devia ser**, que jurei que nunca mais. O trote porém continua em mim. Converso, arrumo a casa, sorrio, mas sei que o trote está em mim. Sinto falta **dele** como quem morre.

Não, não posso deixar de ir.

E sei que de noite, quando ele me chamar, irei. Quero que ainda uma vez o cavalo conduza o meu pensamento. Foi com ele que aprendi. Se é pensamento esta hora entre latidos. Começo a entristecer porque sei com o olho — **oh sem querer! não é culpa minha! — com o olho sem querer** já resplandecendo **de mau regozijo — sei** que irei.

Quando de noite ele me chama para o inferno, eu vou. Desço como um gato pelos telhados. Ninguém sabe, ninguém vê. Apresento-me no escuro, muda e em fulgor. Correm atrás de nós cinquenta e três flautas. À nossa frente uma clarineta nos alumia. E nada mais é dado saber. De madrugada eu nos verei exaustos junto ao regato, sem saber que crimes cometemos até chegar a madrugada. Na minha boca e nas suas patas a marca do sangue. O que imolamos? De madrugada estarei de pé ao lado do ginete mudo, com os primeiros sinos de uma Igreja escorrendo pelo regato, com o resto das flautas ainda escorrendo dos cabelos.	Quando de noite ele me chamar para a atração do inferno, irei. Desço como um gato pelos telhados. Ninguém sabe, ninguém vê. Só os cães ladram pressentindo o sobrenatural. E apresento-me no escuro ao cavalo que me espera, cavalo de realeza, apresento-me muda e em fulgor. Obediente à Besta. Correm atrás de nós cinquenta e três flautas. À frente uma clarineta nos alumia, a nós, os despidorados cúmplices do enigma. E nada mais me é dado saber. De madrugada eu nos verei exaustos junto ao regato, sem saber que crimes cometemos até chegar à inocente madrugada. Na minha boca e nas suas patas a marca do grande sangue. O que tínhamos imolado? De madrugada estarei de pé ao lado do ginete agora mudo, com o resto das flautas ainda escorrendo pelos cabelos. Os primeiros sinos de uma igreja ao longe nos arrepiam e nos
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A noite é a minha vida, entardece, a noite feliz é a minha vida triste - rouba, rouba de mim o ginete porque de roubo em roubo até a madrugada eu já roubei, e dela fiz um pressentimento: rouba depressa o ginete enquanto é tempo, enquanto ainda não entardece, se é que ainda há tempo, pois ao roubar o ginete tive que matar o Rei, e ao assassiná-lo roubei a morte do Rei. E a alegria do assassinato me consome em prazer. Eu estava comendo a mim mesma, que também sou matéria viva do sabath.	afugentam, nós desvanecemos diante da cruz. A noite é a minha vida com o cavalo diabólico, eu feiticeira do horror. A noite é minha vida, entardece, a noite pecadoramente feliz é a vida triste que é a minha orgia — ah rouba, rouba de mim o ginete porque de roubo em roubo até a madrugada eu já roubei para mim e para o meu parceiro fantástico, e da madrugada já fiz um pressentimento de terror de demoníaca alegre malsã. Livra-me, rouba depressa o ginete enquanto é tempo, enquanto ainda não entardece enquanto é dia sem trevas, se é que ainda há tempo, pois ao roubar o ginete tive que matar o Rei, e ao assassiná-lo roubei a morte do Rei. E a alegria orgíaca do nosso assassinato me consome em terrível prazer. Rouba depressa o cavalo perigoso do Rei, rouba-me antes que a noite venha e me chame.
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Table 1. Side by side comparison of the two texts

Literature Review

Lispector's work is the only Latin American literary context in which substantial research on the literary horse has already been conducted. This sets this chapter apart from the three preceding chapters, whose objects of study have generally not been examined by scholars with a focus on the horse. So, what have scholars written about the role horses play in Lispector's works? The few studies that exist analyze the role of the Lispectorean horse in her fiction, to a variety of conclusions, which I will detail below. However, none of them investigate specifically the twin passages that are the basis of this chapter.¹²⁵

For example, in the essay "O mundo zoo em Clarice Lispector", Lorena Pereira Silva and Maria das Graças Fonseca Andrade analyze the horse across Lispector's body of work and note that "...as personagens de Lispector tendem a mergulhos profundos em si mesmas..." (520) and many times display "a representação, por vezes de características bastante peculiares dessas personagens por meio de animais..." (520) without representing them as "...o extremo oposto de nós humanos..." (520). Regarding this specific mode of representation, the authors instead find a connection between human (specifically woman) and horse based on shared wildness: "...a aliança criada entre as essências humana e animal é reveladora de que em ambas há uma potência selvagem, ao mesmo tempo bruta e doce, representadas pelas imagens da mulher e do animal e indicativa de uma afinidade equina" (538). Similarly, Joel Rosa de Almeida in his

¹²⁵ The only analysis I found on these specific sections is a comment by Benedito Nunes. In his edited version of *A paixão*, Nunes comments briefly on the symbolism of the horse in a footnote: "O cavalo simboliza a chamado da vida plena, embutido no cotidiano, a que as personagens de Clarice estão sujeitas, à hora perigosa do entardecer" (83).

"The horse symbolizes the call of fullness of life, embedded in the quotidian, to which Clarice's characters are subjected at the dangerous hour of dusk" (translation mine).

dissertation “Onde estivestes de noite: a experimentação do grotesco” points out that horses, particularly as representative of their natural state of freedom, are a “...recorrente composição temática na obra clariciana” (103, 109). Another study, Agnieszka Gabor’s “A Lesson in Loving the Word: Translating Clarice Lispector into Polish”, affirms the horse-as-freedom reading by citing the second section of “Seco estudo de cavalos” (75). Gabor also offers a humanistic interpretation and argues that Lispector’s representation of the horse is less about the animal itself and more about the identification of the human with the animal; the horse as expressing the animality of the human being (Gabor 73, 75). Lispector “observes animals and exposes the animal side of every human being [...] it opens up the floor for discussion related to the animality of humans, and to human-animal confrontations (Gabor 73). Diane E. Marting in her essay “Clarice Lispector’s (Post)Modernity and the Adolescence of the Girl-Colt” proposes an innovative reading of the text in which first and last sections are related, then second and penultimate, and so on (Marting 437). Marting identifies the topos of the “girl-colt” or “menina-potro” as imagery representative of both the horse and the adolescent girl at once (Marting 439).

The next two studies are especially pertinent to my investigation. In her chapter “Who’s Looking? The Animal Gaze in the Fiction of Brigitte Kronauer and Clarice Lispector” in *Figuring Animals*, Jutta Ittner argues that “[...] any reflection on animals will turn into a reflection on the human condition” (105) and notes that Lispector’s “Seco estudo de cavalos” exemplifies this argument that “[...] seeing animals is remembering ourselves” (106). Ittner investigates what happens in Lispector’s works when characters look at animals, arguing that “[t]hese processes [what happens when go toward [...] what Deleuze and Guattari call the adventure of “becoming-animal”—a journey toward Being” (102). I refer to this same concept

from Deleuze and Guattari in my analysis of Lispector, but specify that it is crucially a “becoming-horse.” Finally, in what is perhaps the other scholarly work most relevant to my argument, “A dama e o cavalo: um êxtase ritualístico de Clarice Lispector”, Cherpinski and Gonçalves claim that the narrators in both *Água viva* and “Seco estudo de cavalos” undergo transformations into horses in order to obtain the freedom of the horse; a freedom that they do not have as women in a patriarchal society. I coincide with Cherpinski and Gonçalves’ interpretation and agree that there is a traditional transformation seen in the passages of “Seco estudo” preceding “Estudo do cavalo demoníaco”. I also would like to take a step further by arguing that the transformation in the twin passages from *A paixão* and the subsection “Estudo do cavalo demoníaco” is actually (rather than a literal transfiguration) a “becoming-animal” or specifically a “becoming-horse”.

A Traditional Transformation

In the sections of “Seco estudo de cavalos” that come before ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO, the narrator first hints at and then appears to actually undergo a straightforward transformation. That is to say, she appears to quite literally become a horse; a mystical transmutation occurs. First, in the section FORMA, the narrator states that she has an “inner horse”: “A forma do cavalo representa o que há de melhor no ser humano. Tenho um cavalo dentro de mim que raramente se exprime. Mas quando vejo outro cavalo então o meu se expressa. Sua forma fala” (Lispector, *Onde Estivestes* 45). Second, in the section “ELE E EU”, the narrator expresses her desire to be a horse:

Tentando pôr em frases a minha mais oculta e sutil sensação – e desobedecendo à minha necessidade exigente de veracidade – eu diria: **se pudesse ter escolhido queria ter**

nascido cavalo. Mas – quem sabe – talvez o cavalo ele-mesmo não sinta o grande símbolo da vida livre que nós sentimos nele. Devo então concluir que o cavalo seria sobretudo para ser sentido por mim? O cavalo representa a animalidade bela e solta do ser humano? O melhor do cavalo o ente humano já tem? **Então abduco de ser um cavalo e com glória passo para a minha humanidade. O cavalo me indica o que sou.**¹²⁶

(Lispector, *Onde Estivestes* 46-47, emphasis mine)

The narrator wishes to have been born a horse, but after reflecting about it, she decides that perhaps the horse “represent[s] the beautiful and liberated animality of the human being” and wondering if “human beings already have the best of the horse” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 453). Metaphysically, she is tempted to undergo such a transformation before denying it in favor of her current incarnation, concluding that the horse “shows me what I am” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 453). Finally, in the section “NO MISTÉRIO DA NOITE” it appears that the narrator has recanted her prior acceptance of her humanity and somehow transfigured into a horse. This suggests that she has decided that the positive aspects of animality outweigh the negative aspects, and perhaps that human beings *don’t* already have the best of the horse. She states:

O medo me tomava nas trevas do quarto, o terror de um rei, eu quereria responder com as gengivas à mostra em relincho. Na inveja do desejo meu rosto adquiriria a nobreza inquieta de uma cabeça de cavalo. [...] Mal eu saísse do quarto minha forma iria se avolumando e apurando, e, quando chegasse à rua, já estaria a galopar com patas sensíveis, os cascos

¹²⁶ “Attempting to put my most hidden and subtle sensation into sentences—and disobeying my strict need for truthfulness—I would say: had it been up to me I’d have wished to be born a horse. But—who knows—perhaps the horse himself doesn’t sense the great symbol of free life that we sense in him. Should I then conclude that the horse exists above all to be sensed by me? Does the horse represent the beautiful and liberated animality of the human being? Does the human already contain the best of the horse? Then I renounce being a horse and in glory I’ll go over to my humanity. The horse shows me what I am.” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 452-453)

escorregando nos últimos degraus da escada da casa. [...] E veria as coisas como um cavalo as vê (Lispector, *Onde estivestes* 50)¹²⁷.

The narrator wants to respond in a neigh, showing her gums, the first suggestion that she has abandoned her human form for an equine one that can neigh. She then notes that her face turns into a horse's head, and by the time she leaves the house her "form" has grown and she has horse legs and hooves. She finally says that she would "[...] see things as a horse sees them" (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 455).

In this passage, the narrator clearly undergoes a bodily transformation into a horse, a transmigration of her soul and consciousness into an equine body. This metempsychosis is a new literary take on the horse, a gaze that is very different from those depicted in the previous four chapters. It surpasses the utilitarian view of the horse seen in Chapter 1, the sympathetic view of the horse encountered in Chapter 2, and the empathetic view of the horse found in Chapters 3 and 4. The narrator undergoes not only a physical transformation, but a metaphysical one: she would see things from a horse's point of view. However, this literal transformation is not what Deleuze and Guattari refer to with "becoming-animal", a complex concept that goes even further than mere representation. The texts in question (page 83 of *A paixão segundo G.H.* and the section ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO, which immediately follows the aforementioned section NO MISTÉRIO DA NOITE in "Seco estudo de cavalos") depict this becoming-animal, rather than a transmigration of souls or transformation of bodies.

A Becoming-Horse

¹²⁷ "Fear seized me in the shadows of my bedroom, the terror of a king, I wanted to answer, baring my gums in a neigh. In the envy of desire my face acquired the restless nobility of a horse's head. [...] As soon as I left my bedroom my form would start expanding and refining itself, and, by the time I made it outside, I'd already be galloping on sensitive legs, hooves gliding down the last few steps of the house [...] And I'd see things as a horse sees them." (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 455)

Not unlike Lispector's works, the concept of becoming-animal can also be difficult to articulate. The philosophers Deleuze and Guattari argue "We believe in the existence of very special becomings-animal traversing human beings and sweeping them away, affecting the animal no less than the human" (237)¹²⁸. This description, while striking, is rather vague. Throughout the chapter, the poststructuralist authors examine becoming-animal's relationships to other philosophical concepts. As one continues reading their chapter, it is almost easier to glean what becoming-animal is *not*:

Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies [sic]. They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here? For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not "really" become an animal any more than the animal "really" becomes something else. (238)

That is to say, becoming-animal is not a transformation in the typical sense. The human is not magically physically transformed into an animal. Gerald Bruns is careful to stipulate in the abstract of "Becoming-Animal (Some Simple Ways)" that this "becoming-animal" "[...] is not animal metamorphosis but an achievement of non-identity, which for Deleuze and Guattari is the condition of freedom [...]". This non-identity is neither human nor animal, but rather a third mode, an "other" that is crucially also outside of capitalism and patriarchy. The narrator achieves this non-identity by stealing the horse. This non-identity, although desired, is frightening to her, and she asks for someone in turn to steal the horse away from her: "...rouba depressa o ginete enquanto é tempo, enquanto ainda não entardecer..."¹²⁹ (both texts). Gerald L Bruns sheds some more light on the subject by further defining "becoming-animal" as "...a movement in which a

¹²⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari's chapter "10. 1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible..." from the book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* for a full discussion of "becoming-animal".

¹²⁹ "...quick steal the stallion while there's still time, before dusk falls, while it is shadowless day..." (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 458)

subject no longer occupies a realm of stability but rather is folded into a nomadic mode of existence in which one is always an anomaly, that is, inaccessible to any form of definition”. He also points out that this non-identity is not a negative: “For Deleuze and Guattari [...] nonidentity is not a deprivation, not a negative, but a form of micropolitics whose structure is molecular, where nonidentity is difference in itself unrelated to the bipolarity (the “bipolar machine”) of identity/difference; [...]” (713). The narrator in Lispector’s texts steals the horse and achieves this micropolitical nonidentity of “other.”

Deleuze and Guattari, in the same chapter on “becoming-animal,” mention three types of animals:

We must distinguish three kinds of animals. First individuated animals, family pets, sentimental, Oedipal animals each with its own petty history, ‘my cat’, ‘my dog’ [...] [Second,] animals with characteristics or attributes; genus, classification, or State animals; animals as they are treated in the great divine myths [...] **Finally, there are more demonic animals, pack or affect animals that form a multiplicity, a becoming, a population, a tale...** (241, emphasis mine).

It is this final category, demonic animals that form a becoming, that we see in Lispector’s work. It is important to note that distinguishing between different species of animal does not concern the philosophers : “That is why the distinction we must make is less between kinds of animals than between the different states according to which they are integrated into family institutions, State apparatuses, war machines, etc.” (Deleuze and Guattari 243). So why is it important that the becoming-animal discussed in this chapter is a becoming-*horse*? It is significant that we are confronting a becoming-horse case specifically and not another animal because of how the horse is integrated into the aforementioned political structures. Historically the horse has been both

part of State apparatuses and war machines— as we saw in Chapter 1, the horse has been an integral bioweapon in both colonial projects and armed conflicts. Additionally, the horse here is “o cavalo de caçada de um rei”: it could not be more representative of the status quo and capitalistic society that Deleuze and Guattari criticize. As the king’s horse, it is likely expensive and well bred. Also, while other social classes might own horses under a monarchy for transport or farm labor, only a privileged few would not only own horses trained for a specific purpose but also have the leisure time to go hunting for sport.

Ashley Woodward in her article “Becoming-animal in Shaffer's *Equus*” further elucidates becoming-animal. She identifies six facets of this enigmatic concept described in Deleuze and Guattari’s text (Woodward 244). I borrow this six-part framework to define becoming-animal and demonstrate how Lispector’s text *ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO* constitutes a becoming-horse for the female narrator. According to Woodward the following six elements must be present in a becoming-animal (244):

1. A becoming-animal not content to proceed by resemblance.
2. The proliferation of a pack which brings a becoming-molecular which undermines the great molar powers of family, career, and conjugality.
3. A 'favourite' in the pack with whom a kind of contract, alliance, or pact is made.
4. The institution of an assemblage that can reach the point of selfdestruction.
5. A circulation of impersonal affects (an inhuman sexuality).
6. An irresistible deterritorialization that forestalls attempts at professional, conjugal, or Oedipal reterritorialization. (From Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 233)

I identify five of these six facets¹³⁰ of becoming-animal in Lispector's texts, looking at both the unnamed version in *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* and the version ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO in *Onde Estivestes de Noite*. Woodward argues that applying the concept of becoming-animal to an object of study can both illuminate said object of study and shed light on the concept itself: "[...] a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading can reveal the depth of the philosophical thrust of the play [*Equus*], and hence defend it from criticism, unpacking this reading of *Equus* also serves to illustrate the concept of becoming-animal, and deepen our understanding of it" (233-234). I intend to do the same in the following section by analyzing the literary works in question and also enriching our understanding of becoming-animal:

1.) To begin with, as Woodward summarizes, a becoming-animal is not a resemblance to the animal. As Deleuze and Guattari declare, "A becoming is not a correspondence between relations. But neither is it a resemblance, an imitation, or at the limit, an identification" (237). As Woodward says, "[the protagonist of *Equus*] does not try to imitate a horse, he appropriates the forces of the horse: its affects, its movements and rests, its speeds and slownesses" (245). The same is true for the narrator in Lispector's texts. She is separate from the horse: "Da última vez que descí da **sela enfeitada**, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana que jurei que nunca mais."¹³¹ (Lispector, *A paixão*, 83): "Da última vez em que descí de sua **sela de prata**, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana **por eu ter sido o que não devia ser**, que jurei que nunca mais. (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 52)"¹³²

In both versions of the text, the narrator recounts the last time she dismounted the horse, descending from the saddle that is either adorned (*A Paixão*...) or made of silver (*Onde*

¹³⁰ I identify elements 1-4 and 6 in Lispector's texts. Element 5, having to do with an inhuman sexuality, falls outside the scope of my dissertation.

¹³¹"From the last time I dismounted from the adorned saddle, my human sadness was so great, that I swore never again" (translation mine, based on the translation of the twin passage in *Complete Stories*)

¹³²"The last time I dismounted from his silver saddle, my human sadness was so great at having been what I should not have been, that I swore never again." (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457)

estivestes). The fact that the saddle is either adorned or made of precious metal is significant. It symbolizes the bourgeoisie, the upper class, those that benefit from a capitalist society or a bourgeoisie. In *Onde estivestes* the added phrase “por eu ter sido o que não devia ser” suggests that the narrator was only pretending to be part of that social class. In any case, there is a clear separation from the horse, its body and the narrator’s body are discrete. She is not becoming one with the horse, unlike the hybrid figure described in *O gaúcho* as “o centauro das pampas” (Alencar, 34) and seen in other Brazilian works like *Os sertões* and *Vidas secas*¹³³.

Instead, the narrator adopts the “forces” of the horse, its “speeds and slownesses”, to use Woodward’s phrases (245). In this context, these “affects” of the horse are not emotions, but are rather, to use Jason Read’s description, “[...] intensities, transformations of states, rather than determinate conditions” (107). Additionally, “[...] affects are always situated in the increases and decreases of power” (Read 108). The narrator literally adopts the gait¹³⁴ of the horse, its trot, which is an increase of power from a walk to something faster:

<i>A Paixão segundo G.H.</i>	<i>Onde estivestes de noite</i>
Mas cansada de quê? Que fizemos, eu e o cavalo, nós os que trotam no inferno da alegria de vampiro? Ele, o cavalo do Rei, me chama. Tenho resistido em crise de suor e não vou. Da última vez em que desci de sua sela	Cansada de que? Que fizemos nós, os que trotam no inferno da alegria? Há dois séculos que não vou. Da última vez que desci da sela enfeitada, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana que jurei que nunca mais. O trote

¹³³ “Montado, confundia-se com o cavalo, grudava-se a ele” (Ramos 9)

“Colado ao dorso deste, confundindo-se com ele, graças à pressão dos jarretes firmes, realiza a criação bizarra de um centauro bronco [...]” (da Cunha 210)

¹³⁴ A “gait” is a “a sequence of foot movements (such as a walk, trot, pace, or canter) by which a horse or a dog moves forward” (Merriam Webster Dictionary, second entry for “gait”)

de prata, era tão grande a minha tristeza humana por eu ter sido o que não devia ser, que jurei que nunca mais. O trote porém continua em mim. Converso, arrumo a casa, sorrio, mas sei que o trote está em mim. Sinto falta dele como quem morre.¹³⁵ (Lispector, <i>A Paixão segundo G.H.</i>, 83) (emphasis mine)	porém continua em mim. Converso, arrumo a casa, sorrio, mas sei que o trote está em mim. Sinto falta como quem morre. Não posso mais deixar de ir.¹³⁶ (Lispector, <i>Onde estivestes de noite</i>, 52) (emphasis mine)
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The narrator participates in the mundane routine of daily life —chatting, cleaning the house, smiling— all the while knowing that the trot is within her. To use Woodward’s words, she adopts “horse-like bodily traits” (245). She longs for the trot like a dying person. This suggests a longing for an alternative way of being, one outside the confines of what is expected of her as a woman in a capitalist, patriarchal society in the 20th century: chatting, cleaning the house, smiling. If we continue to use Deleuze and Guattari’s framework, which is based on Marxist ideas wherein the capitalist has “vampiric thirst for the blood of living labor” (Marx 227). Then

¹³⁵ But weary from what? What did we do, I and the horse, we, those that trot through the hell of the vampire’s joy? He, the King’s horse, calls to me. I have been resisting in a crisis of sweat and won’t go. The last time I dismounted from his silver saddle, my human sadness was so great at having been what I should not have been, that I swore never again. The trotting nonetheless goes on inside me. I chat, clean the house, smile, but I know the trotting is inside me. I long for it like one dying.” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457)

¹³⁶ But weary from what? What did we do, I and the horse, we, those that trot through the hell of the vampire’s joy? He, the King’s horse, calls to me. I have been resisting in a crisis of sweat and won’t go. The last time I dismounted from his silver saddle, my human sadness was so great at having been what I should not have been, that I swore never again. The trotting nonetheless goes on inside me. I chat, clean the house, smile, but I know the trotting is inside me. I long for it like one dying. (Lispector, *Complete Stories* 457)

when the narrator and the horse are passing through the “hell of the vampire’s joy” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457), they are experiencing capitalism.

2. Woodward summarizes Deleuze and Guattari, saying that becoming-animal involves “The proliferation of a pack which brings a becoming-molecular which undermines the great molar powers of family, career, and conjugality” (244). This “proliferation of a pack” is seen in Lispector’s text, although indirectly. Deleuze and Guattari declare that “A becoming-animal always involves a pack, a band, a population, a peopling, in short, a multiplicity” (Deleuze and Guattari 239). Here, while only the one *cavalo demoniaco* is involved, the implication is that of a herd of horses. As Deleuze and Guattari posit,

[...] every animal is fundamentally a band, a pack. That it has pack modes, rather than characteristics, even if further distinctions within these modes are called for. It is at this point that the human being encounters the animal. We do not become animal without a fascination for the pack, for multiplicity. A fascination for the outside? Or is the multiplicity that fascinates us already related to a multiplicity dwelling within us? (239-240)

While the *cavalo de caçada de um Rei* (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 51) is a single animal and not explicitly mentioned to be part of a herd, we can assume that he is one of many hunting horses owned by the crown. One of the main affects of the horse is its status as a herd animal. Deleuze and Guattari note that “[...] affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel.” (240). Horses naturally live in groups, and it is this multiplicity and group consciousness, “the power of the pack,” that the narrator is moving towards. The *cavalo de caçada de um Rei* is also what Deleuze and Guattari call an “exceptional individual”: “[...] wherever there is multiplicity, you

will also find an exceptional individual, and it is with that individual that an alliance must be made in order to become-animal” (243). The King’s horse, the *cavalo demoníaco*, is also “Anomalous”. As Deleuze and Guattari say:

There is always a pact with a demon [...] In short, every Animal has its Anomalous. [...] Sorcerers therefore use the old adjective “anomalous” to situate the positions of the exceptional individual in the pack. It is always with the Anomalous [...] that one enters into alliance to become-animal. (243-244).

The narrator makes an alliance with the King’s hunting horse, an “exceptional animal” and “Anomalous” among all the King’s horses, and thus enters into alliance to become-animal.

3. Deleuze and Guattari declare that becoming-animal always involves “a pact with a demon” (243). This third facet of becoming-animal, as Woodward explains, “[...] is a sorcerous act that involves entering into a pact” (246). While “the pact is made through a favourite individual animal”, it is with “the animal as multiplicity [...] that the pact is made” (246). In Lispector’s texts, this “favourite individual animal” would be the “cavalo de caçada do Rei”. The horse calls to the narrator, and she tries to resist but knows she will go, and does. In this call and response the pact is made.

When the narrator responds to the call of the horse and joins him, she becomes the sorcerer that Deleuze and Guattari posit. As Vázquez Enríquez says, a sorcerer in the eyes of Deleuze and Guattari is someone who has a desire to destroy the current way the world is and bring about a new order (2026). The sorcerer comes into being when the pact with the animal is made—a pact to see the animal as your equal. Consequently, if the usual human/animal liminality is destroyed, it then becomes harder to also divide humans based on social class—something that capitalism requires (Vázquez Enríquez 2026).

Why is the *cavalo* a *cavalo demoníaco*? The horse is a demon/demonic¹³⁷ because it is a form of resistance against the state, that is, because the capitalist system would see it as something perverted and demonic. The narrator steals the horse, thereby turning what is initially a representative of the state (a hunting horse belonging to the king) into a form of resistance or alternative being. The horse is portrayed throughout the text as both something evil and as a terrible temptation. The narrator “covets” the horse: “E no quinto tambor já estarei **com a minha cobiça de cavalo fantasma**” (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 52, emphasis mine); “E ao quinto tambor já estarei **inconsciente na minha cobiça**” (Lispector, *A Paixão*, 83, emphasis mine). She is tempted to go to the horse and knows that when he calls to her, she will go “[...] quando ele me chamar, irei” (both). The narrator is torn between the current status quo and the rebellious, radical new order, but knows she will opt for the latter.

4. Woodward identifies a fourth component of becoming-animal as “the institution of an assemblage that can reach the point of selfdestruction” (Woodward 244).

This assemblage is seen in the previously analyzed passages wherein the narrator asks “Que fizemos **nós**, os que trotam no inferno da alegria?” (Lispector, *A paixão*, 83, emphasis mine)/ “Que fizemos, **eu e o cavalo, nós** os que trotam no inferno da alegria de vampiro?” (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 52, emphasis mine) (emphasis mine). She and the horse are an assemblage, a pair who trot together. This assemblage ends in a two-fold destruction. The first destruction is that of the king. It is understood, in the same language in both texts, that the narrator kills the king: “[...] pois ao roubar o ginete¹³⁸ tive que matar o Rei, e ao assassiná-lo roubei a morte do Rei” (Lispector, *A paixão*, 83) (Lispector, “Seco estudo”, 53-54). But she does not do it alone:

¹³⁷ The English translation of this subtitle in *Complete Stories* is SKETCH OF THE DEMON HORSE

¹³⁸ Here, “ginete” refers to the horse, unlike in Spanish where “jinete” refers to a rider.

Na minha boca e nas suas patas a marca do sangue. O que **imolamos**? (Lispector, *A paixão*, 83, emphasis mine)/Na minha boca e nas suas patas a marca do grande sangue. O que **tínhamos imolado**? (Lispector, “Seco estudo”, 53, emphasis mine). The horse is implicated as a co-conspirator in the crime: his hooves are stained with what we can assume is the blood of the king, the same blood that stains the narrator’s human hands. The distinction between hands and hooves blur when both are covered in blood. In each text, variations of the word “imolar” (“imolamos” and “tínhamos imolado”) are used. The English translation *Complete Stories* offers “immolate” as the translation, suggesting that that the king’s death was a kind of bloody sacrifice. Second, there is a self destruction, a key facet of becoming-animal (Woodward 244): “E a alegria do assassinato **me consome** em prazer. **Eu estava comendo a mim mesma**, que também sou matéria viva do sabath.” (Lispector, *A paixão*, 83, emphasis mine)/“E a alegria orgíaca do nosso assassinato **me consome** em terrível prazer.” (Lispector, “Seco Estudo”, 54, emphasis mine). In *A paixão* there is an auto-anthropophagy, the narrator eats herself. In both *A paixão* and “Seco Estudo” the thrill of the assassination—which is a key word, as it could translate to murder but also to assassination, which suggests it was politically motivated—consumes her. In both texts, the assemblage ends in self-destruction. This self-destruction is the dismantling of the narrator’s previous identity and the achievement of the non-identity.

6. Finally, the sixth aspect of becoming-animal is “An irresistible deterritorialization that forestalls attempts at professional, conjugal, or Oedipal reterritorialization” (Woodward 244). In her analysis of the play *Equus*, Woodward argues that what the protagonist wants to accomplish with his becoming-horse is an “escape”, a “‘way-out’ of Oedipalization” (Woodward 249). It is important to note here that Oedipal psychoanalysis and “[...] its affiliates (capitalism, systematic

philosophy, structural linguistics, universal concepts, linear composition, regimes of normalcy of any kind whatever)” are the subject of Deleuze and Guattari’s criticism (Bruns 709). In Lispector’s text, it is capitalism and the patriarchy (another “regime of normalcy”) that are the implied “regimes of normalcy” or territories in question. Myk Eff in the article “Concept Craft | Part 5: Assemblage Theory” explains that

Territories are formed when elements come together and establish certain forms of organization, whether it is social, cultural, or ecological. Deterritorialization, on the other hand, refers to the breaking down of these established structures, allowing for new connections and possibilities to emerge.

I argue that something similar happens in Lispector’s text. In her becoming-horse, the narrator is attempting an “escape” from the oppressive regime of the King, the patriarchal capitalist society in which she lives. It is also important to note that she capitalizes the word for king, “Rei”, as if it were the word “God”, potentially adding Christianity to the list of (capitalist, patriarchal) structures becoming deterritorialized. Her becoming-animal offers a different mode of being outside of capitalism and patriarchy, a non-identity which is freeing. The human moving towards the realm of the animal makes a revolution, a new way of functioning (Vázquez Enríquez 2026). To borrow Woodward’s phrasing, this deterritorialization is an escape made via the “annexation of horse-power” (250). This is similar to Cherpinski and Gonçalves’ argument that “[...] a liberdade que as narradoras acreditam ter é a do cavalo, pois se entregam à metamorfose... Elas não têm liberdade humana e sim animal...” (10).¹³⁹ They argue that the narrators’ metamorphoses into a horse in both *Água viva* and “Seco estudo de cavalos” confers her an inhuman freedom. I argue that the process seen in *A paixão* and the subsection of “Seco estudo”

¹³⁹ “[...] the freedom that the narrators believe they have is that of the horse, as they surrender themselves to metamorphosis... They don’t have human freedom but they do have animal freedom...” (translation mine).

titled ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO is a becoming-animal that similarly confers a socio-political freedom.

Finally, there is a recurrent topos of the supernatural, particularly in ESTUDO DO CAVALO DEMONÍACO —this supernatural imagery is often missing in the version of the text that appears in *A Paixão Segundo G.H.* This relates to the sorcerer and the demon in Deleuze and Guattari. In the French philosophers' text, the demon(ic) represents everything that is anti-institution, everything that would be frightening to the establishment (Maune 2026). We can see this demonic imagery, which is really a call for anti-establishmentarianism, in the vocabulary that the narrator uses to describe herself and the horse:

“Nunca mais repousarei: roubei o cavalo de caçada do Rei no **enfeitado Sabath**.”¹⁴⁰

(Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 51-52, emphasis mine)

E no quinto tambor já estarei **com a minha cobiça de cavalo fantasma**.¹⁴¹ (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 52, emphasis mine)

“Só os cães ladram pressentindo o **sobrenatural**.”¹⁴² (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 53, emphasis mine)

“A noite é a minha vida **com o cavalo diabólico, eu feiticeira do horror**.”¹⁴³ (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 53, emphasis mine)

“[...] **ah** rouba, rouba de mim o ginete porque de roubo em roubo até a madrugada eu já roubei **para mim e para o meu parceiro fantástico, e da madrugada já fiz um**

¹⁴⁰ “Never again shall I find rest: I stole the King’s hunting horse on the **enchanted Sabbath**” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457) (emphasis mine)

¹⁴¹ “And by the fifth rumble **I shall already covet the ghost horse**.” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 457) (emphasis mine)

¹⁴² “Only the dogs bark sensing the **supernatural**” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 458) (emphasis mine)

¹⁴³ “The night is my life with **the diabolical horse, I enchantress of the horror**.” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 458) (emphasis mine)

pressentimento de terror de demoníaca alegria malsã.”¹⁴⁴ (Lispector, *Onde estivestes*, 53, emphasis mine)

In addition to the description of the horse in the subtitle as a demon, it is also described as “diabolical” and a “ghost horse”— again reminding us of the countercultural nature of the anticapitalist system that this process is moving towards. Also, the Sabbath day, when the horse is stolen, is described as “enchanted,” perhaps an enchanted new beginning. The narrator has a “premonition of terror of demoniacal unwholesome joy”: the joy she will feel when the process is complete.

The narrator describes herself as “feiticeira” or “enchantress”— a clear parallel to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the sorcerer. The bourgeoisie in the Marxist sense, (the Rei) have cast the spell of the modern capitalist moment (Maune 2026) and the narrator is the sorcerer fighting back, the “enchantress of horror”, a horrifying alternative to the systems of the moment. Altogether, this prolific supernatural imagery further supports the interpretation of the text as a becoming-animal.

This becoming-animal interpretation is upheld by what we know about Lispector’s political leanings and social commitments. Earl Fitz in *Clarice Lispector: From Brazil to the World* declares that “Political concerns are everywhere in Clarice Lispector’s writing” and “Clarice felt a great sense of responsibility to her fellow citizens, in Brazil and globally” (23). Lispector’s writing becomes more and more overtly political as the years go on (23-24). This political commitment generally revolves around questions of gender and feminism (24). Her son, Paulo Gurgel Valente describes her as a “democratic socialist” in the online article “Clarice Lispector’s Son on the Personal Politics of His Mother.” She also says that “I would like to see a

¹⁴⁴ “[...] ah steal it, steal that stallion from me because with each theft until dawn I have already stolen **for myself and my fantastical mate, and of the dawn I have made a premonition of terror of demoniacal unwholesome joy**” (Lispector, *Complete Stories*, 458, emphasis mine)

socialist government in Brazil” in a crônica published on December 30 1967 (Lispector, *Too Much of Life*, 61). This all supports the interpretation of the passages as portraying a becoming-animal. Becoming-animal can be political, but that is not all it is. As Goh says,

[..] one must not delimit, in turn, becoming-animal within the domain of politics or the political. Certainly, becoming-animal can be effective, as said, in counteracting certain oppressive State politics; in the face of such oppression, becoming-animal can take on a resistant political trajectory. And yet, [...] becoming-animal is not defined by politics or the political. Politics or the political are never the ends of becoming-animal; becoming-animal does not reduce itself to such limits. Becoming-animal understands that there is more to life than politics or the political, and that which surpasses politics or the political is none other than life itself. That there is life, *there*, if not *here and now*, beyond the confines or limits of politics or the political, is what becoming-animal always keeps in mind and strives for, even though it understands that occasionally it will have to take on a political trajectory in order to make that approach. (37)

This might suggest a subtle resistance against the changing political climate and nascent dictatorship that began in Brazil the same year as *A paixão* was published (1964). In any case, the passages that on a surface level appear to be a bizarre story are actually loaded with a sociopolitical critique— albeit an oblique one— against the status quo.

Conclusion

While the concept of becoming-animal wasn’t articulated by Deleuze and Guattari until 1980¹⁴⁵, years after Lispector’s death in 1977, it becomes clear that Lispector anticipated the French

¹⁴⁵ *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* wasn’t translated into English until 1987. The Portuguese translation wasn’t published until the year 2000.

philosophers' idea. Her passage on the *cavalo demoníaco* that appears in both *A paixão segundo G.H.* and “Seco estudo de cavalos” constitutes exactly what one can call a “becoming-horse”. This becoming-horse is especially salient in “Seco estudo”, which includes more supernatural imagery and additional details. All six primary facets of becoming-animal (as identified by Woodward) can be seen in the passages in question. First, the relationship goes beyond a mere resemblance or physical transformation, it is the adoption of the affects of the animal in question (here its gait, the trot). Second, the narrator interacts with an “exceptional individual” (Deleuze and Guattari 243)—the *cavalo de caçada de um Rei*—from the implied herd of horses that embodies the “power of the pack (240). Third, a “pact” is made with the aforementioned exceptional individual or demonic animal: the narrator enters into this pact when she inevitably answers the stallion’s call and joins him. Fourth, the narrator and the horse are an assemblage who end in not only destruction (of the *Rei*, immolating the systems a king represents), but destruction of the narrator herself.¹⁴⁶ Sixth, a deterritorialization or “escape” from the sociopolitical status quo is implied. In conclusion, the narrators in Lispector’s texts undergo more than just a mere mystical transformation into a horse. The narrators move towards a horsey freedom from the status quo as well as a liberating non-identity: which, as Bruns said, is the “condition of freedom”; another mode of being.

¹⁴⁶ As previously stated, the fifth facet of becoming-animal does not apply to Lispector’s works.

Conclusion

The horse has been present in Latin American literature since its very beginnings. From the 16th century cartas sent back to the Iberian Peninsula by the Spanish to 20th century works by Clarice Lispector, horses walk, trot, and canter across the pages of many Latin American classics. In the previous five chapters, I explored representations of the horse and the horse/human relationship as depicted in selected works of Latin American literature from the 16th century to the 20th century.

The selected works in Spanish and Portuguese that serve as my objects of study are not new: they have been analyzed previously by scholars using frameworks from postcolonialism to gender studies. However, up til now, readings of these classics from the perspective of Animal Studies in literature were scarce, and readings focused on literary equines were almost nonexistent.

My objects of study were selected not only because of the mere presence of the horse in the text, but because previous critical approximations neglected to explore how the horse functions in the text (as symbol, for example) and/or how the human/equine relationship is depicted and the implications of that depiction.

Across this study, I have examined representations of the human-equine relationships from the early colonial period through the twentieth century, drawing on a diverse corpus that includes 16th- and 17th-century crónicas, 19th century abolitionist and gauchesque literature, 20th century fables and novelas, and the experimental prose of Clarice Lispector. Taken together, these texts reveal that equines are far more than a marginal presence in Latin American literary

and cultural production: it is a dynamic figure through which questions of power, identity, cosmology, and relationality are negotiated.

The analysis of early colonial accounts demonstrate that, while the horse was frequently framed as a fearsome bioweapon, it was neither invincible nor exclusively advantageous to Spanish forces. Indigenous actors not only adapted to but also appropriated equine power, complicating traditional conquest narratives. In this way, my study aligns with and reinforces postcolonial scholarship that challenges simplified historical accounts of overwhelming Spanish domination.

My interpretation of *Sab* suggests that Sab's beloved *jaco negro* is both a symbol and a metaphor, sparking discussions of race and class. The horse also joins the titular protagonist in a community of the subaltern via liquid emotions like saliva, sweat, tears, and blood.

Moving into the 19th century my readings of the gauchesque tradition—including *Martin Fierro*, *La vuelta de Martin Fierro*, and *O gaúcho*—demonstrate how human-horse relationships are shaped by competing epistemologies. The contrast between *doma gaucha* and *doma india* reveals the imprint of Judeo-Christian and Indigenous worldviews, respectively. Notably, the prevalence of reciprocal, care-based interactions in certain texts anticipates contemporary frameworks in Animal Studies, particularly the concept of “making-kin,” suggesting that these literary works articulate alternative, non-exploitative modes of interspecies coexistence.

Chapter 4 explores how the often-denigrated donkey is depicted in two early 20th century Brazilian texts. In both *Fabulas* by Monteiro Lobato and “O burrinho pedrês” by João Guimaraes Rosa, the donkey is entirely represented not in the traditional way as a stupid brute but rather as a multifaceted allegory for humanity; both stubborn and intelligent.

Finally, the 20th-century works of Clarice Lispector push the human-horse relationship into a more abstract and philosophical register. Through the lens of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's notion of "becoming-animal," these texts reconfigure the horse as a site of ontological and political transformation. What appears at first as an enigmatic or surreal bond emerges, upon closer analysis, as a radical rejection of fixed identity and a movement toward relational multiplicity.

In sum, this dissertation attempts to demonstrate that the figure of the horse operates as a critical mediator of historical experience, cultural values, and philosophical inquiry across Latin American literature. By tracing its evolving representations, I argue that the human-horse relationship provides a productive framework for rethinking colonial histories, national literatures, and the boundaries between human and nonhuman life.

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