

## THE BED AS BATTLEFIELD: EROTIC CONQUEST AND MILITARY METAPHOR IN OVID'S *AMORES*

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Throughout all three books of Ovid's *Amores*, the lover's life is repeatedly described in terms either of conquering the beloved, or of being conquered, taken captive, and enslaved.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, it is with Ovid even more than with Propertius that the figure of *militia amoris* finds its fullest development.<sup>2</sup> Critics have generally agreed that Ovid's use of military imagery is a display of perhaps excessive ingenuity and wit,<sup>3</sup> one strategy in a larger campaign to shock and amuse an audience familiar, on the one hand, with the conventions of earlier love-elegy and, on the other, with the demands of Augustan moral legislation and imperial expansion.<sup>4</sup> Thus, whereas Propertius seriously considers the conflicting claims of love and war in a number of poems, Ovid evades the problem by denying the conflict: *militat omnis amans* (1.9). This witty conceit is far more outrageously amusing than Propertius's smirking description of sexual exertion as *proelia dura* (3.5).<sup>5</sup> Yet Ovid's manipulation of military

<sup>1</sup> P. Murgatroyd, "Militia amoris and the Roman Elegists" *Latomus* 34 (1975) 77-79, points out that Ovid fuses *militia amoris* with *servitium amoris* at *Ars Amatoria* 2.233-42 and that the two figures are closely related in Roman elegy in general. On *servitium amoris*, see F. O. Copley, "Servitium amoris in the Roman Elegists," *TAPA* 78 (1947) 285-300.

<sup>2</sup> See Murgatroyd (above note 1) 59-79. On *militia amoris* in general, see A. Spies, *Militat Omnis Amans* (Diss., Tübingen 1930); in the *Amores*: E. Thomas, "Variations on a Military Theme in Ovid's *Amores*," *G&R* 2 (1964) 151-65. On connections between politics and poetry, between love and war, and between elegy and moral legislation in the Augustan period, see the articles in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2.30.1 (Berlin 1982) by D. Little, D. N. Levin, F. Della Corte, and R. I. Frank. The *ANRW* volume on Ovid is also helpful (*ANRW* 2.31.4; Berlin 1981).

<sup>3</sup> For instance, Bartsby in his edition of *Amores* Book I (Oxford 1973) on 1.9 (ad loc).

<sup>4</sup> See the *ANRW* articles (above, note 2) and the article on the *Amores* by Georg Luck in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature 2: Latin Literature*, ed. E. J. Kenney (Cambridge 1982). No one has yet noted to my knowledge the devastating implications for these standard accounts of P. Watson, "Ovid and *cultus*," *TAPA* 112 (1982) 237-44. *Cultus* in Ovid refers to cosmetic beautification rather than refinement.

<sup>5</sup> On Propertius' use of the figure, see Murgatroyd (above, note 1) 69-71. On Ovid's use of Propertius generally, see K. Morgan, *Ovid's art of imitation* (Leiden 1977) and K. E. Berman, "Ovid, Propertius and the elegiac genre," *RSC* 23 (1975)

imagery goes beyond Propertius' not only because it is funnier, but also because it suggests that the love of the *Amores* is inherently violent and linked with the Roman *libido dominandi*.<sup>6</sup> In such a context, amorous *nequitia* becomes a domestic manifestation of the same impulses that have motivated both civil war and military aggression abroad. The movement from Book 1 through Book 3 is presumably a conscious development on Ovid's part, since the second edition gave an opportunity for careful arrangement of the individual poems.<sup>7</sup> If so, the words of Dipsas in the central poem (8) of Book 1 take on a darker and darker meaning as the move to their close:

nunc Mars externis animos exercet in armis,  
at Venus Aeneae regnat in urbe sui.<sup>8</sup> (1.8.41-42)

In this essay, I shall trace the connections between love and conquest through the imagery of the *Amores* in order to suggest that the theme of erotic warfare is not merely a witty exercise, but also an exposé of the competitive, violent, and destructive nature of *amor*, an exposé that calls into question fundamental Roman attitudes in both the public and the private spheres. Such a search for thematic effect necessitates tracing military themes from poem to poem throughout the *Amores* and regrettably precludes extended analysis of individual poems. Each of the poems that I shall discuss deserves such an extended analysis both in terms of its own imagery and also in terms of its place in this movement from poem to poem, but it is necessary first to establish that the movement exists in order to justify fuller analysis subsequently.

In the opening poem of the *Amores*, then, Cupid conquers the *amator* with his *certas sagittas* (1.1.25), and then, in 1.2, the *amator* playfully expands and develops the notion of himself as the *praeda* of *amor*. He delights in this captivity and plays flippantly with the conventional imagery of love's torments and *seruitium* (1.2. 9-18) and comes to a cheerful conclusion:

en ego, confiteor, tua sum noua praeda, Cupido;  
porrigimus uictas ad tua iura manus. (1.2.19-20)

14-22. For a list of parallels, see R. Neumann, *Qua Ratione Ovidius in Amoribus Scribendis Properti Elegiis Usus Sit* (Diss., Göttingen 1919).

<sup>6</sup> See the unusual and insightful commentary of P. Green on *Amores* 1.9 (ad loc.) in his Penguin edition, *The Erotic Poems* (1982). For new approaches to Ovid in general, see the special issue on Ovid *Helios* 12 (1985), edited by Mary-Kay Gamel.

<sup>7</sup> On the problems of the first edition, see A. Cameron, "The first edition of Ovid's *Amores*," *CQ* n.s.18 (1968) 320-33. On the arrangement of the second edition, see I. M. Le M. Du Quesnay, "The *Amores*" in *Ovid*, ed. J. W. Binns (London 1973) 3-6. On the implications of that arrangement, see E.J. Kenney's remarks in the *Cambridge History* (above, note 4) p. 420. See also W. Ginsberg, *The Cast of Character* (Toronto 1983) 7-47 for an essay on Ovid's development of character in the *Amores*.

<sup>8</sup> I follow E. J. Kenney's Oxford text (1965) unless otherwise noted.

Ovid's lover seems perfectly content with this acknowledgment that he has become conquered plunder, delighted to submit, as in a Roman triumph, to the *iura* of his conqueror. Whereas Catullus and Propertius strove to free themselves from love's tyranny, Ovid's amator cheerfully resigns himself to *seruitium*. Whereas they became obsessed with the agonizing conflict between sane decency and mad passion, his *amator* accepts without question that his conscience and reason will be taken captive along with himself:

Mens Bona ducetur manibus post terga retortis  
et Pudor et castris quidquid Amoris obest. (1.2.31-32)

Moreover, he acknowledges that *Error* and *Furor* go along with love and that they, along with flattering caresses, are the soldiers of love's warfare, as if these were entirely unproblematic assertions:

Blanditiae comites tibi erunt Errorque Furorque  
adsidue partes turba secuta tuas  
his tu militibus superas hominesque deosque... (1.2.35-37)

He seems to be entirely unaware that a life conquered and controlled by shamelessness and madness exists outside literature. Furthermore, the introduction of elements from Roman triumphs into the conventional figure of love's warfare explicitly links *amor* and Rome in a striking new way. Like a Roman victor, Cupid subjugates and enslaves the conquered; Roman love demeans and enslaves the lover.<sup>9</sup> Thus, the final lines of the poem ominously equate Caesar and Cupid, despite the polite surface request that Cupid should learn from Caesar's kindly example.

Immediately after this appearance in 1.2 as the *noua praeda* (1.2.19) and the *praeda recens* (1.2.29) of Cupid, the *amator* declares himself in 1.3 to be the *praeda* also of his *puella* (1.3.1) and her life-long slave (1.3.5). Yet, as Leo Curran<sup>10</sup> has pointed out, the end of the poem reveals that he merely adopts the pose of being her captive in order to capture her: he swears that he is no *desultor amoris*, but, by comparing the *puella* with Io, Leda, and Europa in turn and himself, implicitly, with Jupiter *adulter* (1.3.22), he inadvertently reveals that he actually hopes to be a *desultor amoris* and to make the *puella* his *praeda* by pretending to be hers. He delights in being Cupid's victim because he can thereby victimize others.

<sup>9</sup> See E. Reitzenstein, "Das neue Kunstwollen in den *Amores* Ovids," *RhM* 84 (1935) 62-86 (reprinted in *Ovid* [Darmstadt 1968] eds. M. von Albrecht and E. Zinn, 206-32). See, G. K. Galinsky, "The Triumph Theme in the Augustan Elegy [sic]," *WS* 82 (1969) 91-94 on *Amores* 1.2. Most helpful and most recent is: C. R. Phillips, "Love's Companions and Ovid, *Amores* 1.2," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 2, ed. C. Deroux, Collection Latomus 168 (1980) 269-77.

<sup>10</sup> "Desultores Amoris," *CP* 61 (1966) 47-49. For an opposing view, see J. F. Davidson, "Some Thoughts on Ovid *Amores* 1.3," in *Studies in Latin Literature* (above, note 9) 278-85. See also E. Burck, "Ovid, *Amores* 1, 3 in Rahmen der römischen Liebesdichtung," *Der altsprach. Unterricht* 20 (1977) 63-81 and K. Olstein, "*Amores* 1.3 and duplicity as a way of love," *TAPA* 105 (1975) 241-57.

In 1.4, for the first time, he really is a captive slave to a *domina* (1.4.60), but only to the extent that she has a *uir* with whom he must compete and whom he must implore her to deceive. In 1.5, however, no rivals impede his experience of a perfect victory in the warfare of love, and Corinna's pretence of resistance makes him feel like a conqueror (1.5.13-16). Although this poem has been praised for its light-hearted delight in sexual joys,<sup>11</sup> sinister elements also abound: not only does the lover find feigned resistance arousing, but his pleasure is in victory over Corinna, and he describes her beauty beginning with the shoulders and working his way down with the noticeable omissions of head and of face.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in 1.7, the *amator's furor* has driven him to beat his mistress. The disproportionate expression of his repentance in extravagant epic language reveals his insincerity, as does the anti-climactic conclusion of the poem, in which he suggests that his *domina* should ignore the whole episode and erase the signa of his *scelus* by combing her hair (1.7.63-68).<sup>13</sup>

He pretends for a moment to think that his victory in the *militia amoris* is disgraceful and that gentle caresses would have been better than violence, but quickly goes on to express delight in the *domina's* dishevelment (1.7.11-18). To see his mistress victimized, helpless, disheveled, and distraught titillates him. He cites the beauty first of Atalanta disheveled in the hunt, then of Ariadne helpless after Theseus has deserted her, and finally of Cassandra desperately begging Minerva to save her from being taken captive.<sup>14</sup> His only interest in all three is in their sexual appeal as victims; Ariadne's tragic plight makes her desirable as would Cassandra's if she had only let down her hair.<sup>15</sup> These

<sup>11</sup> See, for instance, A. G. Elliott, "Amores 1.5: the Afternoon of a Poet," in *Studies in Latin Literature* 1, ed. C. Deroux, Collection Latomus 164 (1979) 349-55. More recently, see N. P. C. Huntingford, "Ovid, Amores 1.5," *AClass* 24 (1981) 107-15. For the older approach of attacking Ovid for not being Propertius, see E. Reitzenstein, *Wirklichkeitsbild und Gefühlsentwicklung bei Propertius*, *Philologus Suppl.* 29 (1936) 92-94.

<sup>12</sup> By contrast, for instance, Ovid draws attention to Daphne's hair and face at *Met.* 1. 487-501.

<sup>13</sup> A. Khan, "Ovidius Furens," *Latomus* 25 (1966) 880-94. Khan's article is a reaction against H. Fränkel's treatment of 1.7 in *Ovid: A Poet between Two Worlds* (Berkeley 1945) 18-21, 53-54, and 188 note 63. Recent responses are B. Stirrup, "Irony in Amores 1.7," *Latomus* 32 (1973) 824-31; P. J. Connor, "His Dupes and Accomplices," *Ramus* 3 (1974) 18-40; V. A. Tracy, "One Aspect of nequitia in Ovid's Amores," *Studies in Latin Literature* 1 (above, note 9) 343-48; J. T. Davis, "Exempla and anti-exempla in the Amores," *Latomus* 39 (1980) 412-17. On the reversal at the end of 1.7, see D. Parker, "The Ovidian Coda," *Arion* 8 (1969) 84-87.

<sup>14</sup> See Davis (above, note 13) p. 417 for an emphasis on Ovid's "gleeful perversion of elegiac convention." For Davis, the exempla are merry absurdity; to me, they seem far more ominous, all the more so because the lover fails to notice how ominous they are. For him, tragedy and despair are amusements. Barsby (ad loc.) is singularly insensitive to the implications of the exempla; Green (ad loc.), too, is at a loss to explain them.

<sup>15</sup> I am indebted to Mary-Kay Gamel's paper, "Apollo and Daphne: the making of a Sign," presented at the annual meeting of the American Philological

exempla move in a disturbing direction: from Atalanta, forced to marry against her will; to Ariadne, exploited, betrayed, and abandoned; to Cassandra, about to be raped and vainly beseeching *casta* Minerva to save her own chastity. To rate them in terms of their beauty under such circumstances is grotesque, and to fault the most tragic instance for a too virginal arrangement of her hair is singularly heartless. As elsewhere, (e.g. *Am.* 2.5.44-46), the lover regards a woman's grief as a sexual attraction. Rather than feeling any sympathy for sorrow, he feels only desire. He continues by invoking the triumph theme again, as in 1.2:

i nunc, magnificos victor molire triumphos,  
cinge comam lauro uotaque redde Ioui,  
quaeque tuos currus comitantum turba sequetur,  
clamet 'io, forti uicta puella uiro est!'  
ante eat effuso tristis captiua capillo,  
si sinerent laesae, candida tota, genae. (1.7 35-40)

Although he ridicules himself for triumphing over a mere *puella*, his hostility and violence remain until the girl's weeping softens him, and even then he cannot resist his heartless little joke at the end with its renewal of military imagery, urging the girl to return her hairs to their posts (*in statione*, 1.7.68) and implying that a woman's attractions are her soldiers in a violent war. After he barely resists the temptation to hurt the *lena* (not at all figuratively) at the end of 1.8, the *amator* makes his famous defence of love with 1.9 (*militat omnis amans*), in which he boasts that love requires as much diligence as does war. Love is also as violent as war:

quis nisi uel miles uel amans et frigora noctis  
et denso mixtas perferet imbre niues?  
mittitur infestos alter speculator in hostes,  
in riuale oculos alter, ut hoste, tenet.  
ille graues urbes, hic durae limen amicae  
obsidet; hic portas frangit, at ille fores. (1.9.15-20)

The rivalry for love is violent, and the lover lays siege to a woman and breaks into her. This breaking in is surely at least as suggestive of rape as of seduction.

The mixture of violence and obscenity continues:

saepe soporatos inuadere profuit hostes  
caedere et armata uulgus inerme manu;  
nempe maritorum somnis utuntur amantes  
et sua sopitis hostibus arma mouent. (1.9.21-22; 25-26)<sup>16</sup>

Association (1984), in which she points out Apollo's comparably disconcerting concern for Daphne's coiffure at *Met.* 1.497-98. See also C. E. Murgia, "Imitation and Authenticity in Ovid: *Met.* 1.477 and *Her.* 15," *AJP* 106 (1985) 456-58.

<sup>16</sup> On these lines, see Barsby (above, note 3) and Green (above), note 6. See also K. Olstein, "*Amores* 1.9 and the Structure of Book 1," *Studies in Latin Literature* 2 (above, note 9) 288-89.

The final joke is the *amator*'s insistence that he was slothful before *formosae cura puellae* (1.9.43) impelled him to become *agilem nocturnaque bella gerentem* (1.9.45). Yet despite the wit of the conceit and of the little obscenities which are as lightly veiled as the Corinna of 1.5, we have already seen that the imagery of violence for the description of love is not only a clever joke but also an accurate reflection of the real sexual violence in which the *amator* indulges. More important, these are the terms in which he thinks of love, with the result that for him and for the uncritical reader, sex becomes an expression of hostility and not of love at all.

In the first half of Book 2, the *amator* mentions the *militia amoris* only in passing (in 2.3, 2.5, and 2.9), but in the last half the theme is almost as prominent as it is in Book 1. In 2.12, after losing control of Corinna in the preceding propempticon, he enjoys another victory over her similar to the one in 1.5:

Ite triumphales circum mea tempora laurus:  
uicimus; in nostro est ecce Corinna sinu,  
quam uir, quam custos, quam ianua firma  
(tot hostes!) seruabant, ne qua posset ab arte capi.  
haec est praecipuo uictoria digna triumpho  
in qua, quaecumque est, sanguine praeda caret.  
non humiles muri, non paruis oppida fossis  
cincta, sed est ductu capta puella meo. (2.12.1-8)

Again, as in 1.9, Corinna is like a town to which the *amator* lays siege. Here, however, he boasts that his is an exceptional warfare in which no blood is shed and no violence done in lines 5-6 above, and again in lines 27-28:

me quoque, qui multos, sed me sine caede, Cupido  
iussit militiae signa mouere suae.

Unfortunately, between these two declarations of non-violence that frame the poem, he undermines his point with the intervening examples that he lists to prove that love is always a *belli causa* (2.12.17-24). Not only does war break out over the women in his examples, but there is also warfare with most of them, in that they are victims of violence.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the passive protasis of the contrary-to-fact condition that introduces Helen as *exemplum* emphasizes that she was *rapta* (2.12.17), and thus far from actively responsible for the Trojan War. Passive shifts to active, counterfactual to real with the next three *exempla* where *femina* mysteriously causes war after war. Helen, at least in one tradition, is to blame for the Trojan War, but only Ovid's lover would be capable of blaming Hippodameia for the fight between the Lapiths and the centaurs or the Sabine women for their own rape; indeed, in the *Ars amatoria*, the *praeceptor amoris* identifies rape as a Roman tradition (1.101ff; see Green ad loc.) and the rape of the Sabines as the paradigm of Roman civil war and Augustan

<sup>17</sup> For Hippodamia, cf. *Met* 12.210ff. For the Sabine women, cf. *Ars Amat.* 1.102ff.

conquest.<sup>18</sup> Of course, the intervening example, that Lavinia forced the Trojans to fight against her father, is utterly absurd. The lover does not perceive his own lack of logic, but his failure to make sense of his unexamined emotions draws the reader's attention to the four exempla, and especially to the movement both geographical and chronological from Helen to the Sabines, which gradually and implicitly brings responsibility for rape, violence, and war home to Rome in spite of the explicit responsibility of the unknown but apparently universal *femina* of the lover's paranoia. Immediately after his protestations in 2.12 that his love is a war *sine caede* comes 2.13, the first of the two abortion poems; the *amator's* victory in the *militia amoris* has nearly killed Corinna:<sup>19</sup>

Dum labefactat onus grauidi temeraria uentris  
in dubio uitae lassa Corinna iacet. (2.13.1-2)

He concludes his fervent prayers for her safety and recovery with a request that she will abstain henceforth from such warfare:

si tamen in tanto fas est monuisse timore,  
hac tibi sit pugna dimicuisse satis. (2.13.27-28)

Throughout 2.13, the *amator's* concern is entirely for Corinna's life. Whereas after the mock violence she inflicted on her own hair in 1.14, he offered mock condolences, he now expresses grief and fear because of the serious harm she has done in trying to abort her baby. For once, he makes no attempt to undermine his own point by extravagant exaggeration. Nevertheless, he makes no connection between his earlier blood-free triumph and her current bloody plight, for which he recognizes no responsibility.<sup>20</sup> In 2.14, the victim of the *militia*

<sup>18</sup> See Julie Hemker, "Rape and the founding of Rome," *Helios* 12 (1985) 41-47.

<sup>19</sup> 19.2.13.5-6 make the reader wonder whether or not the victory was actually his own:

sed tamen aut ex me conceperat, aut ego credo:  
est mihi pro facto saepe, quod esse potest.

The ironic juxtaposition of 2.12 and 2.13 has been noted by S. Dickison, "Abortion in Antiquity," *Arethusa* 6 (1973) 164-5. The two abortion poems have not pleased critics: G. Williams in *Tradition and Originality* (Oxford 1968) 510 calls 2.14 "trivial and tasteless"; J. P. V. D. Balsdon in *Roman Women* (London 1962) 192 calls both poems "singularly tasteless"; A. Watts, "Ovid, the Law, and Roman Society on Abortion" *AClass.* 16 (1973) 89-101 dismisses both poems as having "little of literary value." More recently, Davis and Connor (above, note 13) both discuss the abortion poems with more appreciation, but the most thorough, and, in my opinion, most accurate treatment is that of O.S. Due, "Amores und Abtreibung," *C&M* 32 (1980) 133-50). Due consistently confuses the issue of poet/lover/*persona*/Ovid by calling the narrative voice alternately "Ovid" and "Poet," but his analysis is otherwise thorough and perceptive, in particular his identification of the lover as a Tereus or a Jason (p.148) and his point that Ovid breaks with the tradition of elegy in his interest in the typical rather than the individual (p.135).

<sup>20</sup> Due (above, note 19) 148.

*amoris* is no longer only Corinna, but also her baby; Corinna has become the soldier:

Quid iuuat immunes belli cessare puellas  
 nec fera peltatas agmina uelle sequi  
 si sine Marte suis patiuntur uulnera telis  
 et caecas armant in sua fata manus?  
 quae prima instituit teneros conuellere fetus,  
 militia fuerat digna perire sua.  
 scilicet ut careat rugarum crimine uenter,  
 sternetur pugnae tristis harena tuae? (2.14.1-8)

Then, suddenly, the *amator* becomes a most unlikely satirist, more stern and rustic than Horace, in fact more like some strange premonition of Juvenal's *persona*.<sup>21</sup> He has accused Corinna of being so vain as to abort her child to avoid the *striae grauidarum* (*rugarum crimine*, 2.14.7).<sup>22</sup> Now he goes on to deliver a diatribe against abortions in general:

si mos antiquis placuisset matribus idem,  
 gens hominum uitio deperitura fuit. (2.14.9-10)

After a long list of famous leaders whose mothers would have changed the course of history had they aborted them, he generalizes again:

quid plenam fraudas uitem crescentibus uuis  
 pomaque crudeli uellis acerba manu?  
 sponte fluant matura sua; sine crescere nata:  
 est pretium paruae non leue uita morae.  
 uestra quid effoditis subiectis uiscera telis  
 et nondum natis dira uenena datis? (2.14.23-28)

He emphasizes that abortion is unnatural and therefore wrong:

Hoc neque in Armeniis tigres fecere latebris,  
 perdere nec fetus ausa leaena suos. (2.14.35-36)

Only at the end of the poem does he cease to lecture Corinna and begin to return to his earlier fear that she will die:

at tenerae faciunt, sed non impune, puellae:  
 saepe, suos utero quae necat, ipsa perit;  
 ipsa perit ferturque rogo resoluta capillos,  
 et clamant 'merito' qui modo cumque uident. (2.14.37-40)

He insists that death is what she deserves, but then goes on to pray that she will not die even though she deserves to:

ista sed aetherias uanescant dicta per auras,  
 et sint ominibus pondera nulla meis.

<sup>21</sup> On Juvenal, see W. S. Anderson, *Anger in Juvenal and Seneca*, Univ. of Calif. Pub. in Class. Phil. 19 (1964) 127-96.

<sup>22</sup> On this line, see Due (above, note 19) 145-46.



di, faciles peccasse semel concedite tuto;  
et satis est: poenam culpa secunda ferat. (2.14.41-44)

The fault (*culpa*) is hers, and it is she who has erred (*peccasse*). Whereas the *amator* pretended to feel great remorse when he beat her in 1.7, the first half of line 5 in 2.13 is the only hint in either abortion poem that he has any responsibility whatsoever for her pregnancy or for her abortion.

In spite of this irresponsibility, he has been shaken by fear into conservative preaching. The death of Corinna's parrot in 2.6 elicited from him an unguarded moral response;<sup>23</sup> Corinna's abortion shocks him into a similar retreat from his usual sophistication. He is altogether unprepared to face the consequences of his acts and perhaps even less prepared to understand the consequences of his own *praecepta*. The *militia amoris* he advocates undergoes a complete reversal when the love triumph *sine caede* turns into the blood-bath of a self-inflicted abortion.<sup>24</sup> After 2.14, the *amator* boasts of no more military triumphs in love and almost entirely avoids the subject of amatory warfare. Whereas before he adopted the pose of a captive *praeda* in bondage to a *domina* in order to exploit a *puella* (1.3), he has, by 2.17, become a *praeda* in earnest:

Si quis erit, qui turpe putet servire puellae,  
illo conuincar iudice turpis ego.  
sim licet infamis, dum me moderatius urat  
quae Paphon et fluctu pulsa Cythera tenet  
atque utinam dominae miti quoque praeda fuissem,  
formosae quoniam praeda futurus eram. (2.17.1-6)

Beauty makes Corinna bold and violent; beauty arms her for battle and for victory<sup>25</sup>

dat facies animos: facie uiolenta Corinna est...  
non, tibi si facies nimium dat in omnia regni...  
collatum idcirco tibi me contemnere debes. (2.17.7,11,13)

She has conquered him completely:

tu quoque me, mea lux, in quaslibet accipe leges;  
te deceat medio iura dedisse toro.<sup>26</sup> (2.17.23-24)

<sup>23</sup> L. Cahoon, "The Parrot and the Poet," *CJ* 80 (1984) 27-35.

<sup>24</sup> An anonymous reader for *TAPA* doubts that the reversal here is more than a literary *tour de force*, a display of versatility juxtaposing contradictory rhetorical stances. I think it is such a *tour de force*, indeed, but I cannot in the least understand the widespread view that every thematic issue that Ovid raises is somehow canceled out by the literariness of its treatment. To introduce abortion into love elegy and rape into epic seems positively pregnant with more-than-formalism.

<sup>25</sup> The manuscripts offer a number of variants for line 11 of 2.17, but in each the conquest of the lover by the girl's beauty is clear.

<sup>26</sup> I have chosen the more entertaining, pointed, relevant, and "difficult" reading "toro" over Kenney's choice, *foro*. *Toro* is doubly funny because of its meaning and because it sounds almost like the more predictable *foro*. An

Here, as in 1.2.20, the lover completely submits himself to imposed *iura* as a conquered slave.

In 3.2, the *amator* is not really a captive but has resumed his old pose as the *praeda* of a *domina* in order to seduce another new *puella*, but in 3.7 the various *nocturna bella* (1.9.45) that he has waged (and that he lists in lines 23-26) leave him too exhausted, presumably, to satisfy a new mistress. She hopefully calls him *dominum* to arouse him, but he is not able to dominate:

et mihi blanditias dixit dominumque uocauit  
et quae praeterea publica uerba iuuant.  
tacta tamen ueluti gelida mea membra cicuta  
segnia propositum destituere meum.  
truncus iners iacui, species et inutile pondus,  
et non exactum, corpus an umbra forem. (3.7.11-16)

His *regna* over her are *sine usu* (3.7.49). Like the eunuch whom he mocked in the second book, the *amator* must abandon *spes...uiriles* (2.3.9): *sed neque tum uixi nec uir, ut ante, fui* (3.7.60). He has not only lost the *arma* of love (in line 71, he is *inermis*), but has actually been killed before the battle: *nostra tamen iacuere uelut praemortua membra* (3.7.65).

Not only does the *puella*, in the hope of breathing new life into these *praemortua membra*, call him *dominum*, but he refers to himself as the *dominus* of his penis, which he personifies and addresses in a speech that reveals all too clearly who is the true master of the situation:

quae [membra] nunc ecce uigent intempestiua ualentque,  
nunc opus exposcunt militiamque suam.  
quin istic pudibunda iaces, pars pessima nostri?  
sic sum pollicitis captus et ante tuis.  
tu dominum fallis, per te deprensus inermis  
tristia cum magno damna pudore tuli. (3.7.67-72)

In the *militia* of love, the lover is the defenceless captive (*deprensus inermis*, cf 2.10.3) of his *pars pessima*, from whose deceptive and unpredictable whims he cannot escape (*pollicitis captus*). He can only be called *dominus* in a flattering lie from the *puella* or in a joke against himself. The *puella*, of course, is offended by this insult to her attractions. She is also ashamed to be *intactam* (3.7.83), and, after a futile effort to resurrect the *pars pessima*, she hides *dedecus hoc* from her *ministrae* (3.7.73-84). As the poem ends, we realize that it is a perfect reversal of the *amator's* triumph in 1.5: *nec mora, desiluit tunica uelata soluta* (3.7.81. Corinna arrived in 1.5 with her tunic loosened (*tunica uelata recincta*), soon to have it torn off; the girl of 3.7 also leaves with her tunic loosened (*tunica uelata soluta*), but she is *intacta* in spite of appearances. Whereas the *amator's arma* conquered Corinna in a glorious victory, he is now,

anonymous reader for *TAPA* draws my attention to the fact that Guy Lee's translation makes the same choice.

through the failure of the same weapons, the absurdly conquered captive of his own impotence.<sup>27</sup>

In a discussion of 3.8, one critic<sup>28</sup> expresses outrage at the obscenity of 3.7 and uses the poem as a proof of Ovid's immaturity. The immaturity and obscenity cannot be denied, but they are the *amator's*, not necessarily Ovid's. The *amator* sees all sexual activity in terms of conquest and counts up the number of his victories as a measure of his erotic heroism:

at nuper bis flaua Chlide, ter candida Pitho,  
ter Libas officio continuata meo est;  
exigere a nobis angusta nocte Corinnam,  
me memini numeros sustinuisse nouem. (3.7.23-26)

When he cannot conquer with such feats he has no purpose at all, and, when he finds himself conquered by impotence, he is utterly humiliated:

a tenera quisquam sic surgit mane puella  
protinus ut sanctos possit adire deos? (3.7.53-54)

Since he sees all relationships in terms of victory and defeat, of success and failure, sexual impotence represents total devastation and isolation. He has chosen to live as a captive of the physical urges of his *pars pessima*. To him, the word *pessima* is a suitable curse in a passing fit of frustration, but, as usual, he inadvertently passes moral judgment on his whole view and mode of life. In the world of the *Amores*, what is usually sacred has become strangely profane. To be prepared for worship by sexual abstinence is, in the lover's warped view, an obviously excruciating disgrace, an analogy from which the reader should instantly grasp the abject humiliation of impotence. Similarly, for the *puella*, to be even briefly and temporarily *intacta* (once a Roman virtue) must be carefully covered up and concealed from the servants as the darkest of secrets. For the lover, chastity and piety and honourable love between brother and sister are all embarrassing, even contemptible, in comparison to erotic triumphs:<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> It is fascinating that 3.7 has attracted almost no scholarly attention. There is an admirable emendation for lines 21-22 by G. W. Most "Three Textual Notes on Ovid's *Amores*," *Studies in Latin Literature* 1 (above, note 11) 366-72, and a short discussion by A. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus* (New Haven 1983) 117-19. Richlin rightly points out the genteel preference for sly euphemism that characterizes Ovid's lover's treatment of impotence in contrast to other treatments of the theme. It is likely that 3.7 was admired and copied by the early troubadour William IX in his poem "Ben vueill que sapchon li pluzor," no. 6 in the edition of de Cuenca and Elvira (Madrid 1979), as I have tried to demonstrate in an article solicited by *Mediaevalia* for a forthcoming special issue on Ovid and the Middle Ages.

<sup>28</sup> J. K. Newman, *The Concept of 'Vates' in Augustan Poetry*, Collection Latomus 89 (1967) 103.

<sup>29</sup> Of course, in the erotic context, the chastity of the priestess and of a sister are inappropriate, but what makes the lover simultaneously funny and pathetic is his urgent desire for secrecy and his disproportionate sense of disgrace over a rather ordinary human failing, and over a physical rather than an ethical or

a, pudet annorum: quo me iuuenemque uirumque?  
 nec iuuenem nec me sensit amica uirum.  
 sic flammas aditura pias reuerenda sacerdos  
 surgit et a caro fratre seuera soror. (3.7.19-22)<sup>30</sup>

Not only is he the victim of his physical limitations, but he is also the emotional captive both of his girl's beauty and of her treachery. In 3.11, he expands and develops the Catullan *odi et amo* theme and also in particular extends and elaborates the conflict of Catullus 8: *perfer et obdura* (3.11.7) and again:

desine blanditias et uerba potentia quondam  
 perdere: non ego sum stultus ut ante fui.  
 Luctantur pectusque leue in contraria tendunt  
 hac amor, hac odium; sed puto; uincit amor. (3.11.31-34)

In the first half of the poem (11a),<sup>31</sup> the *amator's patientia* has been conquered by the *puella's uitia* (3.11.1), and, as a result, he is determined to conquer love and to flee from the *catenae* of his captivity:

cede fatigato pectore, turpis amor.  
 scilicet adserui iam me fugique catenas,  
 et, quae non puduit ferre, tulisse pudet.  
 uicimus et domitum pedibus calcamus Amorem. (3.11.2-5)

In the second half, the battle between hate and love continues, but love has gained the upper hand. Although he deplores the *puella's* deceit and begs her to give it up for the sake of *lecti socialia iura* (3.11.45), he admits that her eyes have captured his (at line 48) and that he is driven by force to acknowledge her as his mistress and goddess:

parce per o lecti socialia iura, per omnes  
 qui dant fallendos se tibi saepe deos,  
 perque tuam faciem, magni mihi numinis instar,  
 perque tuos oculos, qui rapuere meos. (3.11.45-48)

Absurdly, he invokes the laws of the marriage bed (even allowing for the ambiguity of *socialia*,<sup>32</sup> this is surely the force of *lecti...iura*), which are utterly

intellectual lapse. His vision is so warped that he does not seem to realize that he is funny any more than he recognizes his bizarre inversion of values.

<sup>30</sup> I follow Most's emendation (above, note 27).

<sup>31</sup> Whether or not one accepts Müller's division (see Kenney's edition ad loc.) of 3.11, the two poems or the two parts of one poem are clearly deliberately juxtaposed and opposed to each other. For a quite different reading of 3. 11, see N. P. Gross, "Ovid, *Amores* 3.11 a and b," *CJ* 71 (1976) 152-60, now also available in his book, *Amatory Persuasion in Antiquity* (Newark 1985) 159-68.

<sup>32</sup> That Ovid is the first and almost the only Roman to use *socialis* of the marriage bond (for which see Lewis and Short, the *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, and *A Concordance of Ovid*, ed. Deferrari [Washington D.C. 1939]) speaks worlds. The cumulative weight of ten instances, scattered throughout his works, bespeaks an increasingly thought-through connection between marital stability and social

inappropriate to the mistress who now deceives him and whom he implores to be faithful even while he acknowledges his inevitable slavery to her whether she is faithful or not:<sup>33</sup>

quicquid eris, mea semper eris; tu selige tantum,  
me quoque uelle uelis anne coactus amem.  
lintea dem potius uentisque ferentibus utar  
et quam, si nolim, cogar amare, uelim. (3.11.49-52)

He is entirely defeated; his situation is the reverse of that in which he earlier (line 5) hoped to place *Amor*: he allows himself to be conquered and enslaved by his own passion.<sup>34</sup>

Finally, in 3.14, Ovid brings the theme of conquest to its logical conclusion.<sup>35</sup> The *amator* continues to be torn between *amor* of the *deliciae* of his *puella*'s *lasciua mobilitas* (2.18-26) and *odium* of her infidelity:

mens abit et morior, quotiens peccasse fateris,  
perque meos artus frigida gutta fluit.  
tunc amo, tunc odi frustra, quod amare necesse est;  
tunc ego, sed tecum, mortuus esse uelim. (3.14.37-40)

The conflict is over before it has begun; he can only love, and there is no room for *odium*. Throughout the poem, he is reduced to assuming that the *puella* will be unfaithful to him and to imploring her to deceive him by ceasing to flaunt her faithlessness:

nil equidem inquiram nec, quae celare parabis,  
insequar: et falli muneris instar erit. (3.14.41-42)

He is eager to let her overcome by mere denial even the evidence of his own eyes:

si tamen in media deprensa tenebere culpa  
et fuerint oculis probra uidenda meis,  
quae bene uisa mihi fuerint, bene uisa negato:  
concedent uerbis lumina nostra tuis. (3.14.43-46)

order, building on and going beyond Catullus's vocabulary of political alliance, particularly at *Tristia* 5.14.28 in the phrase *socialis amor*.

<sup>33</sup> Green's idea (Introduction and *passim*) that the inspiration for Corinna may have been Ovid's first wife would make a particularly poignant kind of sense here. Independent of biographical conjecture, the poignancy of this confusion of *amor* and marriage certainly seems to outweigh the wit noted by Gross (above, note 31).

<sup>34</sup> Green (ad loc.) rightly deplores the "simplistic division" of critics into two camps—those who regard 3.11 as serious emotion and those who see only literary game. Surely, the point is that the lover is unable to distinguish between real feeling and clever wit, too urbane to acknowledge the former, too human to sustain the latter.

<sup>35</sup> On 3.14, see N. P. Gross, "Rhetorical Wit and Amatory Persuasion in Ovid," *CJ* 74 (1979) 305-18. Once again, Green (ad loc.) comes far closer to the spirit of the poem.

Throughout the poem, the lover reveals his pain in the face of betrayal and his confusion at this outcome of his urbane attitudes, his artful strategies, his clever deceptions, his witty doctrines. Thus Green rightly compares his feelings with those of Catullus's lover at Lesbia's betrayal. Ovid's peculiar contribution, however, is to make his lover blind to his own responsibility for his defeat in love. Because Catullus's lover sees so clearly and honestly the causes of his predicament, we share his sorrow and admire his penetration in analyzing it. By contrast, Ovid involves the reader quite differently and reminds us pointedly that the lover's defeat is the natural result of a shrewd *puella*'s use of his own erotic doctrine. Instead of fully sympathizing, the reader is in part estranged from the lover who so clearly has received what he asked for, what he deserved, now that the tables are turned.

At the end of the poem, he is not only the *puella*'s conquered victim, captive, and slave, but grateful to be so:

prona tibi uinci cupientem uincere palma est,  
sit modo 'non feci' dicere lingua memor:  
cum tibi contingat uerbis superare duobus,  
etsi non causa, iudice uince tuo. (3.14.47-50)

He has come full circle; he now takes a pathetic and masochistic pleasure in his own defeat, yet, at the beginning of the *Amores*, he posed as just such a victim as he has now become in order to trap and to conquer the *puella* of 1.3. Through the *amator*'s exploration of the *militia amoris*, Ovid suggests that the lover who conquers reduces the beloved to a defeated, captured, and enslaved victim, dehumanizes her so much that she replaces *socialis amor* with routine infidelity and unhesitating abortion.

To regard love as a kind of warfare is not just a funny conceit about the nature of the sexual act because real hostility and real violence result from such an attitude. Indeed, Ovid draws on the ancient equation of the sacking of a city with the assault on a woman's chastity.<sup>36</sup> Sexual disorder is social disorder. Sexual violence rends the social fabric. If there are no *lecti socialia iura*, *amor* inevitably ends in victory or defeat. The lover who starts out as a seducer and a conqueror may end up as the captive of another's seduction and as the victim of another's conquest. Keeping score of sexual victories can be reversed in the defeat of impotence. Ovid involves his reader in the process by which the *amator* moves from his pose of *praeda* in 1.3, to his giddy triumph in 1.5, to his shocked withdrawal in 2.14, to his shameful defeat in 3.7, to his abject humiliation in 3.14. This development of the theme of *militia amoris* may merely be, as is usually suggested, Ovid's loss of interest in elegy and his desire to go on to tragedy and to the *Fasti*. If, however, the second edition of the *Amores* is a carefully structured work of art with thematic purpose, then it shows how attitudes of competition and hostility pervade Roman *amor* in men

<sup>36</sup> *Amores* 2.12. See M. N. Nagler on the phrase κρήδεμνον... λύεσθαι in *Spontaneity and Tradition* (Berkeley 1974) 44-60. See also E. Vermeule on μείγνυμι and δαμάζω in *Aspects of Death in Early Greek Art and Poetry* (Berkeley 1979) 101.

and women alike and perhaps even suggests that humiliation and subjection are the ultimate result of real as well as of metaphorical warfare and conquest. In the *Amores*, the desire to conquer and to enslave is in itself an enslavement.

The *libido dominandi* deplored by Sallust (*Cat.* 2.2) becomes in the *Amores* a kind of internal moral rot pervading the lives and loves of individuals.<sup>37</sup> By weaving together the vocabularies of love and war, the *Amores* suggest that the ambition to conquer is in the process of destroying *socialia iura*. If Rome contains both literally and existentially the kind of *amor* that the *Amores* depict, and if Venus is an internal reflection of the external labours of Mars, then there can be little reciprocal love in Rome, and political and social as well as physical and individual impotence is likely to follow.<sup>38</sup>

The lover's wit on the one hand and his tendency to slippage on the other are the strategies whereby Ovid manipulates the reader into a vicarious participation in the *libido dominandi* and then into a growing unease at the consequences of domination. To reject elegy is not just to reject one literary genre in favour of another, but also to reject conquest as a way of life that betrays and dehumanizes those who pursue it; the conquest of love can be the destruction of love. To negate love by conquest and domination is to abort the future. Indeed, by contrast to the nightmare of *militia amoris*, Ovid also incorporates into *Amores* 2.6 (on the death of Corinna's parrot) the humbler domestic and Hellenistic ideals of *placidae pacis amor* and *plena concordia*.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> For the idea that Ovid's is a "poetry of disenchantment," "not congratulating us on our distress," but "warning us of it," see W. Ralph Johnson, "The Problem of the Counter-classical Sensibility," *CSCA* 3 (1970) 123-51.

<sup>38</sup> On the confusion of public and private and on the obstacles to love in marriage under Augustus, see L. Raditsa, "Augustus' Legislation Concerning Marriage, Procreation, Love Affairs and Adultery," *ANRW* 2.13 (1980) 278-339.

<sup>39</sup> See L. Cahoon, "The Parrot and the Poet" (above, note 23).