Performing Human-Animal Relations in Spain
An anthropological study of bullfighting from horseback in Andalusia

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Performing Human-Animal Relations in Spain
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Abstract

A fundamental concern of human-animal studies is the human-animal boundary. The rider-horse relationship challenges this boundary through a degree of intercorporeality that is symbolised by the centaur. The centaur is transformative and generative; it is part-horse, part-human but more than horse-plus-human. This dissertation employs the centaur metaphor together with embodied theories of human-animal relations to explore the intercorporeality of humans and animals, and the permeability of the human-animal boundary. Using actor-network theory, it also considers the technological mediation of human-animal networks such as the centaurian relationship.

The case study for this dissertation is rejonó (bullfighting from horseback) in Andalusia (Southern Spain). It is based on fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in Andalusia from 2000 to 2001. Rejonó has been under-researched compared to toreo (bullfighting from foot, also known generically as the corrida). I consider its social development using the idea of invented traditions and suggest that its 're-invention' in the early twentieth century is related to broader socio-economic developments. This challenges the assumption that rejonó is an anachronistic and elitist activity. I argue that rejonó is not a performance by the upper-class but is more accurately a performance of the upper-class.

Rejonó presents a complex triadic human-animal interaction of human-horse-bull and the network rejonadeor-horse-rejon-bull. Contrary to existing dualistic arguments based on the corrida (the bullfight) from foot that assert an Andalusian segregation of humans from animals, I argue that rejonó is a performance of boundary transcendence. As this argument is based on the human-horse-bull trichotomy, I assert that dichotomous interpretations are insufficient in understanding the multiplicity of human-animal relations and gender.
representations in rejoneo. This dissertation illustrates boundary crossing at the level of individual humans and animals, through the wider relationships, contexts and networks in which they exist, to their structured interactions in the plaza and the themes they perform.

I argue that rejoneo is a performance of human-animal relations; it performs the ways in which the human-animal boundary can be embodied and transcended and presents multiple ways of being human, animal, male and female. Thus, this dissertation challenges existing ethnographic research into human-animal relations in Andalusia, and contributes to an embodied and technologically mediated approach towards human-animal relations.