Introduction
Why California is so Reversible?
American Perspectivism Considered from an Arena Scope

The society of the United States is at the forefront of animal protection ethics and the questioning of the primacy of the human over the nonhuman; however, it still gives prominence to rodeo and bull games entertainment today. In North America, bull sports are more commonly associated with the oft-maligned neighbors south of the border. The tendency to stigmatize Mexico's popular traditions north of the Rio Grande has grown in recent decades, particularly due to tensions around immigration and drug trafficking. The practice of bull sports can thus be seen as a marker of the irreducible conflict between Hispanic Mexico, supposedly characterized by boisterous sociability, and the United States, whose culture, grounded in a Puritan ethic inherited from its British roots, perceives affection toward animals as a moral responsibility. This exaggerated opposition is clearly replete with biases given that US society is similarly plagued by extreme violence. Moreover, US society is anything but culturally homogeneous and is threaded with patterns and norms from around the globe. In fact, many of these cultural borrowings are of Ibero-American origin, including events such as rodeos (a Spanish word coming from the verb *rodear*, "to round up" cattle and horses, and by extension, to engage in complex and even violent interaction with livestock). The recognition of rodeo as an inherently American national sport continues to be opposed, however, by guardians of "animalary" ethics.[1] The tensions surrounding rodeo and its contests and competitions in Anglo-American society are rooted in a hidden reality that this book seeks to define: the sport's deep connection to bullfighting and Hispano-Mexican origins that Anglo-American hegemony has never fully managed to suppress.

Rodeos nevertheless clearly differ from corridas (i.e., bullfights in which the bull is killed), and it is illegal to kill animals in a spectacle in the United States. There is far more to bull sports than Spanish bullfighting, however, including a variety of nonlethal events involving bulls and horses—like rodeo—that are practiced in southwestern Europe and across the Americas. Such events belong to a family of spectator sports that developed along a historical continuum and whose epicenter was the Iberian Peninsula and regions along its geographic borders or within its imperial sphere. The formal differences between these sports—even those as significant

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as the question of to kill or not to kill—are differences of degree, not kind. Generally speaking, bull games ("tauromachy") constitute a violent but strictly codified opposition, set in a bullring, between men—and women, although rarely—on horseback or not, depending on the type of spectacle, and bulls selected for aggressive behavior when goaded by humans.[2]

All bull games, however, challenge Western societies' animalary ethics, occasionally causing scandals, and in some instances bans, like in Catalonia (Spain), where national bullfighting was banned in 2010 by the regional parliament, or more recently (and surprisingly) in Mexico City, where activities were suspended in the world's largest *plaza de toros* by a federal judge at the demand of an animal care association (2022). That same year in France, a proposition to ban Spanish-style bullfighting—traditionally practiced in two southern regions—was rejected following a highly publicized debate. More recently, in June 2023, bullfights in the *plaza de toros* in Tijuana (Baja California), immediately adjacent to the border wall, have been suspended by a federal court decision, pending a vote by the Baja California legislature on the legality of bullfighting in this Mexican state. Meanwhile, the pressure of animal rights activism is not limited to bull games involving killing animals. Recently in France (2022–23), for instance, in addition to continuous protests against Spanish bullfighting, the regional *course camarguaise*, where animals are not killed but perform for several years (like the bucking bulls and bucking horses in rodeos), has been targeted by a media campaign by animal rights activists.[3]

Given the globalizing tendencies of contemporary civilization under the aegis of Anglo-American moral standards, humans are unquestionably pressured to acknowledge animals and, to a lesser extent, vegetal beings, as peer beings deserving of empathy and protection against mistreatment. The clearest result of these changes is the status of pets, now considered members of billions of urban households and encompassing dogs, cats, birds, hamsters, fish, and even horses (not uncommonly enclosed in gardens, unridden, because riding them would be considered mistreatment).[4] This ever-growing pet craze is joined by the expanding popularity of home gardening, which fuels a passion for plants, as well as a considerable market.

As a consequence, Western societies are drifting from their supposedly classical "naturalistic ontology," which radically separates, according to French anthropologist Philippe Descola (2005), nonhuman beings from humanity. Paradoxically, the ontology underlying Western societies is undergoing a turn toward a typically non-Western animism that emphasizes, again according to Descola, contiguities between the human and the nonhuman, envisioning the same interiority beyond different external physicality, in other words, sameness through otherness. The United States is clearly at the forefront of this global development, with millions of pets considered full members of their households by "their humans."[5] The question is: How can the continued popularity of bull and horse sports such as rodeo be explained, given the fact that from an "animalary" perspective, they involve the systematic mistreatment of animals?

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Rodeos and Bullfights: Transcultural California

The first step in addressing this question has to do with the cultural complexity and entanglement of influences that characterize US society, particularly with respect to traditions surrounding animals, in its western regions. Because our fieldwork has been based in California, and supported by bibliographical resources spanning the entire American West, we wish to underscore the close kinship between rodeo and bullfighting, a kinship that despite cross-border antagonisms and a history steeped in blood and tears unites Anglo- and Hispano-American cultures under the overarching banner of Amerindian civilizations. Rodeo is firmly rooted in the southwestern United States, but also farther north across the western Great Plains and into western Canada, where native hunters historically took advantage of practices introduced by Spanish colonization, specifically extensive horse and cattle ranching in the wilderness. Amid the rise of Anglo-American hegemony in the latter half of the nineteenth century, these practices became defining features of the "Western culture" of which rodeo was—and remains—a key symbol. Rodeo is indeed a spectacular expression of a fundamentally transcultural cattle ranching complex that blends Spaniard, Native American, Anglo-American, and African American influences.[6]

In addition to rodeo, our ethno-geographic inquiry has encompassed a wide array of alternative events and contests in the bullring, particularly in states located along the border. These events are culturally derived from the cattle ranching complex that was born under the influence of Spanish colonization and are singularly well represented in contemporary California by as many as seven forms of the genre, including classic rodeo. Mexican communities practice unique forms of rodeo known as *charreada* and *jaripeo*, often despite legal limits and outcry from animal rights advocates who view immigrants' methods as clear evidence of inherent "barbarity." Even more surprising is that California law, under the religious freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment to the US Constitution, allows the Azorean Portuguese American community to hold "bloodless bullfights" (in which no lances or swords are used and the bull is not killed) during religious festivals. We have even observed the regular presence of Anglo-American aficionados of Spanish bullfighting at these events, some of whom are members of a Californian taurine club, like Los Aficionados de Los Angeles, which claims to be "The Oldest Bullfight Club in the United States."[7] Apart from frequent cross-border trips to Spanish bullfights in the *plaza de toros* of Tijuana (before its 2023 suspension, of course), several male and female club members used to train in Griffith Park, and some occasionally practice the sport at a bullfighting school on a San Joaquin Valley ranch owned by a Portuguese American bullfighter and bull breeder.

Each of these "foreign" bull game traditions entails a specific approach to cattle ranching and animal breeding. California provides what they need, including specialized breeders offering a wide range of bulls and horses selected for American rodeos. Rodeos are separated into national rodeo, Native American rodeo, African

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American rodeo, and freestyle bullfighting, a competition between professional rodeo clown-bullfighters whose name recalls rodeo's hidden Hispanic origins. The California gay and lesbian community also organizes "Hot Rodeos," notwithstanding the diametrical opposition between gay pride, as demonstrated by colorful Pride parades in major cities, of which San Francisco is the precursor, and the primarily conservative ideology of the rural American cowboy. Unlike the cliché, rodeo provides space for these marginalized social groups.[8] Whether gay or straight, Black or white, Mexican or Indian, however, few rodeo cowboys are actual cowhands. Professional contestants live on the road, traveling from spectacle to spectacle like itinerant circus performers, comedians, or musicians. As a form of bullfight, rodeo is an urban spectacle that, in ways often far removed from ranching practices, makes a spectacle of humans' attempts to control nature, represented by the aggressivity of wild cattle or horses.

From the Cattle Ranching Complex to Campuses, and from Transcultural Spectacle to "Humanimalism Ontologies": California as the Promised Land of a Reversible America

What to a European might resemble a hodgepodge of community sports events amid an inextricable mix of contradictions makes perfect sense in the United States, where most ethnic or gendered communities are so well defined that they have specific university programs dedicated to them, such as Chicano Studies, African American Studies, Native American Studies, and Queer Studies (which focus on the full spectrum of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex communities). Beyond this institutionalization of topics related to cultural minorities, some American universities also promote Animal Studies as part of the postmodernist deconstruction of classical cultural studies, with humans regarded as little more than actors among others amid the interspecies complex underlying "posthumanist" social and biological life.[9] As Cary Wolfe observes, cultural studies will overcome "a fundamental repression that underlies most ethical and political discourse: repressing the question of nonhuman subjectivity, taking it for granted that the subject is always already human."[10]

If this undoubtedly resembles a philosophical statement from a university scholar and clearly not a folk song sung while crossing the prairie on horseback, advances in posthumanist thinking—although initially inspired by European thinkers, from Jacques Derrida to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari and from Jean-François Lyotard and Emmanuel Lévinas to Michel Foucault and Ludwig Wittgenstein—carry the signature brand of America.[11] In her book *When Species Meet*, for example, Donna Haraway seeks to recognize as a seminal stage the profound thoughts inspired in Derrida by his cat's gaze while he was naked in his bathroom:

> He came right to the edge of respect, of the move to *respecere*, but he was sidetracked by his textual canon of Western philosophy and literature and by his own linked worries about being naked in front of his cat.[12]

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In spite of limits that would have stopped even Derrida, and because of his respect for the Western philosophical canon and of Haraway's consequent criticism of him, she intones: "for those readings I and my people are permanently in his debt."[13]

Donna Haraway is a leading figure in animal and interspecies studies and an internationally celebrated scientist and philosophical leader of the global left who is deeply concerned by the future implications of environmental and gender issues for Western societies. She is nonetheless a committed American citizen who writes not only in her name, but also in the name of "her people" (who include nonhuman beings). A further assertion from what Wolfe calls her "central theoretical statement" can also be interpreted as a scientific manifesto, a militant credo, and a singular patriotic claim:

> By the late twentieth century in United States scientific culture, the boundary between human and animal is thoroughly breached. The last beachheads of uniqueness have been polluted, if not turned into amusement parks—language, tool, use, social behavior, mental events. Nothing really convincingly settles the separation of human and animal . . . Movements for animal rights are not irrational denials of human uniqueness; they are clear-sighted recognition of connection across the discredited breach of nature and culture.[14]

The trouble is not only gender—to paraphrase Judith Butler's famous book title[15]—but more broadly, political oppositions. While a transspecies preacher such as Haraway is proud of the rise of the "humanimalities" in her country, her own militant citizenship and writings, and the community of feeling and biological being that she shares with "companion species"[16]—including her dog and clearly claimed sex mate, called "Ms Cayenne Pepper"[17]—the bull breeders who have been our principal informants, although very conservative and nationalist, and even Trump supporters in some cases, also consider their cattle, and above all their best players in the arena, to have the status of relatives (although presumably not sex partners). Despite the vast social and cultural differences that divide rural cowboys from urban scholars, "humanimalism" appears to unite the two groups in a kind of animistic conception of nonhuman beings. Surprisingly, the most strictly opposed citizens from a political, geographical, ideological, gendered, and moral (and so on . . .) point of view are readily convinced, if for different reasons, that the boundary between human and animals has been "thoroughly breached." As Haraway observes:

> How much more promise is in the question, Can animals play? Or work? And even, can I learn to play with *this* cat? Can I, the philosopher, respond to an invitation or recognize one when it is offered? What if work and play, and not just pity, open up to when the possibility of mutual response, without names, is taken seriously as an everyday practice available to philosophy and science?[18]

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Whether in southwestern Europe, where we have conducted long-term fieldwork among bullfighting communities, or in America, cattle ranchers who are breeding bulls and horses for arena games, as well as the contestants, who very often live surrounded by many "companion species" (dogs, cats, horses, and of course cattle) in their ranch, define themselves as "animal lovers" and would answer Haraway's questions in the affirmative. A bull breeder, rodeo champion, or bullfighter might easily respond, "Yes, animals do play, they do work, and sure, I have learned my job from them, through mutual response, dialogue, and so on." Like the bio-anthropologist Barbara Smuts (quoted by Haraway), they often say, although in fewer words, that on the open range or in the arena, "closely interacting bodies tend to tell the truth," and the "truth and honesty of nonlinguistic embodied communication [that] depends on looking back and greeting significant others."[19] They even speak passionately, as does Cary Wolfe about nonhumans in general, about the subjectivity of their champion bulls, their minds, habits, tastes, and loves among the herd. We have lost count of the number of times we have heard similar words from our bull breeder informants.

More disturbing still, in an interesting discussion about animal experimentation laboratories, Donna Haraway, who is not only a philosopher but also holds a PhD in biology, far from radically condemning such practices, which are, like arena games, among animal rights activists' principal targets, pleads for human responsibility in the face of the act of killing:

> human beings must learn to kill responsibly. And to be killed responsibly, yearning for the capacity to respond and to recognize response, always with reasons but knowing there will never be sufficient reason. We can never do without technique, without calculation, without reasons, but these practices will never take us into that kind of open where multispecies responsibility is at stake. For that open, we will not cease to require a forgiveness we cannot exact. I do not think we can nurture living until we get better at facing killing. But also get better at dying instead of killing.[20]

This statement provoked a virulent debate between the author and her friend and colleague Sharon Ghamari-Tabrizi, who was deeply dismayed by Haraway's words.[21] It could almost have been a matador justifying the meaning of their profession, "to kill responsibly," "facing killing"—a form of commandment—and "to be killed responsibly"—a tragic (albeit supreme) honor for people who risk losing their lives every time they enter the arena. "Wounds are a bullfighter's medals," a matador we interviewed in Seville once told us. Those who have lost their lives "facing killing," including the celebrated Joselito, Manolete, or Paquirri, are thrust into the world of myth by aficionados.[22] Although the animal is not killed in American rodeo, particularly bucking bulls, its dramaturgy is similarly based on danger, implying that contestants risk being wounded or even killed by a horse or a bull. This is precisely what rodeo people mean when they refer to the truth of the physical interaction between human and nonhuman in the arena, as will be illustrated by our ethnography (Chapter 1).

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However, Haraway, Smuts, or Wolfe would all argue that bucking bull breeders, rodeo contestants, or worse, Spanish fighting bull breeders and bullfighters—the last defenders of the macho order—are brutally mistreating animals, which should be banned, or at least stigmatized. Beyond this hostility in principle, like Haraway, Cary Wolfe is sensitive to the complexities of gender and ontology matters when it comes to killing an animal in a socially supervised manner. This explains why he evaluates the ambiguity of a writer like Ernest Hemingway as marked by a passion for hunting, fishing, and bullfighting; Hemingway's contrasting portrayals of such pursuits, from his famous early novel *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) to a later, unfinished story, *The Garden of Eden*, question both the virility of aficionado circles and the legitimacy of killing a "noble animal."[23]

Even though—or because?—the killing of the animal in the arena is prohibited, California is a remarkable ethnographic field in which to observe the accumulation of paradoxes that we have witnessed during numerous rodeos, bloodless bullfights, and cattle ranching practices in the Central Valley or in the Sierra Nevada foothills, which details we have been allowed to report during seminars in coastal campuses. We were often invited to share our fieldwork in the UC Berkeley Ethnic Studies or Geography departments, the UCLA Center for the Study of International Migration, or the Chicano/Latino Research Center & Department of Anthropology at the University of California Santa Cruz. The latter is probably the most renowned site for interspecies studies, which was developed by the History of Consciousness, Anthropology, Feminist Studies and Cultural Studies departments, with particularly well-known contributions by Anna Tsing and Donna Haraway. Haraway, along with James Clifford and other colleagues and PhD students, honored us by attending our first guest seminar there in May 2009, thanks to a kind invitation from Prof. Olga Nájera Ramírez. In our French universities, two guest researchers presenting bull games and cattle ranching as a culture and not as barbarity to an assembly of local researchers, including fierce defenders of animal rights movements—which are, for the most part, Haraway's enthusiasts—would have inevitably incited heated debate, if not efforts to impede reasonable discussion. In Santa Cruz, however, we were able to discern the importance of these topics to our prestigious colleagues and their students, despite the ideological and sociocultural gap separating them from cowboys, Mexican vaqueros, Portuguese American bullfighters, bull breeders, and Anglo-American bullfighting fans and all that they represent. These experiences on California campuses were enriching for us. In fact, they became significant elements of our ethnographic study by providing insights into the fascinating, unique social contrasts that can be observed in American culture by comparison to Europe.

Naturally, we make no claims of an irenic relationship between social classes in California or elsewhere in the US, such as urban intellectuals and rural cattlemen, who use to view each other with mutual disdain. Popular habits are not always welcoming to distinguished scholars—as Haraway suggests, for instance, when she ironically detects, as we have seen in a precedent quotation, the "last beachheads of

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uniqueness" in amusement parks. On the other hand, campuses might be negatively viewed by inhabitants of the rural hinterlands. As a Porterville cowboy once observed worriedly, as we were leaving his ranch for a seminar at Berkeley: "You're going to Berkeley? Beware, they're all environmentalists there . . ." In California, the boundary between humans and animals may have been breached, but it remains solid between those who have opened the breaches, each in their own way, whether theoretically on campuses or by interacting daily with cattle and horses on the open range.

Things became still more complex when we encountered Eric Mills, a Californian animal rights activist and head of the Oakland association Action for Animals, whose primary focus at the time was arena games—rodeos and bullfights. The first thing that struck us was that, compared to his French counterparts, Eric possessed extensive technical knowledge of the different bull games held in California and even Spanish corrida (he even lent us some valuable books on these subjects). He was also careful not to condemn such pursuits as a whole, preferring to weigh their characteristics relatively, classifying them from the least to the most condemnable and attempting to focus on improving the treatment of the animals. Because we first met him at a Black Cowboy rodeo at Oakland's Rowell Ranch, he presented himself as an intellectual, a gay and environmentalist militant, thus placing himself on the political left. Like Donna Haraway, he also revealed a patriotic flame, noting that although he had no appreciation for American rodeo as a national tradition, he viewed Mexican rodeos and Portuguese bullfights as excessively brutal for the animals, as well as distinctly un-American. Paradoxically, he also observed that he did not understand why some of his gay and lesbian friends were so fond of organizing "hot rodeos"; he wondered how they could appreciate such a "macho exercise of domination."[24] However, just as LGBTQ+ activists may love and practice rodeo, and take pride in their identity, rodeo girls, although marginalized in the rodeo world, are quite often driven by a spirit of feminist empowerment, in the United States as well as in Mexico.[25] We will return to this observation later, but it is already clear that gender, nationalism, and "humanimalism" can be highly complex factors with respect to California's bull games.

Rurality and Urbanity: The Dialectical Territory of a Reversible America

Our previous observations suggest the potential value of bringing the anthropological gaze to bear on arena games in America's variegated cultural landscape. Ours is a comparative approach with a multifocal perspective that emphasizes both sport and spectacle, human and animal performers, breeders and their animals, and that considers the development of both the bull and horse craze (among cowboys, vaqueros, and aficionados) and "humanimalism" (among scholars and animal care militants) in California.[26] This book is grounded in a dual ethno-geographic approach that provides an in-depth analysis of the questions that our preliminary remarks raise: Why are bull sports so widespread in the United States, and particularly in California, the

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"promised land" of spectacles for the masses, but also of interspecies and posthumanist studies and animal rights activism? Why is this phenomenon, which might seem to be a bizarre throwback to some sort of Hispanic anachronism, found in such a wide variety of forms across the territorial complexity of the state? As we have approached these questions as objectively as possible, we have often faced a number of intriguing paradoxes, beginning with the geographical contrasts of the Golden State, torn between wilderness, pastoralism, intensive agriculture, and megacities.

Although the different abovementioned permutations can be found in pockets of other western states, they are practiced far more widely in California. An equally wide variety of bull sports can be found in Texas, the central hub for classic American rodeo. Unlike the Portuguese in California, however, no specific Texas communities have specific rights to organize bullfights. As a result, compared to California, bloodless bullfights are held with far less frequency in Texas.

From a superficial point of view, this little-known dimension of California could easily be reduced to a mere side-effect of the Golden State's extraordinary economic and cultural attractiveness, an environment conducive to flourishing community-based freedoms. This explanation is based on a naive geographical determinism, however, that implies that California's territory—the impassable West, bounded by the southern border and the ocean—was somehow predestined to embrace a wide range of practices. It is almost as though the multitude of alternative forms and expressions of identity on display in the bullring fit "naturally" with the contrasts of the pronounced diversity of the geographical environment of California, from the Central Valley, with its agricultural expanses, the Coast Ranges, and the Sierra Nevada foothills to the wild majesty of the national parks, the "leisure desert" of Palm Springs (and, not far away, Las Vegas), and the urban centers of the San Francisco Bay Area and the urban sprawl of Los Angeles.

Amid the scenic and cultural variety of California bull sports and cattle ranches, Los Angeles and its agglomeration present the most striking picture. Contrary to received views about a folklore from the past, it is, in fact, in the midst of the urban maelstrom that we find most of the sport's alternative forms, which are classic American rodeo, Black Cowboys rodeo, Mexican *charreada* and *jaripeo*, and Portuguese bullfight, or *tourada*. Far from conjuring bullfight imagery (which travel agencies normally project onto Seville or Madrid), the City of Angels is well known as the mythical setting for 1940s and 1950s film noir and TV detective series. A more realistic view considers the excesses and extravagance of this megalopolis that exploded in the Far West, its unbridled expansion, heightened socio-spatial segregation, heightened police activity, growing unemployment, racism, the proliferation of homelessness in the old center, amid the faded splendor of its art-deco buildings, rising ecological risks, and a convoluted web of drugs, violence, and other social ills beneath a veneer of urbanity. According to the critical sociologist Mike Davis, the transformations of Los Angeles have dashed the hopes of the American dream embodied by California.[27] The reversal of utopia as a civilizing force, however, that

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Davis detects through his reading of Los Angeles—the irrepressible crisis of growth that stirs up demons of self-destruction and the biblical imagery of Babel—is part of a specifically Californian phenomenon: the unrivaled coexistence of the antithetical figures of the spectacle of the self and the spectacle of the other. Rather than the stigma of postmodernist disintegration, the result is a fundamental structure in which forms of expression separated by contradictory claims to identity, far from excluding each other, reinforce each other's uniqueness as they come into contact. This may partly explain why California—with its gigantic offshoot, Los Angeles, and its frenzied satellite, Las Vegas—is the area offering the greatest diversity of bull sports in the world, standing, together with Mexico, as the only region where the two best-known, opposing forms coexist as a matter of course: bullfighting (without, in this case, causing injury to the animal) and classic American rodeo.

At the heart of this society of artifice, sports pitting man against beast find fertile ground despite the hostility of animal rights groups, however radical or mediatized. The system of spectacle in California, by virtue of its capacity to stage its own history and contradictions, has a ripple effect found nowhere else. Whatever falls under its figurative spotlight—from the bullfighter's costume to the silhouette of John Wayne—allows the show of American contemplation to go on (and on), even when it runs afoul of prevailing moral values. It is through these oppositional terms (Hispanic bullfighting/Anglo-American rodeo, white rodeo/Black rodeo, straight rodeo/gay rodeo, US rodeos/Mexican rodeos, Native American cowboys) and paradoxes (scholarly posthumanism/animal rights activism, legally protected bloodless Portuguese bullfights) that California, a land in which the contrast between wilderness and hyper-modernism has always been a source of cinematic inspiration, captures the images of a reversible America.

The Wild West: A Universalist Mythology Born from the Margins of Civilization

Myth is an entirely localized object because it recounts, in forms that require the work of an ethnologist to decipher their meaning, the origins of an ethnic group and its distinction from the natural environment in which it is embedded. The genius of American spectacle lies in having universalized the narrative of the confrontation between civilization and wilderness, a narrative recognizable throughout the world (which is also what makes it hugely profitable).[28] The resulting contrast corresponds to the characteristics of a territory divided between cities—themselves carved into a controlled urban block design affording a place for clustered communities, from the ghetto to the ethnic retail neighborhood—and the vast expanses that remain virtually untouched, evoking the original freedom fantasized by the pioneers of the West.

The Western myth exhibits the primordial duality of nature and culture, celebrating the horse-riding pioneer's conquest of an endless wilderness of plains, prairies, and mountains as far as the eye can see—a geographic area that is both the com-

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plete opposite of urban US civilization and the land most closely associated with the American dream, as propagated by US civilization primarily through spectacle and entertainment. The vast project of conquering an untamed wilderness and making it conform to divine will—given that the white Puritan male, productive and immune to worldly frivolities, saw it as his mission to do the will of God—led to the overdevelopment of this same nature in a show of unbridled sensuality and consumeristic hedonism. The opposition of differences and the violence that it engenders through the staging of this drama and its resolution—like the resurgence of a Greek tragedy in which the godly heroes are Hollywood actors and the archetypes they embody—create a modern cosmology that made the wild, and the otherness onto which it is projected, simultaneously into the enemy and a social foundation. This is the basis for an agonistic social system in which races, classes, and cultures are opposed by virtue of a polarity recognized by all precisely because it is as spectacular as possible, between the hyper-civilization of cities on the east and west coasts and the hyper-wildness of the vast spaces of the West, between the superhumanity of stars and the super-animality of supposedly wild beasts.

The inherent ambiguity of America—a land that has impressed outside observers since the days of the great writer-travelers such as Chateaubriand, Tocqueville, and Dickens—is necessarily concentrated in the arena. Rodeo, a national spectacle that might defy common sense because it exploits the ferocity of animals confronted by man, derives from a Hispanic border influence that was historically stigmatized in the United States. As noted, the sport's name derives from the Spanish word *rodeo*, translated as "roundup" by America's western pioneers—that is, the act of encircling cattle to guide them, bring them under control, and brand them with a hot iron or lead them to slaughter. Like the classic Spanish corrida, the rodeo show is an adaptation of vaquero games once associated with these activities. It became traditional in the United States following the 1848 American annexation of the northernmost half of Mexico's territory, which corresponds to the present-day states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, and California (which then included Utah, Nevada, and Colorado). The takeover was completed by the Gadsden Purchase in 1853, corresponding to a strip of land along the borders of present-day Arizona and part of New Mexico. Before the imposition of US laws, Mexican rodeos were inseparable from the cattle raising and bullfighting cultures imported to the New World in the sixteenth century by the Spanish and adapted to the American continent by Native American and mestizo herdsmen. As such, they formed the basis of the western know-how that would later fire the American imagination and its insatiable appetite for spectacle.

With the nineteenth-century conquest of the West, however, the animal protectionist ideology that originated in England and among the Puritans of the American northeast reached these wild lands with such force that it led to the prohibition of corridas in which the bull was killed, a common practice, particularly during Catholic festivals. The ideological split between the bullfighting "barbarity" of the Mexicans along with Native American "savagery" and the Protestant civilization that had

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conquered the American West was thus reinforced. As with all border conflicts that originate in military conflict and subsequent annexation, the radical opposition between Americans and Mexicans was fueled by traumas from the mythology of history, a genre equally popular on both sides of the border. On the one hand, the loss of half their national territory after the defeat of 1848 left Mexican patriots with a deep bitterness that persists to this day. On the other, American patriots saw the infamous massacre of Anglo-Texan insurgents at Fort Alamo in 1836 by General Santa Anna's troops as a sign of the baseness that supposedly characterized the civilization of their historic foes. As a vehicle for this prejudice, this historical narrative cast bullfighting in the same vein as the atrocities committed by Mexican troops. Thus, the *Degüello* (literally, "throat-slitting"), a trumpet call inherited from the colonial cavalry that, according to legend, was sounded by order of Santa Anna at the siege of the Alamo to indicate that not a single enemy was to be left alive, was also played at corridas to announce the death of the bull.[29] Hollywood's portrayal of this national American tragedy, an episode brought to the screen many times, has effectively conveyed the dark emotionality associated with the tune. As early as the nineteenth century, however, before motion pictures began to project images of the "birth of a nation," the hobo storytellers and songsters who enlivened the evenings in pioneer and gold mining camps, on Appalachian and Midwestern farms, and in the gambling halls of Kansas cow towns became firsthand witnesses to the formidable violence that prevailed as US society approached its westernmost limits. Through oral tradition, hobos laid the foundations of an entire mythology. Nonetheless, the cowboys' involvement in this violence did not prevent them from maintaining close, direct, and enduring relationships with cultures that were inherently other such as Mexicans and Native Americans. Cattle and horses were at the heart of this unique fusion of frontier antagonisms that gave America its heroes.

The Western Frontier, from Roaming Cattle to American Teleology

As the prime mover of the colonization of the Americas beginning in the sixteenth century, cattle and horses of Iberian origin were crucial keys to taming the wilderness, the epicenter of which became the American West. This phenomenon is partly due to ethological factors. If they are not kept in enclosures, horses and cattle are inherently invasive, and wherever natural resources such as water and grass are available, they are able to subsist and reproduce by themselves. When cattle are released into a territory with unlimited pasture, their keepers can only control them at localized points, on horseback, with no certainty of recovering an entire herd. As a result, a mass phenomenon of *marronnage*—the return of cattle to a wild state—took place in the Americas. The Hispanic system of extensive livestock breeding on unenclosed colonial estancias, a model driven by territorial conquest at the lowest possible cost, was conducive to such practices. However, whereas Indigenous farmers in Mexico and the Andean plateaus had to suffer these invasions and the consequent damage

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to their food crops, the nomadic tribes to the north of New Spain who lived near the estancias quickly turned the situation to their advantage by adopting the horse and raiding the settlers' herds. Hollywood imagery later enabled them to become the quintessential horsemen in the eyes of the world.

When the Anglo-Americans set out on their own conquest of the West, they brought with them a model of agrarian civilization that was radically opposed to the Hispanic estancia and the drift toward the wilds that its open form implied. This new model was the enclosed farm, as opposed to shared pasturage, which laid the infrastructural foundations of early capitalism.[30] Under this arrangement, herds were kept as close to their owners as possible and stabled in the winter, which in turn demanded intensive production of fodder and grain to feed both cattle and humans. The Hispanic embodiment of the system established a violent, meta-tauromachian relationship with animals that men pursued across wild expanses and captured in an endlessly repeated struggle, submitting them to their will. Instead, the Anglo-American system tended toward a peaceful, even familial, relationship with the animals that plowed the fields and provided man with milk. For the typical WASP (white Anglo-Saxon Protestant) farmer, this closer relationship was a condition for the conversion of humanity to Christian civilization.

In the nineteenth century, these two contradictory approaches to animality and, by extension, to nature according to its classical image, coincided in the new promised land of the West, simultaneously confronting and enriching each other. This encounter eventually shaped the course of US history through the concept of the frontier, the limit that civilization was called upon to cross in order to transform virgin nature according to its own image. But the American farmer faced two wicked forces who threatened to thwart this heroic enterprise: Mexicans, who were seen as cruel, barbaric, profligate, and icon-worshippers, and Native Americans, who were relegated to the status of wild animals. At the center of this antagonism was the cowboy—fundamentally white, the Black presence effaced by the typical Western narrative and classic Hollywood movie—who traced cattle trails through the vastness of the Great Plains toward the cities established by the pioneers. This intermediate character, living on the margins of society, on the road between wilderness and civilization, earned all of the attributes of a mythical figure. Of course, the dramatic structure of the Western narrative originates with this figure, as does the structure of rodeo shows, which, transforming the cowboy's struggle to bring roving cattle back from the wilds and drive them toward the enclosed bosom of civilization into a competitive sport, routinely reenacts the American conception of divine creation.

Even though like cinema, rodeo played a part in transmitting nationalistic propaganda permeated with Christian morals—because at the forefront of this drama the cowboy must defeat the savagery of the animals, as well as the men—it could not conceal the violence that accompanied this confrontation. Indeed, rodeo has made violence the defining principle of competition and of its value as entertainment. Its

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violence illustrates the Saussurean principle of alteration—the transformation of the self into its other. As the founding violence in the history of the frontier, it characterizes the Hispanic system of extensive livestock breeding and marks the irreducible difference between that system and Anglo-American models of farming, one of whose ideological consequences, promoted by the Puritan reading of the Bible, is compassion toward animals that are useful to man, and, by extension, toward animals in general.[31]

According to this vision, the magnitude of the contradiction is clear: how did extensive livestock breeding and the Western tradition, of Hispano-Mexican origin, become such widespread symbols of Anglo-American civilization? Through rodeo shows and Hollywood movies, the alterity found on the frontier came to be reversed. In movies, the power of the cowboy, a national hero, is expressed in his mastery of a violent relationship toward wild animality—a relationship that the Mexican vaquero and the Indigenous hunter-warrior were actually the first to experience, however much the Anglo-American world might seek to deny this unmentionable lineage. The dominant mentality frames the West as a mission territory conquered from the foul influences of savagery, which the Mexican and the Native American are viewed as embodying. In support of this patriotic spirit of conquest, Frederick Jackson Turner presented a paper combining history and myth at a meeting of the American Historical Association in 1893, during the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The text, titled "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," was published at a time when progress westward had ended with the depletion of the frontier—the division between populated, civilized regions and the wild, virgin lands that await development. This movement forged the American character and territory, giving the nation its values of energy, individualism, democracy, and liberation from Europe.[32] In the collective imagination, the West, and the conquest of the West, remain closely tied to the figure of the cowboy. In Turner's thesis, however, the great hero was not the cowboy, but the farmer, the settler grappling with the wilderness to clear and cultivate the land, who best embodied the values of the nascent nation. In that respect, as Philippe Jacquin remarks, "far from being a uniquely American phenomenon, the westward expansion of the republic of the United States, from its very outset, resembles the colonial project wrought by the European powers." When the editor of the *New York Tribune*, Horace Greeley, issued his famous exhortation in 1853, "Go West, young man, and grow up with the country!" his idea was to convert some of the workers and the unemployed in the East into small landholders, in accord with the spirit of the republic's founding fathers. For Turner, the farmer is the last link in this evolution over time, in the advance of the boundaries of colonization—the true frontier of Americanization—from east to west. Turner summarizes this ideology of conquest in a lyrical passage:

> Stand at Cumberland Gap and watch the procession of civilization, marching single file—the buffalo following the trail to salt springs, the In-

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> dian, the fur-trader and hunter, the cattle-raiser, the pioneer farmer—and the frontier has passed by.[33]

Note that the Cumberland Gap is in the Appalachians, from which it was still a long way to the Mississippi, the Great Plains, and the Far West, which reserved myriad surprises for the pioneers, including the rigors of distance and aridity, that would disrupt the stately order extolled by Turner.[34] Note, too, that the pioneer comes last in Turner's line, consummating the inauguration of the nation. Conversely, this position casts the suspicion of un-Americanness, or an Americanness not yet complete, on the previous members of the group, the first to be submerged in the wilderness. Similarly, it highlights one of the essential ambiguities of American identity, forged through contact with a wild nature that simultaneously represents a destructive and a regenerative force. The cattle raisers, given the diversity of their actual ethnic origins, by contrast with the pseudo-historical reconstruction of an original white Anglo-American Protestant cowboy, and their constant contact with wilderness, fully embody this ambiguity.

In other words, the Western culture of extensive cattle raising and rodeo is difficult to reconcile with the patriotic ideology of the frontier, because it is in fact indebted to the Hispano-Indigenous past that preceded the conquest of the West, as argued by revisionist histories of the subject.[35] More generally, in a spirit of critical reflexivity that is also a characteristic of US culture, authors associated with the New Western History movement deconstructed the Turnerian myth.[36] Regardless of the terms used (Spanish borderlands, Spanish borderland frontier, or Spanish frontier), the notion of "frontier" itself now alludes to the borderlands of the Southwest, which were Native American, Spanish, and then Mexican before they were appropriated by the United States.[37]

Although contemporary movements at North American universities have justly rehabilitated the contributions of cultures marginalized by the conquest of the West, current approaches to the philosophy and anthropology of nonhuman beings are rethinking the progressive nature of civilization on these same campuses. But is this really an entirely novel development? The most classic anthropology—by Lewis H. Morgan (1868), in *The American Beaver and his Work* (whose title implies an anthropomorphism reminiscent of "humanimalism" theories), Frank H. Cushing (1891), with his subtle understanding of the Zuni system of classifying clans, species, and natural phenomenon, and later, the theoretical achievements of Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown (1930), Edward E. Evans-Pritchard (1937), and Claude Lévi-Strauss (1962), to name but a few principal masters—was already firmly focused on the nonhuman world. As Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster noted in an excellent review article on the subject, even if current multispecies ethnography evolves into a "new genre of writing and mode of research," the classics "grew out of long-standing interests in anthropology with systems of animal classification."[38] Expressing fascination with beavers' dam construction as a remarkable social achievement, Morgan was clearly

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prepared to "follow related logics of remaking artwork in nonhuman nature."[39] The grandfather of structural anthropology was deeply concerned with animals' "mode of life" and "mutual relations":

> Each animal is endowed with a living, and, also, with a thinking principle, the manifestations of each of which are not less important and instructive than the mechanism of the material frames in which they reside.[40]

As Daniel N. Moses acutely observes, Morgan's book "can be considered a study of beaver culture. . . . Underlying Morgan's project was a particular understanding of intelligence and the role that it placed in the social life of both humans and 'mutes.'"[41] What Morgan called "mutes" are beings who communicate without an articulated language,[42] in other words, what Haraway calls "non-verbal communication."

Morgan even went so far as to acknowledge that "mutes" possessed a "moral sense," a position that led him, as a pious Calvinist and jurist, to considerations that are surprisingly in tune with current posthumanist and environmentalist discourse:

> the Great Author of existence . . . designed the happiness of the least endowed of all his creatures as completely as He did the happiness of Man. . . . an arrest of the progress of the human race can alone prevent the dismemberment and destruction of a large portion of the animal kingdom.[43]

As Moses expresses it, the contradiction between such a statement and Morgan's actual socioeconomic status as a trained capitalist who invested in the highly unecological iron and railroad industries, as well as his dogmatic evolutionist teleology, is particularly striking. Meanwhile, Morgan did not exclude animals from progress. In addition to beavers, bees and ants could also "teach their offspring," accumulating knowledge and progressing through the generations.[44] In parallel, for him, human progress should also be understood in an alimentary sense. If his dear friends and firsthand informants, the Iroquois, enjoyed eating meat so much, it was because according to his celebrated evolutionist frame, they were still close to the first step of humanity's global history—"probably an enlightened moral sense would teach us to abstain entirely from animal food,"[45] and if God made us omnivorous, we should exercise this right "with reason and forbearance."

> When we claim that the bear was made for man's food, we forget that man was just as much made to be food to the bear; and that our right to eat the bear rests upon no higher sanction, than his co-equal right to feast upon our flesh if he overcomes in battle.[46]

This theological exegesis, a combination of naturalistic (Darwin's influence is noticeable in the last quotation), anthropological, and moral arguments, inevitably calls to mind the current debate in posthumanist studies and the ontological turn, primarily perspectivism. Morgan's American bear and "his work" strikingly resemble Haraway's

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"natureculture" philosophy as well as Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's Amazonian predator.[47] As the well-known Brazilian anthropologist observed in an often-cited passage:

> Typically, in normal conditions, humans see humans as humans and animals as animals; as to spirits, to see these usually invisible beings is a sure sign that the "conditions" are not normal. Animals (predators) and spirits, however, see humans as animals (as prey), to the same extent that animals (as prey) see humans as spirits or as animals (predators). By the same token, animals and spirits see themselves as humans: they perceive themselves as (or become) anthropomorphic beings when they are in their own houses or villages and they experience their own habits and characteristics in the form of culture—they see their food as human food (jaguars see blood as manioc beer, vultures see the maggots in rotting meat as grilled fish etc.), they see their bodily attributes (fur, feathers, claws, beaks) as body decorations or cultural instruments, they see their social system as organised [*sic*] in the same way as human institutions are (with chiefs, shamans, ceremonies, exogamous moieties etc.).[48]

Could this central aspect of Viveiros's "perspectivist manifesto" not be considered an amplified continuation of Morgan's anthropomorphic and theological conception of the (social) animal kingdom? Donna Haraway herself, even if she is a Catholic in her uniquely subversive way, is not far from Morgan's mystical interpretation of Darwin's human–nonhuman continuities:

> Singular and plural, species resonate with the tones of logical types, of the relentlessly specific, of stamped coin, of the real presence in the Catholic Eucharist, of Darwinian kinds, of sf aliens, and of much else. Species, like the body, are internally oxymoronic, full of their own others, full of messmates, of companions.[49]

With its professed goal of dissolving the boundaries between man and animal in favor of a single community of "humans and other animals," the posthumanist movement generally precludes traditions such as bull sports and hunting, although not without ambiguities, as we have already seen.[50] A frontier is once again sensed, in the sense intended by Turner. The perspective of a new global frontier to conquer authorizes a return that—coming from scholars driven by progressive ideals and highly relativistic ambitions—is paradoxical, to say the least: it is the perspective of an antiquated evolutionism, under Morgan's own auspices, whereby the "barbarians," who still believe in human exceptionalism, are enjoined to yield to progress and the course of history. Moses has insightfully analyzed the relationship between the evolutionary morality promoted by Morgan—progress based on the lessons of nonhuman beings and "primitive" sociological holism—and contemporary ecological-alter-globalist ethics.[51] As he states:

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> People in developed—or "overdeveloped"—countries and in developing countries are exploring what it might mean to be properly developed . . . . As Morgan would expect, those who look to the future must draw on the past. Across the United States . . . "progressive" people are reviving republican traditions of small-scale "community supported" (often organic) agriculture. People from across the political spectrum are embracing the traditional conservative emphasis on place, on craft, on community. This is reflected in how people consume—"buy local," "fair trade"—and on how they work together as reinvigorated citizens. At the same time, the definitions and relations of family and property, the shapes of human community, are in a state of radical flux . . . Thrown into the future, individuals in developed (overdeveloped) countries seek out traditional wisdom from around the world.[52]

There would certainly be much to be gained by developing, in another work, an analysis of the structure of an anthropological alternativist ideology, torn between hyper-primitivism and hyper-progressivism (as well as a certain patriotism), originating in American academic circles from the nineteenth century to the present day, from evolutionism to the ontological turn, perspectivism and the new ideals of a globalized ecological community of human and nonhuman beings. For the moment, to stay in tune with our topic, let us content ourselves with recognizing, through this analysis, that the ideological appeal of the "old frontier" thus continues to function so powerfully that it appears to be assembling claims as apparently opposed as the colonialist purposes of nineteenth-century evolutionists and the goals of twentieth-century posthumanist—and of course decolonial-deconstructivist—theorists. In fact, beyond the irreducible ideological gulf between them, evolutionism, posthumanism, and rodeo and bullfighting cultures appear to be consistent with the same "cattle ranching complex" as the United States' historical creation of the categories of the savage (the Indian, the wilderness, the stray cattle turned aggressive), domesticity (the farmer, and from his privatized plot of land, the promise of the American way of life "coming soon"), and successive interbreeding creatures (with Morgan playing Indian with his university mates and admiring the culture of beaver, Haraway and companion species wandering into the UC Santa Cruz campus woods, or bucking bulls' or *toros bravos*' owners raising "wild animals," considered to be metahumans, for the urban spectacle).

The Cocktail Mix of a Reversible America: Cultural Hybrids, Interspecies Relationship, Spectacles of Danger, and Clownery

Among the terms of the ethno-geographic and historical reality that concerns us here, the frontier appears not as a more or less imagined margin separating civilization from savagery, but rather as an ideational and material space of technical transforma-

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tions, intermixtures, hybridizations, and connections in which the peripheral powers supposedly subsumed by the construction of the American nation are recreated. The frontier is not, then, the ultimate conquest of American imperialism, but instead the place where the groups that shaped the West pursue their struggle in hopes of turning its development to their favor by joining the communitarian networks of a nation, so strange to the non-American eye.[53]

Historically, the landscape of the colonial frontier of the originally Hispanic and later Anglo-American Southwest has been shaped by what historian Alfred Crosby called "ecological imperialism."[54] Cultivated plants, weeds, and domesticated animals, species formerly unknown on the continent, have irreversibly transformed America.[55] More than elsewhere, the West was where the cattle ranching complex took place, from the moment when the major Spanish domestic animals were brought by the Catholic missions. Beef cattle and horses returned to the wild and mingled with local fauna in a kind of interspecies encounter, struggling for life along with the native big grazers such as deer, elk, and bison and against predators such as cougars and bears. Native American hunters adopted the new animals that escaped from colonists, in turn becoming skilled horsemen and, in some cases, highly esteemed cowboys. This cultural revolution, thoroughly examined by generations of American scholars,[56] opened the way to a complex natural–cultural hybridization and a reconfiguration of zoological classifications. Because horse and cattle became feral on the open range, like some of the emblematic cereals from the European "Neolithic Revolution" such as rye and oats, a concept-limit of domestication developed in which European species were viewed with reference to their native herbivorous counterparts, principally deer and bison, and became perceived as agents of transformation.[57] Amerindian peoples drove a good deal of the process, successfully adapting their big game hunting techniques from a practical and conceptual point of view to capture and manage European animals and to manage pastureland definitively transformed by invasive European plants.[58] The native people of the West, like their Mexican counterparts, the Huichol, with whom we have also worked,[59] shared "ideas about animals [that] are not a static or finished construction," but are "subject to revision and elaboration through the intellectual activities of human actors," which gives them an "experience of the world," as William Merrill noted for the Raramuri people.[60] Mestizo vaqueros and Anglo- and Black cowboys followed their example, which represented the optimal technical approach for running cattle in areas as hostile as the steppes, deserts, or mountains of the West. The intercultural melting pot simultaneously constituted an interspecies melting pot, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 3 of this book. The Western frontier's "natureculture"—to paraphrase Haraway—opened the way to a series of transformations that challenged the standard Euro-American boundary between the wild and the civilized.[61]

The pastoralism of the savage, or culture of the savage, that resulted from "biological imperialism" had the corollary of playing with the savage and with lethal danger, and thus with fate, that is, the guiding principle of rodeo and bullfighting folklores

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that gave rise to arena spectacles. As a dramatization of the primary relation of domestication—when a human fights the animal with which they also establish a social relationship—rodeo and bullfighting exalt this encounter as the moment when "human and nonhuman are entangled, coproducing one another," to use Hartigan's brilliant expression.[62] Meanwhile, after the Conquest of the West, Spanish bullfighting was rejected north of the Mexican border, and the American spectacle of rodeo owed its distinctive features to both Hispanic and Anglo-American traditions, developing a show business as structured as it is lucrative and resulting in the rationalization of the rodeo animal breeding system based only on an idealized image of wilderness.

Beyond its Spaniard origins, nineteenth-century Anglo-American circus was clearly another prominent influence on modern rodeo. One instantly thinks of William Cody's *Buffalo Bill's Wild West* as a source, an insight that we explore, with support from related historical literature.[63] There is another seminally important character in these developments: the clown. A trickster, as it is in Amerindian folklore, from which they are partially derived, the rodeo clown is also a comic transgressor in the area and the savior of the dismounted bull rider's life. Somewhere between human and animal, adults and children, laughter and danger, life and death, and violence and resolution, the rodeo clown is a genuine intermediary. He incarnates every paradox that we examine here, as indicated by his classical denomination: the "bullfighter," that is, through direct reference to Spanish corrida. An agent of norm-reversal, the rodeo clown enacts the return of the repressed Spanish and Native origins of the American nation. Alongside the cowboy and the bullfighter, they constitute a key element of the spectacular achievement of this nation, torn between the quest for a hyper-civilized lifestyle and the irrepressible nostalgia for the wild, and representing both, although in opposite ways, thereby reconciling with "humanimalism."

Taurine California: From Local Land to Universal Image

One of the purposes of this book is to examine the cultural diversity of the frontier while also presenting a counterpoint to the animal ethics of the wider society in order to illustrate the evolution of extensive cattle raising and bull sports as identity appropriation. This is a process that in turn defines the relationship between the national territory and its margins, as though resurrecting the conquest of the West. In this sense, California is examined in its local and transborder dimensions as the terrain on which diverse types of bull sports attest to the internal organization of differential properties and their relation to the surrounding spaces. Arena games thus produce and reproduce original contrasting cultures as they evolved on Californian soil. In this respect, the pairing of the bull and horse, whose symbolic power traverses intercommunity differences, can be envisioned as a cultural (re)generator.

To explore this process, our multisited ethnography centered on animals draws on two complementary epistemological models, one synchronic and the other diachronic. The intention behind the synchronic dimension is to describe the structures

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of correlations and oppositions associated with the different technical ways of conceiving not only bullring events—from the rodeo to the corrida—but also specialized cattle raising (Chapters 1 and 2). The ethno-geography of cattle raising practices implies a focus on the territories where the animals live, and the subsequent relationships with the environments and plant species that are palatable to them and the kinds of fodder available to sustain herds, particularly under the harsh conditions of the California summer drought. As we shall see, the marginality of these territories in a state where good land and good hay are expensive, if not unaffordable, imposes on the raisers a do-it-yourself approach that presupposes a good knowledge of the ecology of the margins in the Californian nature, profoundly transformed since the first wave of colonization. This sense of adaptation also relies on a network of mutual aid and livestock exchanges, as well as clever tricks to optimize the use of waste from the surrounding intensive agriculture. Our observation of California's formidable diversity in bull games and cattle ranching supports a structural analysis that reveals hierarchical categories that ranching people and arena performers project onto the animals with whom they live and identify. Through their sense of place and subtle management of multispecies relations, these animals, men, and women are the mediators of a nonhuman world.[64]

Our approach to human–nonhuman relationships seeks to establish and sustain the geographic and cultural boundaries between groups and between the values at stake, particularly with respect to the degree of violence that is acceptable. In an anthropological vein, this model sheds light on the terms of an animalist controversy that must, to some extent, take into account the distinctions specific to the realm of bull sports. In parallel fashion, bull sports and cattle raising practices inevitably define themselves with reference to an animal rights ideology that stigmatizes them. We examine how these rifts and coalitions, and the paradoxes that arise from them, produce the contrasts and routes of circulation that characterize California's borderlands and social organization.

The second focus of our inquiry is rooted in history (Chapter 3). We retrace the genesis of the ethno-geographic system of bull sports in California in order to elicit, over the long term and in view of the broader American context, a paradigm of the culture of the West, ideologically the product of Anglo-American imperialism but materially produced by cultures on its margins—those that arrived first (Native Americans and Hispano-Mexicans) and that were inspired by the intellectually powerful entanglement of nonhuman species that fortuitously provoked colonization. Thus, against the grain of transnational and postcolonial approaches to globalization that readily resolve local multicultural complexity by dispersing origins, subsumed by infinite combinations of globalized territories stripped of their specificities and subject to the inextricable deconstructions of a supposed "postmodernism," we rely on classical dialectics to explore a reversible America—a nation capable of producing and reproducing itself through the alterities in opposition to which it was first built. This approach offers an empirical basis that enables us to explain an aspect of America

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that appears enigmatic to Europeans: the duality of national identity, encompassing at once the Union and the marginal communities that constitute it—a communitarian patriotism, as it were, that superimposes a solid national entity onto a fragmented social body.[65]

California, the iconic frontier, concentrates the divisions in the American West between the megalopolis, regions of intensive agriculture, semiarid pasturelands, and wilderness on a relatively reduced scale. Its heterogeneous demography, notable for the continued growth of populations of Mexican origin, clearly lends itself to separation into communities with their own distinct sense of identity. However, on closer examination of the land and its people, and amid the fracture lines of ethnic and sociocultural differences, an implicit mode of coalition cements US national identity. In one way or another, the environments that we studied, beyond the deep incompatibilities that might otherwise separate them (white/Black, white/Native American, Anglo/Iberian, straight/gay, etc.), all spoke a kind of lingua franca (although not exempt from controversies and divisive terms), namely, that of "wild cattle" and their representation in the arena. This common language can be understood by attending to the intercommunity correspondences and collaboration networks that characterize the economy of bull sports and cattle raising, the ways of life and the methods that surround them, and strategies of territorial appropriation whose meaning refers to the tumultuous history of the emergence and development of this economy in California.

From a general perspective, we argue that what unites the diverse actors with whom we interacted is the privileged relationship with an idealized wildness, expressed in the bullring and the pasture by livestock in the form of both cattle and horses. This relation bears witness to the profound reminiscence of both Amerindian and Hispano-Mexican cultures on the western frontier, cultures that American civilization not only failed to quash in its hegemonic and moralistic enterprise but indeed relies upon in order to exist as such, through a Western folklore that it upholds as a symbol of its greatness. Our comparative analysis of the technologies, economy, and ethics of livestock breeding and sports will take on its full meaning, beyond the different communitarian conceptions, within the cultural context that gave rise to these practices: representation through spectacle, a spectacle whose meaning can always be reversed, either in a serious manner, by the cultural singularity of each community involved, or parodically, by the clown. In this regard, a final detour through the world of movies is needed, given that Hollywood made cowboys into its most celebrated—and profitable—character. The complexity of the cowboy as a national hero cast in the mold of the country's own adversaries, the Mexican and the Native American, defines the ambiguity of US civilization in general (and that of California in particular), which emerges, on screen as in the arena, as the height of paradox: the association of mortal danger and burlesque, or the strange exaltation of disaster scenarios.

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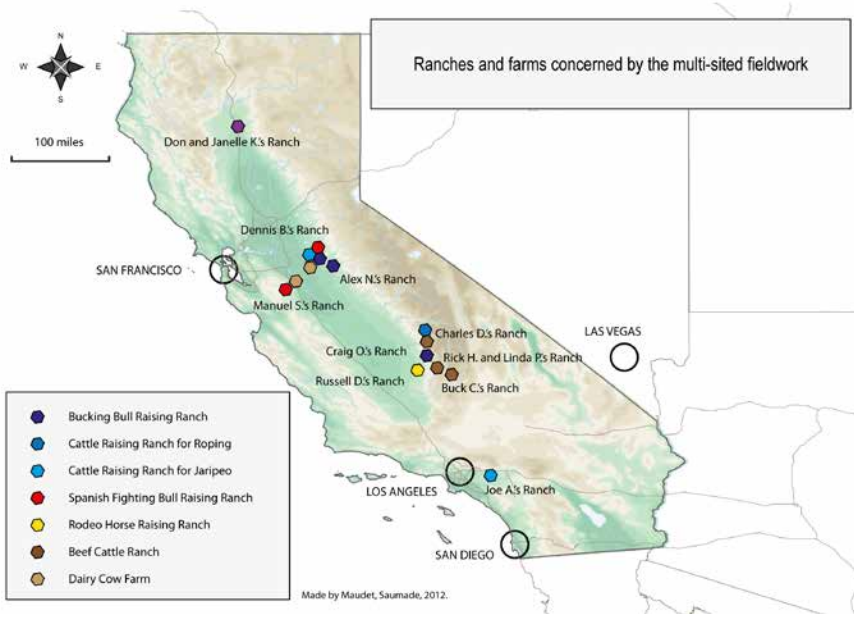
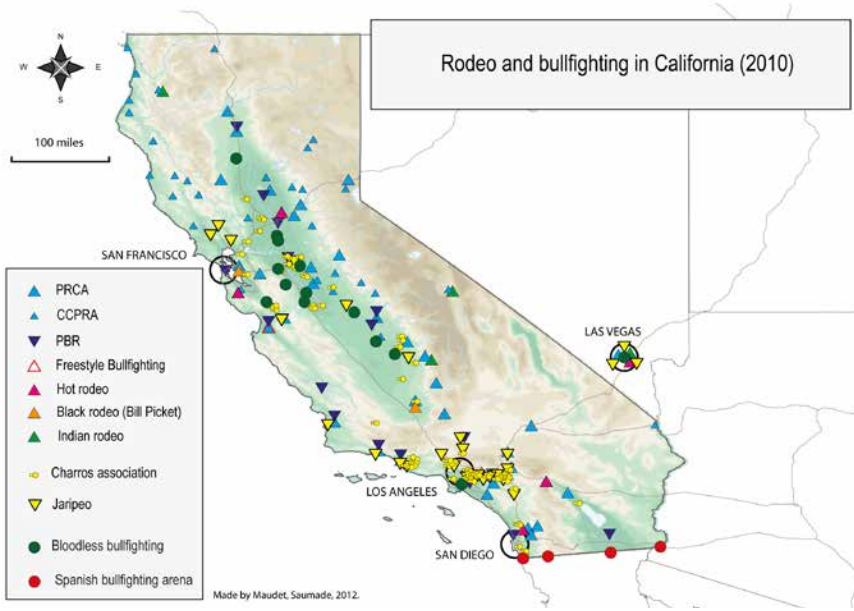


Map 0.1. Ranches and farms examined in the multisited fieldwork.



Map 0.2. Rodeo and bullfighting in California (2010).

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Frédéric Saumade and Jean-Baptiste Maudet
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Figure 0.1. Afro-American flag.

Notes

1. This neologism was coined by Ernest Hemingway, *Death in the Afternoon*, 16–17 and is often cited in its 1949 French translation (*animalitaire*) by the anthropologist Jean-Pierre Digard, a leading expert in animal domestication. See especially his classic work *L'Homme et les animaux domestiques*. Regarding the controversies related to rodeo regularly generated by US animal rights activists, see Fredriksson, *American Rodeo*, 134–48.
2. This point is discussed in greater detail later in the book. See also our previous publications in the field: Saumade, *Des* sauvages *en Occident*; Saumade, *Les tauromachies européennes*; Saumade, *Maçatl*; Maudet, *Terres de taureaux*. Regarding female bullfighting, see Feiner, *La mujer en el mundo del toro*.
3. For a recent anthropological perspective on the polemics surrounding bullfights and bull games, see Saumade, *De Walt Disney à la tauromachie*.
4. According to data concerning domestic pets provided by Donna Haraway, in 2005, $38.4 billion was spent on the acquisition of pets, compared to $21 billion in 1996 (adjusted for inflation), and $46 billion was spent for food and pet care products. See Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 48. The upward trend is clear: in 2023, 66 percent of US households (86.9 million homes) owned a pet, and in 2022, Americans spent $136.8 billion on their pets, a 10.68 percent increase from estimated 2021 expenditures of $123.6 billion. See Megna, "Pet Ownership Statistics 2023."
5. In her provocative way, Donna Haraway, whose philosophical work combines animal rights with the struggles of feminism, reverses the classical relation owner–"his/her pet" with pet–"his/her human." The literary device that she has chosen underlines her strong adherence to the "ontological turn" in philosophy and anthropology for the last thirty years. There exists an extensive list of bibliographical

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references regarding this theoretical turn, including an excellent collective work that, adopting a comparative ethnological perspective on the South American region, assesses the (occasionally dogmatic) arguments for and against a general theory. See Rivera Andía, *Non-Humans in Amerindian South America*.

6. Regarding the "cattle complex" concept, see the classic work by Herskovits, "The Cattle Complex in East Africa." Regarding Hispanic influences on rodeo and the Western cattle ranching tradition, see LeCompte, "The Hispanic Influence." On Indian and Black cowboy traditions, see Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys*; Mellis, *Riding Buffaloes and Broncos*; Durham, "The Negro Cowboy."
7. See the Los Aficionados de Los Angeles website, https://www.losaficionadosdelosangeles.com/ (retrieved 15 July 2023). In California, we also find the Peña Sol y Sombra in San Francisco and the Club Taurino de Chula Vista in San Diego.
8. Scofield, *Outriders*; Ford, *Rodeo as Refuge*.
9. Wolfe, *Animal Rites*; Haraway, *When Species Meet*; Hartigan, *Aesop's Anthropology*.
10. Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, 1.
11. An American brand that is clearly emphasized by the subtitle of Wolfe's book *Animal Rites*: "American Culture, the Discourse of Species, and Posthumanist Theory."
12. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 20.
13. Ibid.
14. Quoted in Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, 2.
15. Butler, *Gender Trouble*.
16. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 15.
17. See Haraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto*, 1.
18. Ibid., 22.
19. Ibid., 26–27.
20. Ibid., 81.
21. Ibid., 86–87.
22. Saumade, *De Walt Disney à la tauromachie*.
23. Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, 122–66.
24. As Eric Mills phrases it on his website. See https://www.actionforanimals-oakland.com (retrieved 29 December 2023).
25. Concerning women's struggles to be "in" rodeo, apart from our ethnographic annotations further on, see in particular Scofield, *Outriders* and Ford, *Rodeo as Refuge*. See also Justine Morvan and Kévin Noguès beautiful recent documentary *Rodeo Girls*. Spanish bullfight also has its female champions—also marginalized, but animated by a spirit of feminist empowerment. See Feiner, *La mujer en el mundo del toro*.
26. Relativizing the novelty of the postmodernist concept of "a 'humanimal' form predicated on the refusal of the human/animal binary" (W. J. T. Mitchell, foreword in Wolfe, *Animal Rites*, xiii), historian Peter Sahlins calls "humanimalism" an alternative ontological regime, which he analyzes beginning with the history of the creation of the Royal Menagerie at Versailles in 1668 under Louis XIV. See Sahlins, *The Year of the Animal*. This "Year of the Animal," a period defined by a certain kind of French animism, challenged Descartes's famous "animal-machine" concept. It was also the year of the first publication of La Fontaine's Fables, a partial reworking of Aesop's Fables. See Hartigan, *Aesop's Anthropology*. French anthropologist Frédéric Keck compares this alternative premodernist ontology to certain theories of the current ontological turn. See Keck, "Les animaux contre l'État."
27. Davis, *City of Quartz*.
28. Regarding the history of wilderness in the United States, see Nash, *Wilderness*, and on the relation with the myth of the American frontier in the twentieth century, see Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*.
29. The *Degüello* at the Alamo and its echo in bullfighting clearly traumatized US collective memory, as seen even in accounts by contemporary historians who can hardly be accused of excess subjectivity. See Ward, *The West*, 74. The excellent work of Mexican historian R. A. Ruiz Torres reframes the sinister interpretation of the trumpet call, explaining that it would not have signified sparing no one but was merely a cavalry charge. See Ruiz Torres, "Historia de las bandas militares," 84. It is intriguing to

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note the extent to which the US/Mexico border divides even the work of their respective university researchers.

30. Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*.
31. As early as 1641, Massachusetts decreed that "no man shall exercise any Tyranny or Cruelties towards any brute Creatures which are usually kept for man's use." Mentioned in Hail, *Knight in the Sun*, ix.
32. Turner, *The Frontier*, 4; Jacquin, "L'Ouest vu, inventé et rêvé," 34–35.
33. Turner, *The Frontier*, 12. On frontier theory's classic statements see also Billington, *America's Frontier Heritage*; and Bolton, *Wider Horizons*;
34. For Walter Prescott Webb, in his 1957 essay "The American West: Perpetual Mirage," Turner's vision of the relentless uniformity of this final conquest of the West stumbles on the issue of lack of rainfall, with an average of nearly 20 inches less annual precipitation west of the 98th meridian. See also Worster, "New West, True West." Regarding the geographical constraints of the conquest in French literature, see Claval, *La Conquête de l'espace américain*.
35. Mary Lou LeComte and Beverly Stoeltje have both underscored the continuity between Western culture and its Hispano-Mexican antecedent. See LeCompte, "The Hispanic Influence"; Stoeltje, "Rodeo: From Custom to Ritual."
36. Cronon, "Revisiting the Vanishing Frontier"; Limerick, *The Legacy of Conquest*; Limerick, "Turnerians All"; Malone, "Beyond the Last Frontier"; White, *"It's Your Misfortune"*; Worster, *Under Western Skies*.
37. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands*; Bannon, *The Spanish Borderlands Frontier*; Hurtado, *Indian Survival*; Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*. See also the classic works Spicer, *Cycles of Conquests*; Nostrand, "The Hispanic American-Borderland"; Garreau, *The Nine Nations*; Martínez, *Border People*.
38. Van Dooren, Kirksey, and Münster, "Multispecies Studies," 7.
39. Ibid.
40. Lewis H. Morgan quoted in Moses, *The Promise of Progress*, 160–61.
41. Moses, *The Promise of Progress*, 161.
42. Ibid., 162–63.
43. Ibid., 164.
44. Ibid., 162.
45. Ibid., 163.
46. Ibid., 163–64.
47. Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native*.
48. Ibid., 197.
49. Haraway, *When Species Meet*, 165.
50. "Humans and other animals" is the title of a work by Ana Cristina Ramírez Barreto. See Ramírez Barreto, *De humanos y otros animales*. The viewpoint of this Mexican philosophical anthropologist, a follower of Donna Haraway, stems from a highly critical analysis of the *charreada* and *jaripeo*, two Mexican forms of rodeo, that draws on moral considerations and feminist ideology. Notably, young Ramírez Barreto was a trained *escaramuza*, that is, one of the young girls on the equestrian team who perform the feminine choreographic segment of the *charreada* (see Chapter 1 of this book). Ramírez Barreto offers an excellent critical analysis of the macho ideology that characterizes both technical and symbolical aspects of the *escaramuzas* ballet. Also worth noting is the title of Cary Wolfe's more recent book (2013), *Before the Law: Humans and Other Animals in a Biopolitical Frame*.
51. See Moses, *The Promise of Progress*, 292–94.
52. Ibid., 293.
53. The relativity of the US–Mexico border, the complexity of interactions, and the reconstruction of Mexican popular cultures observed in the US from 1848 to the present have been extensively examined by North American scholars in recent decades from a perspective that questions Anglo-American cultural hegemony. See, for example, Kearney, "Transnationalism in California and Mexico"; Overmyer-Velázquez, *Beyond la Frontera*.
54. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism*.
55. DeJohn Anderson, *Creatures of Empire*.

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56. Wissler, "The Influence of the Horse"; Jordan, *North-American Cattle-Ranching Frontiers*; Iverson, *When Indians Became Cowboys*.
57. In previous publications about native-mestizo Mexican cattle ranching culture, we analyzed a structural system of transformation linking native and Euro-descendant animals. See Saumade, *Maçatl* and, for Huichol Indians, Saumade, "Taureau, cerf, maïs, peyotl." A comparable phenomenon of symbolic transformation of European domestic animals into wild native animals observed among the Raramuri people of northwestern Mexico has been very capably analyzed by William Merrill. See Merrill, "Species Transformations."
58. This process of mixing two staple activities separated by the classical categories of archaeology and anthropology—hunting (in the wild) and taming animals (the civilizing power of domestication)—is comparable to Tim Ingold's analysis in his seminal work on northern circumpolar American and Eurasian societies. See Ingold, *Pastoralists, Hunters and Ranchers*.
59. Saumade, "Taureau, cerf, maïs, peyotl: Le quadrant de la culture wixarika (huichol)."
60. Merrill, "Species Transformations," 340.
61. This process could define the paradigm of domestication, as explored by Charles Stépanoff and Jean-Denis Vigne in their introduction to Stépanoff and Vigne, *Hybrid Communities*, 1–20. Note that several Iberian traditions of interspecies ranching challenge the classic boundary between wild and civilized, including the breeding of the *toro bravo* ("wild bull"), the intermixing of *bravo* and *morucho* cattle and *ibérico* pigs in the western peninsula *dehesa*, and the shaving of the manes of wild horses in Galicia. See Saumade, *Des* sauvages *en Occident*; Maudet, *Terres de taureaux*; and Hartigan, *Shaving the Beasts*.
62. Hartigan, *Aesop's Anthropology*, Intro, nonpaginated e-book.
63. Moses, *Wild West Shows*; Kasson, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West*.
64. We understand a "sense of a place" as a sense of cohabitating with an environment and its multiple species, of doing something in it and representing it, whether via ritual, spectacle, or narrative. See the beautiful book Basso, *Wisdom Sits in Places*.
65. Regarding the concept of "transnationalism" from the perspective of globalization, see the now classic work: Hannerz, *Transnational Connections*. The theoretical approach to the complexity of contact among migrant communities has recently yielded important developments based on field research that, while questioning the purely nationalistic dimension of expressions of identity, have restored the ethnographic sense of place, tempering the muddled but totalizing nature of the postmodernist enterprise of deconstructing cultures. See, for example, Glick Schiller and Faist, *Migration, Development and Transnationalization*.

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