The Animal and Violence in Hemingway's
*Death in the Afternoon*

I had expected Hemingway to be a beast and found, instead, an aesthete in beast's clothing. But the process of locating Hemingway outside the biocentric tradition proved extremely valuable for illustrating what, besides the representation of animal and Nature imagery, constitutes biocentric art. Hemingway's agon with the animal might well be construed as libidinal activity had he not produced a philosophical argument to rationalize it in his nonfiction works on bullfighting and safari hunting. That literary gesture demonstrates, through the cultural teleology of his violence, the mediation of animal and Nature, and the manipulative functions of his rhetoric and pedagogy, that Hemingway's contest is with the "other," not the animal, and that his quest is for mastery, not for animal power. The possibilities of demonstrating biocentric activity through a process of negative inference from Hemingway's enterprise seemed useful enough to justify such a counterpoint chapter.

But clearly my own position as a critic would be different in this chapter from what it had been in the others. There I had been presenting a critique of anthropocentrism; here I would be practicing such a critique. It occurred to me that I would be repeating the critical gestures I had been tracking in the other writers and thinkers and that I escaped the dangers inherent in this enterprise (of imitating my subjects and behaving like a disciple) only because I had been ambushed by my own analysis: my expectations had been foiled and I was surprised and disappointed that Hemingway did not "fit." Other critical dilemmas proved less tractable, especially those concerning my own rhetorical motives and strategies. I had to purge myself, however imperfectly, of female *resentment* against Hemingway *machismo*. I had to eschew humanistic premises for my judgments and act *not* from pity for the animals. I had to focus the writer's posturing, hypocrisy, and perversity as my target, not Ernest Hemingway, the man. And I had to avoid apologizing for
the imperfect execution of these obligations. But the objective that eluded me most fully was the invention of a bestial "voice" or "style." I had to content myself with possessing a bestial "eye," and speaking for rather than as the animal, in a polemical tone not entirely free of tinges of antivivisectionist bitterness. Yet my criticism (reflecting the more existentialist implications of biocentric thought) is aimed not at the bullfight, but at Hemingway's particular defense of it. My target is not violence per se (in the face of which a biocentric position can only be fatalistic) but the aesthetic and idealistic rationalization of violence.

At the beginning of Death In the Afternoon, Hemingway announces pedagogy as the first twist of the teleological spiral by which violence—and the animal that is its object—is forever displaced, repressed, and abolished until only the residue of a writing marked by bad faith remains. "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e., violent death now that the wars were over, was in the bull ring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it. I was trying to learn to write, commencing with the simplest things, and one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental is violent death" (DA, 2). Not only is the bullfight a substitutive experience, an ersatz for the superior but unavailable wars, but its very violence is reduced to a heuristic function, a field trip exhibit mounted for the education of the fledgling writer. Consciously or not, Hemingway here reenacts the primordially displaced origin of the bullfight. According to Collins and Lapierre, the later conquistadors awaiting military campaigns that never came to pass "kept sharp the skills of war" by killing wild bulls from horseback. The bull is doubly mediated at the very origin of tauromachy: killed neither for his own sake nor even as a substitutive enemy or sacrificial victim, he is negated altogether as a significant object in favor of a pure instrumentality. His function as a victim of violence is abstracted; he serves as a proleptic device, an exemplary or model opponent, a paradigm of danger. His pain and death are stripped of significance except as the incidental expenditure of a deferred violence.

Hemingway's subjectivist praxis of "writing truly," in which truth pertains only to the emotional and sensational fidelity of the writing, requires that all experience serve the ends of the writer's tutelage. But Hemingway primordially confuses the intrinsic significance he would like to impute to violent experience with its representability. When he writes of violent death,
“it is death nevertheless, one of the subjects that a man may write of” (DA, 2), he soberly misses the joke: that he may write of it only if he eludes it, if he experiences it vicariously, as a witness or a spectator. *Death in the Afternoon* is therefore justified by an ocular ethic that forbids the wince, the reflexive occlusion of the violent moment (“the author had never seen it clearly or at the moment of it, he had physically or mentally shut his eyes” (DA, 2)), in favor of a necroscopy with the scholarly authenticity of “the observations of the naturalist” (DA, 133).

But by failing to interrogate the metaphysical status of the spectacle, by failing to perceive the repression and denial of Nature at the heart of its function, Hemingway’s “writing truly” is vulnerable to the bad faith of mistaking the voyeur’s spurious objectivity for the writer’s desire for the truth.

Hemingway’s function as a pedagogue in *Death in the Afternoon* is more than just the harmless egotistical posturing Dos Passos referred to as “where Old Hem straps on the longwhite whiskers and gives the boys the lowdown.” Although teaching is polemical in nature, Hemingway uses its rationalistic methods and assumptions to lend authority to his argument that the *corrída de toros* can be justified on aesthetic and athletic grounds. By imputing to the bullfight the intellectual attributes of both art and science, he assimilates the violent killing of the animal to such traditional humanistic values as beauty, harmony of composition, symmetry of form, logical development, eloquence of gesture, precision of execution, and the personal virtues of valor, discipline, and integrity. But the pedagogic function used as a means of rationalizing violence in the interest of culture has the devious and hypocritical coloration not only of the priestly enterprise, according to Nietzsche, but also of pornological writing, according to Deleuze. The problem at the heart of *Death in the Afternoon* is that by refusing to confront the irrationalities and perversities of tauromachy, Hemingway’s writing becomes implicated in them. The book shows us not only the bullfight through Hemingway’s eyes, but also Hemingway writing to be seen seeing. Hemingway performs not as biocentric artists perform, for the sake of the activity itself, but as a spectacle.

As professor of tauromachy, Hemingway presumes to externalize the hidden interiority of the bullfight, to decode its mysterious and unintelligible signs. The bullfight is revealed to have a logical narrative in which each moment has a plausible rationale, a cause and effect that are never obvious but must be inferred.
from the teleological function of the spectacle as a whole. Thus sticking the bull with banderillas exceeds mere cruelty; the bull is greatly hurt not for the sake of causing him pain, but in order to modify his performance in the ring, to make him slower, and more deliberate and accurate in his horn work, to transform him into a more valuable "artistic property" (DA, 89). Suffering Nature, concealed in the black, dense, vital mass of the bull's flesh, eludes the light-drenched exposure of the solar spectacle, and is therefore elided. In the context of the modern tradition that demystifies the Western cultural hermeneutics of suffering—an enterprise extending from Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* and Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* to contemporary studies by Barthes, Bataille, Deleuze, and Girard—Hemingway's *Death in the Afternoon* stands as a distinct retrogression.

Notwithstanding his derision of writers who mystify instead of sticking to straight statement (DA, 54), Hemingway performs a priestly function when he lays his 1,500 sacrificial bulls on the altar of art. The priest gives pain and violence a spiritual teleology in a betrayal of the body that assimilates living Nature to the exigencies of abstract values, for example, sacrifice, atonement, redemption, and sublimation. Hemingway's ephemeral moment of candor, when he writes of the matador, "A great killer must love to kill" (DA, 232), is betrayed instantaneously by a valorized, idealistic vocabulary that removes autotelic killing (that is, killing as an unconscious, instinctive act committed in an effusion of animal power and excitation) from the realm of the bestial to the plane of virtue. For Hemingway, the pleasure of killing entails consciousness of its "dignity," of "a sense of honor and a sense of glory, . . . a spiritual enjoyment of the moment of killing, . . . aesthetic pleasure and pride," and assorted other "spiritual qualities" (DA, 232–33). But dignity, honor, pride, and glory are values of an intersubjective and social origin, values conferred by the consciousness of the recognition of the "other": in short, cultural values rather than intrinsic ones. Hemingway claims that "killing is not a feeling that you share" (GHA, 120), and yet the entire safari cult of competition and trophies, celebration and largesse, photography and taxidermy, externalizes the experience for consumption by social consciousness.

Hemingway acts the pornologist's part (the masochist justifying cruelty in the name of art and Platonic ideals, the sadist justifying it in the name of science and rationalism) when he

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writes, "There is no manoeuvre in the bullfight which has, as object, to inflict pain on the bull. The pain that is inflicted is incidental, not an end" (DA, 195). If, to correct for our anthropocentric bias, we were to substitute woman or child for bull in the preceding sentence, the perversity of the language would become immediately apparent. The language itself enacts an order of mental or rational cruelty by stripping the inflicted pain of any intrinsic importance, by denying its centrality to the event, by dismissing it, with a sadist’s arrogance, as a mere detail in a larger, abstract project. Hemingway’s sadism does not lie in his capability for violence and cruelty, his willingness to hurt people and animals, his interest in seeing soldiers killed, and killing game. Indeed, when he acknowledges his pleasure in violence and aggression (both verbal and physical), he achieves the disarming innocence of a Nietzschean Übermensch. “There are no subjects I would not jest about if the jest were funny enough,” he wrote in The New Yorker in reply to criticism of Death in the Afternoon, “just as, liking wing shooting, I would shoot my own mother if she went in coveys and had a good strong flight.” Sadism resides in the displacement of pleasure from the commission of cruelty to its contemplation, description, and rationalization. It is not constituted by actions but by attitudes that are founded on a lie, on the denial of the importance of pain. Sadism betrays physis in the interest of techne, subordinating the claims of Nature to those of culture. We see it in Hemingway’s studied apathy toward the pain of the bull “cruelly punished” by pronged harpoons driven forcefully into his neck muscle. “I kept my admiration for him always, but felt no more sympathy for him than for a canvas or the marble a sculpture [sic] cuts or the dry powder snow your skis cut through” (DA, 99).

Hidden in the patently false analogy, which equates sensate being (bull) with insensate being (marble, snow) in order to negate the bull’s pain, lies an invitation to penetrate Hemingway’s hypocrisy, to expose the shamming masquerade of “logic” implicit in his pedagogy. Like Deleuze’s pornologer, Hemingway is on the side of violence, not only against the bull but against the reader as well. His malicious treatment of the fictional “old lady” who serves as our proxy reveals his sadistic ulterior motives. Beneath the ostensible purpose of educating her about the ultimate material reality of death, his “Natural History of the Dead” has the scarcely concealed aim of assaulting, shocking, and discomfitting her.

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Old lady: I don’t care for the title.
Author: I didn’t say you would. You may very well not like any of it. But here it is.

(DA, 133)

He subjects her again to the painful anecdote of the Greeks breaking the legs of their mules at Smyrna before drowning them in the shallow water, not in order to deplore the violence, but in order to contrast (and justify by contrast) the functional and purposeful cruelty of the bullring with the Greeks’ gratuitous act. At the same time, he assaults her (and us) with the specious reasoning that two wrongs make a right.

Because Hemingway separates prejudice and expertise, malice and critical acumen organizationally in the text of *Death in the Afternoon* (by relegating the more egregious gossip and opinion to the ends of chapters) he is able to protect his credibility as an expert technical witness to the bullfight. His glossary ultimately enjoys an authority that deflects our attention from the partial, contrived, and censored nature of the information we are given. For example, the mechanical definition of the *estoque* or killing sword diverts us from recognizing that the technicality of his description of the weapon’s shape and trajectory addresses exclusively the problem of human expediency and technical efficiency while suppressing all reference to the living, sensate body that the sword wounds, hurts, and destroys.

The blade is about seventy-five centimetres long and is curved downward at the tip in order that it may penetrate better and take a deeper direction between the ribs, vertebrae, shoulder blades and other bony structure which it may encounter. Modern swords are made with one, two or three grooves or canals along the back of the blade, the purpose of these being to allow air to be introduced into the wound caused by the sword, otherwise the blade of the sword serves as a plug to the wound it makes. (DA, 406)

The lexicon of feeling and emotion is expelled from the glossary along with the bull’s perspective and subjectivity until Hemingway’s rhetorical demonstration is conducted in a vacuum of theory and abstraction, as though referring to a mere model of a bull, an artificial construct of a bull delineating only the mechanical obstacles to a perfect kill rather than the living and feeling flesh, nerves, organs, and arteries that are severed, penetrated, and destroyed by the steel.

Hemingway ultimately demystifies the bullfight by creating a
new myth. He solves the mystery of how the killing of the animal can be great art by creating its tautological opposite: the mystery of how great art can be founded on animal torture and killing. Hemingway's specious answer, that killing can be done with courage, skill, and technical brilliance to create a spectacle of incomparable beauty, masks another answer, that the bullfight epitomizes the anthropocentric bias upon whose consequent suppression of Nature (the animal, the body, pain) the Western tradition has founded culture and art. Hemingway is enthralled not merely by violence, which could be found in purer, more spontaneous form in the town square capeas, but precisely by the mediated, formalized, acculturated violence of the corrida. It is this violence alone that allows him to play the sadist's part: that of the exponent of violence tricked out in the seemingly legitimate, cultural role of the art critic, who recognizes the aesthetic composition created by man and bull at the moment of killing; that of the scientist, who analyzes the psychology of tormenting the bull into courage; and that of the pedagogue, who overcomes the ignorance and prejudice of his shrinking readers and brings them to an enlightened acceptance of violence.

In writing *Death in the Afternoon*, Hemingway reverses the function of the traditional playwright, which is described by Derrida (in his essay on Artaud) as the creation of a text whose language, in the form of the written word, precedes, determines, and dominates the *mise en scène* of classical theater. But the *mise en scène* of the bullfight, a staged event without words, precedes and determines Hemingway's text, which becomes a supplement, a language, a writing supplied and poured into the volume of mute space in which the tauromachian gestures are enacted. When Scott Donaldson writes of *Death in the Afternoon*, "it stands, more than forty years after it was written, as the best book in English on its subject," he assumes that Hemingway's text represents, stands for, "speaks" the bullfight. But does it?

*Death in the Afternoon* represents neither the existential event that transpires in the ring nor its unmediated (open, unconditioned, true) perception by the trained or untrained spectator. Hemingway's book represents not the bullfight but the modern myth of the bullfight as the triumph of the hero-artist. He gives the spectator a language and a conceptual framework that constitutes a pretext (justification and script) through which to read and interpret the spectacle. He superimposes on
the seemingly spontaneous dispersal of actions and images in the arena the anthropocentric drama of the matador. The spectator's attention and affect is diverted from the materiality of the violence to its abstract significance, and from the animal to the man, who is transformed by Hemingway's argument from the *Mata Toros* (bull butcher) to the matador or formal killer of bulls. The matador combines, as it were, the feats of Theseus and Dedalus, hero and artist of Cretan tauromachy. At the moment of killing, the matador embodies the function of the mythical killer of the Minotaur, and, as he forces the living beast into heroic and aesthetic postures, the function of the mythical sculptor of bovine effigies.

In his negative evaluation of *Death in the Afternoon*, Nemi D'Agostino exposes Hemingway, earlier the critic of decadence in *The Sun Also Rises*, as himself a decadent. "This passion for the bull ring, this over-subtle primitivism, this craving for sensation which finds vent in moments of morbid and bloodthirsty ecstasy, actually springs from a cultured and detached pleasure in the primitive and the barbaric." But D'Agostino goes on to interpret this development in essentially Nietzschean terms, as a "renunciation of culture and of that conquest essential to human progress, the suppression of the blood instinct." I would argue that, on the contrary, far from renouncing culture, Hemingway uses culture in its traditional Western humanistic function of exalting art over Nature and man over animal, of displacing violence, of subordinating the body, pain, and death to ideals and abstractions, of building an anthropocentric, cultural, spiritual kingdom upon an animalistic and biological hell. In the remaining portion of this chapter I will explore in greater depth Hemingway's philosophy of Nature, of killing and death, and of art and representation in *Death in the Afternoon*. But I will do so by restoring the foreclosed perspective of the animal to the ring, in order to subject Hemingway's anthropocentrism to a critique.

Both *Green Hills of Africa* and *Death in the Afternoon* represent violent death, "one of the simplest things of all and the most fundamental" (*DA*, 2), cognitively, subjectively, that is anthropocentrically, as a phenomenon that presents itself to the human perception, the human imagination, as something observed and studied rather than something experienced in the flesh and felt in the nerves, in the senses of the sensate body of

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living creatures whether animal or human. The protagonist of an encounter with violent death is consequently the witness rather than the victim, who is rendered negligible as a mere object: "as the mere fact of the child being about to be struck by the train was all that he could convey, the actual striking would be an anti-climax, so that the moment before striking might be as far as he could represent" (DA, 3). In the safari, likewise, the significant experience of violent death resides in the drama of the hunter, his laudable control and state of impersonal calm before a good kill, or his excitability, dispersed concentration, and remorse at a bad kill. The moment of violent death itself at the impact of the shot is indeed an anticlimax because it is merely mechanical, one sort of unnatural motion or another. "As I started to squeeze he started running and I swung ahead of him and loosed off. I saw him lower his head and jump like a bucking horse as he comes out of the chutes and as I threw the shell, slammed the bolt forward and shot again, behind him as he went out of sight, I knew I had him" (GHA, 118).

It is precisely the mechanical nature of the kill in the hunt, its cause and effect of good shot / clean kill and bad shot / messy kill, that makes even a lion hunt inferior to the contrived heroic drama of the bullfight. "I was so surprised by the way he had rolled over dead from the shot after we had been prepared for a charge, for heroics, and for drama, that I felt more let down than pleased. It was our first lion and we were very ignorant and this was not what we had paid to see" (GHA, 41). However, Hemingway, imputing an audience of aficionados, insists so much on technical expertise, aesthetic appreciation, and moral approbation of bravery as the source of pleasure at the bullfight that he represses the specter of an audience excited by blood, pain, and cruelty. Both D. H. Lawrence and Norman Mailer describe the Mexican bullfight audience as bloodthirsty riffraff, Lawrence with contempt, and Mailer with affection; Mailer's Mexicans love to see the bull vomit blood: "later I learned the crowd would always applaud a kill in the lung—all audiences are Broadway audiences."* Similarly, Hemingway describes P.O.M. at the gut-shooting of the buff: "She was like some one enjoying a good musical show" (GHA, 102). The occlusion of pain and its subordination to the requirements of heroism, technique, and beauty, make the bullfight the sadistic obverse of wrestling, described by Roland Barthes as the perfect vulgar entertainment, a purely mimetic spectacle that offers audiences an exaggerated iconography of torture and suffering." The difference

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between wrestling and the bullfight is analogous to the difference between a "stag" film, where perverse activity is faked, and a "snuff" film—one of an actual torture and killing.

Hemingway realizes that unlike a sculptor (for example, Brancusi, who depicts movement in static form), the bullfighter creates his art with living flesh, as does the dancer or singer. Consequently, the bullfight is a minor art, ephemeral and impermanent, one where, "when the performer is gone the art exists only in the memory of those who have seen it and dies with them" (DA, 99). *Death in the Afternoon* is therefore written not only in the paradigmatic style of the handbook or manual, but also in the personal, subjective style of the memoir, preserving for us memories of individual matadors and specific performances. Hemingway gives us both *langue* and *parole* of the bullfight. Yet, if only permanence were needed to make tauromachy a major art, why not simply record the bullfight on film, a perfectly feasible technical possibility in the 1920s? Perhaps it is because unlike Barthes's wrestling match—of which he writes, "It is not true that wrestling is a sadistic spectacle: it is only an intelligible spectacle"—the bullfight, in which the pain and suffering are internalized and concealed in the animal, is unintelligible without the explication of an expert narrator. Yet in Hemingway's book, this explication invariably functions as a rationalization for repressing, discounting, and negating the pain and death that give the spectacle its significance.

Hemingway *can* tell the difference between the exterior and the interior of a moment of suffering, between its representation and its inimitable sensation. "The numbers of broken-legged mules and horses drowning in the shallow water called for a Goya to depict them. Although, speaking literally, one can hardly say that they called for a Goya since there has only been one Goya, long dead, and it is extremely doubtful if these animals, were they able to call, would call for pictorial representation of their plight but, more likely, would, if they were articulate, call for someone to alleviate their condition" (DA, 135). But he chooses, in the rhetoric of his narration, to focus on the wit of the narrator, on the aesthetic sensibility of the artist witness, on visual or verbal representation rather than cruelty and suffering, on figurative language (*called for* as "deserving" or "constituting a fit topic") whose literal residue (*called for* as "screamed for help" or "pleaded in despair") is dragged in as an afterthought, a little joke, a humorous concession to the repressed pain that can no longer remain censored in the pas-

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sage. The joke, like much of Hemingway’s humor, depends on the embarrassing intrusion of bodily exigencies and mortality (the agony of the animals, the dead Goya) into the artist’s aesthetic theorizing.

The externalization of pain, of bodily damage and its somatic consequences, always scandalizes Hemingway, who responds nervously by either laughing at it, dismissing it as unimportant, or seeking its abolition through euthanasia. In a rather daring polemical maneuver, he opens his book on the bullfight with an attempt to make the reader accept its most shocking visual element, the goring and disembowelling of the horses by the charging bull, as a comic spectacle. His first stratagem is to make us feel foolish about regarding the animal’s pain as a serious matter and empathizing with it. He does this by dividing people into two classes, those who identify with animals and those who identify with human beings, and by denigrating the “animalarians” by imputing to them hypocrisy (“The almost professional lovers of dogs, and other beasts, are capable of greater cruelty to human beings than those who do not identify themselves readily with animals”); aesthetic callowness (“They get no feeling of the whole tragedy”), and overreaction (“They will suffer terribly, more so perhaps than the horse” [DA, 5–9]). Having put us on the defensive, he then proceeds to ridicule the horses in order to make them unworthy of sympathy and in order to make us forget that they are horses, large, warm-blooded mammals with bodies, organs, and somatic sensations not unlike our own. “They are so unlike horses; in some ways they are like birds” (DA, 6). The description of these “parodies of horses” in the simile of “awkward birds,” monstrous creatures with “strange-shaped heads” like “wide-billed storks,” is intended to reduce rhetorically their bodily presence by making their bodies lighter, flaire, less substantial and by identifying them with a more alien, less homologous, less sympathetic species. Having established the horses’ ridiculous and comic character, their disembowellings become “burlesque visceral accidents,” more embarrassing than painful, and very funny, like shitting. “I have seen it, people running, horse emptying, one dignity after another being destroyed in the spattering, and trailing of its innermost values, in a complete burlesque of tragedy” (DA, 7).

In order to pull us from the inside to the outside, to disengage us from our site of empathy inside the terrified body of the blindfolded horse, dazed with pain, plunging desperately to expel the horn tearing at its bowels, Hemingway conjures up the

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metaphor of comic theater, of circus, in order to make us apprehend only the visual exterior of the spectacle, "the most picturesque incident" in the bullfight, and to distance us emotionally by making us laugh, as though the pain, fear, injury, and death we see were no more real than in a theater performance. The comedic language is not in itself inappropriate, for the *suerte de varas* abounds with formal and thematic elements of low comedy: surprise, accident, acrobatic falls, unnatural bodily contortions, anal humiliations, and the like. But Hemingway outrageously begs the question in pressing his logical equation of the goring of horses and its burlesque imitation by clowns as equally funny events. "There is certainly nothing comic by our standards in seeing an animal emptied of its visceral content, but if this animal instead of doing something tragic, that is, dignified, gallops in a stiff old-maidish fashion around a ring trailing the opposite of clouds of glory it is as comic when what it is trailing is real as when the Fratellinis give a burlesque of it in which the viscera are represented by rolls of bandages, sausages and other things. If one is comic the other is; the humor comes from the same principle" (DA, 7). The principles are, of course, as radically different as life and art. We can laugh at a clown being beaten in the circus because we know that the performance is voluntary and the blows are faked, like those in Barthes's wrestling match. But the same scenario with an involuntary victim and real blows would be a cruel exhibit whose spectators would be implicated in the violence. If they were amused by seeing live cruelty, their laughter would be perverse, whether its motive were a primitive pleasure in the cruelty itself or a more decadent pleasure in the "rational violence" of studied apathy toward cruelty. That the victim is an animal only increases the perversity, for the horse's oblivion to its role in the cultural drama contrived for it makes Hemingway's critique of its "performance" the *reductio ad absurdum* of his theatrical analogy. By requiring the horse to do something "tragic, that is, dignified" in response to being gored, Hemingway imposes on it his own idiosyncratic repressions and taboos. He is scandalized by the trailing of "the opposite of clouds of glory"—viscera, excremental entrails, mortality, and death—and the "dignified" gesture he demands is one of self-control, reserve, denial, internalization, concealment, and retention: like Joselito's ("gored through the lower abdomen so his intestines came out [and he was unable to hold them in with both hands]" [DA, 242]), or the brave bull's, "his mouth tight shut to keep the blood in" (DA, 124), or Papa's...
own, as he bravely treats his prolapsed rectum (no laughing matter!) on safari ("Already I had . . . experienced the necessity of washing a three-inch bit of my large intestine with soap and water and tucking it back where it belonged an unnumbered amount of times a day" [GHA, 283]). Hemingway (unlike Joyce and Lawrence) despises the body because its instinctive and somatic activity is beyond control of the mind and will and therefore betrays pride, dignity, and vanity by depriving the individual of a "noble exit" (as though life were a theatrical performance). "The only natural death I've ever seen, outside of loss of blood, which isn't bad, was death from Spanish influenza. In this you drown in mucus, choking, and how you know the patient's dead is; at the end he shits the bed full" (DA, 139).

Hemingway's vehement objections to the introduction of the peto, the quilted mattress shield protecting the horse's underside (and "dignity"), betrays his fear that any formal humane concession, any official admission, as it were, that brutality and pain exist in the ring, may inaugurate a wider challenge of the rationalization of violence that makes the bullfight possible. "These protectors avoid these sights and greatly decrease the number of horses killed in the bull ring, but they in no way decrease the pain suffered by the horses; they take away much of the bravery from the bull, this to be dealt with in a later chapter, and they are the first step toward the suppression of the bullfight" (DA, 7). The illogicality of Hemingway's objection is that, by his own admission, the motives behind the decree are not humane but commercial ("to avoid those horrible sights which so disgust foreigners and tourists"), a cynical bid to increase the number of spectators at the corrida and to save expense through the recycling of injured horses (DA, 185). If anything, the decree seems designed to neutralize opposition in order to perpetuate the bullfight. But Hemingway's objection is philosophically shrewd: he knows that outright denial is better than censorship, and that the horse's peto becomes the mark that hides something horrible, unspeakable, and filthy, a reminder not only of the erstwhile goring of the horses, but of the guilt and shame it should inspire. Hemingway prefers to this the outright denial, the blunt confrontation of the trailing entrails and the insistence, in flat contradiction to his statement above, that the goring does not hurt. "A man who has been wounded knows that the pain of a wound does not commence until about half an hour after it has been received and there is no

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proportional relation in pain to the horrible aspect of the wound; the pain of an abdominal wound does not come at the time but later with the gas pains and the beginnings of peritonitis” (DA, 9). The horse, presumably, is dispatched with a coup de grâce of the puntillas before its suffering commences, and the bull, likewise, suffers minimally (in spite of later talk about the “cruel punishment” of the banderillas) because “all wounds he receives are in hot blood and if they do not hurt any more than the wounds a man receives in hot blood they cannot hurt very much” (DA, 220). Although Hemingway proffers his promotion of euthanasia as a moral and humane gesture, it clearly serves him well as a neutralizer of violence that legitimizes any sort of cruelty on the ground of humane brevity.

The final polemical stratagem of Hemingway’s apologia for the goring of the horses is an appeal to the reader’s critical and aesthetic vanity by making a holistic vision the sine qua non of the cognoscente. “The aficionado, or lover of the bullfight, may be said, broadly, then, to be one who has this sense of the tragedy and ritual of the fight so that the minor aspects are not important except as they relate to the whole” (DA, 9). Aficionados are thus defined by their deliberate apathy toward the suffering of the horses because the structural requirements of art for harmony, proportion, the formal relations of its parts to the whole, supersede the claims of living Nature, the living body, to maintain its formal integrity, the harmony of its organs, muscles, bones, nerves, and sinews, that constitutes it as a living whole. To support this argument Hemingway resorts to a series of false analogies including tragic drama (presumably Shakespearean, since, in spite of the classicism he imputes to the bullfight, classical tragedy admits neither comic interludes nor onstage violence), the symphony, and fine wine. The fallacy in the analogies is that none of these cultivated pleasures requires a price paid in bodily pain and death by an involuntary participant. When Hemingway writes, “If the auditor at a symphony concert were a humanitarian as he might be at the bullfight he would probably find as much scope for his good work in ameliorating the wages and living conditions of the players of the double bass in symphony orchestras as in doing something about the poor horses” (DA, 9), he quite suppresses the much more obvious and accurate comparison with the castrati, Italian youths castrated to maintain the purity and beauty of their prepubescent soprano and contralto voices. Would Hemingway, perhaps the most phallocentric and homophobic modern writer (who treats

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homosexuals as eunuchs), expect the aesthete to dismiss as insignificant and unimportant the incidental detail of the castrato's sexual mutilation in the interest of art? This deliberate foisting of faulty logic upon his readers is part of Hemingway's strategy for achieving authority not on his own intellectual merits but on his opponents' insecurities, their fear of being called philistine. His is the mastery of the bluff and the authority of default, which can be maintained only as long as investigation and challenge can be inhibited with ridicule and preemptive denigration.

Hemingway embeds in the text of Death in the Afternoon its antithesis, Toros Celebres, "a book, now out of print in Spain" (DA, 110) that celebrates chiefly rebel bulls, insurrectionists, as it were, bulls willing to kill but not to play according to the rules of the corrida, who crash through the barrera, goring carpenters, policemen, and random spectators. Hemingway mentions Toros Celebres in order to cancel it, for his political metaphor betrays that he recognizes it as the subversive counterpart of Death in the Afternoon. "It is the difference between street fights which are usually infinitely more exciting, potentious and useful, but out of place here, and the winning of a championship in boxing" (DA, 112). Toros Celebres marks the return of the repressed, of the bull's point of view and interest; it celebrates the autonomy of the animal, its use of its power for its own ends, and the uncontrollability of its aggression rather than its manipulation. Hemingway must discredit such rebel bulls if he is to preserve an essential element of the sadist's posture, namely, the fiction that the victim colludes in the sadistic spectacle, that the victim's participation is voluntary, that the victim's role accords with his nature and is therefore pleasurable. "A bull that jumps the barrera, unless he makes the leap while pursuing the man, is not a brave bull. He is a cowardly bull who is simply trying to escape the ring. The really brave bull welcomes the fight, accepts every invitation to fight, does not fight because he is cornered, but because he wants to. . . . The bull is a wild animal whose greatest pleasure is combat" (DA, 112–113).

Toros Celebres is also a descriptive rather than a prescriptive work, and it thereby helps to illuminate (by contrast) Hemingway's hidden idealism, his preoccupation with the hypothetical and the theoretical, his commitment to the triumph of pure science (the realm of the mathematically and the geometrically possible [(DA, 21)]) and applied science, strategy and technique, over the spontaneity of living Nature. He gives us a fascinating
glimpse into the semantic texture of the Spanish *suerte* or "act" of the bullfight, with its double sense of the uncontrollable ("chance, hazard, lots, fortune, luck") and control ("skillful manoeuvre; trick, feat, juggle" [DA, 96]), of peril and strategy, danger and defense as permanent, inevitable, fated conditions or states of life; but he elaborates the philosophical implications of this linguistic content only obliquely. In the bullfight, it is the spontaneity of the animal that produces the element of chance and thereby creates the danger: the man's ostensible defense is really an offense and it is abstract and cerebral, a matter of science, or mathematical and geometrical calculation ("He should deliberately, as now, try to pass the points of the horn as mathematically close to his body as possible without moving his feet" [DA, 68]), of intellectual, technical, and mechanical control of the material conditions of the ring. At times Hemingway replaces his secular and mechanical definition of killing with an inflated, quasi-mystical language, in which killing becomes "one of the Godlike attributes" (DA, 233) (rather than one of the bestial or predatory attributes) and death is something "given" or "administered"—"Because they have pride they do not mind killing; feeling that they are worthy to give this gift" (DA, 264). He treats death as though it were a grace and killing a sacrament, a spiritual transaction, a generous yielding of the self rather than a bodily assault whose end is the material deformation and putrescence he describes for us so vividly in "A Natural History of the Dead." When he transforms killing from a physical into a metaphysical phenomenon, Hemingway becomes guilty of uttering (as he himself calls it, and defines it) horseshit: that is, "unsoundness in an abstract conversation or, indeed, any overmetaphysical tendency in speech" (DA, 95).

Hemingway's famous definition of the bullfight as tragedy ("the death of the bull, which is played, more or less well, by the bull and the man involved and in which there is danger for the man but certain death for the animal" [DA, 16]) supports neither an Aristotelian interpretation, like those inflicted on us by some of his later imitators, nor quite a colloquial, nonliterary sense of the word as a great catastrophe or pitiable event. Hemingway himself stresses as the salient element of his definition not the certain death of the bull (the unvanquished bull's mandatory slaughter after the fight is, in any event, merely a legal expedient) but the element of play, the contest with chance—the ludic structure of the spectacle. In spite of his disclaimer that the bullfight is not a sport or equal competition,
Hemingway is at his best (and least philosophically corrupt) in *Death in the Afternoon* when he explicates the bullfight as a primitive gaming sport or form of gladiatorial combat. Had he confronted the violence of the bullfight honestly without attempts to sugar it over with talk of art and brilliance and dignity and honor and immortality, he might have captured for it the same horrific symbolic significance that film writer / director Michael Cimino invested in the game of Russian roulette in *The Deer Hunter*, that of a formalized, rule-governed, ludic version and a compulsive reenactment of and obsessional alternative to the dispersed, random, corporate violence of war.

When Hemingway writes, "The matador must dominate the bulls by knowledge and science" (*DA*, 21), he makes of the corrida a battle of wits, a form of "intellectual" and psychological combat between the man and the animal so complex and fascinating that his explication becomes as seductive to the reader as the muleta to the bull. The theoretical rules of the game, the narrative sequence of the three coherent phases of the bull's progressive physical and psychological modification, the use of psychological force (provocation, fatigue, deception) over physical injury (laming, loss of blood) as a controlling device, the variety of honorable and dishonorable options available to the matador in specific quandaries—all of these explications are so intellectually rich and complex that they indeed divert us from the pain and violence they repress as much as the lure diverts the bull from the man. We easily become as embarrassingly enthralled by the details of tauromachian form and strategy (veronicas, mariposas, naturals, and so forth) as Sterne's Uncle Toby, whose intellectual obsession with military minutiae occludes the crippling, killing, and gelding produced by the battle of Namur.

Since the nature of the "play" produced in the corrida varies with the behavior of the bulls, Hemingway oscillates between the metaphors of gambling ("playing cards" [*DA*, 147]) and musical performance ("So the pipe organ and the steam calliope are the only musical instruments whose players can be compared to the matador" [*DA*, 150]). Both are false because they are benign analogies that deny the gladiatorial elements of coercion and violence in the bullfight. The ludic metaphor is altogether flawed in that only one participant in the game actually "plays" or understands the rules ("It is up to the bullfighter to make the bull play and to enforce the rules. The bull has no desire to play," *Hemingway's Death in the Afternoon*
only to kill” [DA, 147]). But the musical metaphor brings to the fore the actually philosophical object of the bullfight, which is one of reification, of reducing the spontaneous power, aggression, and vitality of the bull to a set of conventional movements, gestures, and postures, of transforming the dangerous living creature into a tractable object, an artistic property, a “prop.” Hemingway’s goal of having the matador “perform brilliantly” with the bull evokes the metaphor of instrumentality, of the matador’s activity and volition against the bull’s passivity and mediation. The “play” of the bullfight depends upon an inverse relationship between the man’s and the bull’s intelligence and therefore requires an abolition of the bull’s experience, spontaneity, and autonomy.

The major contrivances of the bullfight, the rules and laws that make the matador’s “victory” possible, are those assuring a vacant taurine mind, a tabula rasa (“The ideal bull is one whose memory is as clean as possible from any experience of bullfighting” [DA, 126]) by prescribing the bull’s age, guaranteeing his novitiate by mandatory slaughter of veterans, and fixing a temporal terminus for each fight to limit the bull’s acquisition and accumulation of fighting knowledge in the ring. Paradoxically, Hemingway’s explication and defense of these suppressions of the animal’s intelligence pay greatest tribute to it (“female calves . . . after a few sessions, become so educated, the fighters say, that they can talk Greek and Latin” [DA, 107]) by stipulating the inevitability of the bull’s victory if the corrida were indeed a sport in which the knowledge of bull and bullfighter were equal. “If the bulls were allowed to increase their knowledge as the bullfighter does and if those bulls which are not killed in the allotted fifteen minutes in the ring were not afterwards killed in the corrals but were allowed to be fought again they would kill all the bullfighters, if the bullfighters fought them according to the rules” (DA, 21). The knowledge and science of the matador is therefore optimally pitted only against the danger inherent in the bull’s body, that is, of its bulk and horns, rather than against the danger of his mentality.

To the extent the matador uses “science” to dominate the bull, he requires, in the form of the bull, a scientific object, that is, a knowable, explicable, predictable phenomenon. Consequently, the adjectives borrowed from the lexicon of military virtue (bravery, nobility) to describe the good bull refer to qualities defined anthropocentrically, in terms of their advantage to the matador. Bravery becomes the willingness to charge, without
which there could be no bullfight ("The bravery of the bull is the primal root of the whole Spanish bullfight" [DA, 113]), but in a perfectly consistent and predictable manner that the matador can anticipate, control, and use to create plastic or sculptural effects. What Hemingway finds "unearthly and unbelievable" (DA, 113) in the bull's bravery is its foolish perversity, the implicit gluttony for punishment that seems to impel the animal to behave unnaturally, against its own best interest. But the cause of this seemingly unnatural behavior is the contrived inexperience of the bull, its simplicity or gullibility (the noble bull is described as "brave, simple and easily deceived" [DA, 426]), which makes it initially confused and unable to determine the precise origin and agent of its pain. Were it allowed more time to make this determination, it would become "almost unkillable" (DA, 107). The ideal bull for the matador is one that is least like a living animal (spontaneous, autonomous, unpredictable) and most like an object, a prop, a mechanical bull, "a bull that charges as straight as though he were on rails" (DA, 6, 160). Matadors want perfect Pavlovian animals with behavior governed by simple stimulus-response mechanisms. But although virtually mechanical bulls are wished for combat, living bulls with easily penetrable and yielding arteries, organs, and muscle ("If the man leans after the blade the bull will seem sometimes to pluck the sword out from his hand") are wished for killing ("Other times, hitting bone, it will seem as though he had struck a wall of rubber and cement" [DA, 237]). As usual, Hemingway's description represents the standpoint of human expediency rather than animal sentience.

The tension that informs all of Hemingway's prescriptions for the bullfight is the need to determine precisely the locus of control, the center of power that, in the nature of all games, inevitably shifts from one site to another. The reification of the bull therefore poses a vexing problem because, although Hemingway accepts the Darwinian premises that make of the animal a plastic organism, a malleable object subject to the genetic modifications of natural and artificial selection, he wants the bull transformed into a tractable object in the arena, not on the range, through the psychological domination of the matador rather than the eugenic control of the breeder. Genetic control is necessary to keep the bulls feral ("They are bred from strain that comes down in direct descent from the wild bulls" [DA, 105]) yet without the "crescent" intelligence of the "old deadly Miuras . . . the curse of all bullfighters." "Similarly there are
certain strains even of bulls in which the ability to learn rapidly in the ring is highly developed. These bulls must be fought and killed as rapidly as possible with the minimum of exposure by the man, for they learn more rapidly than the fight ordinarily progresses and become exaggeratedly difficult to work with and kill” (DA, 129). Artificial selection is necessary because the ludic nature of the bullfight requires some control of randomness and chance. But although the game is intentionally stacked in favor of the matador, a pernicious degree of contrivance is introduced when players are given control over the condition of their adversaries. “The bull is the main element of the fiesta and it is the bulls that the highest-paid bullfighters are constantly trying to sabotage by having them bred down in size and horn and fought as young as possible” (DA, 164). The matador’s impact on taurine eugenics corrupts the bullfight for it internalizes the element of control, displacing it from the arena to the range, from the psyche of the bull to his body, and thereby removes it from spectacle.

The idealism and prescriptiveness of the bullfight, its “standards” and rules, are founded on the suppression of Nature, the animal, the body, in the ostensible interest of culture. But the double system of enforcement Hemingway describes—the matador enforcing the rules upon the bull and the spectators enforcing them on the matador—reveals that there are, after all, two animals in the ring rather than one, and that the matador’s instinctive nature, like the bull’s, must also be disciplined. The idealistic fiction Hemingway creates is virtually Nietzschean in its assumptions: that both man and bull are driven by a will to power, that they fight because they love to fight, because it is “natural” to them, because it gives them pleasure. But the bullfight could be such a Nietzschean event only if it were truly spontaneous, if it were free of contrivance, if it were unselfconscious and, therefore, if it were not a spectacle but were fought purely for the autotelic benefit (aggression, excitation, pleasure) of either or both of the participants. Yet because the corporeality, the sentience, the mortality of the matador give him conservative and self-protective instincts and reflexes, he requires idealistic supplements (virtues) to counteract them. Like the bull’s bravery, the matador’s honor (the Spanish pundonor, “as real a thing as water, wine, or olive oil” [DA. 92]), ensures his willingness to behave unnaturally and perversely against his own best somatic interests, to betray his body in the interest of ego and vanity. Consequently, “to be gored was honorable” but to

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seek safety was not; "any attempt to control the feet was honorable" \((DA, 19)\) but to surrender to the natural reflex to run and avoid danger was not. Indeed, technique itself, as a substitute of intellectual and mechanical physical control for biological instinct and physical reflex, becomes honorable. The man's honor, like the bull's bravery, is an internalization of the spectator's desire, a voluntary courting of danger and disregard of consequences of the sort the audience wishes to see. If the matador fails to internalize the public's desire for his brave and hazardous behavior (in the form of honor), Hemingway condones external measures ("the throwing of cushions of all weights, pieces of bread, oranges, vegetables, small dead animals of all sorts" \([DA, 163]\)) that will override the matador's fear of the bull with fear of the crowd. The corrida is a combat between two animals whose natural behavior is dominated, hierarchically, in the order of abstract power (the crowd's political and economic power, the matador's intellectual and technical power, the bull's physical and instinctual power) by the spectator. "But if the spectator did not impose the rules, keep up the standards, prevent abuses and pay for the fights there would be no professional bullfighting in a short time and no matadors" \((DA, 164)\).

When Hemingway writes, "It is one hundred to one against the matador de toros or formally invested bullfighter being killed unless he is inexperienced, ignorant, out of training or too old and heavy on his feet" \((DA, 21)\), his rhetorical structure misleadingly implies that under optimal professional circumstances the matador incurs minimal risk in the ring. In fact, one hundred to one, given optimal conditions for a well-trained, experienced, fit bullfighter, are not particularly good odds (especially as they pertain only to deaths and exclude nonfatal gorings) and Hemingway's own statistics belie his ruling fiction that, theoretically, science triumphs over Nature in the corrida, and technique neutralizes chance. By means of a circular logic, the gorings themselves become negative proofs of the correctness of theory and the efficacy of technique ("The confident unsoundness of his technique gives you a feeling that he may be gored at any time" \([DA, 217]\)). Hemingway inflicts upon the matadors the same intellectual violence he inflicts upon the other animals, displacing the significance of the goring from man to abstraction; from physiological experience to deviant calculation ("they would only have to move up an inch or two to gore" \([DA, 209]\)); from violence to the criterion of courage ("Bienvenida . . . should not really be judged until his ability to
dominate his nerves and reflexes after his first serious wounding has been proven” [DA, 216]); from object of empathy to disciplinary device (“He is the only bullfighter I have been glad to see gored; but goring him is no solution since he behaves much worse on coming out of the hospital than before he went in” [DA, 252]).

The matador as animal is sacrificed upon the altar of art as surely as the bull, if not as inevitably or totally. Goring is a necessity in the bullring because it serves as proof of the lethal instrumentality of the horns and the reality of the danger: “Jose-lito should die to prove that no one is safe in the ring” (DA, 158). Goring as an intrinsically physical experience, internalized in the animal flesh of the man, becomes totally insignificant and unimportant aside from its abstract uses as a “proof” (a sign, a material substitute for an abstraction, a guarantee of certain realities) and as a proleptic device, a warning to other matadors, an intimation of mortality: “El Gallo . . . never admitted the idea of death and he would not even go in to look at Joselito in the chapel after he was killed” (DA, 159). El Gallo’s gesture of avoidance is characteristic, and it is repeated again in the photograph of the dead Granero, who is cancelled through avoidance and disregard as his mourners look out at us, and we (under the direction of Hemingway’s caption) look back at them, extruding the corpse from the lines of our vision.

The matador, as animal, as living body, is doubly betrayed. He must be injured and killed in order to preserve the meaning of the bullfight, to prove the reality of the risk and danger; yet his mortality as a physical fact must be negated and denigrated in the interest of protecting the theories, myths, and fictions that sustain the bullfight.

Now the essence of the greatest emotional appeal of bullfighting is the feeling of immortality that the bullfighter feels in the middle of a great faena and that he gives to the spectators. He is performing a work of art and he is playing with death, bringing it closer, closer, closer, to himself, a death that you know is in the horns because you have the canvas-covered bodies of the horses on the sand to prove it. He gives the feeling of his immortality, and, as you watch it, it becomes yours. (DA, 213)

The feeling of immortality is, of course, a fraud, a lie, an abstract fiction diverting us from the material reality, which is the censored obscenity on the periphery of our vision, the

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canvas-covered horse, with its guts torn and spilled—like Jose­
lito, the day he was killed, or like Montes and Varelito gored in
the rectum and suffering lethally perforated intestines, or like
Isodor Todo vomiting blood from a chest wound, or like
Gitanillo, whose sciatic nerve was pulled out "by the root as a
worm may be pulled out of the damp lawn by a robin" (DA,
219). Or like Alcalareno II, whose literally unspeakable f
a
ter is
censored by Hemingway for us ("That was too ugly, I see now, to
justify writing about when it is not necessary" [DA, 227]), as he
censors other violence for his little boy: "She would substitute
the word umpty-umped for the words killed, cut the throat of,
blew the brains out of, spattered around the room, and so on,
and soon the comic of umpty-umped so appealed to the boy . . .
I knew it was all right" (DA, 228).

The matador as animal, as bodily creature, is most deeply
betrayed because, since Hemingway will not accept the great
frequency of goring as a rupture of his theory, as a concrete
refutation of the scientific possibilities he imputes to bullfight­
ing, he is obliged to transform the cornada into an ambiguous
sign: simultaneously a badge of courage and a mark of transgres­
sion. It is both necessity and embarrassment: testimony of risk
taking and evidence of its failure, an unsuccessful effort, a fool­
ish bravery. Not only are matad ors inevitably wounded in spite
of their science, but Hemingway makes their wounding a matter
of blame: Hernandorena is guilty of "a simple technical error"
(DA, 19); "Joselito should die . . . because he was getting f
(DA, 158); Luis Freg is gored seventy-two times because he is
heavy on his feet and unskillful with cape and muleta (DA,
263). There is a definite literal residue in Hemingway’s euphe­
mism of goring as "punishment" by the bulls. If a goring is
purely a matter of chance, a freak accident rather than a personal
or technical failure, then the matador gets neither blame nor
credit, and the goring is dismissed altogether, as without signifi­
cance, a moral ciph er. "True, he has been gored, but each time
through an accident such as a sudden gust of wind that left him
uncovered when he was working close to a bull that he believed
safe" (DA, 252). The pain and damage of goring is existentially
the same for Cagancho whether occasioned by flawed technique
or by bad luck; but in Hemingway’s moral economy of the
bullfight, the latter is extruded and negated, like the "‘visceral
accidents’ of the horses.

Lawrence Broer’s statement, "What the bullfighter ac­com­
plishes with the sword and muleta becomes the corollary of what

Hemingway’s Death in the Afternoon
Hemingway wishes to accomplish with words'" is virtually a parody of Hemingway's own specious reasoning in *Death in the Afternoon.* Broer presumably means that for Hemingway the two professions are analogous (similar in function rather than logically sequential) because honesty and killing both involve degrees of risk that can be avoided by trickery or faking. But not only are the risks of honesty and physical courage different in kind, with different consequences (censure versus going), but the matador's very act of candor and integrity, when he genuinely exposes his body to the horn as he guides the bull past him with the muleta, is itself (ironically) a moment of deception, the deception of the bull. The bullfight is founded on the deception of the animal, and the animals deceived are both taurine and human. The matadors are as much unwitting suicides as the bulls, deceived into thinking they act offensively and autonomously as they deliver their lives and bodies to the charnel house of the arena in pursuit of a false target or decoy—an "honor" as meaningless as a piece of red serge—while the real danger to their very being is not dishonor but the crowd's irrational thirst for blood, its repressed and sublimated lust for violence, its disguised passion for torture and killing. *Death in the Afternoon* is itself such a lure, such a textual cape or muleta with powers to mesmerize and hypnotize its readers as we are led into intellectual collusion with violence and torture while assuming we are pursuing beauty and tragedy. Hemingway's posture of candor and courage in the opening pages of the book is a sham. Instead of speaking the truth and reaping the whirlwind by openly taking the side of violence, he is most deceptive (logically and rhetorically) when he is ostensibly most confessional, bravely owning up that he loves the bullfight because it is great art and great science.

Ultimately, Broer is right in his analogy: Hemingway's writing does resemble the matador's art—but we are its victims unless we become renegade critics who refuse to salute every time the word *art* is run up the flagpole. We can take our cue from the renegade bulls who escape the game by crashing through the *barrera.* I have tried to challenge Hemingway's basic assumptions by abjuring his anthropocentrism and cultural chauvinism. I choose to speak for the animal (human, taurine, equine) and for Nature, including the natural violence of animal predation and fighting bulls on the range rather than contrived gladiatorial combats tricked out as art and tragedy. I side with the cowardly bulls who upset the order of the game by acting in their own best
interests, and the defensive bulls in their *querencias* who defend their lives "seriously, desperately, wisely, and ferociously" (*DA*, 154). My hero in *Death in the Afternoon* is the gypsy Cagancho, whose "cynical cowardice is the most disgusting negation of bullfighting that can be seen" (*DA*, 250), because he obeys his instincts, he protects his body, he serves his own ends, and he refuses to buy into Hemingway's (or any other) perverse ideology. Hemingway would like us in reading *Death in the Afternoon* to imitate his own enthrallement with the *cornada* of Hernandorena.

For myself, not being a bullfighter, and being much interested in suicides, the problem was one of depiction and waking in the night I tried to remember what it was that seemed just out of my remembering and that was the thing that I had really seen and, finally, remembering all around it, I got it. When he stood up, his face white and dirty and the silk of his breeches opened from waist to knee, it was the dirtiness of the rented breeches, the dirtiness of his slit underwear and the clean, clean, unbearably clean whiteness of the thigh bone that I had seen, and it was that which was important. (*DA*, 20)

It is representation of violence that is important to Hemingway, not the violence itself, and he demands from us, therefore, a purely aesthetic response to the *cornada*, to the visual and textual and conceptual contrasts of the double wounds (surface and essence, embarrassing and unembarrassing, dirty and clean, gray and white), while the shock and pain, the interior sensation of Hernandorena is occluded. But as renegade critics we can refuse to stare in wonder at the aesthetics of the bullfight and instead ask, as I did, why the blood does not flow, and why Hernandorena does not scream.