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**Women in the "World of Bullfighting": Gender  
identity and social change in Andalusia, Spain**

**SARAH PINK**

A thesis submitted for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

**University of Kent at Canterbury**



La Coleta  
(The Bullfighter's Braid)  
Sarah Pink 1993

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The acceptability of women in bullfighting, varies in relation to a variety of different Andalusian discourses about gender and tradition. Female performers are a contested phenomenon. The inclusion of women has repercussions in several domains; it questions the anthropological definition of the ritual structure and meaning of the bullfight, challenges the status of "tradition" in the contemporary context, and threatens established gender models.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an attempt to understand the recent success of female bullfighters<sup>1</sup> in Spain as part of wider processes of change involving: gender relations and models of masculinity and femininity; the juxtaposition and redefinition of "traditional" and "modern" life-styles and categories; and the relationship between live bullfighting and its media representation. The ethnography is aimed at describing the experiences of women in the bullfighting world, the discourses which approve and disapprove of their activity, and the ways in which these are related to the wider Andalusian culture in which I carried out my research. Theoretically I ask how these feminine perspectives challenge existing analyses of both gender relations and the bullfight in Andalusia.

### **The research context**

I carried out fieldwork in Andalusia, Spain for a two year period from 1992-4. For most of this time I was based and lived in the city of Córdoba, the capital of the province of the same name. This was complemented by a short period living in Seville and four months in village and rural settings of the Sierra Morena, a mountain range in Jaén province, northern Andalusia. Córdoba city has a population of over 200,000, and is in a hot dry zone where temperatures can reach over 45°C during the summer<sup>2</sup>. Situated in the centre of Andalusia

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<sup>1</sup> The term "female bullfighter" is used throughout this thesis to refer to any woman who performs as a bullfighter and the term "female bullfighting" to refer to this activity. There are however, certain problems concerning the use of terminology and translation which I outline in Appendix 1. The Spanish terms used to refer to female bullfighters are discussed in some detail in Chapter 9.

<sup>2</sup> During the summer months of July, August and September the city grinds to a halt. Many shops close down for the summer months and most businesses close for at least one month. Those Cordobans who have family or second homes at the beach or

Córdoba is 140km north of Seville along the motorway which leads to Madrid and the North, and is easily accessible by road and rail. To the immediate north of the city is the Sierra, a mountainous area, and to the south large dry plains. Cordobans are well versed in a version of local history which is dominated by the moorish influence of the Arabic rulers who were in power for many centuries. The historic and tourist area in the centre of the old part attracts international tourism and the city is marked out on the tourist map for its ancient *Mezquita* and *Patios*.

Local bullfight *aficionados* claim that Córdoba is the centre of the bullfighting world. Although there is a long and impressive history of bullfighting in the city, the same claim has been made for many other cities by their inhabitants, and the Cordoban version reflects what some informants critically referred to as Cordoban "provincialism". Nevertheless the city's *aficionados* are extremely proud of the prominent place that Córdoba and some of the city's local heroes occupy in the history of bullfighting. There is an extensive literature on bullfighting in Córdoba which is complemented by an active local community of bullfighting journalists, critics and photographers. Most social bullfighting activity takes place in the city's thriving network of bullfighting clubs, generally referred to as the *peñas*, these groups are most active during the winter when the bullfighting season is over. The municipal bullfighting museum houses a large collection of historical

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in the mountains, or can afford to rent an apartment elsewhere leave the city until the cooler temperatures arrive at the end of September. The only people to be seen on the streets of Córdoba on a hot summer lunch-time are foreign tourists. The locals surface at night, but social life tends to be concentrated in the cooler outskirts which rise into the mountain range north of the city rather than in the centre. Similarly the activities of the "bullfighting world" in Córdoba are curtailed during the summer, it is too hot for performances and social life is located elsewhere.

bullfighting paraphernalia and a library where I spent many hours studying and talking. The city has a large modern bullring built in the 1970s where performances regularly take place during the spring and autumn, and where a bullfighting school is held during the winter months. Several practising and retired bullfighters live in and near the city, their lives, successes and failures are part of daily news and everyday conversation within bullfighting networks. They are amongst the local bullfighting celebrities and usually play active roles in the social and formal events of the bullfighting world.

This research location offered me an environment in which bullfighting is learnt, performed, discussed, debated, recorded and photographed. Both the producers and interpreters of the event were readily available and I was able to observe and participate in the processes by which information about the bullfight is interpreted, represented, published, collected, exhibited and criticised. Yet many of my informants were indifferent or opposed to bullfighting, some thought it immoral, and it is possible to live in Córdoba without bullfighting culture imposing on ones life.

#### **(ii) The urban research context**

The research was never intended to be a full scale study of the city. My focus was on analysing cultural discourses about gender by examining social relations, activities and visual representation. Whilst the case study was the bullfighting world, and the emphasis on the role of women in bullfighting, I contextualized this data with an analysis of the changing labour market and notions of sexual morality (see Chapters 2 and 3). The domains of interaction which I concentrated on can be broken down into the following: domestic and family relations, social networks (kinship, friendship, *enchufe*

(connections<sup>3</sup>), clubs and associations (the *peñas*), and institutions (the museum, the bullring).

### (iii) Initiating Research

When I arrived in Córdoba I spoke very little Spanish, since I was able to read I began archival research in the library located in the office of the director of the municipal bullfighting museum, the *Museo Taurino*<sup>4</sup>. I entered the museum as an academic, a student researching for a thesis<sup>5</sup>, and also became involved with the University *Aula Taurina* (bullfighting discussion forum). My academic interest was taken seriously by students and director alike and whilst they thought it remarkable that an English woman should pursue such a course of investigation the idea that a thesis should be written about *tauromachia* was not novel; intellectual discussion and academic

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<sup>3</sup> *Enchufe* is from the verb *enchufar* which means literally "to plug in" (usually an electric plug- which is also called an *enchufe*). In social terms, to have *enchufe* means "to be connected", to have social contacts. If one has good *enchufe* (sometimes *enchufes* (plural) is used rather than *enchufe*) one will have contacts with people who may be able to use their influence or power to ones advantage.

<sup>4</sup> The Museum is run by the *Ayuntamiento de Córdoba* (The Town Hall) rather than the *Junta de Andalucía* (The regional governing body). It is worth noting that the local *Ayuntamiento* and the regional *Junta* are often seen as being in opposition to one another. The *Junta* is politically identified as "socialist" whilst Córdoba's *Ayuntamiento* is the only "communist" council in the region. The opposition should not, however, be seen solely in terms of conflicting political ideologies since as most informants point out the labels of "socialism" and "communism" have very little to do with the kind of political policies which are proposed and carried out in contemporary Spain. What is significant for this thesis is that the *Junta/Ayuntamiento* competition is used by local organisers in strategies of manipulation and up-staging.

<sup>5</sup> My academic identity had already been established through my involvement with the English Language department at the University of Córdoba where I was conducting a number of language *intercambios* (teaching English in return for Spanish on a one-to-one basis).

writing about the bullfight is normal in Andalusia. My initial contacts were most accommodating, I was given study space in the museum office, invitations to social events and introductions to local bullfighting personalities. From this daily base I not only began to read about bullfighting, but observed the coming and going of the people involved in the local production and representation of bullfighting. The museum is frequently visited by local writers and journalists, several special events are organised every year and receptions and speech-making are often hosted.

As my Spanish improved I became involved in other social circles, I participated in several bullfighting clubs (see chapter 6) and whilst my initial contact with the museum had provided me with a useful social identity, in other contexts I had to establish myself anew. For example, when I began to make contact with the family of the late female bullfighter Maria Gomez, I was asked to prove my identity and reliability. The family was concerned that I may be a journalist and by speaking with me they may be risking the publication of potentially damaging information. Again my status as an academic convinced them of my trustworthiness and I eventually developed a friendship with the family.

I felt that there were many situations which it would be inappropriate for me to enter as a single woman. This problem was resolved by my being accompanied by male or female friends whenever possible. I describe in Chapter 6 how my access to an exclusively male bullfighting club was facilitated by a male member. I also became involved in horse-riding through a language exchange with a local man who was an Andalusian dressage expert. Horse-riding is considered to be an appropriate feminine activity, but stables and this elite horse-riding club which I attended are male dominated. Whilst girls represent a large number of teenage riders, those of the

older generation are almost exclusively male. Under these circumstances I gained access to an area of culture dominated by men, with a legitimate reason for my presence. Andalusians feel under great pressure to learn English and my knowledge of the language became a commodity which was used in exchanges and the development of friendships. Alberto, my partner was able to carry out much of the research into male discourse which I would never have had access to as a woman (see Chapter 2). Although as I have mentioned above I was able to develop strategies for gaining access to many situations which were not normally either open to or of interest to women, my research in Spain did impress on me the limitations of my gendered identity. Writers who emphasise the comparative ease with which women are able to enter "male worlds" whereas men tend to be excluded from women's domains (see Delamont 1995;180-1) appear to be missing an important point.

The other strategy which I used to combat initially my language limitation and second the problematic "single woman alone" status was by taking on the role of photographer. At the beginning of my fieldwork my camera became an armour, a learning device and a means of expanding and reinforcing my social network. As an armour it rescued me from standing around, looking, but able to say very little to those to whom I was introduced. Taking on the role of someone busy taking photos allowed me to keep occupied and keep watching and enabled me to document social occasions. The photographs were appreciated by the events organisers and participants and this helped me to forge new relationships. I became involved in networks of photo exchanges and participated not only in the creation of visual memories for my informants but was able to witness how people selected their images: how they constructed visual memories. Peoples requests for photographs to pass on to others revealed their social networking strategies-strategies which I adopted myself for my research. This type

of photographic activity provokes the question of the role of the anthropologist in creating his/her own data, in this case, my own images. Whilst I framed my shots, I always did so in terms of the knowledge that I had accumulated about my subjects preferred style of photography: I tried to conform to an established journalistic style. There is nothing wrong with anthropologists creating their own images, or visual texts, however, it is important to be aware of how, why and for whom these images were created.

#### **(iv) Fieldwork or life?**

Whereas I began my fieldwork as a foreign student who could hardly speak Spanish I ended it as an "expert" on female bullfighters. Informants referred to me as an *aficionada* and a photographer. After over a year of fieldwork in Córdoba I moved away to spend four months living in the Sierra Morena conducting fieldwork in the large village of Andújar and the rural mountain location. My reception here was different since I had moved with my Spanish partner who was working on an engineering project in the area and I could speak Spanish. During this period my language improved immensely and when I returned to Córdoba my communication skills were much better. I had also won a regional journalistic photography prize for a photograph I took of the female bullfighter Cristina Sánchez (cf. Pink 1996a, 1996b). I was interviewed by a local journalist who published an article about me and my work, took part in a live radio programme speaking on female bullfighters and photography, and my own articles about women and bullfighting were published in a local bullfighting journal and newspaper (Pink 1993, 1994).

Up to this point my research had been deliberately concentrated on women and bullfighting. Now when my partner and I returned to live in Córdoba I began to spend more time organising the

enormous amount of data I had collected both in Córdoba and the Sierra Morena. My situation in Córdoba had changed in several ways. Now, like many of my informants, I was living in Córdoba, with a Spanish partner, occupied with my work during normal working hours, free to socialise at the usual times and with the same family obligations as any other person- I was much better placed to understand the ways in which gender and family relationships are played out. Whilst previously I had been passed along social networks in order that I should meet people who would be able to help with my research, or who had common interests, now I was introduced to people because of the set of social relationships in which I was already involved. I was treated as someone who had a permanent attachment to the place based on my personal relationships. I was given credit and preferential treatment in smaller shops, sometimes due to my long-term presence in the city and sometimes due to my family network. This second phase of my research involved living and experiencing the normal and unexciting aspects of daily life from which one can learn a great deal. I spent many lunchtimes and evenings watching the same television programmes as millions of Spanish people, and came to organise my own life around a routine very similar to those of my informants. My experiences of being a woman in Andalusia and those I have recorded from my informants are very different from accounts represented in the ethnography of the 1970s and 80s.

### **The State of Spain**

Reflexive approaches have inspired much criticism of the way in which the distinction between western and other cultures has been constructed in anthropology<sup>6</sup>. Although many of these

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<sup>6</sup> Fabian suggests that "When modern anthropology began to construct its Other in terms of topoi implying distance, difference, and opposition, its intent was above all, but at least also, to construct ordered Space and Time - a cosmos- for Western Society to inhabit, rather than "understanding other cultures", its' ostensible vocation" (Fabian 1983;12). Said's

criticisms are not key to the anthropology of Spain, precisely because Spain is part of modern western society, the construction of the modern western "other" is a crucial issue. Of particular interest is the anthropological construction of the "other within" modern western culture; the uncivilised, pre-modern currents of western culture which are said to prevail. Indeed, the bullfight has been described in precisely these terms, and Mitchell has argued that the experienced nature of the bullfight and the non-visual sensations it produces can be understood by reference to another time (eg Mitchell 1991)<sup>7</sup>. Arguments that the bullfight manifests the timeless essence of human nature suggest that whilst it is practised in modern western culture, the bullfight is not of modernity. Instead, I propose that contemporary bullfighting

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(1978) **Orientalism**, the "Writing Culture" debate (see Clifford and Marcus 1986) and other recent contributions have made such issues central concerns for some anthropologists. These concerns have not only been expressed over the construction of the Orient as is demonstrated by the collection entitled **Occidentalism: Images of the West** (Carrier (ed) 1995) which reflects Said's understanding back onto Western culture.

<sup>7</sup> Mitchell represents the bullfight as if it were a mystical transporter of timeless human qualities. He attributes the success of bullfighting largely to "its counter-historical inclination, its implicit drive to transcend the reality principle and return to some heroic realm out of time." (Mitchell 1991;175). He generalises that "Spectacles seem to take us away from civilizations' restraints and back not just to our childhood but to the cave dweller lurking in all of us, or still further, to the old animal continuity with Nature that Bataille spoke of" (Mitchell 1991;175). This definition of spectacle cannot be applied to the bullfight. The strict system of rules and regulations which govern bullfighting and the precisely constructed and structured nature of the performance locate it well within the post-enlightenment organisation of hunting and sporting activities: it is of our time, part of the present and governed by modern organisation of time and space. Mitchell, unwilling to incorporate bullfighting into his own vision of contemporary modernity, expresses distaste for its "unpleasant social realities" (Mitchell 1991;175) and classifies it as belonging "to the category that Fiedler calls "sado-masochistic or universally-appealing porn" (Mitchell 1991;172).

is a modern phenomenon, the visual representation of which expresses gender dichotomies which correspond with modern thought.

The rapid processes of change which have occurred in the years since Franco's death have been characterised as a kind of "catching up with the rest of Europe". The journalist John Hooper goes as far as to suggest that the 1992 EXPO held in Seville may "propel one of the poorest areas of one of the poorest countries in western Europe out of the pre-industrial and into the post-industrial world". Some Spaniards, idealistic foreigners and anthropologists (see Douglass 1992) have claimed that Spain and the Spanish possess an uncivilised, irrational element not found in northern Europe, this is often idealised as a lost piece of our Northern European past. The bullfight, amongst other so-called "traditional" things has been identified as being one of those aspects of Spanish culture which pertains to this more emotive and passionate, less civilised, less cold and less rational strand which is thought to have been maintained in Spain whilst obliterated by the rationalising force of the enlightenment in the rest of Europe (see Carrie Douglass 1992). Spain is still part of "the west" but for some it is part of "the rest of the west".

Arguments that Spain is less civilised than the rest of Europe, and that the bullfight embodies this lack of modern progress are misguided. Notions of being civilized vary: whilst "Part of the Anglo-Saxon experience of the 'civilizing process' has involved the closing of the distance between the animal and human worlds" (Marvin 1986;134), for Spaniards the bullfight expresses a notion of being civilized in which animals are distanced from humans and "the way they are treated is not governed by notions of *humane* conduct", "...for Spaniards, the bullfight is 'the most perfect form for defining the human condition'" (Marvin 1986;134). Marvin stresses that "there are

different cultural definitions of being human, being male and being civilized" (1986;135). Whilst the Anglo-Saxon/Spanish distinction is a relevant comparison, it is problematic as a generalization. In this thesis I seek to demonstrate that there are also many different definitions of being human, male and civilized within as well as between cultures. It is also unacceptable to carry out a selective "othering" by classifying certain aspects of Spanish culture as "irrational" simply because they superficially appear not to fit with contemporary Spanish culture. Spain has not missed modernity. As regards the bullfight, "rational" modern thought and modern notions of vision as knowledge are fundamental to it's structure and interpretation. Similarly the gender models represented in the dominant discourse of bullfighting culture pertain to modernity. The classification of the bullfight as "primitive" ritual has served to justify the imposition of symbolic interpretations which claim to reveal the non-civilised rationality of other cultures.

### **The Contemporary Bullfight**

In the 1990s the Spanish Bullfight<sup>6</sup> is a controversial event amongst both Spaniards and foreigners. Yet for a large number of people, commonly referred to as *aficionados*, bullfighting is a central element of their leisure time. During the most intense part of the Spanish Bullfighting season, which runs from Spring to Autumn, bullfights are held almost every day in one of Spain's bullrings. At the height of the summer season weekend bullfights are held concurrently in many cities, towns

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<sup>6</sup> The notion of the "Spanish Bullfight" is expressed amongst *aficionados*. I qualify my use of the term by noting that the concept of "Spanishness" is problematic. There are regional variations in the Spanish bullfight, however, these do not affect the actual performance which is governed by a uniform set of rules, rather, the time of the event, clothing of officials, and extra elements of the performance are added according to region.

and villages. Indeed this activity is not restricted to Spain and the bullfight is also popular in Southern France, Portugal<sup>9</sup>, Mexico, Peru and other Latin American countries. Performances are well supported by a public of men, women and children of all ages. The more important bullfights are televised and most are photographed. Bullfighting is big business and whilst most *aficionados* do not consider it a primarily commercial enterprise, it generates much capital and employment, not only within the "bullfighting world" itself, but in communication and media and the industries that serve it. Despite Spanish and international campaigns against it<sup>10</sup>, the bullfight is not dying out and it is unlikely that the European Parliament will succeed in prohibiting it (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1993). It is popular amongst *aficionados* of all ages and many young people actively participate in its production and performance.

The iconography of the bullfight is centred on the *torero* figure: the individual triumphant masculine hero (cf. Pink 1996a). Yet despite the gender stereotypes represented in bullfighting culture and in the "traditionalism" of its dominant discourse, women are becoming increasingly active in the bullfighting world.

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<sup>9</sup> The Portuguese Bullfight has some variations from the Spanish version. The most frequently cited (especially amongst anti-bullfight campaigners) was that the bull is not killed in public).

<sup>10</sup> The Spanish campaigns are mainly based north of Andalusia. Although I heard of a fairly large group in Cádiz, in Córdoba I witnessed no public anti-bullfighting activity. Whilst an animal protection society existed there was neither an independent anti-bullfighting group nor a regional branch of any of the national or international organisations. Although many of my informants were against bullfighting- mainly on grounds of cruelty to animals- in general rather than active opposition I encountered indifference.

## The Standard Performance

Most performances take place in the late afternoon and last for approximately two hours. In a standard bullfight three bullfighters will kill six bulls, each performer having been allocated two in the *sorteo* which takes place in the morning. The *sorteo* entails a kind of lottery in which the numbers of the three pairs of bulls (the pairs are selected so the best bull is likely to be matched with the worst) are written on folded pieces of paper drawn by the performers or their representatives. Bullfighters perform in order of seniority—he/she who is most advanced in his/her career takes the first and fourth bulls<sup>11</sup>.

The beginning of the performance is marked by the entry of the *alguaciles*, mounted officials who ride into the arena ahead of the three bullfighters, followed by their respective *caudrillas* of three *banderilleros* and two *picadores*. The *cuadrilla* is the *matador's* "team" of three *banderilleros* and two *picadores*, whom he pays to perform with him. The *banderillero* places the *banderillas* (barbed sticks) in the neck muscle of the bull. A *banderillero* is usually a bullfighter who failed to make the grade as a *matador*. This is however still a dangerous role and although it should be noted that this is an infrequent occurrence, one *banderillero* was killed in the bullring during my fieldwork. The role of the *picador* is to damage the neck muscles of the bull by spiking it with a lance. The *picador* is mounted on a sturdy horse which is blindfolded. His own and the horse's bodies are well padded to protect them from injury. The *picador* in general tends to be characterised as an unpopular figure (normally due to the damage which he does to

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<sup>11</sup> Not all bullfights follow this standard model. Some are "mixed" in which both *rejoneadores* and *toreros* or *novilleros* perform. El *rejoneo*, horse-back bullfighting is discussed in more detail in Chapter 8).

the bull), and tends to be the least respected and most often ridiculed member of the *cuadrilla*. The *matador de toros* is literally "the killer of bulls". Whilst all performers may be referred to as *toreros*, it is only the *matador de toros* who performs with and actually kills fully grown four year old bulls in public. The performers salute the *presidente*<sup>12</sup> who governs the performance and retire to their position at the ringside.

On the release of the first bull the bullfight begins. During the twenty minutes allowed for each animal the following procedure is played out:

The *matador's* assistants attract the bull with their capes to "test" it whilst the *matador* and his advisors contemplate it's characteristics, the *matador* himself then steps out and performs some cape passes until the president calls for the introduction of the *picadores*. With the assistance of the *matador* and *banderilleros* the *picador* attracts the bull to charge him this is repeated twice or three times. The *picadores* leave the ring and the stage of the *banderilleros* begins. Sometimes the *matador* performs this himself but more usually the *banderilleros* alternate. Taking one *banderilla* in each hand the *banderillero* attracts the bull with the movement of his body by running towards the animal, leaping to one side to place the *banderillas*. Once the *banderillas* are in place the final stage of the performance begins: the *matador* exchanges his pink cape for the red *muleta* and sword and now steps out to perform alone with the bull. After what is ideally a successful series of *muleta* passes the *matador* changes swords and kills the bull. If he /she performs well

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<sup>12</sup> The president and representative of the law is empowered with controlling the bullfight, he may over-rule the decisions of the performers and decides whether to award trophies.

the audience will ask that trophies of the bulls ears (and for an outstanding performance, the tail) be awarded to the triumphant performer. Even if no trophies are granted, a successful performance merits a victory lap during which the *matador* is thrown gifts, hats, flowers and other objects by the audience. The dead bull is dragged out of the arena by the mule team and the ring is smoothed for the next performer.

Bullfighting is dangerous. Not all performers are successful and whilst bullfighters are rarely killed they are frequently injured.

### **The career of an bullfighter**

The performance described above represents that of a professional bullfighter. Most performances follow the same format, although at the initial stages of a performers' career when he/she fights smaller bulls, the *picador* stage is excluded. The young performer passes from being a *becerrista* (fighting one year old animals) to a *novillero sin picadores* (who fights two-three year old bulls without *picadores*<sup>13</sup>), to a *novillero* with *picadores* who is differentiated from the *torero* by the age and weight of the bulls he/she fights. The debut with *picadores* is a significant step towards the final stage of promotion: the *alternativa* by which the performer graduates to full *torero* status and fights four year old bulls at professional level. Whilst many aspire to be bullfighters and reach the first stages it is very difficult to succeed as a fully fledged professional.

As yet no female bullfighter has taken the *alternativa* in Spain. At the close of the 1993 season six female bullfighters

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<sup>13</sup> Such young and small bulls are not considered to be sufficiently strong or dangerous to be subjected to the lance of the *picadores*.

were active at the *novillero* level and one, Cristina Sánchez maintained a position amongst the top ten male *novilleros* with *picadores* throughout most of the season. The others, Mari Paz Vega, Yolanda Carvajal and Laura Valencia performed with *picadores* and Mireille Ayura and Soría Díaz *sin picadores*. They received favourable reviews and media attention, contracts for live performances (sometimes televised) and trophies. Whilst Cristina Sánchez performed in 34 *corridos* (bullfights) and collected 51 ears, top male *torero* Enrique Ponce performed an exceptional 110 times and cut 135 ears (**Aplausos** 18.10.93). Status is measured in terms of the number of performances and trophies awarded and listings are regularly published. In the same year five female *rejoneadoras* (horse-back bullfighters) were also active. The successful Maria Sara was extremely popular and classified amongst the top *rejoneadores*.

## CHAPTER 1

### GENDER, BULLFIGHTING AND ANTHROPOLOGY: THEORIZING FEMALE BULLFIGHTERS

In this chapter I critically evaluate some of the existing literature on gender and bullfighting in Andalusia. The theories proposed by both these bodies of work fail to accommodate female bullfighters, and the ethnography describes an Andalusian culture which renders female bullfighters inappropriate in the arena of professional male bullfighting. I propose that the contemporary success of female bullfighters, as well as the inconsistencies between my own research findings and the existing ethnography, demands a reassessment of gender relations in Andalusia and a re-thinking of how anthropology may theorize both gender and the bullfight in Andalusia.

#### The Anthropological Construction of Gender: The ethnography of Andalusia and gender theory in the 1970s & 1980s

##### (i) The theoretical context of the study of gender in Andalusia

Existing analyses of gender in Andalusia were written in the theoretical atmosphere of the 1980s which emphasised the cultural construction of gender and proposed the existence of a cross-culturally applicable model of gender hierarchy (see Ortner and Whitehead 1981). Recent gender theory criticises this work by questioning the relationship of sex to gender to move "away from the view that variation in gender constructions and roles are merely cultural elaborations of the facts of biological sex difference, towards analysing the ways in which cultures actually construct sex differences between men and women" (Moore 1993b; 196)<sup>1</sup>. The contemporary stress in both

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<sup>1</sup> See for example Moore 1993, Stolke 1993, Howell & Melhuus 1993, Connell 1995.

anthropology and sociology is on bringing the body and biology back into the analysis, thus redefining gender as "embodied"<sup>2</sup>. First I discuss the relationship of the Andalusian ethnography of Gilmore (1985), Brandes (1981) and Corbin and Corbin (1984, 1986) to the theory of gender proposed by Ortner and Whitehead (1981).

Corbin and Corbin's data from Ronda questions the cross-cultural applicability of Ortner and Whitehead's model of gender hierarchy because they emphasise women's autonomy and show that "the spheres of competence and control of husbands and wives are almost separate..." (1986; 69-70, note 2). Gilmore, in contrast claims that a hierarchical gender dichotomy is fundamental to Southern European culture. Gilmore agrees with Ortner and Whitehead (1981;6) that:

"...this hierarchical gender structure (is) a basic "organising" principle in andro-centric societies like those of Southern Europe" (Gilmore 1985;2)

Whilst Gilmore regards hierarchy as fundamental to the gender dichotomy, Corbin and Corbin argue that hierarchical relations are only evident to the extent that men are symbolically closer to the supernatural than women. Gilmore goes much further in his stress of a universal gender hierarchy which permeates the experience of everyday life. Corbin and Corbin are right to dismiss the universality of experienced gender hierarchy, because as they point out, gender role segregation is instrumental in restricting male-female competition. In Chapters 2 and 3 I describe how in the 1990s I witnessed a situation where gender role segregation is becoming less relevant and men and women are competing as gendered

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<sup>2</sup> For example see Featherstone et al (eds) 1991, Scott and Morgan 1993, Strathern 1988, 1993, Moore 1994, Broch-Due and Rudie 1993, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (eds) 1994.

individuals, rather than as concrete groups of "men" and "women". Gender segregation is a contested model in contemporary Spain. The discourses are open, public and political, conflicting messages come from the media and politicians. For example, campaigns initiated by the Andalusian Branch of the department which promotes sexual equality and women's issues ran a series of television advertisements depicting a cartoon version of a model 2 parent, 2 child family in which both parents work, and all family members share domestic work and weekend leisure activities (eg. family bike rides in the park). In contrast in Córdoba during the 1994 regional election campaigns, the candidate for the Andalusian Party ended his speech by calling on his audience to vote for the good of "your future, your wives, children and jobs".

Like Gilmore some Spanish feminist academics follow Ortner and Whitehead (1981) stating that male dominance is real and must be combatted. Borrell Velasco (1992) argues that women are imprisoned by a male dominated society (see Chapter 3). Whilst not exaggerating the situation to the same extent as Gilmore, according to whom, women become domestic pawns in mens public games (1985;5)<sup>3</sup>, Spanish Feminist Anthropology does campaign for housewives to be liberated from domestic imprisonment and misery. Attempts to resolve this "problem" have involved setting up community self-help and self-awareness groups through which women supposedly realise their own self worth. These groups do relieve domestic boredom, boost some women's self confidence, and introduce new worlds of social and

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<sup>3</sup> Gilmore develops the point as follows:

"As Ortner and Whitehead have pointed out, gender relations are not totally arbitrary, but are deeply rooted in male competition in which the procreative power of women and their labour are reduced to currencies of masculine achievement and invidious comparison. Thus in a sense, we may see gender hierarchies and the subordination of women as male constructions directed not simply at the dominance of men over women but also at the dominance of stronger over weaker men" (Gilmore 1985;5)

cultural activity. The groups are a positive move for the emotional well-being of many women. Nevertheless, the success of practical policies which are based on theories of female subordination does not necessarily prove that the domination/subordination model is a reflection of all women's experience. These theories do not allow for multiple experiences of masculinity and femininity represented in contemporary Andalusian culture and stressed by recent theory and ethnography<sup>4</sup>.

Another basic assumption of the 1970s and 1980s was that of "women's universal subordination" (cf. Moore 1994;10). Corbin and Corbin rejected this argument, thus contradicting Gilmore's proposal that there is a "male need to substitute a social hierarchy in place of a biological symmetry in which women are dispensable and more than equal" (Gilmore 1985;4). Corbin and Corbin also argued that biological functions were fundamental to gender constructions and gender role segregation, but for them the logical conclusion was not gender hierarchy.

**(ii) The gender of the anthropologist, the construction of gender, and gender theory**

The anthropology of gender relations in Andalusia represented mainly in the work of Corbin and Corbin (1984, 1986), Gilmore (1985, 1987, 1987a) and Brandes (1981, 1985, 1987) was written in and responded to an intellectual climate in which a thorough exploration of the relationship between biological sex and the cultural construction of gender was being initiated (see Ortner and Whitehead 1981) the influential theory was one in which:

"Gender was seen as socially constructed, but underlying that idea was a notion that although gender was not determined by biology, it was the

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<sup>4</sup> See for example, Connell 1987, Connell 1995, Moore 1994, de Valle (ed) 1993, Broch-Due et al (eds) 1993, Cornwall and Lindisfarne (eds) 1994.

social elaboration in specific contexts of the obvious facts of biological sex differences" (Moore 1994;12)

The ethnographies which reported gender as a hierarchical relationship also contributed to gender theory; the influential work of Ortner and Whitehead takes Brandes and Pitt-Rivers observations seriously as empirical evidence. They criticise Pitt-Rivers for underemphasising the importance of prestige, (1981; 13) identifying the "'Honour" and "shame" complex of the Mediterranean" as one of the "better known examples of prestige structures" (1981;15) and state that "a gender system is first and foremost a prestige structure itself" (1981;16). They make the problematic generalisation that "...cross-sex social relations in all their manifestations - the sexual consanguinity - ramify upon male prestige from the point of view of the male actor" (1981;18) thus constructing a linear one-way movement of prestige from the female, to the male/female, to the male. Ortner and Whitehead assumed that a general "tendency to define women relationally" was exhibited by informants. Instead, I suggest that this tendency was manifested in the work of anthropologists and the issues should be redefined as: 1) Who defines women relationally?; and 2) What are the different contexts and criteria for the evaluation of an individual's prestige and reputation. Whilst in Andalusia male anthropologists have tended to define women's worlds and inter-sex domains as subordinate and supportive to male spheres (eg. Gilmore, Brandes), female researchers have shown that male prestige systems are not necessarily the only organising principle of "Mediterranean societies" (see Lindisfarne 1994, Hart 1994). In Chapters 2 and 3 I describe how there are a variety of different masculine and feminine types of prestige and reputation<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> cf. also Ardner and Ardner's (1972, 1975) notion of "dominant and muted groups" and Delamont's (1995;173-7) summing up of more recent contributions to this discourse.

Brandes analysis of gender relations in Andalusia is a problematic contribution to gender theory. More recent work by female anthropologists has represented women's lives in Mediterranean societies in a way which reveals and challenges the male bias which is written both the ethnography and theory of the honour and shame theme and other gender issues in the Mediterranean (cf. Lindisfarne 1994). Brandes researched, interpreted and represented Andalusian culture from a masculine standpoint which leads him to construct an unbalanced representation of gender relations (cf Loizos 1992)<sup>6</sup>. In contrast, Corbin and Corbin, who participated in men's and women's activity and discourse stress the difference between masculine and feminine power demonstrating how other anthropologists had missed the distinction between, in Delamont's words "sex segregation and sex equality" (1995;175). Delamont is right to emphasise that: "Equality may not come from the sexes being integrated or inequality from segregating them" (1995;177). It is only through comparing men and women in terms of male prestige values that women appear to be devalued by a male dominated system. In the 1990s this model is sometimes relevant because in some contexts women and men compete for the same rewards. Whilst in some contexts in contemporary Andalusia hierarchical gender relations are experienced by some individuals and groups, a fixed gender hierarchy is not "the" organising principle of Andalusian culture. Neither are hierarchical gender relations a relic of "traditional" Andalusian thought. Social relations are more flexible than Brandes, Gilmore, and Ortner and Whitehead

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<sup>6</sup> Loizos notes that since Brandes spent much of his earlier period of fieldwork in an exclusively male bar "We might suppose that what men say about women in such contexts has a rather special character, and perhaps an especially negative character" and "...it seems reasonable to wonder how far the views of his male informants about women were decisively shaped by compelling material from those early months of bar-talk" (Loizos 1992;174).

recognised: even if men are superior to women in one social context, it does not necessarily follow that women are **always** inferior to men. In other social contexts within the same culture the hierarchy may be reversed. As Connell (1987, 1995) Moore (1994) and Morgan (1993) have shown gender hierarchies are not "straightforward, perhaps even fixed", but "that the relationship may be more complex" (Morgan 1993;84), and that "gender as difference cannot be considered in isolation", but intersects with other forms of difference such as race, ethnicity and class (Moore 1994;61). Gender hierarchies are more usefully defined as contextual and subject to reorganisation, rather than static and based solely on one form of difference: biological sex. Gilmore (1990) has been heavily criticised for assuming that in any given culture there is a "single way of 'being a man'" (Lindisfarne 1994;27, cf. Hart 1994).

#### **Anthropological interpretations of the bullfight**

Anthropological analysis of the bullfight centres on two main issues: the relationship of the bullfight to "Spanish culture"; and interpreting "the symbolic meaning of the bullfight". Two themes have been stressed: one refers to the bullfight as a symbolic representation of masculinity, and the other to the performance as a metaphor for gender relations<sup>6</sup>.

"Readings" of bullfight symbolism are problematic. The quest for the "true" meaning of the bullfight in Spanish or

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<sup>7</sup> Hart's work on prostitutes and their clients in Alicante illustrates the plurality of discourses concerning notions of "man and client" (1994;48). She criticises Gilmore (1992) who despite new theoretical waves continues to insist on the "pursuit of harmonic integration" (1994;51) and stresses how in the neighbourhood where she worked "there were many different ways of being a man" (Hart 1994;50).

<sup>8</sup> These interpretations also figure in pseudo-intellectual discourse, art, fiction, and poetry.

Andalusian culture leads to over-generalisation. This disallows the notion of multiple interpretations of the bullfight, and by stressing a "traditionalist" masculine perspective has marginalised other standpoints. Conversely, "traditional" models of the social relations and sensuous experiences of the bullfight do not necessarily coincide with all subjective individual and consensus group interpretations or experiences. Anthropologists have relied mainly on male experience to understand the bullfighting world and the male bias in anthropology has classified "women" in bullfighting in relation to "men". Women are subordinate and secondary to men in the anthropological theory of the bullfight.

Below I critically describe some social science interpretations of the bullfight.

#### **Psychological approaches**

Conrad modelled the bullfight as "a culturally sanctioned ritual" which releases "culturally produced but repressed fears and frustrations" expressed by "displaced aggression against the bull as a symbol par excellence of power and authority" instead of against the state and the father figure (1959;185). In the 1950s and 1960s a psychoanalytical discourse about bullfighting developed (Ingham 1964). One of Ingham's foci is "*machismo*" (reflected in recent work of Gilmore-see Chapter 2), he agrees with Pratt, that "*machismo* is a defence against femininity" (1959;96) which actually represents a "defense against homosexual impulses" (Ingham 1964;97). From this model of Spanish "mentality" Ingham constructs a series of sexual symbols for the bullfight, for example interpreting the bullfighters' cape as metaphor for female genitalia. Ingham suggests that the conflict between homosexuality and heterosexuality is central to both Spanish thought and bullfight symbolism: "The bullfighter is masculine in that he penetrates the bull with the sword, yet homosexual in

penetrating a male" (1964;98) and "The dramatic conflict is based on the tension generated by the problem of whether masculinity will prevail over femininity" (Ingham 1964;99). Like Pitt-Rivers, Ingham argues that the bullfighter becomes increasingly masculine as the performance proceeds, and like Douglass, that "the bull is made feminine in the act of dying" (Ingham 1964;98).

### **Julian Pitt-Rivers**

Pitt-Rivers argues that the bullfight is a ritual sacrifice; a sacrificial exchange (Pitt-Rivers 1984;29). He (following Tylor) treats it as a ritual, a symbolic language, which has survived in "rational" modern society. Pitt-Rivers' analysis of "ritual" is based on Turner's recommendation that ritual is better "read" or understood by an outside observer. Appreciating, like Turner that symbols are "polysemic" Pitt-Rivers lends some adaptability to his interpretation of the bullfight by correctly observing that it does not exclude alternatives and expressing his willingness to modify it for a different historical age or country (see Pitt-Rivers 1984;30-1). The problem lies in Pitt-Rivers' assumption that meaning is fixed within the spatial or temporal boundaries which form his contexts, he does not allow that meaning is also subjective. The main problem, is the way in which Pitt-Rivers establishes a relationship between the bullfight and it's "Spanish" context.

Pitt-Rivers is criticised by Marvin (1988), Mitchell (1986) and Cambria (1991) for arguing that the bullfight is a religious ritual, nevertheless in 1993 he insisted that "It is a ritual sacrifice and it is part of Spanish popular Catholicism as indeed is the cult of the bull in general" (1993;11). According to Pitt-Rivers, during the performance the bullfighter "progressively disposes of his feminine symbols" to become increasingly masculine as follows: "...first we see the

bullfighter appear with an ecclesiastic aspect to him, which from the moment the bull enters the arena, transforms him into a female" (1984;33). The connection between the bullfighter and the "sexually ambiguous" figure of the catholic priest (1984;34) has been heavily criticised. Mitchell points out that in their respective performances priests and bullfighters are evaluated on very different terms (1986;401-2) and Marvin shows that the sexualities of bullfighters and priests represent two very different concepts- the former "self control" and the latter "celibacy". Self control asserts masculinity whilst celibacy denies that the individual should be defined by sexuality (Marvin 1988;149-50). Marvin insists that although the bullfighter's clothing has some similarity to that of the priest, the comparison should not be taken any further.

Cambria follows Mitchell in criticising Pitt-Rivers because he commits "the logical error of taking the metaphor for the essence", and then compounds this by incurring in "the methodological error of inventing the informant" (1991;221). The criticism is correct and Cambria rightly accuses Pitt-Rivers (1984) of extracting "certain aspects from the bullfight (which he confesses, he used to frequent...thirty years ago)" which "as a result of his sexual/religious interpretation" he "applies them to Andalusian men and the relations between the sexes in that southern region of Spain" (Cambria 1991;221). Cambria does not expand this, but Pitt-Rivers (1993) returns to the issue as an opening phrase: "An integral feature of Spanish traditional life is the cult of the bull". He claims again that the bullfight "is a ritual sacrifice and it is a part of the Spanish popular Catholicism as indeed is the cult of the bull in general" (Pitt-Rivers 1993;11). The centrality attributed to "Spanish popular Catholicism" and "the cult of the bull" in Spanish culture is unfounded. Similarly Pitt-Rivers' subsequent assertions that the bullfight is "a ritual

means of ensuring the stability of society" and "inherent in the Spanish mentality" (1993;12) are unjustified generalisations.

### **Carrie Douglass**

Douglass' (1984) interpretation of the bullfight been the subject of similar criticism<sup>9</sup>. Cambria accuses Douglass of taking "the metaphor for the essence" (1991;222) and arriving at the unjustified conclusions that "the theme of the bullfight itself is 'honor' and "the bullfighter is to the bull as man is to woman" (Douglass 1984;243, Cambria 1991;222). Indeed Douglass' rigorous application of "honour" to her analysis exacerbates the problem.

Douglass, like Pitt-Rivers (1984) compares the kill to copulation<sup>10</sup>, she incorporates the televised bullfight into her analysis by claiming it to be a culturally constructed "clue" which stresses the metaphor by emphatically repeating it at close up:

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<sup>9</sup> Mitchell (1986) and Cambria (1991) have again been the main commentators. Marvin and Corbin and Corbin (personal communication) agree that Douglass' analysis is problematic.

<sup>10</sup> Pitt Rivers' (1984) interprets the bullfight as a representation of violent sexual intercourse in which the bullfighter breaks the taboo against sexual intercourse with a menstruating woman (symbolised by the bleeding wound in the bull's neck) and thus symbolically overcomes a universal male fear of female menstrual blood. Such descriptions of superheroes and ritual representations of passionate sex have an appeal which goes beyond anthropology: Spanish writers also consider the bullfight "a searching symbol of the sexual act" (Luiz Alvarez 1963), and analogy is reiterated in the work of Hemmingway and other American and French novelists. These connections must however be treated as representations, not as pre-existing relations between the culture and the ritual. Frank points out that dance: "...may be no more a metaphor for the social joining of two bodies than sex may be a metaphor for dance" (1991;80). The same applies to the bullfight.

"Television in Spain now shows bullfights regularly and repeated instant replays of the kill are shown: the torero's blade goes in and out and in and out, for all to see; a kind of televised copulation." (Douglass 1984;254)

Douglass is wrong to emphasise a repeated "in and out" motion (or slow motion) of the sword. The action is not as prominent in televised bullfights as she suggests. Whilst Douglass' pre-fieldwork viewing may have suggested copulation to a North American anthropologist, for most Spanish *aficionados* the metaphor is irrelevant (although it is plausible that the action could possibly suggest copulation to **anyone**, it does not necessarily do so). When viewing a televised kill *aficionados* concentrate on technique. The televised kill is not an unconscious, implicit sexual metaphor. Douglass' reference to the televised bullfight is also problematic because she treats it as if it were interchangeable with the real experienced bullfight. As I will show the distinction between the televised and experienced bullfight is of great importance. Douglass' description of the "in and out" action suggests not a "televised copulation" but a copulation created by television. Even if it were to really be plausible to consider that this scene represents a copulation we would be dealing with a media narrative, a TV event, which has new symbolism and new meanings which do not necessarily originate in the experienced performed bullfight itself. Pitt-Rivers' and Douglass' interpretations are "over imaginative" they construct the symbolism of the bullfight and apply it to models of social life which do not represent experience. They deny the rich variation of life styles and thought which is found in Andalusia.

## John and Marie Corbin

Corbin and Corbin's interpretation of the bullfight is integrated into a general model of Andalusian culture<sup>11</sup>. They argue that the bullfight dramatizes two main themes: "The bullfight simultaneously processes the life of beast and man, its purpose in both cases the conversion of animality to humanity". The animal is transformed from "subhuman substance to human substance by ingestion" whilst the man strives to maintain his "public reputation" (1986;108). Corbin and Corbin locate the bullfight within male space and activity, it's theme is masculinity: "As a processor of human life the bullfight epitomizes the specifically male predicament and the means of overcoming it". Corbin and Corbin see the bullfight as analogous to *calle* competition where men are judged in terms "of relative success in coping with difficulties". The qualities required for this being: "general human qualities of skill, intelligence, ability to dissimulate and deceive"; "the more specifically male ones of physical strength and speed"; and "the especially masculine ones of courage and determination" (Corbin and Corbin 1986;109). However, in contemporary Andalusia, male and female bullfighters must both perform on these terms to succeed: women must exhibit "masculine" qualities in competition with men to achieve success and admiration. Cristina Sánchez is admired by many

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<sup>11</sup> When Corbin and Corbin did fieldwork in the 1970s they approached the bullfight (as did their informants) as part of the local *feria*. Whilst aware of the presence of journalists, visitors, tourists and later of television they did not incorporate this dimension into their research, thus restricting their analysis to the *feria* context (personal communication). The relationship between the bullfight and *feria* was also significant in my research but in the 1990s has become less prominent firstly as bullfights are often held outside *feria*, second because many bullfight "*ferias*" are not accompanied by major urban festivities such as Andalusian *feria* (for example the *San Isidro* bullfight season of Madrid), and third television has dislocated bullfighting from its local context and projected it onto a national and global media stage (see Chapter 10).

men and women precisely because she shows "courage and determination" and she "resists external aggression and domination" (op.cit). Women intellectuals, professionals and politicians, are also admired by many for the problem-solving in the *calle*. Many women and men confront similar difficulties, women must prove their competence to deal with these as they compete with men in the paid work place. Indeed, some informants differentiated between the qualities they admire and the display of masculinity expressed by bullfighting. They saw the bullfighter figure as an ugly stereotype of "traditional" man with an inflated ego, strutting about and showing off. Others criticised this model of masculinity for displaying aggression and domination which is not "noble" but cruel and involves the victimisation of an animal.

In Corbin and Corbin's analysis the female body has no place in the symbolism of the performance. They write:

"...the 'matador', like the bull must be male. His costume thus not only exaggerates the 'artificial' but also the male body - emphasising the width of the shoulders, hugging the hips and the buttocks, moulding the genitals. Maleness and masculinity, body integrity and behavioural autonomy are clearly at risk. Man and bull are each trying to penetrate the body of the other" (Corbin and Corbin 1986;110)

In this analysis the bullfighter must feminize the bull in order to prevent his own emasculation<sup>12</sup>, if the body of the bullfighter were female this would change the drama of the bullfight.

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<sup>12</sup> This is related to the idea of sexual penetration of men by men which is a metaphor for male public denigration. Thus Corbin and Corbin state that the bullfight recognises the problem that "the assertion of maleness may feminize others" (Corbin and Corbin 1986;110).

## Garry Marvin

Similarly, Marvin argues that "the *corrida* may be interpreted as a statement in a dramatic form of what it means to be a human male in this culture" (Marvin 1988;142). Like Corbin and Corbin's, Marvin's interpretation of the bullfight refers specifically to "traditional" Andalusian culture.

Marvin's research was carried out mainly in an exclusively male bullfighting social club<sup>13</sup>. He analyses male *aficionado* discourse and activity, and interprets bullfight symbolism in connection with the model of masculinity which dominates in this cultural context. This perspective excludes some female *aficionada* discourses, and others which explicitly disagree with "traditionalism". This is particularly evident when Marvin comments on the relation of women to the bullfight, for example, he writes:

"Not only are women felt to pose a threat at the individual level (to bullfighters), but some *aficionados* and commentators see women as having an influence over the whole event. Some of the older *aficionados* with whom I spoke even bewailed the fact that women are allowed in the *plaza* as members of the audience, where it is felt that their presence has had the effect of attenuating the virile, masculine spirit of the event..." (Marvin 1988; 154)

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<sup>13</sup> The social class, ages and sex of Marvin's informants and his research strategies differed considerably from my own. Marvin "spent several hours each day in the *Peña Taurina Curro Romero* in Camas near Seville...a private mens' social club founded by a group of *aficionados*..." (1988;viii). This was a male working class environment in which Marvin trained to participate in taurine activities (he did not actually perform as a bullfighter) and was "educated" by his informants (John Corbin, personal communication). As a woman in bullfighting social circles my approach was inevitably different (see introduction). Moreover, my informants included a greater middle class and female element. These points explain the differences between Marvin's and my own data to a certain extent.

This is only one particular perspective. I have come across other masculine standpoints which state that the role of woman in the bullfight is that of beautiful spectator and that women are essential to the bullfight. The masculine perspective does not exist, rather Marvin describes one consensus *aficionado* opinion about female bullfighters. I found that whilst the arguments against female bullfighting outlined by Marvin form a powerful discourse, I was dealing with a **debate** over the issue of female bullfighting; my *aficionado* informants' opinions did not amount to one general consensus. Marvin's interpretation of the bullfight as a representation of "what it means to be a human male in this culture" (1988;142) must be qualified because it only corresponds with certain models of masculinity.

The qualities which Marvin describes as essential to being male are being incorporated into Andalusian constructions of femininity. Corbin (1978) and Marvin (1988) emphasise the importance of "having balls", Marvin agrees with Corbin's point that "Manliness is thought to have a physiological basis - strength of character is equated with 'having balls'..." (Corbin 1978;4). Marvin argues that

"If 'having balls' is an essential quality for a *torero*, then the *torera* who does not have the anatomical requisites for performing presents a conceptual or classificatory problem. Most *aficionados*, commentators and members of the public deal with the anomaly by denying the *torera* her femininity. Just as the man who performs badly is liable to lose his *cojones*, so the woman who attempts to perform at all is liable to gain them, at least in the eyes of the public" (Marvin 1988;163)

Whilst for Marvin's own informants his argument holds, in a context where women are admired for "having balls" it is less appropriate since it is inconsistent with non-"traditionalist" models of femininity. I found it perfectly normal to say that a woman "has balls", meaning that she is brave and assertive.

Female bullfighter, Cristina Sánchez claims to have metaphorical balls and is nevertheless regarded as a very attractive female. One male informant commented that although it is normal to compliment a woman by saying she has balls, the phrase originated from "our sexist society". Whilst identity is inevitably gendered, masculine/feminine distinctions should not be assumed to be directly related to a male/female sex distinction. Cornwall and Lindisfarne make the point that "...nothing should be prejudged. Being masculine can involve a range of behaviour which elsewhere would be termed feminine" (1994;15).

Cristina Sánchez is quoted in *The Guardian* newspaper in England as claiming to have the balls of a bullfighter: "I have exactly what the men have" Sánchez insists, "even the 'balls' , with my courage!..." (Report by Alix Kirsta, Women p12 *The Guardian* nov. 1993). In asserting that she is as brave as a man Cristina does not find it inappropriate to use the metaphor of *cojones* to refer to the type of bravery she exhibits. Despite its "masculine" classification and the apparent contradiction and biological impossibility of a woman's claim to have balls, such bravery is not exclusive to men. The argument that women can have metaphorical testicles expresses a counter assertion denying sexual inequality. Nevertheless the idea that both sexes can possess the bravery required for bullfighting is not a universal consensus in Andalusia; this issue must be categorised as a debate (see Chapter 8).

Whilst Marvin describes the basis upon which **some** men question the femininity of female performers, others regard female bullfighting as an appropriate expression of femininity. The idea that a woman should have metaphorical balls is not universally problematic. Indeed to describe a woman as "*cojonuda*" is a positive evaluation. Although female organs retain negative evaluations, symbolising human weakness and

inadequacy, and male organs are associated with strength of character and social correctness, these symbols are not necessarily associated with masculinity or femininity<sup>14</sup>. In the 1990s many women are powerful individuals who compete with men and are admired for doing so. Conversely, the discourse central to Marvin's analysis states that "Not only should women not be publicly assertive in their dealings with men, they should not be seen to compete with men" (Marvin 1988;157)<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> The contrast between the use of terms referring to male and female organs is significant. A positive evaluation is denoted by the term *cojonudo/cojonuda* (deriving from *cojones* (testicles)). However, to say that a person is a *coñazo* (a term derived from the word *coño*, which means "cunt" but is more commonly used as a swear word than the English term), is an insult, meaning that the person is problematic to deal with, irritating, and who behaves inappropriately. Positive and negative social values are represented by male and female organs. This use of gendered linguistic metaphors implies that persons whose behaviour is considered to be socially inappropriate are said to be driven by the female *coño*, a negative force. In contrast, those who are to be praised for their *forma de ser* "way of being" are associated with the force of the male testicles. These references to male and female physiology agree with the analysis of the history of medical thought which shows that female "irrationality" was associated with the assumption that feminine behaviour was governed by the female reproductive organs.

<sup>15</sup> The *casa/calle* distinction which Marvin makes much of when he identifies women with the domestic realm and men with the street and public realm, does not hold for many contemporary Andalusian lifestyles. My research questions whether the *calle* is necessarily "particularly associated with men" (Marvin 1988;145). This division was evidently more relevant in the past, but the comment "*somos muy callejeros*" (we are people who are always out) which was made to me about the Cordobans in general was voiced by a young woman. The *calle* is not necessarily male space, and is not relinquished to the men by the women when their shopping and other outside tasks are over. Marvin points out that "Traditionally in this culture men spend very little time at home" (Marvin 1988;145 my emphasis). He notes that this situation is changing (1988;201), but does not take up this theme which I regard as being central because it implies the important question of how these changes are relevant to the changing socio-cultural constructions of masculinity and femininity in Andalusia.

This invokes the question of: according to whom and in what contexts does this statement apply? In Andalusia, women can and do compete with men in public and often win. They are often admired for doing so, and again the questions of "by whom?" and "in what context?" are relevant. It is necessary to account for more than one perspective on femininity and masculinity in order to understand how women performers are conceptualised by bullfight *aficionados*<sup>16</sup>. Whilst some *aficionados* argue that women should compete in women only events keeping male and female bullfighting separate, several "great *aficionados*" argued that male and female bullfighters should perform together (see Chapter 9). Furthermore, many bullfight *aficionados* are women (see Chapter 6). The gender stereotypes reiterated in "traditional" bullfighting discourse and imagery do not necessarily correspond with the way in which men and women think of or live out gender roles in bullfighting social circles, and women are beginning to play increasingly active, decisive, productive and influential roles in the bullfighting world (see Chapters 6 and 7).

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<sup>16</sup> My data disagrees with Marvin's on the question of the sex of the "bulls". Whilst some accept that women may bullfight the suggestion that cows rather than bulls be used in professional performances was not debated. Marvin reports that his informants simply responded that the use of cows would be *fea* (ugly) or inappropriate. In contrast, my informants offered the practical technical explanations that cows are not used in professional performances because, like other female animals, they are unpredictable (especially when in season), they are lighter and lack the steady balanced movement of bulls. Cows are difficult to perform safely with: they are more dangerous than bulls. Furthermore, the best cows should be saved for breeding since they produce the best bulls, it would be foolish (economically and for the future of the strain) to kill them. Therefore, the quality of cows available for performances is always lower.

## Timothy Mitchell

Mitchell criticises Pitt-Rivers' and Douglas'<sup>17</sup> interpretations of the relationship between the bullfight and sex, correctly pointing out that "Once we jettison empiricism, our answers to the questions "What does bullfighting have to do with sex?" will be limited only by our imagination or our shame" (Mitchell 1991;155).

However, Mitchell's own brand of empiricism is unfortunately problematic<sup>18</sup>. He constructs an empirical "experienced" bullfight which in more ways than one reaches the realm of sexual fantasy. Mitchell recommends that "if it is going to be worth anything, an "inherent" relationship between the bullfight spectacle and sex must begin not with what bullfight spectators say but with what they do" (Mitchell 1991;159). He argues that the bullfight has a "structural" (rather than metaphorical) similarity with sex, because both are to do with "physiological arousal".

Whilst the bullfight is undoubtedly an embodied communication and experience, my interpretation differs greatly from Mitchell's analysis of what he calls the "psychosexual aspects

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<sup>17</sup> Mitchell ignores the work of Corbin and Corbin and Marvin and does not directly contest their interpretations.

<sup>18</sup> Whilst Mitchell dedicates himself to social history rather than anthropology he engages in the debates and issues tackled by anthropologists and presents his hypothesis as an alternative to them. Unfortunately he offers no viable solution to the problems which he identifies in previous work. His research methodology is unclear: Mitchell writes that after one year of library research in Spain, his "game plan for the second year was to attend as many bullfights as possible..." (1991;viii). He mentions that on one of these occasions he was accompanied by "Paco, a middle-aged *madrileño* with a lower class background and a first class mind" who had "the kind of reflexivity that anthropologists dream about" (1991;ix). It seems reasonable to assume that Mitchell was not involved in the type of "participant observation" carried out by myself, Marvin, or Corbin and Corbin.

of the bullfight" (1991;159). For Mitchell it is the experienced nature of the bullfight, not its symbolic meanings which explain the way in which Spaniards relate to it. Basing his arguments in psychological theory which I am not qualified to assess, but find unconvincing, Mitchell asserts that

"Physiological arousal, whether of a gratifying or guilty variety, is an automatic result of viewing bullfights, since they are transgressive by definition and fully participate in the erotic dynamics of violence. We have already seen enough therefore to justify calling the bullfight pornography- in a purely empirical, not judgemental sense." (Mitchell 1991;171)

He describes bullfighting as "The innocent enjoyment of the national pornography" which "may well be related to a culture-wide predilection for strong sensations in general" and proposes that "bullfighting can only be understood in terms of renewable Spanish legacy of emotional volatility" (Mitchell 1991;173). Thus Mitchell's so-called study of the experienced bullfight turns out after all to be just another attempt to generalise about the psychology of the "Spanish Character"- which he constructs as a national psychological trait which transcends both time and space as it "return(s) to some heroic realm out of time" (Mitchell 1991;175). Mitchell's audience is made up of passive recipients of erotic imagery, they react as a faceless mass and the experience is universal, not personal or subjective. Instead I argue that it is more useful to treat interpretation as a subjective activity which takes place within a particular social system.

### **Female Bullfighters and the Bullfight as Ritual**

Pitt-Rivers (1984, 1994), followed by a series of Spanish anthropologists (Romero de Solís, 1992; Cardín, 1991; Delgado Ruiz, 1989) defines the bullfight as a "ritual sacrifice" and Garry Marvin has argued that the Spanish Bullfight is a ritual

in Gilbert Lewis' sense of the term; a drama which provokes an emotional response and affects the performer emotionally (1988;167). Whilst Pitt-Rivers has seen the Bullfight as "the ritual revindication of masculinity" (1963;90) but does not find female bullfighters to be disruptive to his reading of bullfight symbolism, Marvin demonstrates how female bullfighters are problematic for the ritual structure of the event. According to Marvin's analysis of the symbolic statements about masculinity made in the bullfight, female bullfighters (seen by his informants as inappropriate and out of place) cannot communicate the message of the bullfight. He argues that "the *corrida* may be interpreted as a statement in dramatic form of what it means to be a human male in this (Andalusian) culture" (1988;142). The emotional responses provoked in both performer and audience through the bullfight are, according to Marvin, dependent on the biological maleness of the bullfighter. When the performer is female the *ambiente* (atmosphere) of the bullfight changes.

It is possible to approach this problem from two perspectives: classification of the bullfight as ritual pivots on whether one argues 1) that the ritual structure of the bullfight makes it problematic for female bullfighters to be accepted, 2) or conversely, that the existence of female bullfighters is a problem for the anthropological construction or deconstruction of the bullfight as a ritual about masculinity. When the anthropological construction of the bullfight depends on a symbolic framework which originates in anthropology rather than in culture itself (which is undeniably so in the work of Pitt-Rivers and Carrie Douglass), it is possible that the latter is the case.

The contemporary success of female bullfighters begs certain questions for the anthropological definition of the bullfight as ritual: Do female bullfighters break the rules of the

bullfight as ritual and how may this either affect their own chances of success or the "structure and formal characteristics" (Marvin 1988;167) of the ritual? Is the bullfight a new ritual when women perform? or is it the same ritual by which something different is communicated? or does (as Pitt-Rivers (1993) argues) the biological sex of the performer have no bearing on the content of the ritual? (Pitt-Rivers is prepared to maintain his symbolic scheme at all costs) Should we even be analysing the bullfight as symbolic ritual? and does the anthropological reading of the so-called symbols of the bullfight actually render it meaningful in a way which is more significant for anthropology than those involved in the event? This possible threat to the validity of the meanings which anthropologists have read from bullfight symbolism invokes the questions that Fabian poses:

"Is it the primitive whose way of thinking, expressing or being is symbolic, or is anthropology symbolic in the sense that it projects onto its other symbolic meanings and understandings'..." (Fabian 183;125)<sup>19</sup>

Have anthropologists been so ready to discover (or invent) the true meaning of the bullfight in a homogenous "Andalusian Culture" that they were deaf to other voices?

In a contemporary socio-cultural (and intellectual) context where notions of multiple masculinities and femininities are

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<sup>19</sup> Fabian accuses symbolic anthropology of processing the "time of natives" by means of "visual-spatial" tools. A tendency which he labels "visualism" and which involves an exaggerations of the visual thus omitting other dimensions of experience (a rather harsh criticism in fact; more recently anthropologists have payed attention to other senses eg. Stoller 1989, Classen 1993, Classen, Howes and Synnott 1994). For Fabian and others this is a historical cultural tendency (cf. Yates 1986) firmly embedded in the history of western scientific thought (cf. Classen 1993, Tyler 1984), and one of the problems of symbolic anthropology.

stressed in anthropology<sup>20</sup>, media, and everyday conversation (including amongst some bullfight *aficionados*) it may be more useful to interpret the suggestions that rituals are "polysemic" in a way which neither Victor Turner (1967; 50-51) nor Julian Pitt-Rivers (1984) intended. Whilst the bullfight undoubtedly has characteristics of a ritual it may also be usefully defined as a visual and emotional performance which may be interpreted (positively or negatively) in terms of a variety of models of masculinity and femininity. Contemporary theoretical emphasis on differences within cultures and the breaking down of categories invokes an agenda which asks not simply "what do the symbols say about the culture they are found in?" but also, "what does the performance mean to the people who are involved in it (including it's audience)?" In Chapter 4 I ask these questions about a local Cordoban "traditional" bullfighting festivity. In order to apply this approach to bullfighting and gender, I take it for granted that there are many ways of being either man or a woman (or neither) in Andalusian culture (cf. Hart 1994). Some people have fixed notions of masculinity and femininity, but the entire audience of any given bullfight does not. Moreover, whilst bullfight *aficionados* may appear to adhere to certain models of gender in some situations, in others they may voice seemingly contradictory arguments. Individuals "take up a variety of subject positions within different discourses...some of these subject positions will be contradictory and will conflict with each other" (Moore 1994;55). My informants often needed to represent themselves differently in order to maintain a

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<sup>20</sup> Much of this work has been influenced by Barrett's (1987) outline of the various forms of "difference" that gender may take and Connell's (1987) stress on multiple and hegemonic masculinities. This has been followed up in recent publications, notably by Moore 1993, 1994) and Cornwall and Lindisfarne eds (1994).

reputation in a variety of situations<sup>-1</sup>.

Above I stressed that whilst the arguments against female bullfighting outlined by Marvin undoubtedly represent a powerful discourse of the hegemonic (cf. Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994-20-24) "traditionalist masculinity", I received a far greater sense of a **debate** over the **issue** of female bullfighting. Whilst, the fact that females are marginalized in the bullfighting world serves to justify Marvin's perspective, the extent of the power wielded by the masculinity described by Marvin is unclear. My purpose is to introduce some of the "muted" (and often feminine) voices of the bullfighting world and to suggest that these marginalized discourses may be gaining strength. Significantly it seems to be this "traditional" model of gender which often foils women's attempts to be recognised as professional performers (see Chapters 7, 8 and 9) or to play other active roles in the bullfighting world (see Chapter 6).

Marvin's point that the atmosphere (*ambiente*) of the bullfight changes with the biological sex of the performer is fundamental. The generation of emotion in the bullfight, the nature of the communication between performer and audience, the notion of audience consensus, and the problem of the sex of female bullfighters for the production of the *ambiente* associated with a good bullfight are central to my argument. "Traditionalist" opposition and lack of audience consensus present practical problems for female performers.

Now women are becoming successful bullfighters the problem for

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<sup>-1</sup> Informants as well as anthropologists can be seen as social chameleons who express their identities in different ways to fit into a variety of different social worlds. Similar ideas have been developed in recent literature on Community Studies (see Cohen 1986). Likewise, Bruner and Weiser (1991) develop the notion of "the navigation of self".

both anthropologists and bullfight aficionados is one of whether to redefine the bullfight to incorporate them. The questions are: what type of ritual is the bullfight when women perform and what type of performers are they? Opinions over this of course vary in anthropological and aficionado discourses. In Chapter 10, I suggest that this is less of an issue for television where the bullfight is reconstructed in such a way that female bullfighters are incorporated with more ease, although not without classificatory confusion.

Having outlined some of the problems inherent in the analysis of the bullfight as ritual, I want to briefly consider the bullfight as performance, in order to introduce a model for understanding female bullfighting which I shall elaborate on as I discuss the ethnography in the following chapters.

### **Performance and Performers**

When we start to think of the bullfight as a performance certain questions come to the forefront. What type of performance is the bullfight? What does it have to do with theatre? Does the performance become different when the body performing is female? How does the ambiente change? What are the dynamics of audience-performer relations? Is this a question of changing ritual structure or is it to do with changing processes of communication and conflicting notions of femininity? Should we be analysing the performance as ritual or what? and would such a ritual change when protagonised by a female? What kind of representation is the bullfight, and what does it represent?

The bullfight is a bodily experience for both performers and audience, it is to do with bodily sensations, with things which it is said must be experienced, they cannot be evoked by verbal or written description, photography or film (see Grosso 1992).

It follows from the centrality of the human body to the performed bullfight and *aficionado* discourse that the body should be given corresponding attention in it's analysis. In Chapter 8 I discuss the ways in which the performers' body features in the bullfight and the variety of ways in which *aficionados* respond to and classify the body of a female performer. Although the audience of a bullfight appears to act as one, "an audience is never fully homogeneous... but always includes different individuals and thus different interests and view points", and it is this heterogeneity that should be examined (Finnegan 1992; 99-100). I describe how both feminine life-cycle as embodied experience, and the expression of bodily experience of bullfighting through a female body may be either perfectly appropriate or utterly problematic depending on the different notions of masculinity and femininity to which viewers compare them. This is related to contemporary debates about gender; whilst female bullfighters themselves do not represent a political movement, their actions can be related both to political debates over the status of "women" as a political issue in Spain, and to the ways in which feminine roles are disputed and negotiated in domestic, family and work contexts.

**(i) Real bullfighters in real bodies**

The relationship between the bullfight and theatre has featured in the work of Pitt-Rivers and Marvin in different ways. Pitt-Rivers, attempting to incorporate female bullfighters into his symbolic construction of the bullfight (1993) has suggested similarities between the bullfight and theatre. Unlike Marvin, Pitt-Rivers argues that the biological sex of the performers is unimportant and claims that as in theatre the gender interchangeability of performers is not problematic (1993;15). Pitt-Rivers is able to make these assertions because in his symbolic analysis he claims that the bullfighter represents

both masculine and feminine roles. According to his analysis "the matador symbolises a female role in the first *tercio* (act), while in the third act...he achieves a super-masculine embodiment..." and "...the sexes may be either mutually exclusive as in daily life (the more feminine, the less masculine, and vice versa) or they can be cumulative as in a religious context..." (Pitt-Rivers 1993;14, cf Pitt-Rivers 1984). Thus the female bullfighter may fit into this role by becoming a "Joan of Arc" figure in the final stages (1993;14-15). Unfortunately for Pitt-Rivers, whilst female bullfighters may not be problematic at the level of his symbolic constructions, they are problematic at the level of human experience, which after all is the object of anthropological analysis.

As Marvin aptly demonstrates the bullfight is not "staged". In bullfighting and theatre, the relationship between audience and performer is quite different, processes of self-expression, presentation and representation work in different ways. Marvin points out an essential difference between the actor and the *torero*, a difference which he argues is essential for understanding the generation of emotion in a bullfight:

"The role of the *torero* is much more closely tied to the man himself than the role of actor is tied to the person who is an actor. In a sense the role of *torero* is inseparable from that of person as person, and although an actor may be famous and a `personality, there is no set of expectations of how that person should behave simply because of being an actor. There is however, for a *torero*" (1988;178)... "The *torero* performs as himself- the role of *torero* is not thought to be separable from the man who is a *torero*" (1988;179).

Furthermore the danger of death is real in the bullfight, whereas in theatre, however much the actor may appear to be in danger, the danger is an illusion evoked by drama. In the bullfight the danger is real and "emotion and excitement are

generated because of the danger" (Marvin 1988;179)<sup>22</sup>. Marvin's analysis excludes female bullfighters: the performer must be male and the drama of the bullfight is part of the larger image of the life of the bullfighter, he lives out his role not only in the bullring but in his everyday life. Whereas Pitt-Rivers attempts to include female bullfighters in an interpretation which is flawed because he fails to account for the fact that many people refuse to accept female bullfighters, Marvin's interpretation is limited because he fails to account for the opposite: many people do accept female bullfighters.

Marvin has defined the bullfight as a ritual performance which represents a drama about masculinity in a way which excludes female performers. It follows from his model that a bullfight in which the performer is female would represent a drama about femininity- about "what it means to be a woman in that culture". Or rather, since there are many ways of being a man or a woman in Andalusia, a drama about one particular dimension of feminine experience. Whilst objections to female bullfighters are often based on gender segregation models, for many Andalusians these "traditionalist" models represent unjust male exclusivity. Furthermore, as I have described above, the type of masculinity described by Marvin and Corbin and Corbin and characterised by public self-assertion, "having balls", is precisely what some women are admired for by some people in contemporary Spain. Women do compete with men in public and assert themselves over men in business and social contexts<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> Some *aficionados* pointed out that for them the existence of real danger was essential to their appreciation of the performance.

<sup>23</sup>In the bullfight women use their bodies to dominate the bull in a way which may be related to Frank's (1991) notion of the "Dominating Body". Morgan develops this idea more specifically in connection with gender, pointing out that whilst such domination (especially when force is involved- which is not the case in bullfighting where manipulation, not physical force is used) is associated with masculinity in many

What Marvin describes as a masculine drama and experience is also part of contemporary feminine experience. Many contemporary categories of gendered experience and activity do not fit with Marvin's definition of masculinity *vis a vis* the bullfight.

Like the male bullfighter, the female bullfighter is no actor; the drama of her performance is also about the female bullfighter as a person, she is acting herself, a woman who has succeeded in the public sphere and has become a bullfighter. This is relevant for the contemporary scene as it is about contemporary feminine success and along these lines one could argue that the ritual structure of the bullfight is adapting in relation to the changes in Spanish society<sup>24</sup>; it is possible that the mixed-sex bullfight tells a range of different stories about men and women in Spanish culture. In this case the lack of cultural homogeneity may be reflected in the lack of audience consensus which is key to the difference between male and female bullfighting. The body is central to this because experience, (life-cycle experience) is embodied. Women's life-cycles in contemporary Spain are diverse and varied, women choose different patterns of body use and different people have different ideas of the ideal model for the successful woman.

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societies, women also "use force and exercise domination" in many situation (Morgan 1993;80). The crucial point being that "in many cases it would seem that the difference is not so much one of whether women are capable of exercising force, but whether the wider frameworks of meaning within which the exercise of force by women is conventionally understood" (Morgan 1993;81). In contemporary Spain the moral correctness of women who dominate particular persons and situations co-exist. Some approve of a female body being used to dominate a bull and also control an audience, in public. Others do not.

<sup>24</sup> Rudie's comments about Malay ritual could equally apply to the bullfight. She writes "The ritual practices have to feel good and appear agreeable and inoffensive, in terms of contemporary reality". But "what is more, society is so complex that the reality is not completely shared by everyone" (Rudie 1993;175).

Female bullfighters must complete a life plan and career plan and this may involve a different use pattern and experience of their bodies to that of (for example) women involved in life plans which are primarily aimed towards childbearing and mothering.

### (ii) Representation and presentation

On one level the bullfight as performance is a representation, as discussed above, it may tell a story which has parallels in human models of success in social life and body use (be it masculine or feminine success stories). Simultaneously the bullfight is an event in which the technical and artistic skill of the individual performer is judged (according to set criteria), in this sense it is also a direct presentation<sup>25</sup> of the individual's physical technical and emotional artistic skills, knowledge and understanding. These elements, art, technique and knowledge are embodied in and expressed by human bodies. As I have shown above, female bullfighters do not act roles with their bodies, they act the roles in their bodies. In the live bullfight the body of the performer is an experiencing communicating body, an expressive body. In Chapter 8 working from Frank's (1991) notion of the communicative body I use the ethnography to show how different members of the audience understand female bodies in different ways, and how some marginalized images of the female body are gaining recognition. This is occurring in a wider

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<sup>25</sup> I use the term "presentation" here to emphasise the difference between the bullfighter and actor and to define the body of the female bullfighter as distinct from that of the actor which in the words of Pasi Falk:

"An actor in a play uses his body primarily as a tool, as a means of expression (speech, mime, gestures). The actor uses his body as an instrument in a re-presentation: standing **before** the audience (his concrete presence) but at the same time standing **for** something that is absent, that is his or her 'role' in the play" (Falk 1994:199)

The bullfighters body does not stand **for** absence, it is utterly present and at risk.

international context of changing women's body images. Hargreaves illustrates how in particular "Current representations of the female sporting body show some collapse of conventional points of reference, some acceptance of values which have previously been marginalized, and the emergence of new radicalized images of female physicality" (1994;173). Changing perceptions of female bullfighter's body images may both parallel this process and become more acceptable when considered in relation to it.

Trying to define what it is that a female bullfighter represents on a symbolic level is only half the story because we should also be thinking about the ways in which she is interpreted. Marilyn Strathern's point is instructive "...we should not forget that vision is embodied. In that case, in what kinds of bodies are the eyes set?" (1993;42). Taking vision and experience to be embodied I ask then, how do the bodies of male and female bullfighters communicate experience visually? how is this identified with by audiences and what variety of emotion does it generate? and how does this communication process change when the bullfight is televised? Biological sex is important since some members of the audience, accustomed to seeing a male body performing may find it difficult to identify with the performance though the visual expression of a communicating female body, if empathy with the female body is difficult then *ambiente*, the emotionally charged atmosphere of a good professional bullfight, may not be forthcoming. Members of the audience identify with differently sexed bodies in different ways and this may determine the type of *ambiente* generated. The level of consensus is low when women perform since their sex remains problematic for a large proportion of the audience<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> The homosexual body however is a different case, it is the sex of the body, not the sexuality which is at issue because many bullfighters are thought or "known" to be

In Chapter 8 I look at how some of the debates about female bullfighters' bodies have been formulated. Stressing sexuality as embodied, I examine some of the ways in which the female body has been considered unsuitable for bullfighting in terms of: female life-cycle as embodied experience; "functions" of the female body (breast-feeding, childbirth, menstruation); and strength. Female bullfighters and those who support female bullfighting are able to counter essentialist arguments (which centre on female physiology and "naturalize" gender difference) by taking a constructivist perspective, arguing that their opponents lack reason and evidence and demonstrating that women are not restricted by either their physiology or intelligence. Similarly intelligence (and emotion and fear) are gendered by those who argue that feminine intelligence does not understand bullfighting and (thus women could not embody the intellect required to direct their female bodies as if they were bullfighters' bodies (male bodies); successful female bullfighters have been referred to as having "the body of a woman with the mind of a bullfighter". Similarly it is argued that feminine fear combined with feminine intelligence, misjudges the bullfight. The body is central to the ways in which performers are believed to internalise, think, and express the bullfight.

Not only the classification of female bullfighters' bodies, but also other ways of classifying female bullfighting are crucial to whether or not it is considered acceptable. In Chapter 7 I discuss female performers' career paths and routes to success or failure, and in Chapter 9 I concentrate on clothing and language in a discussion of how female bullfighters may be classified as pertaining to a separate feminized tradition of bullfighting. Finally in Chapter 10 I examine the media

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homosexual, nevertheless this does not create an ambiguous category for the traditionalist aficionado (cf. Marvin 1988).

context of the success of female bullfighters and the relationship between live performances and the televised bullfight. All these are contexts in which female bullfighters may be criticised and evaluated.

## CHAPTER 2

### SEX IN THE CITY: POPULATION, GENDER AND REPUTATION IN ANDALUSIA

"I am free to have sex with anyone I like and when I like, and it has nothing to do with what anyone else thinks" (Female Andalusian student).

#### The End of Honour?<sup>1</sup>

The so-called "Mediterranean" concepts of honour and shame have dominated the study of gender in Andalusia during the last forty years. Despite Lever's (1986) insightful suggestion that honour may be a "red herring", other anthropologists (Gilmore, Brandes 1987) continue to assume that "honour" and "shame" play a dominant, decisive role in Andalusian experience. However, research suggests that even their modified redefinition of honour is not an appropriate paradigm for the anthropological understanding of contemporary Andalusian definitions of masculinity and femininity.

The main problems with the honour/shame debate are concerned with : the idea of Mediterranean unity; change; masculinity; female chastity and the male bias in anthropology. Below I document some aspects of the honour/shame debates, showing how my own data suggests the inappropriateness of honour/shame models for the study of contemporary Andalusia, and describing some of the characteristics and variety of sexual behaviour and morality amongst young people today.

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<sup>1</sup> Here I question the validity of the notion of honour as a "characteristic" of Andalusian (and by implication, Mediterranean) life. I do not intend to challenge the use of honour as an anthropological concept.

## Masculinity, sex, and honour

Discussions of Andalusian masculinity have admitted only one masculinity. Pitt-Rivers opened the debate on gender in Andalusia with the following definition:

"The quintessence of manliness is fearlessness, readiness to defend one's own pride and that of one's family. It is ascribed directly to a physical origin and the idiom in which it is expressed is frankly physiological. To be masculine is to have *cojones* (testicles)" (Pitt-Rivers 1963 (1961);89)

This "honourable masculinity", is a "moral quality" (Pitt-Rivers 1963;90-1)<sup>2</sup>. Honor Pitt-Rivers writes, is "intimately connected with manliness" (1963;91), whilst "The feminine counterpart of the conception, which expresses the essence of womanhood, is *verguenza*, or shame" (1963;111). *Verguenza*, Pitt-Rivers goes on argue, "is closely associated with sex" and the status of the family depends on female sexual comportment. Whilst a wife's sexual infidelity (the most extreme form of shamelessness) shames her husband and male relatives, maintenance of her *verguenza* stresses her husband's masculinity (Pitt-Rivers 1963;117)<sup>3</sup>. This model allocates men and women distinct and separate roles: "...men are entrusted with

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<sup>2</sup> Pitt-Rivers' model of masculinity has also been applied to the *torero* figure.

<sup>3</sup> It has been suggested that the strongest way to insult a man is by insulting his mother, this refers to "set phrase" insults like "hijo de puta" (son of a whore), etc. The example was meant to support claims that the shame of a man is related to that of his mother. Such insults are so frequently used that their meaning is not specifically directed at anyone's mother, rather they are contextual. The implications of "bastard", "bugger" or "wanker" in English have nothing to do with parentage, anal sex, or masturbation. Informants commented that they tended to use the first insult that came to mind, and that they are not to be taken literally. Whilst calling someone the son of a whore would direct the insult at its receiver, criticism of a persons mother is a very different matter and can inspire very angry reactions.

authority, with the earning of money, the acquisition of prestige" (Pitt-Rivers 1963;120) and "women are entrusted with the maintenance of the home and all that it means..." (Pitt-Rivers 1963;121). The existence of an Andalusian honour and shame system was also assumed by Press who translated Pitt-Rivers' model to the urban context of Seville (Press 1979; 129).

Pitt-Rivers has been criticised for overstating "the confrontational component of honour" in which "honor for one man must therefore be dishonor for another" (Gilmore 1987a;128). Gilmore redefines Andalusian honour by suggesting that what Pitt-Rivers and Brandes are "confusing is honor with the more general and inclusive concept of *fama* (reputation, literally fame)". He rightly points out that

"Today, in Andalusia, a man's reputation is just as contingent upon codes of geniality, generosity, and honesty as it is upon a baroque, violent honor" (Gilmore 1987a;128)

and suggests that the word "masculinity" should be used in place of "honor". Gilmore thus redefines honour as "sexual vigilance in a predatory environment, in which women are targets and men victims by sexual proxy" (Gilmore 1987a;127). Gilmore shifts the emphasis from honour to masculinity which he locates in the realm of "machismo": "the Andalusian cult of masculinity" (Gilmore 1987a;128-9).

Gilmore's contention that honour and/or reputation are not merely contingent on sexual conduct is fair enough. Men gain respect for reasons unrelated to sexual prowess or control of women's sexuality. Gilmore is right to cite economic success (1987c; 90), honesty, integrity, hospitality and generosity (1987c;91), however, in contemporary Córdoba women are also respected for manifesting these qualities, as they were in 1960s Ronda (John Corbin, personal communication); Gilmore's

criteria is not exclusive to male reputation, and he is mistaken to treat it as if it were<sup>4</sup>.

The applicability of the terms "honour" and "shame" is questionable. Gilmore and Brandes recommend their continued use but qualify "honour" by including it in a complex of masculine status-determining qualities. In Córdoba the term "honour" is virtually obsolete, the terms "*formal*"<sup>5</sup>, "*legal*"<sup>6</sup> or simply "*buena persona*"<sup>7</sup> indicate a positive evaluation. The theoretical utility of the concept is also dubious: use of the terms honour and shame as if they were specifically related to men and women respectively is problematic. Pitt-Rivers (1961), Corbin & Corbin (1986) and Brandes (1987) show that shame is not exclusive to women, but maintain that it is specifically related to female sexuality. However, a recognition of the coexistence of multiple masculinities and femininities for which female chastity is valued in a variety of different ways imply that the ways in which reputation is allocated are context dependent. Variety is contingent on the interface between sexual behaviour and reputation, therefore, an

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<sup>4</sup> Gilmore also cites "physical prowess" which is slightly more complicated because it is certainly a quality which is more closely associated with men than with women, however, attendance at gymnasiums, and the quest for physical fitness and "perfection" is a female obsession as much as a male one and both are concerned with the pursuit of both physical beauty and strength. Couples attend the gym together and sometimes tend to participate in sporting activities together. The above should not be confused with women's physical maintenance groups which are rather different as they are all female activities also aimed at the improvement of the body and mind via physical improvement means both better health and self esteem.

<sup>5</sup> *Formal*, when applied to a person may be translated as: reliable, dependable, businesslike.

<sup>6</sup> To be *legal* may be translated as a trustworthy, truthful, loyal reliable person.

<sup>7</sup> A *buena persona* means a good, kind, reliable and trustworthy person.

analytical model which states a causal relationship between sexuality and reputation is mistaken. I leave the honour/shame question here to concentrate on changing meanings of masculinity and femininity.

### "Machismo" and "Machistas"

Gilmore claims the existence of an Andalusian cult of "machismo". In doing so he constructs a masculinity without considering femininity and thus creates a theoretical hierarchy in which femininity is subjugated by masculinity: it is no surprise that he states "machismo sustains the society as it is" (1987a;149). The term "machismo" itself is problematic. It does not, as Gilmore claims, denote an Andalusian cult of masculinity, neither is it a dominant conservative force capable of inhibiting change. My informants who were familiar with the term "machismo" associated it with an "ugly" set of values demonstrated by some men and insulting to women.

Gilmore's exchange of the term "honour" for that of "masculinity" was mistaken, it was the local understanding, not the local terminology which needed re-analysis. Gilmore recommends "masculinity" in favour of honour because "In modern

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<sup>5</sup> John Corbin (personal communication) points out that in Ronda in the 1960s and 70s the term "machismo" did not figure in the vocabulary. He suggests that it has filtered through from contact with American culture in recent years. Indeed this appears to be the case- "machismo" is used in Andalusia as a negative evaluation of certain expressions of masculinity. Rather than referring to a dominant cult of masculinity the term is used in attempts to marginalise certain forms of behaviour. In Córdoba even in the 1990's the term was not in frequent use, although most younger informants understood it. The term "machista" was applied rather than "machismo". Gilmore appears to confuse anthropological theory with Andalusian culture: "machismo" as an anthropological construct may be useful, however as an Andalusian concept is not relevant. In contrast, the term "machismo" does have an empirical base in some, if not all, Latin American societies, and is explicit in Cuba (John Corbin, personal communication).

Andalusia, if you refer to a man's honour, men will laugh or they will direct you to the classic morality plays..."(1987a;129). However, in 1990s Córdoba many young people laugh at the model of sexual behaviour that Gilmore labels Andalusian "masculinity", they attribute such thought and behaviour to very "traditional" uneducated people who have spent all their lives in small villages. Gilmore is wrong to speak in general terms of either "modern Andalusia" or "Andalusians", his descriptions are heavily influenced by what some of my informants labelled as "traditional" or anachronistic Andalusian thought<sup>9</sup>. Gilmore is mistaken to assuming that such attitudes prevail as the dominant discourse.

It is surprising that Gilmore was unaware of the diversity, and experimentation in sexual conduct, which was practised by many young people during his fieldwork. Informants described sexual activity in urban and village contexts during the 1970s and 1980s. Although most referred to long-term heterosexual relationships or casual sex amongst teenagers, some mentioned sexual orgies and group sex as unusual, but which also happened<sup>10</sup>. No doubt such activities were not practised amongst Gilmore's male working class informants, and would have been

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<sup>9</sup> I have spent time in and met people from the villages which Gilmore refers to. Whilst the attitudes Gilmore describes are surely represented by some people, there is a far greater extent of diversity than Gilmore recognised.

<sup>10</sup> Organised sexual orgies do take place in Andalusia, they are certainly not part of face-to-face village culture, and were not to the personal taste of the informants (a group of young men and women aged between twenty and thirty) with whom I discussed the issue (whilst some felt that those who wished to should be free to participate). I would not like to imply that group sex is considered to be a normal or appropriate type of sexual behaviour by most people in Andalusia, however, in the region's cities and villages there is a rich variety of different sexual preferences and behaviour patterns which are accepted by some and not by others. Claims about Andalusian sexual morality based on (not at all recent) studies of small villages are inadequate and misleading.

considered immoral by the majority of Andalusian villagers in the 1970s.

Many informants stated that they live in a society which is *machista*<sup>11</sup>, but they referred to the negative connotations of this condition. The meaning of the term *machista* varies according to which discourse it refers to: whilst for some it means any situation where women appear disadvantaged, so-called "traditionally" minded men claim to prove that they are not *machista*, as one informant put it: "I'm not *machista*- I sometimes help my wife lay the table...".

Some younger men see their backgrounds as *machista*, and despite disliking sexist behaviour, say that they probably display sexist attitudes themselves without realising. Women who had moved to Córdoba from other Spanish regions remembered being quite amazed by Andalusian culture which they had found

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<sup>11</sup> The word *machista* is more commonly used than *machismo*. I discussed *machista* with informants who had a fairly good knowledge of English, we defined it as similar to "sexist" in English. The term was refused to describe a variety of attitudes towards women, the common factor being that all these attitudes were valued negatively when both male and female informants used *machista* to describe them. *Machistas* were "male chauvinists" said one informant- men who believe that women were not equal to men, men who would not allow or did not want women to take on paid employment, men who shouted *piropos* at women in the street, any man who did not respect a woman as his equal, a man who left his wife to undertake all domestic work whilst he stayed out in bars, men who say that women are physically weak, and men who argue that women cannot, or should not be bullfighters, etc. *Machista* was used to refer to both individuals, groups, society itself, and attitudes. Informants argued that both men and women can be *machista*: women, like for example, the "traditional" mother who practices gender role segregation in the household, expecting only her daughters to perform domestic roles and instructing daughters to make their brothers beds and prepare meals for them. Male informants used the statement "I'm not sexist but..." ("No soy *machista*...") contrary to the opinion of many women, some men believed themselves not *machista* simply because they appreciated the importance of the role that women played in the home.

*machista*. The relationship between Andalusian gender relations and the national and global contexts is an important variable in the contemporary processes of local change. Some Andalusians apologetically compared this aspect of their own culture negatively to other parts of Spain and Europe. Andalusian informants often attributed the *machista* elements of their regional identity to the region's past association with Islamic and Arabic cultures. They associated extreme sexism with southern Mediterranean cultures and explained Andalusian sexism as the cultural heritage of that historical period. Being a *machista* is also endowed with the negative (and racist) values which are associated with stereotypes of North African masculinity<sup>12</sup>.

Furthermore younger people expressed the idea that being a *machista*, is anachronistic and out of place, as one young woman put it:

"...my father is so "*machista*" and so lazy, I really don't know who he thinks he is, or why he thinks he's so important. Myself and my sisters come home from working or studying all day, and he's sitting there in his arm chair and tells us to go and get him the newspaper, or a coffee or some wine. We are all far more intelligent and better educated than he is, yet he still thinks he can tell us what to do"

Daughters as well as sons challenge the authority of the father in the home. Daughters are able to measure their own worth in the public work place against that of their fathers and conclude that the subservient role expected of them at home is contradictory to the order by which relative personal worth is

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<sup>12</sup> Informants referred to Islamic North African cultures in which women are veiled, would have to prepare food and serve at the table but would not be allowed to eat with the men and their guests.

measured elsewhere<sup>13</sup>.

### Male Sexual aggression

Gilmore cites a conversation in which some of his male informants recited the following:

"A man and a woman cannot be friends unless the woman is very very ugly and the man is very, very foolish".

He interprets this as meaning that

"...it is the very nature of the male animal to take advantage of women, to seduce them at every opportunity, to make conquests. A man who fails to heed the call of nature in this respect is weak in his manhood, inferior and foolish" (1987a;129)

Gilmore thus emasculates many of my informants under the age of thirty. Exclusively male or female peer groups, or "pandillas" are still common in Andalusia, however, not all "pandillas" and close friendships are single sex<sup>14</sup>. Although strong friendships

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<sup>13</sup> One of the main differences between my data and that presented by Corbin and Corbin (1984, 1986) lies in the way in which informants were critical of their own culture. Corbin and Corbin argue that the complaints they heard in Ronda could largely be explained by life cycle stages and the construction of appropriate sexual identities (1986; 167). In contrast many of the complaints that I heard, which were supported by women's movements, campaigns and press articles confirm that in the 1990s gender identities are questioned and debated and clashes over definitions of proper gender identities and behaviour may not be related solely to life cycle or generation.

<sup>14</sup> Uhl reports that in "Escalona" an Andalusian village, in the 1980's there were large mixed sex *pandillas* of around thirty pre-courtship youths (Uhl 1985;148). Amongst my informants I found that large *pandillas* were always of mixed sex composition, and smaller *pandillas* or "sub" *pandillas* based on closer friendships and of between around three or five members were either mixed or single sex. Corbin and Corbin also observe that in Ronda mixed sex *pandillas* existed, but note that this varied according to social class (1984;79-80).

between people of different sexes were not so common amongst middle-aged informants, they were regarded as normal amongst the 20-30 age group. There is no reason to assume that these friendships will break down with time; involvement of one party to a friendship in a serious sexual relationship (or marriage) with another person does not necessarily result in his/her curtailment of friendships with people of the opposite sex. Men and women develop friendships without a sexual element or potential. Indeed men who attempted to conquest or seduce women at every opportunity were often seen as irritating and foolish. Some attributed the behaviour of men who tried to have only sex with women, without first establishing social relations, to shyness and an inability to relate "normally" to women. In mixed friendship groups of middle class young people such behaviour is often seen as problematic and out of place.

The clash between "traditional" assumptions and new ways of conducting relationships is interesting because gossip networks did sometimes make male-female friendships problematic. "Traditional" assumptions may be used in a gossip strategy even if those participating in gossip know those assumptions to be inapplicable to the situation. One informant was particularly distressed by gossip which was catalyzed when she began walking to a government office, to check employment information. A young man of her age who lived nearby regularly checked the same notice board for his sister, naturally they walked together chatting. Several acquaintances of the girl saw them together, amongst whom was her cousin who informed family and friends that my informant had a boyfriend<sup>15</sup>, with whom she regularly walked in the street. My informant was most annoyed by this gossip, her friends and family began jokingly accusing

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<sup>15</sup> She used the Spanish term *novio* which implies a quite serious boyfriend and possibly an engagement.

her of having a boyfriend but not wanting to admit it. Neither her nor her companion were interested in beginning an amorous relationship, and she had to work hard to dissipate all the rumours. She commented that she found the gossip particularly distressing because, as she had no boyfriend, the insinuation that she was almost engaged considerably reduced her chances of meeting one within the circle of friends who were affected by this rumour until it was totally dispelled. In another case a female student formed a close friendship with a male colleague, however, his circle of friends began to gossip about the friendship, and the relationship became quite distressing for his girlfriend. Consequently the two friends agreed to spend less time together. Whilst some informants only admitted that one relationship may occur between men and women, most recognised multiple possibilities, including friendship. Normally friendships were treated as normal non-sexual relationships<sup>16</sup>.

Gilmore distorts "Andalusian man"'s behaviour to a ridiculous extent. Whilst some men make comments to some women in the

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<sup>16</sup> This differs from the changing situation represented by Uhl who describes pre-courtship relations in a Cordoban village in the 1980's. She observes that young men and women frequently socialised with one another in large mixed sex groups and that casual relationships developed between some couples. However these flirtations were relationships which extended into Uhl's informants' other social and family networks. *Pandillas* only met *en masse* for picnics or parties. If a male and female member were seen alone together in the street they may have been suspected of having a flirtatious relationship because some couples within these groups were romantically attached. Parents disapproved of these casual relationships and couples tended to conceal them within the group (Uhl 1985;148). Concealing the relationship may also have enabled the couple to maintain it as a casual flirtation. Young people are well aware that their elders may conceptualise a romantic attachment as being more serious than desired if the couple "go public". Moreover, if a relationship is thought of as temporary there is little point in incorporating each member into the social and family networks of the other, only to have to unravel all these connections in the near future.

street (it happened to me, and happens to all women in Andalusia I expect<sup>17</sup>) this is by no means universally considered normal or acceptable<sup>18</sup>. Such behaviour is normally restricted to the occasional comment made in passing, by a man to a woman, some women ignore these, others are insulted. One young man of about twenty years old, who belonged to an all male *pandilla*" of guys of his own age regarded himself as being in a trap concerning meeting women. Being too shy to initiate "normal" conversation with an attractive girl he stayed in his group, but felt embarrassed by the *piropos*<sup>19</sup> that some of his friends shouted to girls who passed them in the street. He felt that such behaviour would not help any of the group to meet girls, it was a strategy more likely to alienate girls and reduce his chance of initiating a relationship.

Gilmore argues that in Andalusia it is important that men should be "*macho*": "Being *macho* in Andalusia is being sexually aggressive, using only the penis as a weapon" (Gilmore

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<sup>17</sup> Similarly comments are shouted to female bullfighters when they perform in public, however the behaviour of those who make the remarks about a female bullfighters bum is not universally admired or considered appropriate masculine behaviour.

<sup>18</sup> On one rather extreme occasion I was followed on my way home by a male student who tried to insist on buying me a beer, I eventually managed to get rid of him after about ten minutes. When I described his actions, his persistence, and the way he explained his behaviour : "when you see a pretty girl you naturally want to take her for a drink", to informants of the same age as me they regarded his actions as being strange, out of place and highly amusing, in short he was regarded as an object to be laughed about. They did not regard this as normal male behaviour as Gilmore's model implies that it would be, rather they saw it as ridiculous and inappropriate. However, it is important not to play down the amount of attention that both men and women pay to one another's' appearances both in the street as casual passersby and in conversations.

<sup>19</sup> A *piropo* is a provocative, flirtatious comment, usually made by a man to a woman.

1987a;132). He claims that *macho* is used to refer to sexual prowess (not aggression against other men or physical violence against women). To stress the sexual meaning of *macho* Gilmore quotes an informant

"A macho, one man declared dreamily, is a man who would make love to a shovel if you put a dress on it" (Gilmore 1987a;132)

in 1990s Córdoba many people would call such a man an idiot, not a *macho*. Indeed the only time I heard the term *macho* was with reference to electrical equipment<sup>20</sup>. Equally inapplicable for Córdoba is Gilmore's informants' belief that there is a very strong danger of sexual intercourse taking place between any man and woman left together unchaperoned regardless of their ages (Gilmore 1987a;132). Men are simply not constantly sexually predatory in this way and many would find Gilmore's *macho*'s behaviour unpleasant and irritating, during my research one young man behaved as Gilmore describes: "his sexual impulses were uncontrollable; he cannot be friendly to any woman unless she is ugly, deformed, or bespoken"... "The macho youth thinks about women "with his balls, he thinks with his testicles"" (Gilmore 1987a;133). His aggressive sexuality was considered to be bad behaviour, he was thrown out of a night club. One male informant described such sexual behaviour as being a sign of immaturity and a failure to relate to women as

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<sup>20</sup> Not only is Gilmore's model of masculinity problematic, he also misinterprets the meaning of the term *macho* in andalusian culture (cf. Hart 1994;50, Corbin and Corbin 1986). In Spanish the term *macho* denotes the "male sex" (cf. Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994, Corbin and Corbin 1986). Informants insisted that *macho* and *hembra* referred to animals and never to humans. The only other time I heard the term used to refer to sex/gender was in conversations about plug sockets for which *macho* means male and *hembra* means female. John Corbin suggests that Gilmore's mistake is due to his imposition of a North American term which originates from Latin American Spanish, inappropriately retranslated in the Andalusian context (personal communication).

persons. He saw this as a character deficiency, rather than appropriate male behaviour and recalled some examples of how friends of his had acted in the same way in their late teenage years but later modified their behaviour as they became older.

Corbin and Corbin criticise Brandes and Gilmore for confusing the notions of animality and sexual identity in Andalusian thought (Corbin & Corbin 1986;166). Neither the animality represented by the young man in my example nor what Gilmore describes as "masculinity" are accepted as proper male sexual behaviour. One of the reasons why Gilmore's "masculinity" is so out of place in the Cordoban context is because he actually mis-labels "animality".

Gilmore's interpretation of femininity is equally problematic. Basing his analysis on his informants approval of the passive sexual role played by a woman in a folk song he constructs ideal sexual relations as follows:

"The virginal girl may be hot, to use the favoured Andalusian expression, but she has no idea about sex...The male must play the role of the aggressor; he must show the woman her role through instruction tantamount to rape. He must awaken her sexuality through aggressive coercion, penetration, and ejaculation."(Gilmore 1987a;139)

Although he admits that this "probably reflects a universal narcissistic male fantasy of the willing rape victim" Gilmore disassociates the model from fantasy by maintaining that it defines correct male and female sexual behaviour (1987a;139). Gilmore is wrong: it is inappropriate to argue that proper sex is analogous or "tantamount to" rape. Rape is a much more serious issue and Gilmore fails to distinguish between the two. The willing rape victim is indeed a fantasy; rape victims, by definition, are never willing. Some men idealise passive, submissive female sexual behaviour as desirable and appropriate, however, bar-room conversations about a few bawdy

folkloric songs does not provide a summary of Andalusian thought on rape and female sexual awakening. Moreover, Gilmore's "Andalusian view of sexuality" (1987a;137) is oblivious to a feminine perspective.

### **Inequalities in sexual relations; the smoothing out of double standards?**

According to Gilmore "The seduced woman is diminished: her reputation and her future prospects are destroyed; she becomes damaged goods" (1987a;134)<sup>21</sup>.

This "double standard" is debated in Andalusian discourse. Alberto, my partner is Andalusian, he became involved in a series of conversations with a colleague, an uneducated man in his sixties, who lived in the small village where we were temporarily based. He felt that Alberto had taken on a big responsibility by living with me unmarried because if the relationship ended, I, with no marriage prospects, would effectively be ruined for life. Their conversations continued over several weeks, Alberto never succeeded in convincing his colleague that if our relationship were to end I would recover with my reputation intact and have no problem beginning a new relationship. Neither did his colleague convince Alberto of the gravity of our situation. This type of discourse is

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<sup>21</sup> Gilmore describes heterosexual relations in military terms :

"A man wishes to defeat the woman's resistance; his advances are in way of conquest. His ultimate goal is to take something away from her: her resistance, yes, but by implication also her chastity, or her virginity, or her honour. A seduced girl, they say, is lost...The seduced woman is diminished: her reputation and her future prospects are destroyed; she becomes damaged goods." (Gilmore 1987a;134)

Some Andalusian men and women speak of sexual conquest in military terms. One informant used military metaphors to describe the seduction process, however this isolated case cannot be taken seriously as a generalisation: other informants found this way of describing seduction amusing but "over the top".

commonplace between the old and young, both moralities pertain to Andalusian culture and are sometimes pitted against each other in real conflict<sup>22</sup>. Parents usually claim to be unaware that their late-teenage and older unmarried children have active sex lives. Older men and women say that a woman should be a virgin on marriage. The parents of a young man who was cohabiting with a single mother, voiced their disapproval of the relationship because she had "been with other men". In this case her sexual experience was evidenced by her child. Male informants in their twenties responded by pointing out that many women of their age have had a similar degree of sexual experience, but since they had not become pregnant this was not initially evident. In contrast Press's male informants in Seville in the 1980s expected men to be sexually experienced on marriage, but insisted that they would only marry a virgin (Press 1979;130-32).

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<sup>22</sup> Co-habitation is an interesting example. In three of the cases I knew of the relationships ended. Neither partner had difficulty forming new relationships due to problems stemming from negative public opinion. Similarly after broken engagements, both parties have returned to the "marriage market" unblemished. Cohabitation was seen by most female informants as "out of the question" for reasons attributed to their social environment rather than personal morality: parents would disapprove, be hurt, or even disown them, or in "a conservative city like Córdoba" it would look bad. Most agreed that cohabitation would be easier in another city, this is practised by some couples. Some commented that my partner and I were "lucky" to have the economic means and family approval to live together. In many situations, particularly in kinship networks, we were treated as "husband and wife" some older informants referred to us as "your husband" and "your wife". Corbin and Corbin observe that in the past couples who had established home together even if they were not married were often accepted as being married and their children are not thought of as illegitimate (Corbin and Corbin 1986;70 note 6, cf Pitt-Rivers 1977;26). Cohabitation is now thought out in terms of different paradigms and moral frameworks. However, the link with the past is relevant for Andalusians since the historical continuity implied lends legitimacy to contemporary cohabitation.

Models which prescribe female chastity exist amongst, and are in competition with, a variety of other models for sexual morality in contemporary Andalusia. The male bias in the ethnography of Andalusia has led to an over-emphasis on female chastity as both ideology and experience- "many ethnographies of the Mediterranean and middle east report on an obsession with female virginity which amounts to a kind of fetishism" (Lindisfarne 1994;84). It is likely that these reports of female chastity reflect dominant or "traditional" discourses rather than feminine experience. Most informants under 30 in Córdoba thought that the majority of young people were sexually active and even those who did not admit it or talk about it had some sexual experience. In short, having a girl-friend or boyfriend implied involvement in sexual relations. As one female informant put it "I am free to have sex with anyone I like and when I like, and it has nothing to do with what anyone else thinks". However it would be unfair to say that these opinions, expressed by maybe more outspoken informants, reflected the universal feminine experience. Young women may chose to remain virgins for personal or religious reasons, or may simply not find the opportunity to have sex with an appropriate partner<sup>23</sup>. Some fear that they will, as Gilmore puts it "lose their reputation" (Gilmore 1987a;134), or at least their self respect, and in certain socio-cultural circles this may well be true. Extremist conservative Catholic religious organisations such as *Opus Dei* have some influence over their members sexual morality, but religious control of sexuality generally cannot be assumed and State control over

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<sup>23</sup> Several female informants in their twenties were not sexually active and were also quite uniformed about male sexual physiology, desire, and performance. This was partly due to their not having been in a relationship with a man, and whilst some expressed belief in virginity on marriage, others assumed that sex would be part of any relationship they may begin in the future.

sexuality has decreased<sup>24</sup>. Today women are free to determine their own attitudes to sex and are aware of a variety of alternative sexual moralities. Women are taking control of their own bodies and sexualities in several ways, an important example being the use of birth control (see Chapter 8). Indeed chastity itself is also being redefined in Spanish culture, recently the international phenomenon of "Chastity clubs" has caught on in Andalusian cities (Granada, Seville and Almeria)<sup>25</sup>. Media discourse identified these clubs as perverse and pornographic, whilst members claimed that the movement is a response to a situation in which they feel under great social pressure to experiment with sex. This phenomenon identifies the female chastity described in the existing ethnography as something which has almost been marginalised in mainstream urban culture. The new chastity which is being publicly announced and debated is part of a morality which potentially affects both men and women equally, it is not specifically or institutionally related to the catholic church. This version of chastity, unlike "traditional" female chastity is not a passive submission to social conventions, rather, it is a public statement of the idea that both men and women have the

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<sup>24</sup> Giovannini suggests that "Throughout the mediterranean region, the cultural emphasis on female chastity as an indicator of social worth and the corresponding male control over female sexuality have been intimately tied up with the legal/political system of the nation state as well as with institutionalized religious reforms" (1987;64), "...over the years, state and religious institutions have formally legitimated, enforced, and symbolically justified the cultural codes of female chastity. This had taken the form of marriage and family laws emphasising male authority, differential laws and punishments for female and male adultery..and religious images like the Madonna, which glorify female chastity" (1987;65). Informants have often referred to the changes which occurred with the end of the Franco dictatorship as entailing a kind of sexual liberation. Neither the state not the church has the control over sexuality which was maintained during the Franco era.

<sup>25</sup> The European 30 Sept-6th October 1994 p3. Report by Giles Tremlett.

right to control their own bodies and sexuality.

The "fiercely double standard" in which "the girl stands to lose" and "He wins a conquest; she loses her reputation" (Gilmore 1987a;134), loses significance when translated to a contemporary situation in which the site for male conquest is rapidly diminishing and the girl may lose nothing because her reputation is not necessarily related to her virginity. As Gil Clavo puts it, young women today

"...in order that they should not lose out, strategically cultivate their best virtue, which in the present is not their virginity, but academic success"(1993; 21).

Gil Calvo's observation is also rather excessive as a generalisation, however, he makes the point: a woman's reputation need not be based in her virginity, nor indeed in her sexual conduct. Correspondingly neither is a man's reputation, masculinity, honour, or what ever one chooses to call it, bound up in the sexual behaviour of the women connected to him by kinship.

The "double standard" is still alive but not flourishing as before. Orgaz Romero shows from her research amongst adolescents in Madrid that in general boys fulfilled their stereotype and tended less towards fidelity than the girls in her sample (1992;74-6). Another implication was that girls are supposed to be interested in and experience sex, albeit in a different moral framework to that of their male peers. I found a similar situation amongst adolescent Andalusians. My data implied that as young people mature into their mid and late twenties, male peer group prestige begins to have less to do with sexual discovery and achievement thus evening out the

"double standard" to some extent<sup>26</sup>. Some informants had an awareness of the "double standard" which also entailed its critique. This self-criticism represents a process of change, but is not practised by all Andalusians.

### **Sexual Fidelity**

Some men accept that if they are unfaithful they should not be surprised if their partners return the favour. Sexual relations with more than one partner is not a male privilege. Rather than being seen as a danger to a male honour female infidelity was conceptualised as something to be avoided because it is emotionally painful. Most of my informants believed in and practised the notion of romantic love and fidelity. Some male informants commented that having seen or experienced the pain of sexual infidelity, it should not be practised by either partner. Married men who have a string of lovers are not necessarily admired by other men, rather they are frequently seen as "sons of whores" (*hijos de putas*) who mistreat their wives. Many young people express a romantic ideal of a lasting partnership of shared activity and emotion.

In the contemporary context Gilmore's suggestion that sexual activity involved competition between men is irrelevant. Where

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<sup>26</sup> Amongst my informants it became clear to me that many middle-class girls in their late teens experience and express an open interest in sex, this forms a theme for discussion amongst close female friends. It is not the sexual act itself which is judged morally; approval and disapproval are governed more by the circumstances and frequency with which it takes place. "¡Que calor hacia anoche...!" (It was (it got) so hot last night!) young women in their late teens would sigh in the height of the burning andalusian summer. They were referring to the sexual meaning of "calor" and talking about the discovery and exploration of sexuality, they approved of one another's sexual activity and shared information about sexual experience. In contemporary Andalusia this is part of what a feminine identity may comprise.

sexual intercourse with a woman is not a matter of sexual conquest men achieve nothing: resistance may not be defeated because women have no reason to resist- women are empowered actors who may concede to or decline sex as they chose. Women know their own minds and do not have to be persuaded; they do not really want sex without realising. This model does not represent the Andalusian attitude to sex, but reflects one which renders Gilmore's generalisations inapplicable. Sexual relationships are complicated and involve complex emotions and loyalties which are personal and particular to every situation.

However, there is another cultural pointer to the notion that infidelity is to do with relations between men and women, rather than between men: Whilst Gilmore argues that it is men who "poner los cuernos" literally, put horns on, or cuckold, other men by having sex with "their women", my informants insisted that the placing of horns is something which occurs between a man and woman. The horns may be put on either partner, through the others sexual relations with another person. Brandes also reports from his research in Monteros that "it is clear that it is the cuckold's wife, not his rival, who bears primary responsibility for the horns on his head" (1980;90). However my agreement with Brandes argument ends here: Brandes argues that the real danger for men is that if their wives put horns on them, they are effectively being feminized: "...to be cuckolded is to be transformed symbolically into a woman. The horns originally associated with belonging to the woman, are placed upon the head of a man, thereby feminizing him". For Brandes it is the "uncontrolled sexuality " of the Andalusian woman which threatens her husbands masculinity (Brandes 1980; 90-91). Corbin and Corbin report a similar situation for Ronda where "Female adultery always reflects on the maleness of their husbands, suggesting their sexual inadequacy, and on their masculinity, their

inability to command the respect of their wives and keep them from temptation" (Corbin and Corbin 1986; 38). Whilst these ethnographic accounts emphasise the importance of male control of female sexuality, I found an emphasis on women's control of their own sexuality. Young unmarried women think their active sex lives have nothing to do with their male relatives. Moreover, the idea that women are in control of their own sexuality is not necessarily a new one: older informants who believe in female chastity spoke of a woman's virginity as being her personal "honour", which she was responsible for maintaining. I do not claim that "traditional" systems of values have vanished from Andalusian culture, indeed, one informant, a middle aged male villager asserted that if his wife gave him horns he would "sew her cunt up". Instead, I stress the existence of other discourses which organise gender relations.

Young people's reactions to *los cuernos* vary and are often different from those of older people. These differences are most noticeable amongst strategies for coping with infidelity. Coping strategies vary at different stages of a relationship, and one would expect a much greater emphasis to be placed on both fidelity and the maintenance of the relationship after marriage. Often infidelity is secret, but when found out many factors must be considered. For some it means the end of the relationship whilst others regard it as part of a learning process. A young man who was regularly unfaithful with a number of different women during the several years that he was with his fiancée was shattered to discover that she, being perfectly aware of his activities, had also had several affairs. The relationship ended, he was unable to cope with the destruction of his illusion and could not forgive her. He was careful to conduct his future relationships differently, saying that women could behave in the same way as men and that mutual respect for the same rules was important. Another

informant, deeply hurt on discovering that his girlfriend had had a fling with another man reconciled himself to the event since he had already had one affair and felt he understood his fiancée's actions.

### **Sexual Pleasure and the meaning of sex**

Under this heading I discuss the contemporary relevance of some models which Corbin and Corbin present as Andalusian cultural ideals for sexual relations.

"Copulation should not be pleasure, gratification, indulgence of appetite, or submission to infatuation" (Corbin & Corbin 1986;35)

Some Andalusians believe this and agree that sex:

"...should be intended to produce human beings by private acts between married couples who should live together in a house of their own away from other sexually mature persons" (Corbin & Corbin 1986;35)

However, for others, copulation is intended for and means precisely "pleasure, gratification, indulgence of appetite..." etc. Copulation occurs during long-term heterosexual relationships, between virtual strangers or persons and between people of the same sex. When contraception is practised the sexual experience may be considered legitimate and satisfying by both parties. I want to stress that sex that is not bound up with the contractual relations of kinship and reproduction is not necessarily evaluated as out of place or threatening to the social and moral order. Sexual experience is often part of a single person's identity and those who were sexually active are frequently considered normal. Young unmarried couples who took holidays together were considered to be "lucky", not immoral. When one young woman went away with her boyfriend for a few days without informing her friends, they commented that they wished that they too had "disappeared" under similar

circumstances, they expressed envy, but not malicious jealousy. Sexual relations between unmarried couples now fall into the realm of what many Andalusians think of as "proper relations".

The "Subjugation of sexuality to procreation" (Corbin & Corbin 1986;35) is practised by some couples but is neither a universal cultural ideal, nor a standard for proper relations. Whilst as Corbin and Corbin point out, "'casa' arrangements" ensure "sexuality sanctioned by marriage and intended for procreation" (1986;36), in contemporary Andalusia these are not the only "proper births" and "proper sexuality". Common use and advertising of contraception implies that within marriage sex exists for pleasure as well as for childbirth.

Yet women are seen and identify as procreators. Most young women expressed the desire to have children. But this was qualified as something they would do "when I want" rather than "*cuando Dios quiera*" (when god wishes). Since abortion and contraception are readily available women may control when and whether they have children. In these circumstances women are not only "life-givers"<sup>27</sup>, but they are also empowered with the authority to decide whether to give or prevent life. Women do not "lack will in relation to their biological functions" (Corbin and Corbin 1986;41), they are decisive actors rather than passive recipients. For many contemporary Cordobans loss of virginity does not imply impurity, premarital sexual activity is not shaming, and women are expected to desire and enjoy sex- to be more than passive participants, and women take control of whether or not conception will be possible. This

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<sup>27</sup>Corbin and Corbin introduce this concept as being fundamental to feminine identity:

"These are the basic identities of both men and women; they constitute who people are as givers and receivers of life. They are conferred by marriage which links two people of different kinship identities and gender and ensures proper biological and social reproduction" (Corbin & Corbin 1986;35).

attitude exists alongside, and often in open conflict with "traditional" definitions of sexual morality.

## Conclusion

In contemporary Andalusia an individual's reputation is not measured according to universal criteria concerning his/her sexual behaviour. Instead, the evaluation of sexual comportment is context dependent. Whilst some of these contexts may be related to age, generation or social class, other variables must also be considered<sup>26</sup>. Different consensus groups refer to different models of sexual behaviour. Young people must appear to live up to not one, but several, ideal models of sexual behaviour, in different contexts different people must be convinced of the sexual identity one projects. A young woman may express her sexuality to her parents, boyfriend, lover and close female friends (and if she is a female bullfighter, also her public) in very different ways.

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<sup>26</sup> In the past different sexual moralities were associated with particular social classes, the upper classes tending to practice greater promiscuity. This may still be the case today, but to a lesser extent. One of my main criticisms of Gilmore and Brandes is that they make general assertions about gender in Andalusia which are based on research amongst working class men in rural locations. This thesis is not intended to analyze the Andalusian class system and I do not feel qualified to state any specific conclusions concerning this. However, some factors are worth mentioning. The class structure in Andalusia has changed considerably since the 1970's. The middle-class, previously small (and little documented in the existing ethnography) has grown considerably. I found a large "middle class" which was only loosely definable as such since its members were of diverse economic and educational levels, and amongst whom there was a wide variety of attitudes concerning sexual morality. Whilst I was in contact with many working class people during my fieldwork, I never spent time in the poor neighbourhoods on the outskirts of the city where a more strictly "working class culture" would be more likely found.

## CHAPTER 3

### GENDER, IDENTITY AND THE ANDALUSIAN LABOUR MARKET

#### Introduction

There are significant differences between the contemporary Spanish labour market and the situation which Corbin and Corbin (1984, 1986) describe for the 1970s. These discrepancies are explained partially by the rapid processes of socio-economic change which have occurred in Spain over the last thirty years. Whilst I am unqualified to analyze macro-economic processes, I discuss how in the 1990s in Córdoba attitudes towards work, types of work available, and the gender of those engaged in or seeking paid employment, differ significantly from those described by Corbin and Corbin (1984,1986) and Pitt-Rivers (1963). Below, documenting some of these changes, I sketch the environment in which young people are initiating their adult working lives.

Three main points form the basis of my reinterpretation of "work" in Andalusia<sup>1</sup>. First, being in paid employment is a desired and valued status. Some informants expressed their desire for not only the regular salary which enables one to support an appropriate domestic and social life, but to be occupied, they were "bored" when unemployed. Rather than being "dehumanizing" (as Corbin & Corbin show it was in 1970s Ronda), paid employment allows the individual to live a fully "human" life facilitating marriage and bringing up a family. Some informants contrasted working to an alternative lifestyle of

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<sup>1</sup> These differences reflect spatial as well as temporal variations. Employment opportunities in a large city like Córdoba are likely to be rather different from those in a small village.

crime and drug taking<sup>2</sup>.

Second, the "traditional" concepts of Andalusian masculinity and femininity exist in a plural gender system of multiple models of masculinity and femininity. Whilst gender role segregation models are represented in "traditional" contexts, they are not party to the discourses which dominate in many contemporary social contexts<sup>3</sup>.

Third, women's employment opportunities and attitudes towards women's entry into the Andalusian labour market, in which they compete with men, are changing. Fewer women are willing to take low paid jobs as domestic servants and gender role segregation is diminishing as women are integrated into a public work force. Furthermore, relationships between work, home, and the street are changing; "work" is something one leaves ones home to do.

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<sup>2</sup> Unemployment and the drugs problem are often cited as the most worrying aspects of contemporary society both in formal public and media discourse and by informants in conversation. For some informants in their twenties the drugs scene was a disturbing comparison to their own lives because some of the very people who had been their friends and neighbours when they were children were now amongst the group of heroin addicts seen in the streets, or already dead.

<sup>3</sup> The incongruity between "traditional" models of masculinity and other competing masculinities is illustrated in clashes over the moral evaluation of the torero figure. As Corbin and Corbin show, according to "traditional" discourse, the torero was a "super-man" figure, whose masculinity was admired. Nevertheless, in some social contexts the masculinity embodied by the torero is not regarded as a metaphor for appropriate male behaviour (It is possible that this was always the case- throughout the C18 and C19 several groups of Spanish writers developed polemics against the bullfight). Indeed whilst some informants identified themselves as bullfight aficionados and appreciated the aesthetic element of the performance, they voiced their disagreement with the "ideology".

### **Attitudes towards paid employment**

Corbin and Corbin observed that in Andalusia "employment is demeaning", it is "forced on people whose house has insufficient capital to maintain itself" 1986;45). Employment is a necessity for those with no other income; many people have little choice over whether they take on paid work. I heard many complaints about work, but whilst some informants expressed the desire to change jobs they did not regard paid employment as undesirable, or "demeaning" in Corbin and Corbin's sense of the term<sup>4</sup>.

Whilst in the absence of economic obligation, many people may not work, several informants with substantial private incomes were employed in salaried positions. They were frequently praised by less affluent informants for despite being "rich", rather than being idle they are prepared to work "like anyone else". Having "too much money" and no occupation is believed to sometimes lead one to ruin. Informants recounted stories of young people have lost large proportions of their family's fortune on alcoholism and drug addiction, they attributed this partly to an excess of money and free time.

### **Self Employment**

Corbin and Corbin found that self-employment was the preferred economic activity. Whilst the success of the prosperous self-employed is respected, in the 1990s self-employment is often problematic; several self-employed informants found themselves in precarious financial situations with a income which was

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<sup>4</sup> Corbin and Corbin describe the dehumanising aspect of employment as follows:

"...to sell a service to somebody else is to sell a part of oneself, entirely analogous to selling an arm or an eye. Employees lose control of some portion of their time and effort; cede authority to their employer. This loss of autonomy and self-determination is a loss of the very qualities which allow humans to rise above the material limitations of lesser beings. Employment 'dehumanises': the adult, healthy, fully capable man who takes employment moves symbolically in the direction of women, infants, the ill, the impaired, and beyond to animals and other subhuman entities." (1986;43).

neither regular nor sufficient. Some saw paid employment as a happy alternative. Amongst the self-employed it is common for one person to be involved in multiple money generating activities: one young man scraped a living from one unprosperous business whilst trying to set up another which seemed even less promising; another sold cleaning liquids on a pyramid selling basis whilst earning the other part of his income as an entrepreneurial bar manager and music promoter. Examples are abundant: a part-time university lecturer supported himself with his academic salary whilst rebuilding a small bar which he later opened, he also supplemented his income by giving summer language courses in outlying villages; finally a mounted policeman relied on the security of his regular income whilst operating as a highly respected independent dressage horse trainer. In these cases the relationship between work and identity is complicated, in different contexts either of these dual occupational identities may dominate. Self-employed people work longer hours than those employed by others and their diligence is not always rewarded financially. Informants justified dual occupations by explaining that they found one occupation more rewarding but could not depend on it as a reliable enough source of income, they often classified this as an expensive hobby which "pays for itself".

### **Being "human"**

Work is not always enjoyable and the distinction between doing a job which one enjoys and working solely to guarantee economic survival is relevant. Informants whose jobs were "boring" or "unrewarding" emphasised that they worked to earn money which would facilitate their social or family life. Informants commented that they "would like to be rich", young women joked about their prospects of marrying into money and having a future "life of leisure". However this is rarely converted into practice; young women who chased men with purely economic

motives were heavily criticised.

Informants tended to see paid work as a normal, usual, sensible and above all secure way to spend ones days. Whilst Corbin & Corbin argue that in Ronda employment "dehumanized" an adult, it seems to me that in contemporary Córdoba work is all about becoming a human adult. There are two dimensions to this notion. First, for some informants to be unoccupied by work implied the danger of drug or alcohol abuse, or other illegal activities<sup>5</sup>. Second, work may be instrumental in the following process of becoming a full social adult: only once both members of a couple engaged to be married are in paid employment can they begin to start thinking about setting up home. Saving money to put down a deposit on a flat and beginning mortgage payments is a first step towards marriage since many couples do not marry until they can buy a home<sup>6</sup>. Until one finds paid employment one remains a child in many ways: there are few social security housing provisions for unsalaried young adults, an unemployed young person seeking first employment cannot leave the parental home and remains economically dependent on his/her parents, under these circumstances marriage is unlikely<sup>7</sup>. The dominant discourse of the 1990s identifies

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<sup>5</sup> Informants feared that the temptation of the escapism of drugs may affect their unemployed children or friends, and witnessed the process of drug addiction amongst those in the streets in Córdoba. Some unemployed informants had participated in petty crime and illegal activity, they were criticised by others for taking this alternative rather than dedicating themselves to further training and study.

<sup>6</sup> This situation is similar to that described by Press for Seville in the 1970's where: "Premarital female employment is almost a necessity for couples who must save large sums for down payments and furnishings." (Press 1979;122). But it should be noted that premarital female employment now has a great many more ends than simply housing acquisition.

<sup>7</sup> Graduates in their late twenties often find themselves unemployed and relying on their parents for pocket money, if the parents themselves are not very well off this can be very

employment and other social ills, namely crime and drugs which are related to it as "dehumanising" or "demeaning".

### **Work and sexual identity**

The relationship between masculinity and paid employment is central to Corbin and Corbin's model, they observe that the "...fully capable man who takes employment moves symbolically in the direction of women..." (1986;43). In the Ronda context, paid employment (as opposed to self-employment) emasculated. In contrast, in Córdoba there were two factors which indicate that unemployment, rather than employment emasculates<sup>8</sup>.

An unemployed man cannot provide for his family: he cannot play the masculine role of supporting the household economy. Thus he becomes a dependent, just another mouth to feed from a very limited family budget which may depend on state support or income derived from the work of his wife and children. Some wives ironically laughed amongst their close friends about the dreams of the "poor thing" of ever finding another job or providing for his family. Furthermore, an unemployed man has a restricted social life, since his resources with which to participate in "traditional" male drinking and socialising are limited.

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little. One informant commented on a male friend in this situation which limited his social life and idenpenence. She saw his chances of finding work to be very slim and subsequently regarded the possibility of his ever finding a girlfriend or marrying as being equally problematic.

<sup>8</sup> In general, since the 1960s, the nature of employment has changed in Andalusia. John Corbin has commented (personal communication) that in the 1960s employment was insecure and did not provide adequate funds. Under these circumstances the only means of being secure was to have sufficient capital in the household which could be operated to make what was considered a satisfactory living. Since this period there has been great change and in the 1990s incomes from paid employment offer a good standard of living and (in some cases, although recently to a lesser degree) financial security.

A second factor concerns changing gender roles. Whilst above I have referred to the family stereotypes represented in "traditional" discourse, other models are also at play: in contemporary Córdoba paid employment is not always a masculine activity. Both men and women participate in the labour force and in terms of contemporary models of masculinity and femininity neither employment nor unemployment need threaten sexual identity. Application of the notion that paid work feminizes men, to the contemporary situation would suggest that most men are either having their masculinity reduced by being in employment, or desiring to do so by seeking paid work. The employed, unemployed and self employed, may all have difficulties in living up to the model of masculinity represented in "traditional" discourse.

Attitudes to women working are also characterised by change. Many unmarried and married women actively seek employment. Their male and female relatives do not usually object to their becoming engaged in paid work outside the home. This data clashes with two main themes in the existing ethnography where it is argued that Andalusian culture is opposed to the idea of women working. Press compares the position of women in the urban and rural contexts concluding that "Wage labour in the city is more readily available for females, a potential threat to male economic power..." (1979;116). He found that men preferred women not to take on paid work unless absolutely necessary for the family's economic survival. In order to maintain the "illusion" of male control derived from the family's economic dependence on the husbands income, Press' male informants emphasised that a man's own wife should not work outside the home (1979;121). Women however controlled the household economy, and most household events (1979;118-9), men would only cook or clean under circumstances such as a woman's illness or day out and in the absence of a woman in the household tended to move in with female relatives (1979;119-

121). This model applied to **some** of my informants, moreover **some** young men living away from home remain dependent on their mothers. Other informants were amused by what they saw as the ridiculous situation by which one young man returned from his family home every weekend to the city where he worked with five prepared meals in storage jars to reheat for his daily meals.

Such gender role segregation is not the norm in Córdoba where many wives are employed with their husbands approval. Whilst one complaint was that working women deprive men of jobs and are directly to blame for male unemployment other informants dismissed this opinion as ridiculous. These differences of life style are debated in contemporary discourses, for example, on 1st May 1987 an article from the female workers department of Córdoba's Trade Union organisation appeared in the local newspaper (*Diario de Cordoba* 1.5.87 p21). The writer argued that women have little to celebrate on the 1st of May, and called for protest against the idea that women should be supported by the paid work of their male relatives, and that the woman should give up work if there are two salaries entering the home. This article defined women as "workers" demanding that society treat them in a more just and dignified manner.

Corbin & Corbin observed that "One of the main objections to women working is that it permits them to meet 'unsuitable' men without being subject to family control" (1984;69). Again, attitudes in Córdoba were different. Many schools are mixed sex, and girls have an opportunity to meet males outside the family context from a early age. It is accepted that young women should seek employment on leaving school or university and that they may have to go and live in another city (or country) in order to take up an appointment. Young people often see their work place as an area for increasing social

networks, friendships and generally expanding their extra-familial social life. Corbin and Corbin describe the 'moral hazard' of women being exposed to "dangerous interaction with men in the work place" (1986;45), however in the 1990s a search for a future marriage partner the work place has some advantages over bars, discothèques or nightclubs; a man met at work is socially "placed" and one knows he is in employment. This was an important consideration for some female informants who stated that they had no intention of starting a relationship with an unemployed man.

Gender relations in the work place have always been problematic, although the nature of the difficulties and the ways of dealing with them have changed. In the 1970s Corbin and Corbin show that:

"...public jobs which bring women into prolonged company with unrelated men are...insecure. Men paying attention to women are simply expressing their masculinity. If this causes them to neglect their duties or perform them improperly, the women who are the source of the dereliction are more likely than the men to be dismissed from their jobs even though their expertise may be more difficult to replace" (1986;45)

In the 1990s such behaviour would be labelled as sexist and the woman's dismissal considered "unfair". Contemporary issues are more clearly defined and are recognised by women's organisations. Sexual harassment is an issue, although instances of it are often not brought to public attention. During my fieldwork a female friend suffered much distress due to continuous unwanted attentions from a male colleague. Whilst some uninvolved informants felt my description was of the behaviour of a normal male attracted to a young woman, the man's actions were seen by my friend and her other colleagues (those directly involved in the situation) as out of place. The woman was judged blameless, the man held a more influential position, and she was concerned that he could use this against her if she forcefully or insultingly rejected his advances.

Similarly women involved in occupations in the bullfighting world have to deal with "sexism" at work on a daily basis. The reasons for this and the strategies which are employed to deal with it are discussed later.

### **Women and the changing labour market**

Corbin & Corbin note that the labour market was changing in Ronda in the late 1970s<sup>9</sup>. Cousins documents some recent changes. Whilst "the historic pattern appears to be one of married women leaving paid employment after the age of 25 years", throughout the 1980s there was an increase in the number of working women over this age in Spain in general. From 1987-1990 whilst there was a 29% increase in the number of women in employment, the increase for men was only 7.9%. The greatest expansion has been amongst married women (Cousins 1993;48). In Andalusia the percentage of women working is usually lower than that for the rest of Spain, in Andalusia in 1993 31% of women were active (Cousins, 1993;51). These statistics must however be qualified by accounting for the enormous amount of informal women's work.

### **Part-time work**

According to the statistics only 5.8% of all employment in Spain was part-time in 1991 (Cousins 1993;52). The term part-time work does not even have a Spanish equivalent although some (non-English speaking) informants used the English term. The official statistics are misleading because they refer to the formal economy only. My research suggests that in the informal

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<sup>9</sup> Corbin and Corbin observed the affects of a decline in agriculture and domestic service, noting three points which seem to be particularly relevant to the processes of change which are continuing today: that "the shift to manufactured goods has reduced numbers of men and women working as artisans and seamstresses", "relatively more women are working" and "most of the expansion is in commerce and light industry" (1984;6). Paid employment and women's work was on the increase whilst home, or domestic based work was beginning to decline.

economy much women's work is part-time (for example: teaching;, child-care; cleaning; and bar work). Domestic employment maintains a model of gender role segregation whilst teaching and bar work involves both sexes<sup>10</sup>. Part-time work is usually combined with other temporary or part-time work, university study, or training courses. The flexible nature of informal part-time work makes it compatible with the other activities of this "invisible work-force". The very invisibility of the work means that it tends not to be a dominant element of the workers identity: a young woman who did part-time shop work and child-minding identified herself as a student; another, having recently given up bullfighting pointed out that she was only child-minding whilst waiting to begin a police training course. Young women are able to capitalise on the gender stereotypes which identify them as being "naturally" equipped to take on part-time child-care jobs. The feminine identity associated with this role often contradicts the very career building strategies of which it is a part. In the case of the bullfighter, as her mother pointed out, her career aspirations were consistently "traditionally" male occupations. The child-care labour force is made up of a non-permanent group of young women, they have little or no long-term commitment to the role which usually forms part of wider strategies<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, the demand for child-minders implies that a corresponding number of women are unable or unwilling to care for their children full-time due to either paid work or social obligations. The former

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<sup>10</sup> I did not hear of young men taking on part-time child care or domestic cleaning jobs to earn extra money.

<sup>11</sup> I exclude professional child-minders from this category for two reasons. Firstly because they are involved in the formal economy, and secondly because much professional child-minding is not domestic work, ie. it does not take place within the home. Some informants who worked in *guarderías* (play-schools, or *crèches*) had studied child psychology or infant education a Bachelors or Masters level at University. Informal child-minding assumes no child-care qualifications and has no career structure.

seems more likely since in Andalusia it is uncommon for "baby sitters" to be hired whilst parents socialise: children are usually included in social activities, or left with other family members.

### **Temporary Work**

Temporary work is more prolific in the formal sector. Since the 1980s "temporary fixed-term contract work has become overwhelmingly important as a new form of work" in Spain, in 1991 virtually all new jobs created were occupied by non-permanent employees and in 1992 31% of men and 39% of women were on temporary contracts (Cousins 1993;53). The situation differs according to gender: the number of permanent jobs occupied by men decreased and were replaced by temporary contract work, whilst 94.5% of the increase in women's employment was in temporary contract jobs (Cousins 1993;54). Women have entered the labour market predominantly as temporary contract workers, many of the jobs available to young people seeking work are offered on the basis of a temporary six or three month contract. Informants continually emphasised this problem.

Cousins outlines the development of this system of employment. Briefly this process was begun by labour legislation which went through in 1980 and 1984 which "seriously eroded the principle of job security" in Spain: in 1984 fixed term contracts were introduced, these can be renewed for six-month periods up to a maximum of three years. A person may be employed for three years on a series of six month contracts, or a new worker may be taken on every six months. Informants comments on this system correspond with Cousins' description of the situation:

"New employees may be contracted for a few months and then work informally before returning to legally-contracted work (Miguel Lobo 1988). Employees, especially in the small firms (firms with less than 50 workers constitute 98% of all businesses) are reluctant to transform

temporary contracts into permanent ones. They prefer to lose trained workers rather than risk having one day to pay the high redundancy payments (OECD Spain 1991/1:68)" (Cousins 1993;58)

Cousins suggests that this job insecurity affects over a third of the work force (1993;58), and was a constant concern for informants in their twenties. Unskilled workers such as supermarket assistants and those with professional qualification, were affected similarly<sup>12</sup>. It is this increasingly insecure formal labour market which has coincided with the expansion in women's employment<sup>13</sup>.

According to Cousins' analysis the position of women in the contemporary labour market is not a happy one. Although the proportion of women in employment is increasing, women are entering the labour market during a period of great instability, most of the employment available to them is temporary and unemployment is high. Cousins concludes that "women in Spain suffer a massive unemployment rate, the worst types of unemployment, and economic and employment instability"

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<sup>12</sup> Normally case a young person is employed on a six month contract at the end of which he/she finds him/herself training the person who has been contracted for the following six months. Employees who remain with the same company for three years on a series of six month contracts hope that at the end of the period they will be offered permanent contracts-employers are obliged to either offer such job security or not renew the contract. It is common practice therefore for employers to break their relationship with a temporary contract employee after the three year period. In some industries a pool of workers is maintained and they given special contracts for specific short term projects.

<sup>13</sup> Permanent employment does exist and is sought after. Many young people hope to become state employees *funcionarios*. These permanent jobs are regarded the most secure and include a range of benefits such as health insurance, concessionary tickets for local theatre, summer and public holidays, and often a light work load. Such positions are obtained by public competitive examination. The competition is very high, often several thousand entrants will compete for less than 100 regional positions.

(1993;55)<sup>14</sup>. Women are disadvantaged in the labour market, furthermore, despite legislation obliging employers to pay men and women equal salaries, women are also, according to the statistics, paid less than men<sup>15</sup>.

Cousins explains the difficult nature of the situation of women in the labour market in terms of male domination and the history of a fascist dictatorship<sup>16</sup>. Cousins' argument is historically correct, she cites Franco's labour laws as obliging women to give up work on marriage, and points out that until 1975 women still had to obtain permission from their husbands in order that they should be able to work (1993;51). My informants statements like "my mother wanted to work but my father wouldn't let her" thus carry the added implication that a husband did have a real veto over his wife's activities. Cousins goes on to assert that this "patriarchal" system has continued to have a great influence despite the liberating

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<sup>14</sup> Unemployed women tend to be made up of those out of work for long periods and first time job seekers, Cousins' statistics reveal a "profound discrimination against women in the labour market and their inability to gain access to paid employment" (1993;55).

<sup>15</sup> On average a woman earns 70% of the salary of a man, amongst professionals and workers the average women's wages are 63% and 67% that of their male contemporaries respectively (*Instituto de la Mujer*). This may not simply mean that women are paid less for the same work as men, rather it implies that it is women who occupy the positions which are lower paid and the new temporary posts which since they do not have the same status as permanent posts do not demand the same level of salary. Informants have in fact found that their salary may effectively be reduced when they are offered a second contract.

<sup>16</sup> Cousins writes:

"...women's participation in the labour market has been hampered by the survival of patriarchal ideologies and traditional sexual division of labour in the home. The model of the family is a strongly hierarchical structure with a notable subordination and dependence of the wife in respect of the male head of the family and the children in respect of their parents. The structure has been influenced by the long years of conservative and religious ideology, reaching an extreme during the Franco years, and the late development of the state social services and assistance" (1993;50-1).

nature of recent legislation and is one of the reasons why women have been very slow to be incorporated into the work force in Spain. She argues that both men's and women's own attitudes have helped to maintain this "traditional" way of life (1993;51).

However, Cousins' argument is too simplistic an echo of gender hierarchy models of male domination to effect a real understanding of the issues. The arguments of Spanish feminist writers and organisations are similarly problematic. Spanish feminist anthropologists argue that women have been limited by the patriarchal oppression of a sexist society. They call for women to be incorporated into the work force and freed from male domination and near domestic seclusion (see Sanchíz 1992). Whilst these arguments are extreme, they do reflect the experiences of **some** women. Indeed these models influence the way in which some informants interpret their own experiences and inspire them to plug for change. The issues of "women", "women's work" and "women's rights" are incorporated into political campaigns and policies. Government organisations promote programmes intended to implement change and "improve" the situation of women throughout the country.

Cousins' approach offers only one rather limited perspective on women's' lives in Andalusia and is mistaken in assuming that "traditional" configurations of gender relationships are necessarily or always negative and that change is paramount<sup>17</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> The negative perspective on "traditional" women's roles coexists with an emphasis on the value of women as household managers which condemns hierarchical gender relations. This perspective was represented in a public lecture given at a civic centre in Córdoba. The theme was that of the Economic Crisis and the Role of Women and the basic argument was that in the current situation of crisis and lack of work it is women who suffer since the culture does not represent the concept of female persons and male persons as being equal. In this situation women earn less, are given fewer permanent contracts

Cousins fails to recognise that this may not correspond with the experience of many individual women. However, since some women do feel that their experiences evidence a need for change an argument that society has a moral obligation to accommodate their particular needs would be more acceptable.

### **A Spanish Feminist Anthropologist's perspective**

Spanish anthropologist Borrell Velasco asserts that work is necessary not only for survival, global production, and social demand, but also for ones own autonomy, personal development and self-awareness (1992;180). She attributes women's low self esteem and feelings of incompleteness and inferiority to other family members is due to their inability to realise their identity through working outside the home. This is problematic since an individual's identity is constructed in multiple contexts: outside work would be only one of many variables which bear on identity construction. Moreover, my empirical data suggests that many women do "feel complete" and satisfied participating in "traditionally" feminine activities outside the home. Several late middle-aged female informants were members of "religious communities" which provided them with a forum for discussion and expression outside of the family

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and shorter temporary contracts. The next point was that it is actually the woman as house keeper who has to cope with the crisis "in the home we always have an economy of crisis" the woman who manages a household economy must be able to cope with an economy of crisis and furthermore displays that she is capable and efficient by achieving this. Despite the fact that women play this important role the speaker argued, that they are not recognised, she argued that womens' work in the home is both unpaid and undervalued. This was followed by the presentation of the idea that this unpaid labour in the home should not be exclusively womens' work, men, especially if they are unemployed should share in the division of domestic household labour, and the question of why men are not granted maternity leave from paid employment was brought up. The recommendation was that the law should provide for the option of the woman returning to work and the man staying in the home and caring for the baby.

network, emotional support, friendship, social networks which gave them privileged access to certain resources and services, and also the opportunity to help others and feel valued outside the family group.

Borrell Velasco constructs a model in which paid employment is universally hierarchically superior to domestic work and calls for women to be emancipated from this subordination<sup>16</sup>. Such a hierarchy does operate in some social contexts and is confirmed by the experiences of many women living in Andalusia today. But although the model has some relation to experience, it is quite irrelevant to the lives of many Andalusian women. A whole variety of power relations operate between men and women in contemporary Andalusian culture, the same individuals may participate in several different power hierarchies (maybe simultaneously) during the course of their life.

#### **Anthropological constructions of women and work**

Borrell Velasco constructs three categories of women by work "situations": women who do only domestic work; women who do paid work; and women who do both (1992;184)<sup>19</sup>. Her analysis of women occupied exclusively in domestic work assumes this

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<sup>16</sup> Borrell Velasco's conviction that women are always in a disadvantaged position in Andalusian society leads her to press for female "emancipation" from dependency on males and subordination by the family, she laments that:

"...the political (democratic relations) and economic (access to production and salaried work) changes have, in our opinion, neither produced the real emancipation of the Andalusian woman nor have they "dethroned" her from her traditional fictive power, given the continued existence of stereotypes concerning folkloric femininity" (1992;184)

Borrell Velasco's notion of "fictive power" and "folkloric femininity" is what Corbin and Corbin identify as the basis of feminine domestic power and autonomy.

<sup>19</sup> These categories are similar to those set up by Carmen Vazquez Anton who addresses the related issue of women and public space by distinguishing between: mens space; shared space; and privatized space (1986;91-93).

category to be "socially unequal" and their work undervalued (1992;185), they are ignorant and silenced unpaid workers (1992;185) who mistakenly feel satisfied with their lot by acknowledging a false vocation to be a mother, wife and housewife (1992;187). Domestic work is her main culprit: "...it is the free character of the activity which makes it looked down on socially, and at the same time converts the woman into a financial dependent" (1992;188). Corbin & Corbin have shown that this was not necessarily the case in Ronda. My male and female informants emphasised the importance and value of women's domestic work and specialist knowledge. For example some men do not know how to operate the *cafetera* to make themselves a coffee in their wives absences. Many regarded women's specialist knowledge of cookery and domestic tasks with great respect. Whilst women are often financially dependent on their husbands, the man's salary is often handed over to his wife, effectively she has control over the family economy. This was a satisfactory situation for many informants. Borrell Velasco's point that "large groups (of women) remain imprisoned, not only by tradition but also in indignity and silence" (1992;208) may be applicable in some contexts, nevertheless I question her authority to challenge the statement of women who say that they are fulfilled. Complaints are more often focused on ill health and lack of money and the latter was more frequently blamed on the economic crisis than on the position of women in Andalusia. It is inappropriate to cite women's dissatisfactions with the limitations of their lifestyles without recognising that many men also feel gravely dissatisfied and unrewarded by their paid employment obligations. The question of whether an individual leads a fulfilled, rewarding and self-aware life depends on more than simply their occupational identity; job satisfaction is not simply the satisfaction of having a job. Informants did not necessarily see paid work as the route to self-fulfilment, for example the wife of a bullfighter told me that when just

married she had been offered a job working in administration at the local hospital. She accepted the post because she thought it would be a pleasant job and she would enjoy the working environment. However, before starting work she reconsidered and decided not to work since she preferred to accompany her husband in his bullfighting activities. Other young women said that they would not get married until they were in employment precisely because they did not want to be economically dependent on a spouse.

Traditional discourses do not devalue women's domestic work in the home; domestic activity is valued as separate and autonomous from masculine activity. Rather it is contemporary reinterpretations of masculinity and femininity which prompt the development of this negative perspective and devaluation of domestic activity.

Borrell Velasco's model demands critical reading. Corbin & Corbin's material, whilst offering a useful counter-argument, is limited by its historical period. Feminist arguments highlight some important points: Borrell Velasco is right to draw attention to the "social problems" of women in Spain: recent changes have caused many women to feel "trapped" alone in their homes. Women in the newer neighbourhoods of Córdoba complained that their neighbours are unfriendly, and not, as in the past (and still in some older *barrios*<sup>20</sup>) sharing or supportive. I encountered cases of very unhappy marriages in which husband and wife spent little time together except at meal times and open insults were frequent<sup>21</sup>. However, these may

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<sup>20</sup> "Barrio" is the Spanish term used for formally demarcated neighbourhoods or zones of the city.

<sup>21</sup> In one case the middle class husband always stopping at the bar on his way home from work for meals would arrive home drunk and inflict a long stream of loud verbal abuse on his wife every night whilst waiting for and eating the meal she

be cases of unhappy marriages rather than a basis from which to critically construct the position of women in Spanish culture<sup>22</sup>. It is often once women try to expand their lives beyond domestic and family orientated activity and into paid work on a competitive basis with men, that they encounter discrimination and the male expectation that they will play a servile role at work.

Borrell Velasco constructs her category of women who do only paid work in relation to the model of women who are confined to domestic work: the domestic work from which the former have "liberated" themselves, falls into the responsibility of other women (namely mothers and domestic helps) (1992;190). Cristina Borderías (1991) describes a similar pattern<sup>23</sup>, whilst women move into paid work, men's labour is not channelled in the opposite direction. This category of working women is small and tends to be made up of young women with a fairly high level of education who are single and living with their families or married and economically affluent (Borrell 1992;189). I found

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prepared and served for him.

<sup>22</sup> Changes in Spanish society which tend to orientate family groups towards more insular living that have led to housewives becoming more isolated from close female networks and thus made incompatible marriages less easy to bear. However, Borrell Velasco over stresses the model of oppressed and dominated womanhood: there are plenty of wives, mothers, and housewives who also have happy, full and rewarding social lives, they do not feel themselves subordinated by family life nor are they "frustrated" by being unable to realise their own lives.

<sup>23</sup> Borderías describes a general pattern in which women's paid work is supported by other women, not by men. Borderías reports that women's career patterns are more broken and less supported than those of men. Sisters tend to start working young so that the continuation of their older brothers education can be financed. Brother's salaries however are not used to finance the education of their sisters, whilst mother's salaries are, and grandmothers come in to substitute many working mothers (Borderías 1991).

similar data, and add that most single working women from families without extra domestic help contribute to domestic work. The specific "contribution" must be defined as either occasional or token regular "help" (such as making one's bed, washing up, and occasional food preparation- which sons and husbands often do too), or a sharing range of supportive domestic activity. The former leaves the mother to carry out the majority of domestic work. The female bullfighter, Cristina Sánchez has taken on this role of working daughter. She specialises in training and paid work outside the home and depends on her mother for domestic support. She voices her appreciation of her mothers willingness to liberate her from such activities in order that she can pursue her career. Male bullfighters do not tend to make similar observations about their domestic arrangements.

Borrell Velasco's final category of women who carry out both domestic and paid work has two sub-categories: those who work because they are financially obliged to contribute to the family income but aspire to "inactive wife" models, and those with a vocation towards their employment (1992;192). She argues that paid work does not liberate these women from domestic work<sup>24</sup> and the double work load makes it tough for women to compete with men who participate only in paid work concluding that this situation contributes to "the myth of female inferiority" (1992;193). Women who do both types of work also have very little time for further training, men who do have this greater time resource can continue to train and study and progress more easily (1992;194). Middle-aged informants cited similar problems<sup>25</sup> describing two types of

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<sup>24</sup> To a certain extent this misses the point because often women are liberated from domestic work by other women's help rather than through employment.

<sup>25</sup> Some informants identified with a model of the woman who works and studies whilst simultaneously struggling to

"sexism": "aggressive" sexism by which men are openly resistant to women's presence, attempt to prevent their participation and deny women's abilities; "paternal" sexism- the male tendency to doubt women's abilities by acting "protectively", treating women as if they were unintelligent, fragile beings, unsuitable for the male world.

### Young women and work in the 1990s

Whilst a group of informants, girls in their late teens, identified sexism in the older generation they dismissed older women's complaints about unequal opportunities as irrelevant to their own experiences. These young women, mainly from middle class families played leading roles in intellectual discussions expressing themselves in public more frequently than their male colleagues. They had firm plans to attend university and study degrees in journalism, law and other professions, fully intending to follow careers in these subjects after university. They felt that work and socio-political domains pertained equally to themselves and their male contemporaries, and did not feel disadvantaged because of their gender. Their active participation as decision-makers in public life was taken for granted, not something they anticipated fighting for. This

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maintain the role of wife and mother. Women frequently leave classes early to meet their children from school, or prepare meals. Domestic tasks are rarely neglected. One lower middle class woman in her thirties, married with two young children and a husband whom she affectionately described as "one of the old traditional type", had strong views about the problematic situation of women. She studied part-time courses and was hoping to enter university. She also worked as a freelance theatre designer and was involved in projects aimed at bringing self awareness to women in poor neighbourhoods. This woman felt that she was involved in a battle which included fighting against sexism, she worked "double time" to manage both a home and a career, but also respected her husbands values and was grateful when he would stay in for an evening to supervise the children freeing her to pursue educational or work activity. This informant represents a type of woman whose experience supports her identification with a political argument for change.

model of femininity does not apply universally to all young women embarking on a career in contemporary Andalusia, but signifies differences amongst women's expectations and aspirations<sup>26</sup>.

Sociologist Enrique Gil Calvo writes that "the girls of today are not content with being servants, secretaries, machinists or assistants, they increasingly aspire to be judges, engineers, general directors and air pilots" (1993;18). These are precisely the careers that several of my female informants were planning, training for, or embarking on. Many university educated women work as shop assistants and secretaries simply because no other work is available, these jobs are usually acquired through family and friendship networks; they hope to find another job "after the crisis".

Corbin and Corbin's descriptions of middle class young single women who worked in shops or studied at university is quite different from the contemporary scene. Whereas in the 1970s only the wealthy studied (1986;56), in the 1990s university students come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. Corbin and Corbin (1984) and Gil Calvo (1993) describe 1970s attitudes towards middle-class women's education and work<sup>27</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless the changes implied must be qualified: young unmarried women have always been relatively free from domestic tasks whilst still living with their parents (although daughters have usually been expected to make a greater contribution than sons, who may not be asked to participate at all). At this stage in the life-cycle it may be difficult for young women to imagine the experienced difficulties of women who manage full-time employment whilst running a home.

<sup>27</sup> The sons of *señorito* families tended to go to university either returning to run the family estates or to practice as, for example, lawyers doctors or engineers. It was less usual for daughters to attend university "However the primary expectation remains that they will be *señoritas*" a role they learn passively. Their future would be that of running a household which they would learn from their mothers (Corbin & Corbin 1984;36). Corbin and Corbin observe the beginnings of the

In that period it was not normal for wealthy young women to take on paid employment and those who did so "were careful to point out that they only did so as a personal adornment", in the same way, studying for a degree "was not intended for any other purpose than finding a husband and becoming more educated" (Gil Calvo 1993;18).

According to Gil Calvo's statistical data<sup>26</sup> young women are beginning to follow typically masculine career paths; women are not simply applying household management skills to paid employment. However, it is necessary to qualify the statistical implications by noting that most women entering employment are young and take up junior vacancies. Rather than entering a profession related to their degree, the qualification may facilitate entry into another "feminized"<sup>26</sup>

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process of change, both rich and poor women's aspirations to take up paid work were increasing and "by the 1970s wealthy young women were doing 'acceptable' part-time work such as working in the more elegant boutiques. A few were practising in the professions" (1984;42, note 10).

<sup>26</sup> Gil Calvo sums up the contemporary situation for all of Spain as follows. Young women make up 51% of the total number of university students and are moving into traditionally male occupational domains. The only exception to this is engineering where there has still been an increase from 10% to 20% of places being filled by women in the last ten years (1993;20). An article about female engineers by Inmaculada de la Fuente was published in *El Pais*, 31.10.93. Featuring on the career of one young woman aged 27, she reports that of 45 students who graduated as Road Engineers in 1989, only 5 were women, two have taken public examinations to work in administration, two work in engineering but in project offices and only one has become an active professional. Women are not paid less than men in this career but do face other additional problems. Another young female engineer noted that companies sometimes specifically asked for a male engineering consultant to be sent to them since they felt they could have more confidence in advice given by a man.

<sup>29</sup> Gil Calvo suggests that young women tend to opt for specialisations which are more "feminized", such as medicine, social work, and teaching. Even women engineers tend to be attracted to agricultural, mountain, or architectural

occupation. Senior positions are still mainly occupied by men.

My research over-represents young women of middle-class origin, although university education is not limited to the middle and upper class. The data implies that not only highly qualified women are entering "traditionally" male professions, for example, firewomen and female soldiers have been the subjects of recent reports and an increasing number of women are entering the police force. Bullfighting is another activity for which no academic qualifications are required. These changes are "news" in Spain and there is an abundance of newspaper and magazine articles which represent women working in traditionally male occupations. Media representations of women contribute to the generation of cultural constructions of femininity. However, media representations of women playing "traditionally" masculine roles often take a "novelty" angle. This actually serves to reaffirm "tradition" rather than reporting signifying change because it classifies women who play masculine roles as merely curious novel deviations from an established norm.

Women's participation in the labour market is increasing whilst men still dominate in sheer numbers, seniority and security of position, wage earning capacity and networks of personal influence. Two issues are particularly relevant for future research: first the process by which men vacate certain occupations as they are colonised by women and "feminised" (Gil Calvo 1993;20); second the question of whether jobs with the same title amount to the same duties when occupied men and women. Later I explore the ways in which women are integrated into professions in the bullfighting world.

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engineering, which he associates with the vegetable garden, garden and house respectively (1993;26). Although the statistics may be reliable the symbolic connection is dubious.

## CHAPTER 4

### TOPSY-TURVY BULLFIGHTS AND FESTIVAL QUEENS: ON THE MEANING OF GENDER, TRADITION AND RITUAL IN CORDOBA

This Chapter is about the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa* a festive bullfight held annually in the city of Córdoba. I concentrate on the interface between gender and notions of tradition and change in the context of a non-serious performance.

The role of women in the bullfighting world is often represented by the stereotype of the "passive woman", embodied in the image of the "beautiful spectator". Whilst these "traditionalist" representations of gender dominate bullfighting discourse, women actively challenge this model in their everyday lives. Below I introduce an example of the interface between stereotype, ideal model, and feminine experience, showing how a local festivity which represents gender stereotypes contested by both feminine experience and political campaigns nevertheless has remained extremely popular throughout a whole century of social change. This raises issues concerning the nature of the relationship between ritual, tradition and changing social structures and interpersonal relations.

"Tradition" is a problematic term, not only because there is confusion about what anthropologists mean when they refer to "tradition" but because informants too have a variety of definitions and usages of the term. In some contexts the notion of tradition has negative connotations, especially when marginalized whilst modernization is favoured (see below). However, there is currently a trend

FERIA DE MAYO  
CORDOBA 1994



# PLAZA DE TOROS DE CORDOBA

Becerrada de Convite  
**HOMENAJE A LA MUJER CORDOBESA**

Lunes  
**30**  
Mayo 94

**6 Bravos Becerros 6**  
de la prestigiosa y afamada ganadería de

**D. JOSE MURUBE**

para los futuros espadas

A las  
**7**  
de la tarde

**DIEGO MARTINEZ  
ENRIQUE REYES  
FRANCISCO JOSE  
IVAN DE RUS  
ALBERTO BRELL  
ANTONIO CANO**

Acompañados de sus correspondientes cuadrillas

of "revitalization" of "traditional" festivities in Europe (cf. Boissevain 1992), and "traditions" are treated by some as significant symbols of regional (see Boissevain 1992) and urban identity and status (see below). Local interpretations of the *becerrada* are associated with several notions of tradition: events and activities locally defined as "our traditions"; attitudes regarded as "traditionalist" or "traditional"- rather than "modern"; the "tradition of.." as in the historical repetition of an event or action. Nevertheless this festivity is rendered meaningful in various different ways in the local context. Local classifications of the event (its motives, "functions" and meanings) are diverse and sometimes contradictory. Whilst at the local level this presents no particular dilemmas, certain difficulties arise when one attempts to classify the event and its relationship to Andalusian culture in anthropological frameworks.

### ***Becerrada***

This *becerrada*, like any is not a serious bullfight. A *becerrada* is usually a promotional bullfight held to give trainee bullfighters a chance to display their skills and gain experience of public performance. The performers in this *becerrada* are between 10 and 16 years old, they are not grown men and occasionally girls perform. A professional bullfighter (who performed in the event when younger) pointed out that the performers do not wear the suit of lights of professional bullfighting, but the less formal *traje corto*. The "bulls" are one year old *becerros*, and may be either sex. Neither the skill nor danger of a professional bullfight are present in a *becerrada*. In fact the event is frequently referred to as "The Cordoban Woman" and is sometimes treated as a "homage to the Cordoban woman", rather than a bullfight. For example, in some media reports the images and text represent not the

performers but the audience and the procession of festival queens who open the *becerrada*. Most unusual about this particular *becerrada* is its audience, for only women are permitted entry.

### The history of the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa*

I traced the history of the *becerrada* from three main sources: oral history and personal experience; historical and contemporary press and journal reports; written local bullfighting history. These accounts were notably consistent. Although the amount of detail varied, the same history was repeated. Local knowledge offers no alternative to the "official history" outlined below.

The event was invented by the nineteenth century bullfighter *Guerrita*. On his retirement in 1896 he set up the *Club Guerrita* with some friends and from this base the first *becerrada* was organised 1898. The history of the event is framed by references to *Guerrita*, an important figure in local bullfighting history<sup>1</sup>. A local bullfighter of national renown, he is represented in accordance with the conventional stereotype of a successful and respected performer: he has been described as "unpretentious", socially skilled, popular and a womanizer. *Guerrita* stood for the belligerent popular hero- a person acceptable to the upper classes but yet a role model for the lower classes. He used his earnings from the rich to provide for

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<sup>1</sup> June Purvis points out that histories of the C19 have tended to concentrate on the activities of "great individuals" and have an emphasis on individualism which "has been restricted to great men and powerful elites" (Purvis 1994;139). This applies to the case of bullfighting; the individual who figures in the history of the *Mujer Cordobesa* is *Guerrita*, the women are a mass. For the documentation of the bullfight it certainly holds that "the majority of historical works are written by men, and...generally about men" (Purvis 1994;141).

the poor, and often financed events from his own pocket. *Guerrita*, with the support of his club is said to have invented the *becerrada* in order to provide a festive occasion for the enjoyment of the "beautiful Cordoban Woman"<sup>2</sup>.

Excepting the organisers and performers, men are excluded from this bullfight, nevertheless, in practice a man with appropriate social contacts is permitted entry through the Porters doorway and allowed to stand at the ringside. Historical anecdotes cite cases of men disguising themselves as women in order to join the audience. These accounts glorify *Guerrita* since he is reported to have detected and dealt with these men in an admirable, amusing and appropriate fashion (see de Córdoba 1980). The anecdotes also stress the non-serious and semi-carnavalesque nature of the *becerrada*, a theme which is also lent to oral and photographic representations<sup>3</sup>. Informants who were careful to speak (and write) respectfully of *Guerrita* himself were nevertheless ready

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<sup>2</sup> According to one account this was because at that time women did not usually attend bullfights (Montera Agüera Idelfonso 1993;32). Another writer takes up a pseudo-social science approach identifying the event as having been "an escape valve in a poor and sexist Córdoba of the past" in which "gratuity and exclusivity" were united by *Guerrita*- the "imaginary Califa of an admirable harem" who "banned male presence the day of the bullfight" (La Voz de Cordoba 28.5.85, author anonymous). As Abrahams and Bauman have shown, however, the safety-valve perspective is "simplistic and distorted" because "People have a greater tolerance for disorder than anthropologists give them credit for and analysis of festivals of symbolic inversions must take account of the place of this disorder in their lives" (Abrahams and Bauman 1978;207).

<sup>3</sup> However, it must be noted that the carnival element was subdued: the cross-dressers were always thrown out. Besides, Carnival in Córdoba is a quite different event held in February, a different part of the festival cycle from the May Festivities to which the *becerrada* pertains.

to sneer about the quality of performance at the *becerrada* and compare the event to a circus commenting that they would not want to attend such a fiasco<sup>4</sup>. Similarly photographs, for example, of nuns in the audience and men performing wearing a blonde wig, which have been published in books and newspapers in Córdoba during the 1980s and 1990s, show how on occasion the visual reports emphasise the non-serious aspect of the performance and capitalise on novelty factors of the audience.

Until his death in 1942 *Guerrita* protagonised the history of the *becerrada*, deceased, he is still given a leading role. In 1988 the event was advertised as follows:

"Becerrada of the "Club *Guerrita*" in homage to the Cordoban woman.  
Patronised by the New Bullring Society, Córdoba"

and in 1984, it was announced as:

"Restoration of the old *becerrada* of the *Club Guerrita* in homage to the Cordoban Woman"

Indeed the main lament over the cancellation of the *becerrada* in 1986 was that a "tradition" continued in memory of *Guerrita* could be curtailed (eg Bejarano 1986;27). Because *Guerrita* is an important symbol of Cordoban bullfighting he stands for the favourable projection of Córdoba into the national stage. In the discourse of local bullfighting history *Guerrita* is lent legendary status and the failure of the Town Hall to organise the annual homage to him is represented as a crime

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<sup>4</sup> Whilst some would say this was "sour grapes" from men because they are not allowed to attend, many women also state the same reasons for rejecting the possibility of attending.

against traditional identity<sup>5</sup>.

Histories of the *becerrada* represent the audience as a feminine mass; the generalised category of the Cordoban woman. Whilst the performers are named individuals, their performances are supplemented by their trainers, often a senior performer steps into perform the kill. The Festival Queen (previously the "Queen of the Patios") who both opens and "adorns" the event is a generalised festival queen; she represents an ideal, not an individual.

The *becerrada* has remained virtually unchanged, it outlived the civil war, francoism, and survives with great popularity (in 1994 the police were called to resolve to disturbances caused by women who could not enter the overflowing bullring). In a contemporary political climate where women's rights are demanded and women's voices are heard, this *becerrada* which publicly silences women as a general category and elevates men to the status of legendary heroes is still enjoyed. The *Becerrada a la*

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<sup>5</sup> Economic factors are crucial and when the *becerrada* was threatened it seemed that this was due to want of a sponsor. Dreissen's suggestion that "there is a direct link in Andalusia between the revival of Carnival, Holy Week, and patronal celebrations and a sharp increase in the standard of living, an upsurge in regionalism, and the creation of 'regional autonomy'" (Dreissen 1992;91) is certainly a probable context for the continuation and promotion of the *becerrada* as a crucial element of local festivities. Nevertheless I am not convinced that the empowering effects of sponsorship which Dreissen suggests for religious rituals in Andalusia is applicable to the *becerrada*: "By sponsoring local festivals they (the Council of Andalusia and local governments) manipulate local and regional consciousness" (Dreissen 1992;81). This is certainly true to a certain extent, but given the "local and diverse" motives for their celebration (Cruces and Díaz de Rada 1992;71) we should be wary of generalizing about the form, extent and power involved in this manipulation.

*Mujer Cordobesa* has out-lived the "traditional" institution of the "Queen of the Patios" beauty competition which was discontinued in the midst of "feminist" debates in the 1980s (see Pink and Sanders 1995). In the *becerrada* the Patio Queen was replaced by another Festival Queen and her entourage of traditionally dressed women.

On the afternoon of the *becerrada* all routes to the bullring are jammed with horse-drawn carriages which are hired to take groups women, most of whom are traditionally attired in the flamboyantly feminine *gitana* dress<sup>6</sup>, to the performance<sup>7</sup>. The women are on public display both during this short journey and on their arrival at the bullring. Those carriages which carry the *feria* queen and her entourage do a circuit of the arena before the women dismount and are joined by a male bullfighting "celebrity", historically *Guerrita* himself, and now a local bullfighter. This process is photographed by local photo-journalists and the shots are duly published in the local newspaper the following day. The now de-throned Patio Queen featured in this stage of the *becerrada*: she was paraded and photographed with her "attendants" before ascending to the president's box with the male official who governed the bullfight. Although sometimes referred to as "*Las Presidentas*"<sup>8</sup> they never presided; they merely accompanied

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<sup>6</sup> The *gitana* (gypsy) dress is a long, frilly, tiered dress often brightly coloured and decorated in lace, which emphasises the shape of the female body.

<sup>7</sup> In Córdoba few people privately own carriages, however, there is no shortage since part of the local tourist economy is supported by the lines of horse-drawn carriages which wait outside the key tourist sights to take visitors on trips around the city.

<sup>8</sup> One informant explained to me that the women in traditional dress who accompany the president were called the *presidentas* and in Córdoba this would be the Queen

the *presidente*<sup>9</sup>, the Patio Queen never acted as an individual decision maker, rather she performed her role of "adornment". The term *presidentas* implies dignity and affirms the festival queens' symbolic opposition to the unruly crowd. Nevertheless the two categories have something in common; their stereotype is celebrated, not the women as individuals.

### Whose bullfight?

The *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa* has been described by one local writer as having two positive elements: firstly it gives the women of the city a chance to "give free rein to their passion for enjoying themselves"; second it allows young bullfighters the opportunity to perform in a full arena where they can count on the support of the "beautiful womanhood of Córdoba" who even throw their underwear to the performers during their victory laps (Toscano 1993;36).

The history of this bullfight is dominated by *Guerrita* and firmly based in local taurine identity. Contemporary press reports of the *becerrada*, and informants, emphasised either the performers or the women. Firstly I describe my own experience of the bullfight and then discuss the accounts collected from women who disapprove of the event, women who regularly attend, organisers and performers.

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of the Patios. The *presidentas* have no part in judging the bullfight but play the passive role of adorning the ring -a type of festival queen which my informant assumed perfectly predictable for any city. He was unaware that the queen of the patios was no longer elected. Since her symbolic role is still performed it is not surprising that her absence has gone unnoticed.

<sup>9</sup> The term *presidentas* is a feminized and plural version of the term *presidente* which refers to an individual powerful male.

## Anthropologist as observer?

When I attended the *Becerrada* for the first time the arena was crowded, I found a small space on the steps as near as possible to the ring. The atmosphere was very different from that of the professional bullfights I had witnessed the preceding week. The *ambiente* was opposed to that of serious bullfights<sup>10</sup>. The arena was crammed full with women and children who made noise and played whilst the women chatted, ate, and drank. One group near by had brought musical instruments and formed a band which struck a traditional tune every now and then. The song *Soy Cordobesa* (I'm a Cordoban woman) featured and women joined in singing: "*Soy Cordobesa de los piés a la Cabeza*" (I'm Córdoba from head to toe)<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup>*Becerradas* in general are defined as non-serious bullfights, many *aficionados* do not consider them worth attending. Rodriguez Becerra makes a similar analytical distinction: on considering the classification of the bullfight as an object of anthropological analysis, he defines the professional bullfight as a "spectacle", thus distinguishing it from *becerradas*, and bull-runs, which he classifies as "*fiestas*". However, Rodriguez Becerra's distinction is slightly problematic because it is made on the basis of audience participation. He argues that whilst the audience goes to watch a professional bullfight the "people" do not participate, whilst in *becerradas* and other events they are fully involved (Rodriguez Becerra 1982;34). Rodriguez Becerra is mistaken in playing down the role of the audience in the professional bullfight, and whilst there is certainly an important distinction between these and *becerradas*, it is not as simple as he suggests.

<sup>11</sup> The chorus to the song which this refers to is as follows:

Soy Cordobes de la tierra de Julio Romero  
pintor de la musa gitana  
Córdoba Sultana, ¡cuanto te quiero!  
Soy Cordobes, y a la orilla del Guadalquivir  
tengo que poner un letrero  
diciendo "me muero, Córdoba por tí"

With certainty of losing all poetic affect I have translated the Chorus.

Whilst many women in the audience do not dress in *Gitana* or *Traje Corto* outfits, the event is written and spoken of as if they did and press photographs of the Feria Queen dressed in traditional clothing predominate. Similarly, novelty value (eg. nuns) and traditional costume make audience members more attractive photographic subjects<sup>12</sup>. In reality, most of the women around me wore everyday clothes.

Noise was constant during the bullfight, a contrast to the periods of silence and loud crowd reactions of professional performances. The women talked and joked, fed, and amused their children, the audience's attention was not focused exclusively on the performance. However, cheering and clapping were momentous and frequent. All the performers were awarded trophies; there were prizes and praise for all. The atmosphere was of celebration and a warm and

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I'm Cordoban from the land of Julio Romero  
painter of gypsy inspiration  
Córdoba of the Sultans, how I love you  
I'm Córdoba, and at the bank of the river Guadalquivir  
I have to put up a notice  
saying "Córdoba, I die for you"

The poetry is laden with local references. Julio Romero was a local artist of national renown. He is best known for his portraits of the "beautiful Córdoba woman". In Córdoba a museum is dedicated to him and his oils are reproduced on post-cards, posters, prints and in a series of art books. Many homes and most "traditional" bars have copies of his paintings on the wall. The reference to the Sultans is a reminder of Córdoba's Islamic history, one of which many "traditionally minded" people tend to be proud (despite often marginalising Muslim Northern Africans as "dirty thieves").

<sup>12</sup> Likewise, I found myself seeking out women dressed in stunning outfits for my shots. I later realised that I had photographed traditionally dressed women because they made interesting images, and seemed to be the shots that I ought to be getting.

uncritical supportiveness given to the young bullfighters. The audience did not represent the stereotype of the "fickle crowd" that a professional bullfighter performs to. The calls of "torero" and "oreja" which in a professional bullfight are hard won compliments were dealt out unquestioningly.

Nevertheless the *becerrada* has a very serious dimension: for the performers the bullfight offers the rare opportunity to perform in public with live animals, to be on local television, to be noticed by potential managers, and have one's name in print; in short a chance to begin a bullfighting career. Whilst the performers are classified as boys, they try to behave as if they were professionals.

The audience, in contrast, behaves outrageously. During the performers' victory laps a variety of objects are thrown to them; shoes, flowers, clothes, and women's underwear- an enormous bra was flung to the ground near to where I was sitting. Informants were aware of this practice which was described to me by women who never attend the *becerrada*. Indeed it is more or less condoned as a local curiosity, for example a report of the 1993 performance describes how "the beautiful womanhood of Córdoba took off her under-wear and threw into the path of the little bullfighters. Since there were four laps of the ring, some almost ended up top-less" (Toscano 1993;36).

The bullfighters were carried out of the ring on the shoulders of bullring employees surrounded by teenagers and children from the audience- a privilege usually reserved for the most successful of professional bullfighters.



The boy toreros enter the ring and are photographed as if they were professionals



They leave on the shoulders of the crowd, surrounded by children and teenagers rather than traditionally dressed Cordoban women

Finito de Córdoba  
1993



Both Finito de Córdoba and a young performer at the Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa adopt a conventional pose whilst doing a victory lap of the bullring. Despite the upturned conventions manifested by the audience of the becerrada, the performer maintains a "traditional" order and countenance in his own actions.

"Young hopeful"  
performer  
1992



### The official account

The next day the *Becerrada* was reported in the local newspaper. A short paragraph which mentioned the full bullring and the names of the bullfighters and breeders, accompanied a photograph of the bullfighter *Chiquilín* with the Festival Queens. Some reports are longer and comprise a few lines of critical appraisal of each performer. What is striking about press reports from 1981-1993 is that almost none (with the exceptions of 1989 and 1991) of the visual reports include shots of the performers in action. Similarly the reports presented in a seasonal bullfighting journal first published in 1991 did not offer shots of the performance. These images concentrate on three main themes: the "triumphant" performers, after the event (triumph was inevitable, and did not depend on the visual evidence of their performances); the festival queens (in 1992 in the carriages and in 1993 in the president's box); and the women in the audience (featured in closeup in 1993). These and *Guerrita*, according to the bullfighting press, are the four elements of the *becerrada* which became symbols in which notions of "tradition" and local identity are invested in various ways<sup>13</sup>.

### "A vulgar and common affair?"

When I was initially seeking women who attended the *becerrada* some informants jokingly suggested that if I wanted to meet any of "that type of person" I should go and

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<sup>13</sup> The media themes and the collective representation of the *becerrada* can be understood in relation to what Dreissen refers to as a process of "traditionalization" by which "events wherein certain items taken to represent tradition are selected out and newly contextualised" (1992;91). Although in the case of the *becerrada* it is not fitting to point to a particular moment of "traditionalization" (Dreissen 1992;91) or "revitalization" (cf. Boissevain 1992).

look in the door-ways of the run-down houses in the old "traditional" and poor neighbourhoods of Córdoba. They scornfully said that this event was for housewives and gossip-mongers. Others were adamant that they knew no one who would attend, they eventually quite seriously suggested in order to get in touch with such people I should put an advertisement in the newspaper or a local advertising magazine. A course of action which I did not follow. One informant classified the *becerrada* as "lower class" pointing out that it is free and the bulls and performers are bad quality. She said it simply wasn't worth it.

This impression of the *becerrada* is inaccurate. Some upper class women attend, usually either for love of bullfighting of any type, or due to a particular interest in a performer. Upper and middle class women who are well connected in the bullfighting world often support the son of a friend or relative who is performing. This was the case for two friends who accompanied me one year. Their father a well known *aficionado*, poet and lawyer was allowed to watch his nephew from the ringside. Another middle-class woman, the sister of a bullfighter, goes every year because since her brother has become a bullfighter there is always a family friend or cousin in the line up. These women pointed out that they do not throw their bras into the ring, I met no one who admitted to having done so.

For many the *becerrada* is a family outing, several informants who remembered going with their families when they were young and assumed this was the norm. The "unruly crowd" is in fact made up of women with a variety of motives for attending and notions of how to behave. The reputation of the crowd is derived from the behaviour that is most striking. Furthermore, the greater proportion of the audience do not wear traditional costume, and a good



Although the audience is defined as the Cordoban womanhood, it's age and sex composition distinguishes another category- conspicuous by it's exclusion: the adult male.



number of the "Cordoban Women" are children including boys well into their teens. Those Cordobans who have culturally and socially distanced themselves from the *becerrada* perceive it differently: one informant told me that only women wearing traditional dress could enter free. Others calling it a "housewives' festival" found my photographs an excellent source for mocking "tradition" and the lower classes. Not surprisingly the women who responded in this way had no desire to be Festival Queens.

Local history and contemporary reports gloss over the medley of difference which comprises the *becerrada* audience. It is represented with the uniformity appropriate to an orderly tradition. Most accounts do not distinguish between women at different life-cycle stages or occupations, under the same label the generalised, ageless and faceless (or many-faced) woman includes women who are nuns and women who have downs syndrome. Instead the "unruly mass of womanhood" which transgresses normal morality with its flying underwear, almost "top-lessness" and unconsidered and uncritical distribution of trophies and praise, is contrasted with the traditional moral integrity of the *feria* queen. However, the *feria* queen herself is not quite what she seems either.

#### **The Feria Queen on the dole**

Life in Córdoba is no bed of roses for young women without access to influential social networks or private funds. Unemployment is high and disillusionment rife (see Chapter 3). The image of the beautiful *feria* queen is distant from the experience of contemporary young Cordoban women. Those who are exceptionally beautiful may become beauty queens or models like Miss España 1994, who was from Córdoba. This solution is improbable for most.

A recent *feria* queen was interviewed on a rainy *feria* day, she was, in the words of the journalist, en "*anorak*" y sin corona (wearing an anorak and crownless). The interview begins as follows:

Q: Do you work?

A: No way, I'm unemployed

Q: How can anyone with your beauty be unemployed?

A: Lets see if anything turns up for me now

Q: Do you study?

A: I study at home, I was studying puericulture but that ended badly because the teacher didn't have any qualifications.

Q: What are you thinking of doing then?

A: In August I'm going to get married, well, perhaps- you never know do you!

Q: Will marriage be the solution to your situation?

A: Well, its been the solution for many families

Q: Wouldn't you like to be in films?

A: I'd love to, most of all horror films.

Q: Apart from marriage, what kind of work would you like to do?

A: With things as they are at the moment I don't know, maybe a fashion shop.

The future doesn't look too bright for the unemployed *feria* queen. In the current economic climate she is unlikely to find a job in a fashion boutique, if she did she would be underpaid, work long hours and have no job security.

For the performers the *becerrada* is serious. It invokes memories of many of the city's bullfighting heroes' first moment in the public arena, the trainee bullfighters aspire to follow in their footsteps. When the female bullfighter *Antoñita la Cordobesa* performed in 1988 she was overwhelmed by the experience, the emotion of the occasion brought tears to her eyes. She remembers this chance to perform in a large bullring in a major bullfighting city to a massive live and television audience, as one of the highest points of her career.

In 1993 the ex-bullfighters who prepared the performers treated the *becerrada* seriously. They intensively schooled the performers and invested their time and money in the *becerrada*, not so the women of the city should appreciate an enjoyable afternoon of free taurine entertainment, but to give their protégées a head start in the tough world of bullfighting. One informant made clear his opinion that women were "naturally" incapable of understanding bullfighting (see Chapter 8).

The *becerrada* was an important step for one Cordoban bullfighter, now a *novillero*, it was his first public performance and he displays it's small framed poster in the living room of his parents house. He enjoyed performing in the *becerrada*, although the *ambiente* was different from the serious atmosphere of professional bullfights, he had found the female audience very supportive. Since many Cordoban bullfighters have performed in the *becerrada*, participating is tantamount to pertaining to a tradition, it evokes a sense of belonging to the Cordoban bullfighting "lineage". In this sense the *becerrada* may appear to be a *rite de passage*. However, although it offers experience and some prestige (if the performer does well), it confers

no rights or formal change in status. Whilst if the performer eventually becomes famous he/she may retrospectively classify the *becerrada* as a type of initiation ceremony, the meaning this performance will come to stand for in the young bullfighter's life is in reality contingent on his future career.

### *La Cordobesa*

Historical accounts and public discussions of the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa* and the *feria* queens are part of a discourse produced predominantly by men which stereotypes women and women's activities. Until recently women were not the public speakers and writers of history; the visual images of the generalised Cordoban woman were painted by a male artist, Julio Romero de Torres. His works is still central to the definition of Cordoban femininity, almost all my informants cited his work and directed me to his museum in response to questions about Cordoban feminine stereotypes. The image of the ideal Cordoban woman refers to traditional moral virtue symbolised in female beauty (cf. Pitt Rivers 1963) and is a theme in local traditional identity<sup>14</sup>. In the *becerrada*

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<sup>14</sup> The image of the Cordoban woman is fundamental to many representations of local identity. Informants cited that Córdoba is famous for its beautiful women, many believe Cordoban women more attractive than others. One informant claimed that when Córdoba was ruled by the Arabic Caliphate all the most beautiful women of Spain were brought to the city, the beauty of the contemporary *Cordobesa* originates from these ancestors. In contrast the image of the Cordoban man plays a different role in the representation of collective identity. Individual men are praised for personal achievement, in bullfighting talk this is embodied in the notion of the *Califa*. Yet the local stereotype of the Cordoban man, is not of perfection: he is characterised by both male and female informants as serious, "traditional", sexist, dry, arrogant, not handsome (some say ugly) and not tall. These characteristics are not celebrated, rather, to be worthy of praise a man must prove himself as an individual whilst a woman is automatically

the moral integrity of the Festival Queen rules as she "adorns" the presidents box, elevated above the feminine mass of spectators. The passivity of the festival queen represents a stereotype of passive woman/active man which was never the experience of Andalusians (cf Corbin & Corbin (personal communication) and MacClancy 1995). The woman herself may not be a virgin, (that is her business), her visual self-presentation stands for a category, not the experience of the individual subject.

Cordobans are aware of the incongruity between symbol and experience. In the 1980s local public debates flared up over the proposal that Patio Queen beauty competition was sexist<sup>15</sup>. It was argued that the Patio Queen image misrepresented the struggle which is the experience of contemporary women. Whilst conservative writers accused the *ayuntamiento* which discontinued the competition of being "feminist" the competition was labelled "sexist" by its opponents<sup>16</sup>. Women's and "feminist" voices are clearly

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praised by her belonging to the category of Cordoban womanhood. This "traditional" model of gender stereotypes is parallel in some ways to a point made by Corbin and Corbin who suggest that whilst women are "naturally" women, men must prove that they are men.

<sup>15</sup> Until this point an annual beauty pageant was held to elect a festival queen - the *Reina de los Patios* who performed official functions during the May Festivities (prize givings, openings of events -including the *becerrada*). The title of the Patio Queen also reflected a theme of local identity; the Patios of Córdoba (old courtyard houses) are an important symbol of local identity, both promoted externally as a tourist feature and internally as a symbol of local history and heritage. A competitive festival (and "invented tradition" in Hobsbawn's (1983) sense) which precedes *feria*, named *La Fiesta de los Patios* is held on an annual basis.

<sup>16</sup> Whilst the feminist-traditionalist debate is central to the cancellation of festival queen type beauty pageants, there is another related explanation which would be worth

heard in public debate and local political parties cannot afford to ignore the "women" issue. "Traditional morality" remains the bastion of some local factions whose proponents favourably juxtapose its' model of femininity against "modern" women: during the 1980s debates over the Patio Queen, in a press interview a defendant of the "traditional" beauty competition compared the Festival Queen to the "bathing suit" beauty queen, claiming that the latter was more derogatory to women. The Municipal Delegate for Education and Culture, Francisco Martín argued that the cancellation of the Patio Queen competition, had been based on mistaken feminist understandings. He stated that rather than a beauty contest the competition aimed to find a representative of the "average Cordoban woman". He reiterated the argument that the fact that so many women enter the competition proves that it does not insult them (Martín 1981;15). Nevertheless the "untruth" of symbols of Cordoban womanhood are also publicly acknowledged, in 1993 the situation of the Cordoban woman was highlighted when a journalist listed one of the motives behind the

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following up in a more detailed analysis. For example, the Spanish anthropologist Salvador Rodríguez Becerra locates the issue in the more specific political context of the franco dictatorship versus the democracy. He observes from an analysis of archival press sources that in the last years of the dictatorship and the beginnings of the democracy political parties frequently denounced the programmes of particular types of festival". The election of festival queens especially seems to have been singled out as an invention of francoism and neither pertaining to the people nor fitting to the festive programme (Rodríguez Becerra 1982;40). In the 1980s and 1990s these ideologies are still significant. Francoism and new brands of fascism are evident in contemporary culture. I did not collect detailed data on contemporary political movements, but my research amongst informants of opposing political persuasions suggests that there is both a continuing fear and resentment of fascism and a strong hold belief that things would be better if a Franco-style dictatorship were revived.

*becerrada* as: to give the women a day of freedom and diversion away from their hard domestic work and lives (Toscano 1993;36). Whilst "free rein" is lent to the crowd, the festival queen and her entourage remain composed and dignified as she reigns over their unruliness from the president's box. The *becerrada* juxtaposes two poles: the beautiful Cordoban woman, a passive adornment, morally pure, and restrained, and the unruly and sexually explicit crowd of hard-working women who have to actively battle for the survival of themselves and their families. The crowd has licence, the women's behaviour is exaggerated, action and words are imbued with sexual innuendos as enormous bras are thrown to the "child toreros". The contradiction between ideal and experience is implicit to this bullfight, but ideal is maintained as the dominant symbol of femininity above experience: the festival queen is not dethroned in this topsy-turvy bullfight where women are spectators who deny their "traditional" role of "woman as **passive** spectator". The image of feminine moral integrity emerges untouched: thus the model of woman historically invented by men is not shattered by the realism of feminine experience.

Nevertheless the event is protagonised by *Guerrita*, the triumphant male bullfighting hero who began this yearly bullfight almost a century ago. Whilst the only adult male protagonist is marked out as an individual and provides a prop for the historical continuity of this bullfight, the boy *toreros*, the unruly crowd of women and children and the beautiful festival queens remain general categories. Indeed on one level the event is about the relationship of a generalized mass to a specific masculine individual.

This is a familiar binary construction of gender and needs no further elaboration. However, despite the repeated

representations of these stereotypes in visual and other media they are not necessarily consistent with the experiences of men or women: John and Marie Corbin found that in the 1970s Andalusian women were active and forceful decision makers in the domestic domain. Similarly data from the newspaper archives in Córdoba reveals how in the late C19 and early C20, lower class women were acting in forceful and individualistic ways in public. In a series of cases of women being arrested for arguing and fighting in the public market place, the "beautiful Cordoban woman" appears to be stretching far beyond the limits of her ornamental spectatorial stereotype. Indeed, the contradiction, inherent in the *becerrada*, was manifested in the juxtaposition of the two opposed femininities of the *Feria* Queen and the unruly crowd. The notion of multiple femininities and masculinities is applicable both historically and today.

### Ritual, Symbol and Theory

The *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa* is a local festivity which has survived almost unchanged during periods of immense social change and political upheaval: the formal categories of participant have remained the same and the structure of the event has been maintained. In short, experience has changed whilst the *becerrada* has remained more or less constant. Unlike the Patio Queen beauty pageant the *becerrada* has not been directly attacked as a misrepresentation. This suggests that the gender role models and the hierarchies within gender categories which are represented in the *becerrada* have survived because they have **always** been detached from the experience of gender; the ritual does not therefore enact any one and fundamental principle of Andalusian culture or society.

Instead the gendered experiences of the participants vary

immensely. Those who are involved in the *becerrada* are driven by personal motives and seek to extract particular experiences from the event. From this perspective, a reading of symbolism of the *becerrada* cannot explain contemporary cultural discourses about gender

Media reports of the *becerrada* and *aficionado* commentaries represent the event as a central part of local festivities. Whilst it has a place in the festival programme the event is not however central to the lives of many Cordobans<sup>17</sup>. The fact that the ring is always overflowing must be reconsidered. There is in fact much local indifference to and even scorn of the event. The population of Córdoba capital is over 200,000 and during the feria many people from the outlying villages visit the city. The proportion of the female and teenage population who fill the arena for the event is only a small minority. I initially found it difficult to meet people who attended and eventually I went on my own the first year. Indeed those who scorn the *becerrada* construct it as a marginalised tradition attended only by housewives.

However, as "tradition" the *becerrada* is at once both central and marginal: marginal in that the notion of "tradition" as a "traditional" way of life is becoming increasingly marginalised in contemporary Córdoba, whilst "tradition" as "our traditions" are being increasingly central to local processes of cultural production (cf.

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<sup>17</sup>The *becerrada* has several similarities with Hobsbawn's notion of an "invented tradition" (Hobsbawn 1983;1-4). Contrasting invented tradition with older, agrarian rural ritual Hobsbawn notes the way in which invented traditions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are less central to people's lives (1983;11).

Boissevain 1992)<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless it should be noted that the construction of the *becerrada* as a "tradition" does not reflect the event as it is experienced- those who participate in the event do not do so because they wish to "evoke a 'traditional' order that is rapidly fading away" (Dreissen 1992;90)<sup>19</sup>.

Babcock suggests that "what is socially peripheral is often symbolically central" (Babcock 1978;32). In a sense this is true for the *becerrada*; as a social event it is on the periphery (it involves a relatively small and diverse proportion of the population), whilst as a symbol of local identity it becomes central as a "unique local tradition". In the above phrase Babcock is referring to the process of symbolic inversion, she goes on to argue that "...if we

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<sup>18</sup> The local promotion of "tradition" in Córdoba is similar to the processes of "revitalization" discussed by Boissevain (1992). Building on Salmonsson's concept of "the resumption of older cultural features or their retention for new reasons" (Salmonsson 1984;45 in Boissevain 1992;7), Boissevain points out that retention may be for both old and new reasons. Local government and press attitudes to tradition in Córdoba tend to reflect a local "concern for tradition and authenticity" (Boissevain 1992;11) and assert a particular version of local identity which takes "tradition" as an important local symbol. The *becerrada* is one of the city's traditions which is cited as an element of urban identity and uniqueness.

<sup>19</sup> I have used Dreissen's phrase to express the opposite to what Dreissen intends when he writes about dawn bell-ringers in rural Andalusia: "By performing the rites of dawn these men are trying to evoke a 'traditional' order that is rapidly fading away" (Dreissen 1992; 90, cf. Boissevain 1992;4). Whilst this may be the case for small-scale rituals the case is different for the *becerrada*, a large scale complex ritual. Whilst some of those involved in it's production may be concerned with the maintenance of a traditional order, they may not see the *becerrada* as a means of implementing such a campaign. Furthermore, as I have shown, the diversity of motives which involve people in the event means that it is impossible to regard its maintenance as being aimed towards any one particular goal.

ignore or minimise inversion and other forms of cultural negation we often fail to understand the dynamics of symbolic processes generally" (Babcock 1978;32, cf. Stallybrass and White 1986). Whilst it is problematic to classify the *becerrada* as a ritual inversion (I have argued above that in several ways it is not because the similarities between everyday behaviour and festive behaviour are so great that it is impossible to argue that such discontinuity between ritual and everyday time occurs), however the elements of the *becerrada* which do invert aspects of both contemporary gender configurations and the formal bullfight, are worth considering. Below I conclude by considering the ways in which inversions, continuities, and juxtapositions combine to distinguish a local festivity from the bullfight- *la fiesta nacional*.

The inversions apparent in the *becerrada* correspond with some, but not all, of the categories which are associated with "World Upside Down" (see Kunzle 1978;41). Significantly, whilst human to human inversions feature in the *becerrada*, the human-animal order is not disrupted. "The principle of inversion is that there are two parties, the one dominant, the other dominated, whose roles, in some action typifying their relationship are simply reversed" (Kunzle 1978;42)<sup>20</sup>. In the *becerrada* human inversions are based on generation and gender- boy bullfighters are "assisted" by the ex-professional bullfighters who train them, and the predominantly male audience of the serious bullfight is locked out of the arena which is filled with an unruly crowd of women and children. The unruly and generous crowd is again an inversion of the formal self-controlled and critical audience of a serious performance

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<sup>20</sup> See Babcock 1978 for a discussion of the historical and theoretical developments of the meaning of inversion as both social phenomenon and theoretical construct.

(see above). Nevertheless whilst the theme of inversion is implicit in certain elements of the *becerrada*, neither the structure of the event nor the hierarchical ordering of its characters are affected. The performance follows the same sequence as a serious bullfight<sup>21</sup>, and the male president is not ousted from his seat high above the crowd in the officially sanctioned presidents box. The "micro-cosmic"<sup>22</sup> world of the bullring is not turned absolutely upside-down, and neither is it completely detached from normal time; in terms of the "real-time" career plans, strategies and aspirations of the performers the *becerrada* is "crucial time" and is continuous with their daily training and dedication.

Another locally stressed aspect of the *becerrada* is that it is free; a stark contrast to the increasingly commercial and corrupt world of professional bullfighting. Whilst tradition and locality are stressed in representations of the *becerrada* the identity of professional bullfighting is changing. Whereas in the past bullfights were securely located within local festive and religious calendars, the bullfight is being increasingly projected on to a national

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<sup>21</sup> Apart from some ritualized elaborations at the beginning of the *becerrada*- the procession of *feria* queens and carriages. Whilst this elaboration is specific to this particular event, regional and festive elaborations also form part of serious bullfights. The theme of the Cordoban woman explicit in the pre-bullfight processions may be interpreted as a statement of local identity made still more forceful by the overriding festival theme of the Cordoban woman.

<sup>22</sup> I use the term "micro-cosmic" in inverted commas because I wish to imply some ambiguity. The bull-ring with its high walls, locked doors, and its ritual which has a beginning and end, is in some ways a temporarily closed system. Nevertheless the continuities between both the *becerrada* and the serious bullfight and what lies outside the bullfight are so intense that it is on the other hand ridiculous to attempt to separate them.

and international media stage and is often dislocated from its place in local *fiesta* cycles. Professionals perform on a competitive national (and increasingly international) stage. As an inversion of this the *becerrada* may be interpreted as being to do with the local, playful, (feminine) nurturing of the city's young bullfighters<sup>23</sup>- a model which is convincing when viewed as a symbol of traditionalism but irrelevant for many contemporary models of femininity.

The "unruly women" of the *becerrada* again invoke the notion of inversion. With their "low", underwear-throwing symbolism (see Stallybrass and White 1986) they present an ideal target for the symbolic anthropologist, and have already been seen by some (local informants, journalists, and a local anthropologist- see above) as expressing working class femininity or letting off steam in a safety-valve type ritual. However, I have shown that the audience is not an exclusively working-class mass and those who are bawdy may be no less bawdy in other social situations. Indeed although these women are undoubtedly unruly, the question is whether their unruliness constitutes an inversion, and with regard to the notion of unruly women being "women on top", whether they are necessarily "underneath" in their everyday lives? Indeed, if they are "on top" outside the bullring, of whom are they "on top". In short, the contemporary unruly woman of ritual may not be an inversion, rather, she may simply be expressing what is regarded by many as a perfectly acceptable or "normal"

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<sup>23</sup> Unlike many of the festivities described in Boissevain's volume the *becerrada* is not reinvented in the face of tourism or by the "appearance of multiple others" (Boissevain 1992;4). It is an inward looking, introverted presentation in which the unquestioning support and generosity of the feminine crowd is interpreted as analogous to mothering.

version of femininity. In contrast, the woman who symbolically "rules" who is symbolically "on top" and high up in the presidents box, does not "misrule" (see Zemon Davis 1978;166) she does not contest the authority of the male official at her side. Whilst this is congruent with "traditionalist" models of gender relations, it is on the other hand an inversion of the morality of the *Instituto de la Mujer* and the women's movement in Andalusia and opposes the model of femininity which is being promoted in influential contemporary discourses.

A constant obstacle to attempts to relate any symbolic reading of this *becerrada* to the culture in which it is produced is that the ritual is inconsistent in its relation to Andalusian culture. Whilst the order of the *becerrada* is ritualised, formal and straightforward, Andalusian culture is not; it is diverse, changing and complex. The *becerrada* is related to this culture in many multi-stranded ways, as I have shown it parodies, inverts and represents many aspects of contemporary experience. I have described how whilst the *becerrada* is publicly defined as a tradition, it means many different things to the different people who participate in it<sup>24</sup>. Moreover, as a tradition the *becerrada* is classified according to differing moral evaluations of the traditional as opposed to the modern. Depending on the identity of the person judging it this

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<sup>24</sup> Although writing about a quite different Andalusian festival (the burning of the *Judas of Cabazuela* figure at Easter in a rural ritual) Cruces and Díaz de Rada make a point about diversity which could equally be applied to the *becerrada*:

"We see, then, that what makes these non-summer celebrations singular in their traditional appearance, visible both in the course of actions and in native talk that tends to select for descriptions of the feast sequences rooted in tradition and bearing a sense of social integration and distinctiveness for the community. But the motives for celebration are local diverse, and lumping them together is justified only by this traditionality" (Cruces and Díaz de Rada 1992;70-71).

same event has either been interpreted as being about, or manipulated in order to make statements about, diverse themes such as: gender, class, leisure, career development and promotion, celebration and festivity, family outings, feminine beauty, feminine vulgarity, tradition, local urban identity and others.

Rituals do not fit tidily into cultures. But real people do participate in them and meanings are invested in both rituals as a whole and the characters and artifacts of which they are composed. In the Andalusian urban context where tradition is becoming a commodity rather than a way of life and the participants in rituals are motivated by diverse aspirations, ritual activity becomes not a "statement about the **workaday** order" (see Turner 1978;282-3) but at the same time both a domain of activity in which individuals and groups may seek certain experiences and achievements, and, a set of symbols in which may be invested notions of local history, tradition, and identity.

## CHAPTER 5

### GENDER STEREOTYPES AND THE EXPRESSION OF "TRADITION": MODELS OF FEMININITY IN THE BULLFIGHTING WORLD

#### "Traditional" Women

Irrespective of their moral evaluations informants tended to agree that the "traditional" feminine role at the bullfight was that of "beautiful spectator". As one man put it "women have an important role to play at the bullfight, but not as performers, rather they have the more emotive role of gracing the audience with their beauty". He was not referring to the emotional experience of the women themselves as spectators, but the emotional aesthetic of seeing a beautiful woman adorn the bullring. In bullfighting discourse women are commonly treated as aesthetic objects rather than individual subjects. This model of woman is frequently visualised in art and description; the emphasis on feminine presence as "adornment" is apparent in twentieth century bullfight posters, art, photography, poetry and novels. This category of woman is not expected to have the "true" understanding of bullfighting which some "traditionalists" regard as exclusive to the "male intellect".

The beautiful "traditional" woman represents feminine moral integrity. Her morality coincides with that of two stereotypes of "women who pray"<sup>1</sup>: the wife and mother of the bullfighter. The close relationship of ideal wives and mothers to the bullfighter supposes that they form the bedrock and security of

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<sup>1</sup> The label -"The women who pray" was sometimes used by informants and refers to an image often represented in feature films of about bullfighting where the wife and mother of the bullfighter spend the duration of his performance kneeling in front of an altar praying that he should survive the performance.

his emotional well-being. In novels and film such women are represented mainly in domestic and religious contexts and their lives are said to be dominated by the suffering<sup>2</sup> caused them by the constant danger faced by bullfighter sons or husbands. In opposition stands the model of "woman as seductress"<sup>3</sup>, who rejects the morality inscribed in "traditional" codes of conduct. She is "lost", "unconnected", "free", her sexuality is uncontrolled and the bullfighter is in constant danger of falling prey to her charms. This image appears frequently in

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<sup>2</sup> The mother of the bullfighter *Manolete* was appropriately named "Angustias" (which means anguish or distress). Her suffering the death of both one of her husbands and her son from gore wounds forms the mainstay of the narratives of her life as it is represented in bullfighting discourse.

<sup>3</sup> The contemporary meanings attached to the "seductress" model must be reconsidered. Pels and Crébas' analysis of Bizet's (1945) *Carmen* shows how the *femme fatale* of mid C20 representations has been redefined in the 1980s by cineastes (Godard, Saura and Rosi) who have gone back to Bizet's (1845) text to exchange the "classic icon of the *femme fatale*" for a "new feminine icon" (1991;345). The new *Carmen* of Saura's film is "an independent young woman" (1991;344) since the negative connotations of the *femme fatale* are redefined as the markings of feminine strength surrounded by masculine weakness: "capriciousness and the hunger for power now become self-assurance and sovereign wilfulness; provocativeness becomes self conscious femininity and expressiveness; whorishness becomes sexual frankness. In this way the *femme fatale* is transformed from a masculine fantasy...into a womens' fantasy in which the woman can usurp all kinds of 'masculine' characteristics without losing her femininity" (1991;346). Such a model would condone active women in the bullfighting world. Saura's work was popular amongst my cinema-going informants in Córdoba, as were films by Pedro Almodovar, whose leading actor, Antonio Banderas also starred in Saura's film *Dispara* (Shoot). It is not within the scope of this thesis to include an analysis of contemporary Spanish cinema, but it is worth mentioning that in Almodovar's film *Matador* the boundaries between ritual killing of animals and human murder as well as those of "traditional" gender roles are transgressed. The *femme fatale* is a successful woman lawyer, association with whom leads to the death of an ex-bullfighter (who has become a serial killer) and of the woman herself.

early twentieth century fiction<sup>4</sup> and film, and there have been several media attempts to impose the same stereotype on women who have become involved with bullfighters in the last twenty years (see below). The less dangerous counterpart of this model- the "poor misguided" woman- is a "victim" passed around by a string of bullfighters who use her for sex and then tire of her. This feminine stereotype misunderstands the meaning of *afición* and follows a misguided route to become closer to bullfighting. One informant recounted the example of a woman from his village who had employed this strategy in order to become closer to the bullfighting world and in the hope of opportunities to train and practise with live bulls. The story was told as follows: this woman had sexual relations with many bullfighters who did not really care for her, but did manage to get some chances to practise bullfighting. However, one day she was knocked on the head when training with a live bull, went mad and has never recovered. She developed a split personality and may just as well pass you in the street as punch you, my informant concluded that the woman, now middle-aged is a pitiful creature and in a sorry state. Whether or not this tale is an entirely accurate representation of the woman's history is another matter. However, the interpretation is certainly informative: as in the fictional accounts of the immoral seductress, the result of non-conformity to ones proper role is the threat of insanity and subsequent disorder.

Although these stereotypes play a fertile role in the imaginations of many men (who are often labelled "sexist") it is rare that a woman should live out any of these roles. I

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Conrad's *Death of a Matador* (1952); *Sangre y Arena* (Blasco Ibañez 1991), from which a theatre production and three film versions have been produced (the ways in which the gender constructions of *Sangre y Arena* have been represented in the three film versions produced at significant intervals during this century merits further research); *La mujer, el torero y el toro* (Insúa 1971).

want to consider how "traditional" notions of femininity, are used as reference points both for the classification of women in bullfighting, and as misconceptions which are challenged by women who enact ambiguous roles. The models and stereotypes are woven into the strategies of women who play or aspire to active roles in bullfighting. They are also pitted against the definitions of femininity manifested by other dominant discourses in contemporary society.

In this chapter I discuss the stereotypes and ideal models of women in bullfighting culture and show some of the ways that they have been applied in the contemporary context. Then in Chapter 6 I develop the discussion further to examine how the experiences of women who are currently active in the bullfighting world are connected to the generalisations.

#### **Woman as Beautiful Spectator**

This stereotype represents a passive role associated with the gender role segregation model of "traditional" discourse. In Chapter 2 I discussed how the stereotype and women's experiences have been confused by some anthropologists. I suggest that the "passive woman" stereotype has been maintained throughout periods of socio-cultural change precisely because of its tenuous relationship with the feminine experience. Glancing further back in history it is evident that at the turn of the century the feminine ideal of the *Mujer Cordobesa* was not a direct reflection of women's experience during that period. A flick through Cordoban newspaper archives reveals numerous cases of working class women being arrested for arguing and fighting and causing public disturbances. Such women acted assertively; the passive<sup>5</sup> woman stereotype cannot

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<sup>5</sup>Whilst the term "passive" is often used to mean "inert" its root meaning refers infers being "driven" (eg by strong emotion- hence "passion"). In this sense those who lose their



Encarni works as an English Teacher in a Secondary School in Córdoba. She wears fashionable clothes and listens to modern music, has no interest in bullfighting and does not consider that hers is a "traditional" life-style. One day Encarni told me that through becoming involved in my research she had discovered many aspects of her "traditional" culture of which previously she had little knowledge. During the feria Encarni dresses either in her traje corto (above) or a gitana dress. We met one day of the feria especially so I should see her dressed in traditional costume and she posed for my photographs. Everyone who saw this shot remarked that she looked like a typical "traditional" Cordobesa. Notions of "tradition" and what is "traditional" are complex and varied, and from under the veneer of what appears to be tradition may emerge ideas and actions which are in direct opposition to it.

be stretched to incorporate them<sup>6</sup>.

Historically the passive woman/active male stereotype does not fit to the experience of the lower classes. Neither can the model be understood as representation of upper class experience: the international connections of the upper classes often meant that upper class women were criticised for their deviations from the stereotype of passivity, and in much of the fiction based on the bullfight upper class women with foreign contacts are portrayed as individualistic, untraditional and immoral seductresses (see for example Gautier 1975, and Blasco Ibañez 1991).

The contemporary situation shows a similar incongruity between

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temper and fight "passionately" are "passive" rather than "active", however agitated their movements may be (J. Corbin, personal communication). My use of "passive woman" refers specifically to the role of woman as spectator (eg at the bullfight), rather than public actor (eg the bullfighter).

<sup>6</sup> MacClancy suggests that there were "alternative" womens' voices during the post-war period (1995;10) and that women had been strong public actors during the republic (1995;11).

<sup>7</sup> According to Mitchell, historically the *maja* and *torero* formed a "traditional" couple, and *maja* was placed in opposition to the seductress. Mitchell sees *majismo* as an eighteenth century folk response to the enlightenment and Europeanism which was so attractive to the upper classes (Mitchell 1991;56-7). Mitchell opposes the traditional morality of the "saucy sexuality" of the *maja* and *torero* to the flirtation, experimentation and "moral decay" of the upper classes (Mitchell 1991;56-61). Mitchell's model of *maja* offers yet another alternative stereotype, however it is not part of Cordoban bullfighting history and appears not to be an Andalusian phenomenon. In Córdoba informants generally recognised the term for it's contemporary meaning, in the words of one informant: "a *maja* is a girl who is a good person, she doesn't have to be really pretty, but is attractive because she is all over a good person". Informants said the term is not used in Córdoba, but is from Madrid and further north. Amongst informants from Valenica however it was normal to describe a person as "*muy maja*" to say she is a good person.

ideal, stereotype and experience. Whilst the "beautiful spectator" continues to be represented in the media and informants persistently define the "proper role of the woman as "beautiful spectator" many women are active in the bullfighting world in ways which contradict the stereotypes. Despite the apparent "rebellion" and challenge to tradition posed by these active women, they are often accepted in bullfighting circles. However, they are sometimes incorporated because they can be classified as novelties.

Some "traditionalist" *aficionados* have no difficulty in reconciling the ambiguity of the relationship between the ideal and experience. The distinction between the "romantic emotional" element of the bullfight and the everyday reality of women's participation is key to some informant's understanding of gender roles in bullfighting. In the words of one informant "a bullfighter needs beautiful women in the audience to inspire him to perform well". He compared this situation to his own experience: when asked by his friends to perform with a small cow at a country festival, he had refused to perform until persuaded by a pretty woman. For this man the romantic and flirtatious elements were essential to the bullfight, they demanded that women play the role of spectator. Yet he also maintained that women and men were equally capable of becoming accomplished bullfighters and should be respected on an equal basis. When questioned about the role of women in bullfighting most informants responded in similar ways: they argued that the normal and "traditional" role was that of spectator. Many directed me towards the long history of bullfighting art and posters which depict women in the audience. However, the reiteration of the dominant discourse did not imply overall rejection of the idea that women should also play other non-traditional roles in the bullfight. Men who supported and praised Cristina Sánchez and were comfortable with the idea that women should be bull breeders, the managers of

bullfighters, and the organisers of taurine events, are often active in the reproduction of the "traditional" gender role segregation stereotype. For example, a poet presented me with the following piece as an illustration of the role of woman as beautiful spectator:

Someone, had just performed the *rejoneo* on horseback in the bullring. During his performance he had noticed the eyes of a woman whom he had wished to meet for some time, a wish which she was aware of, and which was why she had attended the bullfight.

The *rejoneador*, finding himself being watched by her, was constantly more attentive to those women's eyes which at times offered him love, and at times denied him it, than he was to the bull before which he ran the risk of danger.

When the *rejoneador* arrived at his hotel before undressing and taking a shower, he picked up a pen and paper, and having lit a cigarette, he wrote:

"With my horse, *La Trianera*,  
I punished the bull with my spear  
Her eyes, at the ringside,  
toyed equally with me  
as my horse did with the beast"

Baldomero Herrero Sanchez de la Puerta<sup>6</sup>

The poet is also an advocate of female bullfighters, whom he insists are "as good as any man" and often better. He scorned men who refused to perform alongside a woman and did not classify female bullfighting as a feminized event.

Photographs published in bullfight reports from the 1950s to

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<sup>6</sup> Alguien, después de haber actuado en una Plaza de Toros, rejoneando a caballo un toro bravo. Y habiendo encontrado, durante su actuación, unos ojos de mujer, mujer a la que él quería conocer desde hacia tiempo. Deseo que ella conocía, por lo que había asistido a presenciar el espectáculo.

El Rejoneador, al encontrarse con ella, como espectadora, estuvo todo el rato, más pendiente de aquellos ojos de mujer, que a veces le ofrecían amor, y a veces se lo negaban, que del toro, ante el que corría peligro de muerte.

Y cuando el rejoneador llegó al Hotel, antes de desvestirse el traje corto, y de tomar una ducha, cogiendo papel y lápiz, habiendo encendido un cigarillo, escribió:

"Con mi jaca la Trianera,  
Le puse un par de castigo,  
Sus ojos en la barrera,  
Jugaban igual conmigo,  
Que mi jaca con la fiera".

the early 1990s<sup>9</sup> reveal a consistent use of an iconography of "general feminine spectator"/"individual masculine performer". Audience shots in particular can be divided into passive female spectators and active male participants. The structure of visual bullfight reports appears to have changed little between the 1970's and today. Lengthier visual sequences include shots of the other key non-performing participants: critics, bull breeders, managers, ex-bullfighters in the audience. All are identified as active participants, and most are men (the exception is that it is normal and accepted that women should own and manage *ganaderías*). These images denote activity and participation because their titles refer to their subjects profession in the bullfighting world. In contrast, most audience shots of women bear the name of their subject only if she is a relative or lover of a bullfighter. Women who are public dignitaries, who hold public office, are named when their photographs are published. Whilst this reflects the growing participation of women in public roles, the passive woman active man stereotypes are simulataneously maintained.

The more famous the woman in her own right the more likely she is to be photographed: in 1992-3 Rocío Jurado a popular singer of "traditional" Spanish music, and the partner of the bullfighter Ortega Cano was frequently photographed at his performances; when *Finito de Córdoba*, began a relationship with the daughter of another bullfighter Paco Camino, photographic reports of her attending his performances were published. Two categories of woman which informants identified as ideal wives for a bullfighter were either the singer of traditional Spanish songs or the daughter of an older performer. The publication of

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<sup>9</sup> The choice of this period for analysis was designed to encompass a historical period during there has been accelerated social change, and in which the position of women has changed enormously. Whilst the clothing of photographic subjects has changed, the iconography has remained relatively constant.



El día 1 por la mañana se lidió una novillada de Alvaro Domecq. En la imagen, Chamaco.



Chamaco (padre).

**INFORMACION  
GRAFICA DE  
LOS ULTIMOS  
FESTEJOS DE LA  
FERIA DE  
SEVILLA**

(FOTOS ARJONA)



Chiquilín cortó una oreja en cada novillo.



Gonzalo Domecq y señora.



Joaquín Díaz.



Manolo Vázquez y su esposa.



Juan Guardiola con su hermana.



**INFORMACIÓN  
GRÁFICA DE LA  
FERIA DE  
VALLADOLID  
(FOTOS CANO)**

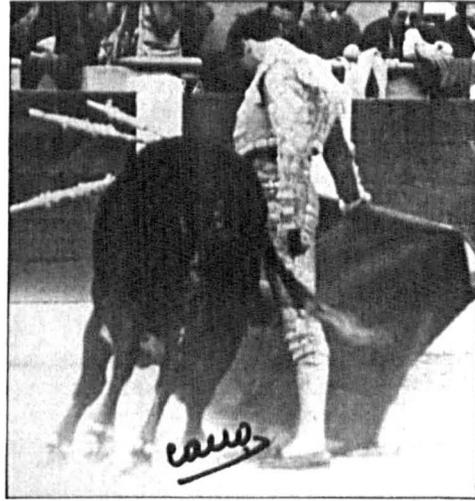
La corrida de Núñez del Cuvillo dió un juego extraordinario. Se cortaron nueve orejas y un rabo en una tarde inolvidable. Ortega Cano, Espartaco y Manolo Sánchez salieron a hombros acompañados del hijo del ganadero.



El alcalde de Valladolid con Enrique Múgica.



Espartaco.



Manolo Sánchez.



Ortega Cano.



Dos jóvenes aficionadas.

such photographs is another representation of "traditional" patterns of social relations. The photographs of nameless women featured in bullfight reports emphasise the passive role of women in the bullfight. Titles such as "A young aficionada", "Two girls from Bilbao", "César Rincon and Pablo Copera (two bullfighters) with a female friend", "A pretty aficionada" and "Pretty faces at the ringside" (Aplausos 30.8.93) characterise women as nameless and inactive adornments to mens' performances.

Images of masculine action and feminine stillness have been discussed in connection with other visual representations in feminist film criticism (eg Mulvey 1989) and visual anthropology (eg Pinney 1992). Photographic press reports of bullfights reveal patterns of female stillness and male movement which fit to traditional gender stereotypes. In photographic representations of performances women are seated, anonymous and immobile; still. Men, in contrast, fight bulls, communicate, are named and active; men move and command. Photographic stills documentation of bullfighting represents masculinity and femininity in a way similar to that which Pinney describes for film: action shots are of men and still shots are of women. Women are often said to be an "adornment" to the bullring, the implication is that they are there to be looked at thus becoming a "static female site of pleasure" (see Pinney 1992;27-29; cf. Mulvey 1989).

Bullfight reports, literature, poetry, photography and art maintain a constant media flow of information which communicates "traditional" gender configurations. In this context women who play roles in bullfighting activities which break the "traditional" pattern tend to be reported in the media as a novelty or something "of interest". The publication of report articles about women's achievements in bullfighting may in fact serve as confirmations of the "traditional"

discourse rather than highlight the notion of women breaking out of the traditional mould and implementing changes. In Córdoba in 1993-4 the achievements of two young women who organised a series of bullfights and a woman who had taken on the management of the career of a bullfighter were published alongside reports of conventional activities. In this context the women became novelties because they were represented as curious deviations from the norm. Hence the "traditional" norm is reaffirmed. Women's involvement in conventionally masculine roles is novel to the extent that it becomes "news", whereas a man may perform the same role without publicity.

### **Women who are Spectators**

There is no singular reason why women go to bullfights. Nor is there a general feminine experience of the performance. Two sisters who had previously insisted that they were against bullfighting because they considered the event to be cruel, were happy to sit in the best seats at one of the *feria* bullfights with their family. The bullfight is a social as well as taurine event and it is not only women who attend for reasons which are more to do with the social element than their *afición*. However, those who are heavily involved in the social world of bullfighting as well as being fervent *aficionados*, combine the two. The wife of one ex-bullfighter, an *aficionada* herself explained that the *feria* bullfights have a far greater social importance than occasional events held at other times of the year. Especially during the *feria* some women enact roles which approach the stereotype: at what this informant referred to as the "higher level" of the social world of bullfighting, the wives, mothers, sisters and daughters of bullfighting celebrities treat the *feria* as an important point in their social calendar. The *feria* bullfights signify the start of a social year: the women who belong to this set buy their summer wardrobe for the beginning of the season in Córdoba. The *feria* bullfight season was compared to a fashion parade in which



Finito, Córdoba's leading bullfighter acknowledges three young aficionadas from his peña. The dichotomy of triumphant male bullfighter and female spectator is apparent in my photography. However the young women planned to become a pilot, a nurse and a journalist; whilst in one context they are spectators, in others they are productive decision-makers.

everyone shows off her new outfits for the first time. The social element extends beyond the performances themselves which are usually followed by dinners in restaurants and other celebrations. *Aficionadas* who did not pertain to this social circle also felt some pressure to dress appropriately for the *feria* bullfights. One middle-aged woman had an expensive Cordoban hat hand-made in time to wear with traditional costume for the *feria*. Younger women also felt obliged to go to the bullfight smartly dressed, some felt that it was a pleasant detail to buy a flower to wear in ones hair for the occasion.

The question of whether a woman should accompany her husband or fiancé to the bullfight provoked varied responses: some men asserted that they would never consider going to the bullfight with their wives; others during the season of *feria* bullfights sometimes sat with their wives and daughters and on other occasions sat with friends. For one family the question of where and with whom one should sit depended mainly on the extent of ones interest in the particular bullfighters of the day. One informant pointed out that it was not worth paying double the price to sit with her husband to see his favourite bullfighter when she would be better to save the money for a good seat when her own favourite was performing. In contrast another informant was confronted with a dilemma when it came to buying tickets for the bullfight; he was a very dedicated television *aficionado* and would dearly have loved to attend the live performances of the *feria*, nevertheless he felt that if he bought himself tickets he would also be obliged to invite and pay for his fiancé to accompany him. This man, late middle-aged and with little money was most frustrated by the irony of his situation, the moral obligation he felt towards his fiancé meant that were he to attend he would have to buy cheap seats in an inferior location. That women should accompany their husbands to bullfights is again reinforced by photographic reports: from the 1970s to the present the audience photographs

of named bullfighting celebrities: "...and his wife" have been part of the visual construction of bullfights.

Whilst the stereotype of "beautiful spectator" is manifested in the importance placed on women's dress, the titling of audience portrait photography displaces the feminine subject and locates her within the "traditional" order of gender relations. Many women may resemble "beautiful spectators" when they attend *feria* bullfights, but actually aspire to be pilots, journalists, and are soon to be qualified as lawyers, etc. Visual imagery which uses women to represent "traditional" values do not necessarily serve to reinforce "traditional" ideologies- as in the case of the *feria* queen, women may enact symbolic "traditional" roles whilst not living out the proposed morality. The bullfight photographer's brief requires the acquisition of certain shots, amongst these are audience shots of women<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Wives, Mothers and Lovers**

At the beginning of this Chapter I introduced the dominant models for women which are expressed in "traditional" bullfighting discourse. These categories are not mutually exclusive- both the "good wife" and the "seductress" may be "beautiful spectators", yet the latter only superficially fulfils this role since she inevitably reveals her individualistic appetite and endangers the bullfighter through her lack of consideration for his feelings. The models rarely describe women's experiences, instead their contemporary significance is that they are frequently referenced in media discourses and aficionado conversation. During my fieldwork I followed four cases, two concerning contemporary performers,

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<sup>10</sup> Whilst learning bullfighting photography I followed the same format: it occurred to me more infrequently to photograph male friends in the audience although I came away with several photographs of women with their eyes keenly set on the action.

and two historical cases which were continuously revived in both the media and the aficionado discourse of my informants.

***Manolete: suffering mother, dangerous lover***

The bullfighter *Manolete* died after being wounded during a performance in Linares, Jaén province (Andalusia) in August 1947. Descriptions of his last hours emphasise the close relationship between the bullfighter and his mother. Numerous publications stress that whilst amongst *Manolete's* last words was his lament that his mother should be obliged to suffer his death, he did not mention the name of his supposed fiancé, the actress Lupe Sino.

*Manolete's* mother, Angustias Sánchez has become a key figure in the bullfighting history of Córdoba as a symbol of feminine suffering. Her two husbands, both bullfighters, left her a widow twice over, one like *Manolete* was killed by a bull. Her status as the only woman with a permanent place in taurine exhibitions and publications is granted through her relationship to male bullfighters. Moreover her "life of suffering" is constructed in relation to male bullfighters, for example Filiberto Mira defines her life as follows:

"Her name, Angustias, is exactly what matches the reality of her anguished life - few women have suffered more than Doña Angustias. She was the wife of two toreros and the mother of one and is of an exceptional category of humanity who lived what is to suffer being in this situation" (Mira 1984:24)

Accounts of his life and death repeatedly emphasise the close, positive nature of *Manolete's* relationship with his mother. In interview men who worked closely with *Manolete* characterise his relationship with Lupe Sino as negative and problematic (see Mira 1984). It has been suggested that *Manolete's* death was caused by his having sought refuge from a rough patch in the relationship by turning to alcohol. Informants proposed that

he was drunk on the day of his death. Others even suggested that *Manolete* became addicted to cocaine whilst with Lupe Sino in Mexico. Not surprisingly such theories do not surface in the respectful tributes to *Manolete* as triumphant hero which dominate the literature about him. It is significant that there have been attempts to attribute *Manolete's* death to his relationship with Lupe Sino because a similar scenario has been constructed concerning the death of another bullfighter, *Paquirri*- in 1984 (see below).

In the written history of *Manolete*, mother and lover are set up in opposition to one another. They did not socialise in the same circles and Doña Angustias is said to have been displeased by her sons choice. Whilst the mother is always described as supportive and stabilising, Lupe Sino is portrayed as destructive and dangerous. Her unsettling influence on the emotional life of the bullfighter is said to have put him in mortal danger. Nevertheless, although elements of the "seductress" model contribute to the representation of Lupe Sino, she does not fit the stereotype. In fact, the other side of the debate about the role of Lupe Sino represents her as an unfortunate "hanger-on" of whom *Manolete* made use but was never in love with. The existence of an "unknown" local "traditional Cordoban beauty" who *Manolete* "should have married" has even been proposed as an alternative to Lupe Sino. Both descriptions of the actress assert that there was something wrong about Lupe Sino: she did not manifest "traditional" morality and she was not an appropriate fiancé for a bullfighter. In contrast, Angustias Sánchez is constructed as the ideal-type woman as wife or mother of a bullfighter<sup>11</sup>. In Córdoba her almost religious life of suffering and self-

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<sup>11</sup> Wives of bullfighters are often expected to become the mothers of bullfighters, since it is considered usual that the sons of bullfighters should wish to follow their fathers' career.

Manolette's  
sister- with  
her two  
daughters-  
came to see  
Finito



La hermana de Manolete —junto a sus hijas— vino a ver a Finito.



Manolette's  
m o t h e r  
photographed  
with a young  
torero relative  
under the  
portrait of  
Manolette

Photographs of these women are published in bullfighting journals and books by virtue of their relationship with the deceased bullfighter Manolette

sacrifice for those men around her who were bullfighters gives her a special place in the bullfighting world. The annual memorial for the death of her son which is published in the local newspaper every 29th August is also dedicated to his mother.

Informants who had known *Manolete's* family maintained this image of Angustias Sánchez, moreover, they did so by contrasting her to Lupe Sino. I was repeatedly told that *Manolete's* mother was a central figure to my research since she was an extremely important figure in the bullfighting world. Her importance stemmed from her relationships with the key male figure in Cordoban bullfighting history and the kin-based continuity acknowledged by other bullfighter descendants. Most informants characterised the life of the mother of a bullfighter as one of suffering. However, when I spoke to some of the mothers of bullfighters in Córdoba I received an interesting variety of responses:

One mother told me that she had always been against her son's ambition to be a bullfighter, she cannot bear to watch his performances live (although views some on video). Her own association with bullfighting has grown out of her sons activity and she does not consider herself an *aficionada*. Whilst she is proud of her son's achievements as a bullfighter shares his happiness and she cannot help feeling a strong sense of pride for her sons achievements, but would prefer him to give up.

Other informants suggested that the extent of a woman's suffering depends on the depth of her *afición*: one woman, a devoted *aficionada*, said that in her personal experience, if one has *afición*, the emotional strength of the performance will elevate ones experience of the performance above the sensation of maternal worry. Instead one becomes absorbed in the beauty

and art of the bullfight. Another *aficionada*, the mother of a *novillero* bullfighter enthusiastically promoted her son and keenly awaited his performances. She explained that risk was simply part of the career of a bullfighter. She dearly loved the bullfight and would be delighted if her son could become a leading performer one day. Another *aficionada*, keen for her teenage son to be a bullfighter actively encouraged him to train and experiment at country festivals. In this case parental stereotypes were reversed since the father, as enthusiastic an *aficionado* as his wife, was much more cautious: he did not want the dangerous and problematic career of a bullfighter for his son.

***Paquirri* and *Pantoja*: Perfect wife or adulterous flirt?**

The bullfighter *Paquirri* and his second wife, Isabel *Pantoja*, a popular singer of traditional Spanish song have often been cited as the perfect couple. The *Torero-Tonderillera* marriage is an "ideal". As symbols of "traditional" masculinity and femininity they form the dyad which is central to constructions of social order in bullfighting discourse.

When *Paquirri* died after being wounded by a bull in Pozoblanco (Córdoba province) in 1984, *Pantoja* became the "national widow". *Paquirri's* death was recorded on video and was followed by the publication of several books as well as numerous commemorative magazine articles and supplements. The documentation of the death of the bullfighter emphasised the grief of his wife. One publication, for example, dedicated a set of articles to Isabel *Pantoja* and several of my informants wrote to her personally to express their grief and condolences (see Toscano 1984).

It is not unusual that the death of a bullfighter should bring his family to public attention. For example, when in 1992 a *banderillero* was killed in the bullring a national fund was set

up and a stream of donations, administered by *Aplausos* magazine was channelled towards the economic support of his wife and family. In the case of the death of *Paquirri*, Pantoja, already a national figure came to stand for the sense of national loss which was attributed to her husbands' death by the media.

Some media laments of *Paquirri's* death represent the *Paquirri-Pantoja* relationship as the "perfect marriage" made between two "traditional, sincere and honest people", Gargilla (1989) predicts that their future would have been equally perfect. Curiously, there is another, less congenial side to the speculations over the cause of *Paquirri's* death. Several informants indicated that Pantoja's position as the "national widow" was extremely ironic since she had actually been instrumental in her husbands death. One informant suggested that *Paquirri* had been drinking heavily for some time before his last performance because his marriage was on the rocks and his wife was having numerous affairs. Other accusations have been more subtle, but the same theme persists: Pantoja and *Paquirri* were having marital difficulties and the bullfighter was unable to concentrate on his performance. Even explanations which emphasise that the couple were deeply in love tend to blame Pantoja for her husbands death: ex-bullfighter Miguel Dominguín commented that

"Some days before *Paquirri* died we were watching a programme down here and I noticed how he was watching his wife sing until 1 a.m in the morning. I thought: it's not important because he's not drinking or anything and he's a strong man who trains a lot; but he's in love with his wife- something which seems fantastic- but one pays for it" (in Zumbiehl 1987)

More recent media attention has revived the controversy. In 1990 *Paquirri's* brother accused Isabel Pantoja of arguing with *Paquirri* the night before his death, and refusing to speak with him when he attempted to telephone her just before his fatal

performance the next day. Further speculations in 1993 led to a TV "reality show" on which *Paquirri's* father was wired to a supposed "lie detector" machine and subjected to a test about the couple's relationship. The outcome was not decisive and continuing controversy rages over whether Pantoja is unjustly hoarding the *Paquirri* inheritance which should rightfully be shared with his ex-wife, sons from his first marriage, and his paternal family. The alleged marital dispute has never been proven, although the controversies have served to shake Pantoja's status as "national widow" in some circles. Pantoja's media representation has been manipulated to fit both positive and negative "traditional" stereotypes.

#### **Does sex destroy a bullfighter's career ?**

Some bullfighters and *aficionados* uphold the argument that women and bullfighting can be a deadly combination. In the examples cited above the deaths of both *Manolete* and *Paquirri* were referred to their relationships with women. Marvin notes that before *Paquirri's* death he was criticised for "saving himself for Pantoja" and not giving his all to the performance. Similarly the demise of the once top bullfighter *Espartaco* has been attributed to his recent marriage: press reports and *aficionado* discourse express the conviction that he now takes fewer risks since he has a wife and child, married life is thought to have diverted some of his commitment away from bullfighting. The belief that bullfighters should avoid sexual relations before performing or even during the whole of the bullfighting season is quite widespread. Some believe that sexual intercourse or simply contact with women may sap the strength of the performer (Marvin 1988;153-4). Ex-bullfighter Miguel Dominguín explains the problem as not simply of sexual intercourse, but of falling in love. Dominguín claims that every scar on his body was won in "the name of a woman" with whom he believed himself to be in love and for whom he had lost concentration whilst in the arena (see Zumbiehl 1989).

Whilst the sex lives of bullfighters are usually represented as having a negative affect on their performances, the "right woman" may be treated as a positive influence. The case of Rocío Jurado and Ortega Cano shows how this is developed in *aficionado* and media discourse. Rocío Jurado, like Isabel Pantoja is a *Tondillera* or *Coplista*- a singer of popular "traditional" Spanish song. The *Tonderillera-Torero* association was brought up by Rocío in a 1975 interview when she stated that: "I have never allowed myself to become emotionally involved with a bullfighter - isn't that strange for a singer like me? - I've always seen the torero as a dangerous man for a woman". She characterised the life of the wife of a bullfighter as a very sad existence, and felt that the torero was not her type of man (El Ruedo 1975). Almost twenty years later the same woman, now in the process of divorcing her first husband was given media approval for having a happy romance with a leading torero. Rather than suffering, Roció's face is described as "evidencing enormous happiness" as she watches Cano's performance (Pronto 1993). The couple were continually photographed and interviewed in the bullfighting and gossip magazines. Ortega Cano's success was attributed to his flourishing personal life and Rocío was frequently photographed in the audience of his performances. In short, the media romance was constructed as a serious love affair which lent strength to other aspects of both performers lives; Rocío Jurado's career was also at a high point - in 1993 she starred in a feature film and brought out a new record. The question of how Ortega Cano's career was affected by his being in love was broached in detail by the media. In 1993 the television show "*Queremos Saber*" ("We Want to Know")<sup>12</sup> took up the issue and interviewed the couple, they publicly denied that

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<sup>12</sup> A type of "reality show" which probes the lives of the rich and famous and invites them to be interviewed and personally explain the issues which press attention has focused on.

their relationship had ever had any negative affect on Cano's performances. Bullfighting journalist Manuel Moles commented that "everyone thought that between his romance with Rocío and his age, Ortega was finished, but in fact he has continued to perform as well if not better than ever" (*El Ruedo* 15.1.1993). Similarly in a press interview Cano stated "love helps and strengthens a man of my age",; "the fact that I am in love...has not affected my work, on the contrary, it has strengthened me" (*Diario 16* 3.8.1993)<sup>13</sup>.

I have described how the stereotypes of women in the bullfighting world are referred to both in the media and aficionado discourse. The media images of certain celebrities become invested with the morality associated with these "traditional" stereotypes and sometimes, come to symbolise elements of the "traditionalist" definition of the feminine presence in the bullfighting world. As in the case of Isabel Pantoja, the celebrity may become a feminine shell which may be identified as the embodiment of contradictory moralities depending on the context of her evaluation.

In the next chapter I take a closer look at the ways in which some of my informants who considered themselves *aficionadas* were involved in the bullfighting world.

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<sup>13</sup> The Jurado-Cano romance stimulated a whole series of articles about the *Tonderillera-torero* relationship, in one article about the history of the "traditional couple" journalist Marcelo González listed 27 such couples.

## CHAPTER 6

### ACTIVE AFICIONADAS: GENDERED INDIVIDUALS IN THE BULLFIGHTING WORLD

#### Introduction

In this Chapter I discuss some of the ways in which women have situated themselves in the "bullfighting world". I examine two themes, first the strategies which enable women to participate in an activity formally controlled by men and organised according to gender role segregation. Second, how women incorporate this "masculine" world into their feminine identities. I sought women who were active in the bullfighting world and included as many different roles as possible, ranging from performers, managers, members of *peñas*, mothers and wives of bullfighters. Each woman challenged or reconfirmed the gender role segregation model and "traditional" notions of femininity to a different extent and in her own personal style. The bullfighting world appears to be and is spoken about as if it were dominated by men. The women who reach the headlines or who are discussed in *aficionado* discourse tend to be those who are exceptional and in the public view, most commonly those who succeed as bullfighters. As for women's sports "most people know about exceptional sports women...but "...little is known about the various types of women who participate who are involved in sports, and the values that they bring to them" (Hargreaves 1994;1). "Active *aficionadas*" undoubtedly have some impact on the values which dominate in bullfighting circles.

Below I describe some of the ways in which different women have experienced the "bullfighting world" in Córdoba, focusing finally on the relationship of women to bullfighting photography. In Chapters 7, 8 and 9 I discuss female bullfighters, their activity is more obvious and visually

stated in public and causes greater controversy. However, opposition is confronted by any woman involved in bullfighting. The grounds for acceptance and rejection are not consistent throughout different social contexts and women who operate within bullfighting groups and networks must play off different representations of their own feminine identities against the stereotypes of women which are referred to in dominant discourses. The precise ways in which these strategies develop are context dependent.

As my research developed I became one of the subjects of my research: a woman in the bullfighting world and a producer of visual images. To some extent I had tried to copy feminine models, hoping to be accepted, but other strategies had allowed me to participate as an active rather than passive person. I opted to act as a writer and photographer, but other dilemmas emerged, in particular, the question of whether I should train to be a female bullfighter<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For many, the logical conclusion of learning about bullfighting is to be able to apply that knowledge in a practical sense at country bullfighting celebrations when the opportunity to attempt a cape pass with a young cow may arise. I realised that were I to learn the passes I would never actually "perform": I had no illusions about being a female bullfighter, and I would have been laughed at had I tried. However, I did feel that, as my understanding of the bullfight grew, I gained some sense of what it must be like to work towards that "moment of truth"- the confrontation with a live animal. My eventual decision was based on my conviction that I would never step out into a small arena, cape in hand to face a small cow, and therefore I would be wasting tutors time if I asked for any tutorship. There were plenty of young hopefuls at the bullfighting school with too few teachers to go around as it was. It should be noted however that (as is the case in several of the examples discussed below) it is considered perfectly normal for one to train simply in order to increase ones understanding of the bullfight with no intention of going on to eventually perform. Some people consider this to be the more normal (although not a usual female aspiration) approach for women who train as bullfighters- they train so that they may truly understand the cape pass that they see male bullfighters performing- not so that they may realise the

### Being an Aficionada: Anthropologist as Aficionada

In Córdoba, my interest in bullfighting became well known and some male informants began to refer to me as an *aficionada*. My being English and furthermore an *aficionada* was often a source of delight which for some implied a victory over the anti-bullfighting movement. Initially it puzzled me that my minimal knowledge of bullfighting was adequate for me to be referred to as an *aficionada*. In fact the term is used to express a variety of degrees of understanding, knowledge and interest in bullfighting, its meaning is contextual, sometimes qualified by use of the term *verdadera aficionada* (true *aficionada*). My English *afición* was "exceptional", there are other explanations for Spanish *aficionadas*.

### Becoming an *aficionada*: in the veins or in the air?

Most women who called themselves *aficionadas* explained that they had developed their *afición* in childhood through family association. Women from families involved in the business of bullfighting, bull breeding, or closely related to bullfighters often attribute their *afición* to family socialization-attending bullfights, country festivals, visiting *ganaderías* during their childhood social lives. These women tend to have extensive knowledge of bullfighting and often practical experience. Other women credit their *afición* to male relatives whom they accompanied to the bullfight as a child. One woman always visited the bullring with her father who was a taurine vet, her ambition was to become a bullfight critic. Others, uninterested until marriage attributed their own interest to their partner's *afición*.

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activity themselves. Even those *aficionadas* who have had no formal training usually know the basic movements performed in a cape pass.

### **The role of *afición* in a woman's life**

Women's involvement in bullfighting tends to be part of family life. Some unmarried women are "television *aficionadas*"; rather than participating in a taurine social life or attending bullfights, they follow televised performances and written reports.

Many women attend bullfighting *peñas* and their social events. Whilst married women often participate on the strength of their husbands membership, younger women lead a social life in the youth *peñas* which is characterised by peer group equality and is less dependent on paternal support. Some teenage girls sign up at the bullfighting school which is held in the bullring in Córdoba. The girls training there did not want to be bullfighters, but said that to truly understand the bullfight they must have practical knowledge of technique. Young people also attend various courses, seminars and conferences to study theory, history and philosophy of bullfighting.

Whilst most teenage *aficionadas*' lives are not dominated by bullfighting, some older women found that their social lives were devoted to events and friendships connected with the bullfighting world. The wife of an ex-bullfighter, now a taurine radio and television journalist, found her life dominated by bullfighting events either as leisure or in connection with her husband's work. She found this the ideal, she grew up in an *aficionado* family and has always loved bullfighting and is delighted that one of her daughters recently married a bull-breeder.

### **How do women channel their *afición*?**

Women channel their interest in bullfighting in a variety of ways and which meet various degrees of approval. Some informants said the most proper way for an *aficionada* to be involved in a bullfighting career is to marry a bullfighter;

she should provide him with the necessary support and understanding. The ex-bullfighter's wife gains access to many events through her husband. She is often the only woman present when she accompanies her husband to lunches and receptions connected with his work. Her activities support her husband's salaried work. Other informants suggested that as a manager or sponsor a woman may prove her *afición* by investing her economic resources in the supportive promotion of a male performer.

Another woman, a bull breeder, has channelled her interest in bullfighting by running her business herself, and taking an active role in bull breeders associations. She argued that although physically women do not have a suitable build to perform, they can and should pursue other careers in bullfighting. Currently an increasing number of women are becoming journalists, critics, and photographers. Several female teenage informants planned to enter these professions, they concentrate on developing professional skills which they may apply to a career in the bullfighting world. The position of women who own *ganaderías* is different from that of women who enter the bullfighting world through the *peñas* and those who aspire to be performers. Informants suggested that the *ganadera* role was one commonly played in bullfighting, although many added that the women tended to be owners, rather than managers of their properties. The *ganadera* is empowered in ways that most *aficionadas* are not. She has a direct claim to be part of the bullfighting world and she has normally has the economic resources and social influence to move easily in and out of bullfighting circles.

## Women and the Peñas

The *peñas*<sup>2</sup> are said to be attended by male *aficionados* and their families. Meetings are normally held in bars where the *peñas* are permanently based. Members organise a variety of activities which benefit both themselves and the bullfighters which they support (eg fundraising lotteries, annual dinners, etc). The profits subsidise activities such as the spring and autumn country bull-festivals, winter lectures, round table discussions, video and film screenings, and subsidised coach trips to see the clubs bullfighter perform in other cities<sup>3</sup>. *Peñas* present annual trophies for the *feria* bullfights in May, and some use their funds to support young aspirants to bullfighting by organising promotional performances. The biggest clubs are amongst the eighty or so local organisations which construct portable decorative bars *casetas* during the May

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<sup>2</sup> In Córdoba there is a thriving network of bullfighting social and supporter clubs which are in general referred to as "*peñas*", some are defined more specifically as "*tertulias*". In Córdoba this type of associationism is widespread phenomenon (as it is in many other Spanish cities and villages) there exist voluntary associations which cover a whole range of both traditional and non-traditional activities. Traditional and folkloric groups were amongst the few types of associations which were encouraged under Franco and thus have a longer history a than the relatively younger political and womens groups which are now also flourishing. The bullfighting clubs in Córdoba merit a study themselves, they form a network of contacts and alliances, opposition and cooperation over a whole range of issues on both personal and public issues. They are united under the umbrella organisations of the Taurine Federation and the Federation of *Peñas*, are registered and have formal recognition. Each club is run by its own committee of president, secretary, treasurer, etc. *Peñas* and other voluntary associations have significance beyond that of the common interest by which they are identified. Within Spanish anthropology some attention has been paid to the ways in which associationism is related to local social structures and power networks (see, for example, Escalera 1991).

<sup>3</sup> In 1993 one club organised a flight and ten day holiday in South America incorporating two performances of Córdoba's top bullfighter in Mexico.

*feria* and represent the institutions which are part of "traditional" social life.

In Córdoba there are approximately fifty *peñas* of varying size and endurance. Their membership ranges from three people to over seventy. I visited many *peñas* and became more involved with four: one was held on private premises, comprised of close friends and family, and held on an informal basis; another was exclusively male with six regular members, held in a "traditional" bar and dedicated to the bullfighter *Manolete*; the third club was mixed sex and age and one of the largest, dedicated to *Finito de Córdoba*; finally, the university bullfighting club, led by two male students and with a mixed sex membership, the club publishes a successful intellectual bullfighting journal and organises social activities. I also participated in activities organised by a number of other *peñas*<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Women and Membership of the *Peñas***

Not all men who attend *peñas* are members. Several refused to commit themselves saying that they prefer to have good relations with all the clubs rather than being obliged to deal with the petty quarrels and organisational problems. Women do not attach themselves to clubs in this way.

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<sup>4</sup> Clubs differ in a number of ways. Some bullfighting clubs represent specific social classes, for example, although people from all social levels attended events organised by a *peña* based in Córdoba's elite club is clear that the membership is made up of the upper classes. In addition to the above certain elite formations are also made up in less formal groups which include local public figures and businessmen, top public administrators, local government officials, intellectuals, bullfighting journalists and ex-bullfighters. There are notable divisions between these persons and the working class bullfighting devotees with little education.

I received mixed responses to initial questions about whether women were members of *peñas*: some informants said women attended activities, others that *peñas* had male and female members. Other *peñas* appeared to be exclusively male. Informants were aware of the presence of women in the *peñas* but were often not certain about their status. In general in Córdoba adult women do become named members of bullfighting clubs, whilst in other cities women's bullfighting *peñas* existed none were active in Córdoba from 1992-4. In comparison, in youth sections both teenage boys and girls are formal members and participate in the leadership and organisation of their club. One male informant explained that it was unnecessary for women to be members because they attended meetings with their husbands. Some male informants stated that women attended in order to accompany their male relatives, and not due to personal interest. Sometimes this is the case, when I attended a lecture in Córdoba's elite bullfighting club three late middle-aged women were in the audience. One left when the talk ended and did not attend the drinks reception. Two remained, the sister of the speaker who had gone in support of her brother, her friend accompanied her so that she shouldn't have to go alone.

Women do not attend all clubs. The all-male group had weekly meetings which dealt mainly with administrative and organisational matters. Whilst women attended their occasional lectures and fiestas the core group consisted of these few men. The large club was more social and family orientated. Its youth section organised most of the lectures and discussions which were attended by members of all ages. The ways in which men, women and teenagers formed groups was informative: men did not attend lectures unless the theme or speaker was especially interesting; families would normally separate on arrival- men tended to congregate around the bar whilst wives, mothers and the younger members would often directly sit in the seats

arranged for the lecture. This was not a rigid pattern, some women assertively debated with men at the bar, and men often joined in conversations at the tables in both male and mixed groups. In this *peña* organisation of other activities and events fell into the hands of a core group of older men, women did not participate in organisation or decision making, although some expressed their opinions. This seemed to be the norm in club organisation, even when there was notable feminine presence "serious" matters, official business, decision making and organisation was conducted by senior male members. One female informant, a member of another large family orientated *peña* complained about such procedures, she claimed that the male leaders took women's subscriptions and gave them Christmas lottery tickets to sell, but when an important policy issue or discussion arose they didn't inform female members. She wanted the *peña* to include members of both sexes at all levels.

The presence of women is increasingly felt in bullfighting *peñas*, in the youth sections teenage girls participate and organise activities on an equal footing with their male contemporaries- the president of one youth division was a very efficient teenage girl. Older women have not become active or influential individuals at the senior levels in the same way. Indeed some women remain at home (probably out of choice), preparing dinner and caring for children, whilst their husbands attend their meetings.

Very few women attend *peña* events alone, my attendance at the smaller male bullfighting club was facilitated by a male friend who was the treasurer of the club. I attended the larger, family orientated *peña* under different circumstances: I was introduced to the male president of the adult section by an other informant, he presented me to the teenage girl president of the youth section and invited me to attend their weekly events. As a young single woman I was allocated to the youth

club since I did not fit with the adult or male part.

### Teenage activity in the Peñas

Teenage *aficionadas* stand in a different relationship to their male contemporaries from that of the women of the older generation<sup>5</sup>. However, young women only have influence in the "youth" sphere of activity, and although male members of the adult section have no difficulty in accepting that young women are leaders of youth sections, they are not allowed to participate in the decision making processes of the adult sections. Women and children are still excluded, but the implication is that the young women who are currently playing leading roles will continue to do so when they are older.

My informants tended to stereotype girls as more mature, responsible and organised than boys of their own age. Some informants expected that girls should have a greater interest in administrative activities whilst boys are expected to be

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<sup>5</sup> From research amongst young *aficionados* in Madrid Pérez Molina suggests that there are certain differences between the emerging youth *afición* and that of older and retired *aficionados*. He argues that in the 1980s a minority resurgence of interest in bullfighting occurred amongst young people (1991;445). He proposes that this new movement has developed in a context where there is a stress in the cultural, aesthetic, philosophical and ideologically neutral character of bullfighting, thus disassociating it with Francoist politics (1991;446). Taurine bars have become fashionable, and the *torero* style has become an important theme in popular culture, music and fashion (1991;447). Molina also makes a useful distinction between different types of young *aficionado*- he found that whilst many of those up to sixteen years old were pupils of the bullfighting school, those slightly older tended to be students or educated youth, his data also suggests that the 'new' *aficionados* tend to include those whose *afición* does not derive from family *afición*, but which has developed out of contemporary youth culture (1991;450-1). Contemporary youth culture (or cultures), including the gender relations of that culture, certainly has a significant influence on the *afición* of young people.

dedicating part of their spare time to attempting to actually become bullfighters. In Córdoba two teenage girls established themselves as the organisers of a series of bullfights. In contrast, teenage boys tend to envisage themselves as bullfighters rather than as the promoters, they dedicate themselves to preparing to compete themselves rather than organising events to further the careers of their contemporaries. The two female managers mentioned above were secondary school girls, aged around fifteen years. They are members of youth bullfighting clubs and have good family contacts in the bullfighting world. The role they carved for themselves in bullfighting was a prominent one but did not involve their stepping into the male territory of the performance. Instead, as organisers of promotional events they were playing fund-raising and administrative roles which are usually classified as normal feminine activities. Their project was legitimated and backed by male members of the bullfighting community, the girls were from known families and therefore considered trustworthy. Moreover, they did not trespass the realm of serious bullfighting since they organised promotional events. Their work was complementary to that of their male teenage contemporaries, voluntary, and represented no real challenge to conventional bullfighting. Similarly, women do not usually manage professional bullfighters. However, whilst some informants classified these women's activities as supportive to male roles and thus conventional, from another perspective these women are making moves into masculine domains.

### **Women and Social Networks**

Whilst middle-aged women did not emerge as powerful actors in the *peñas*, their influence was evident in the social networks which join bullfight *aficionado* families and individuals. For example, it was the wife of an ex-bullfighter who put her network of contacts (*enchufes*) into action to find a manager

for her nephew who was an aspiring young bullfighter. Similarly when I carried out a series of interviews with wives, mothers and other female relatives of bullfighters I was passed along the female friendship and kinship networks which form a part of the more complex webs of social relationships in the bullfighting world<sup>6</sup>.

### **Aficionadas as Photographers**

The different roles played by women who photograph the bullfight, as well as the way they are interpreted locally provides an useful example of how women may become involved in bullfighting culture. The interface between photography, bullfighting and identity is a complex and fascinating aspect of bullfighting culture (see Pink 1996a, 1996b). Below I describe the role of photography in bullfighting and some of the ways in which women express their *aficionada* identity both as photographers and subjects.

### **The history of bullfighting photography**

Bullfighting photography tends to be used "honorifically"; formal portraiture and shots of "triumphal moments" and "great performances" endow status upon the bullfighter. Rather than manifesting the "repressive" function which Sekula (1989) bases on the Foucauldian concept of surveillance, bullfighting photography tends to be conservative. However, whether it is a conservative force which impedes social change is debatable.

The history of the style of bullfighting photography is curious because it has changed very little over time. Whilst C19 photographers obliged bullfighters to pause during the

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<sup>6</sup> These women would have been otherwise inaccessible in large city since they were not involved in the bullfighting social clubs and formed part of what some informants saw as the 'elite' of the bullfighting world.

Rafaél Perez de Guzman, early C19 (left). Torerito, early C20 (right).  
Manolette, 1940's (below right)



Mike Gidley shows how in both art and photographic portraiture there has been a tendency towards the classification of persons according to "type". Categories of "type" determined the pose the subject would take in the photograph or the costume worn (Gidley 1992;1438-9). Gidley points out that whilst in the work of C20 art photographers such "crude typologies have of course been eliminated", some vestiges of this tendency still exist: "army commanders are usually stiffly erect and writers seated" and setting and costume also sometimes tend to recur with particular subject "types" (Gidley 1992;139). Similarly bullfighters' poses have been remarkably consistent throughout C19 and C20 art and photography. Indeed the bullfighter style of pose and clothing has also been borrowed for the representation of non-bullfighter. A C19 example of this can be found in the work of Edouard Manet whose **Portrait of Campubri** (oil on canvas 1862) portrays the dancer wearing a suit of lights and holding a cape in the same pose seen in the photographs printed here (see McCauley 1985;180).



Conejito c. 1890 (above left). Manolette c1930 (above right).  
Cristina Sánchez 1991 (below left).  
Chiquilín 1992 (below right).  
Laura Valencia 1992 (overleaf).



# LAURA VALENCIA

DE CUENCA

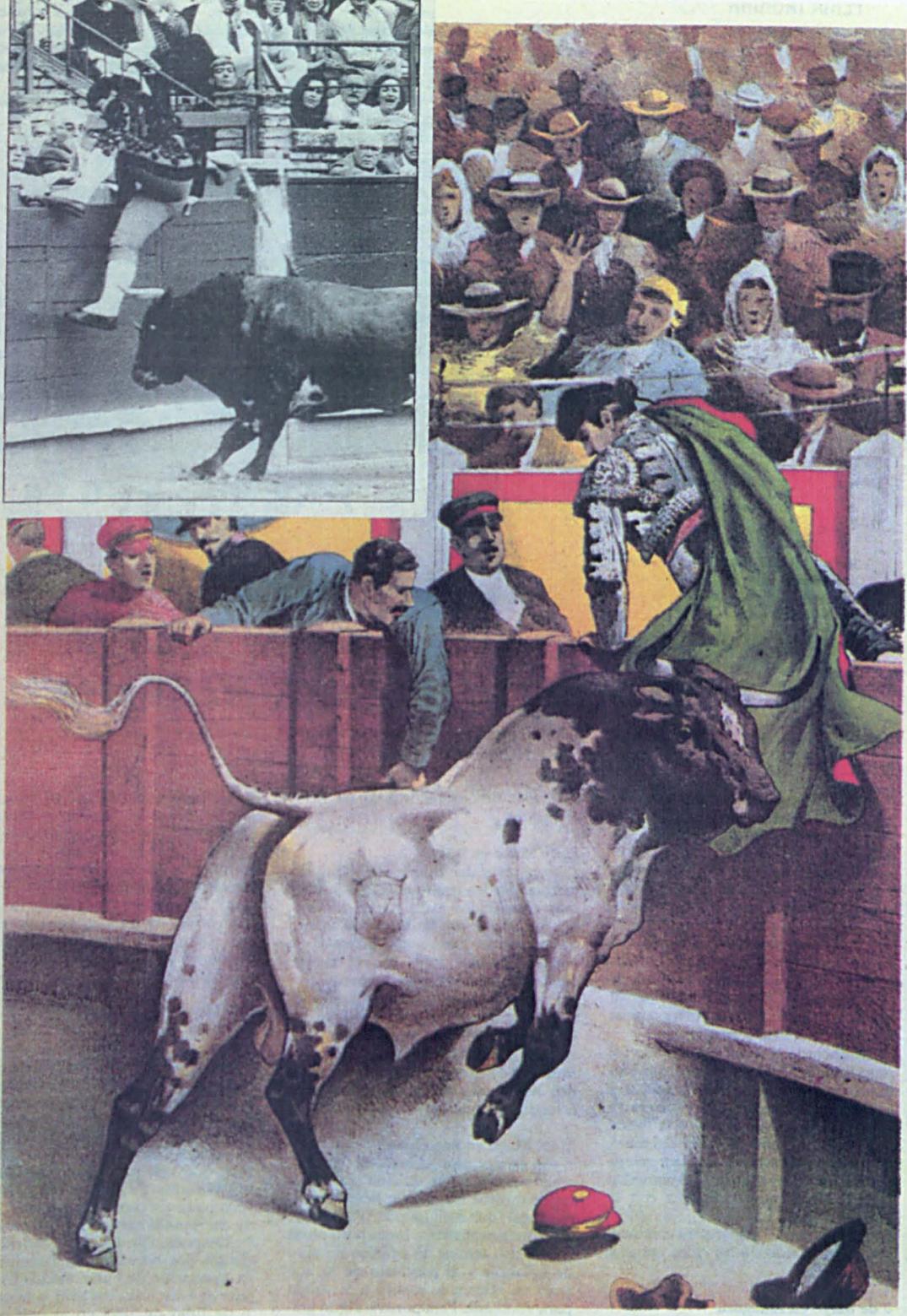


**DESPUES DE LOS GRANDES ACONTECIMIENTOS  
DEL 92, ELLA SERA EL ACONTECIMIENTO DEL 93**

Apoderado: Sr. Garrote. Contratación: tels. (966) 23 03 28 (91) 741 79 46



A banderillero jumping the barrera  
1993 (inset) & earlier (main picture)



performance for "portraiture" shots (Clementson 1993;9), technological innovation, fast films, zoom lenses and automatic shutter action have facilitated higher quality action shots. However, the basic iconography has not changed. Key visual moments and subjects appear consistently throughout the last two centuries. The maintenance of photographic conventions in the bullfight is especially interesting because the socio-cultural context has changed. For example, female photographers produce bullfighting images which represent the gender role segregation model of "conventional" visual compositions; an ideology which they overtly voice their disagreement with. Likewise conventional audience shots of women are ambiguous; the title of "a "pretty girl" in the audience" may well refer to a young lawyer. Bullfighting photography represents conservative ideologies but does not necessarily empower or enforce them- in the photography of female bullfighters the gender contradiction is explicit; following the conventions for male performers the images portray women's bodies in masculine poses.

Visual history of Cordoban bullfighting is a celebration of local masculine triumph; its iconography is of masculine individualistic achievement. Those excluded have not contributed to the glorious history of bullfighting in Córdoba. Photographs of bullfighting's failures do not pertain to the local history of heroes. Some find their place of privilege on the wall of the home of their protagonist, but their wider historical value is dubious.

### **Images as material culture**

Photography is an element of the structure and experience of most professional bullfights. Formal photography confers importance on a performance. Photographs are easily accessible and have become institutionalised as the memory or symbol of a great performance. One strand of local intellectual thought

represents this cultural use of photography. For example Portillo Martín writes:

"In our particular case photography is possibly the most meaningful medium of communication. Through the image it is possible to create the atmosphere which mediates the essential elements of visual memory. These memories, translated chemically by emulsions, exposure times and play with the light, recreate those essential components of the myths which are lived and felt individually, conserving them in time and facilitating their diffusion" (1993;4).

The camera introduces a new dimension to the experience of the bullfight. The visual composition seen through the view-finder differs from what the naked eye sees. The zoom lens offers the bullfighting *aficionado* an image which combines both closeness and distance, sometimes conceptualised as seeing more and experiencing less. For example, Grosso describes the bullfight as "the ultimate living art" (1992;20) and its photography as merely "the codification of a reality which is so rich that it is impossible to embrace and, above all, it is something infinitely reproducible and not the unique living work" (Grosso 1992;20-21). Whilst photography cannot reproduce the sensations experienced in the arena the image has nevertheless become indispensable to the experienced event. In journals photo-reports and written text represent major bullfights, whilst minor events are allocated correspondingly smaller columns. Local newspaper reports are biased in favour of "local heroes" with images of triumphant local bullfighters rather than successful outsiders. Journalistic bullfight photographs are privileged authoritative images and there is a certain image hierarchy which confers less authority still to art and amateur photography (cf. Tagg 1982;117). Certain context dependent hierarchies influence the extent to which different types of bullfighting photography (eg journalistic/professional, amateur, snapshotter, tourist, art) are empowered, respected or approved. The identity of the photographer as author is crucial to the evaluation of his/her

work. Bullfight photographers are treated as subjective image producers, as "subjective observers" (see Crary 1990) of the bullfight. Bullfight photographers and *aficionados* criticize and debate against one another's subjectivity when they interpret images of bullfighting.

### **Photographic production and professional bullfights**

#### **(i) Photographing as an aspect of the bullfight**

Official photography is part of the structure of the bullfight and professional photographers are amongst the actors. Before sharing the arena with the bull the bullfighters enter with the *alguaciles* (mounted officials who ritually open the event), and official photographers.

In Córdoba the May *feria* is the largest local festival. *Feria* bullfights are meticulously documented in visual and written reports in the local print and television media. After the *feria* in 1993 I appeared on regional television in some video news footage the shot was of me taking a photograph at one of the *feria* bullfights. This footage had several layers of meaning which refer to gender, observation and image production: it showed a woman performing an activity which is expected of the audience and reflects a tendency to publish or broadcast audience shots of anonymous women. Notions of "spectator" and "image producer" are united in the unexceptional televised representation of "woman as spectator as photographer" and the notion of woman as producer of images is normalised. However, feminine identities are not constructed solely through the act of photographing, rather a woman may be classified by the type of photographs she produces.

#### **(ii) Professional bullfight photography**

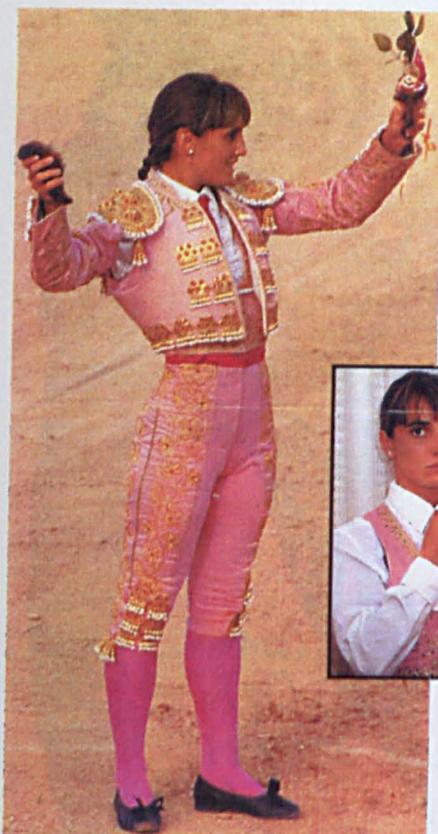
Professional photographers represent news agencies and papers. Throughout the bullfight they stand in the special location

reserved for them at the ringside leaning forward with their long powerful zoom lenses pointed towards the action.

The brief usually covers the following series of shots: the *paseillo* (entrance to the ring); the bullfighter performing cape passes; a *picador* successfully spearing the bull; a *banderillero* successfully placing the *banderillas*; the bullfighter dedicating his bull to the audience ; the bullfighter challenging the bull; the final stage of the *muleta* (red cape) passes; the ultimate successful kill; the bullfighter standing victorious over the dead bull; the triumphal bullfighter with arms extended upwards holding any trophies (ears or tails) that he has been awarded; the super-triumphal bullfighter being carried out of the arena on the shoulders of the crowd. In addition to these there is normally a series of audience shots; shots of the bulls; and shots of people in danger; death, human or animal has always been a visual subject. Bullfighting imagery is about success, triumph or tragedy: not failure- the dead bullfighter becomes a tragic hero.

Bullfighting performance imagery is about success and differs from sports photography which can be "divided into two categories: winners and losers" and "us and them" (Hagaman 1993;49). Images of failure are not sought after for publication or display. Both performers and photographers respond to conventions: bullfighters assume poses or perform actions which communicate notions of triumph to their audience, it is at these moments that photographers shoot. Since the bullfight is also a social event audience shots of non-performing celebrities of the bullfighting world may be included, especially for major *Feria* bullfights.

Photographers are expected to be ready to record exceptional performances and to capture the special moments which happen



Images of Triumph: Cristina Sánchez 1991 (top left), César Rincón 1993 (top right), Enrique Ponce 1993 (below left), Manolette c.1940 (below right)



around the main focus of the performance. Jose Luis de Córdoba suggests that in this sense the specialist photographers show more bullfighting spirit than the real bullfighters. It is they who capture the more complete beauty of the event (1990;11). *Aficionados* told me that one may attend many bad or mediocre bullfights but the possibility that something incredible could happen drives one to attend regularly. When the awaited moment arrives the photographers should be ready. A Cordoban bullfighting journalist told me an anecdote about ex-bullfighter Julio Robles<sup>7</sup>. Whilst Julio was performing an exceptional *faena* an incident in the crowd attracted the attention of many spectators, and all the official photographers. Julio is reputed to have commented on the irony that he had performed one of the most famous *faenas* of his career, and only one photographer had recorded this once-in-a-lifetime moment. Furthermore the photographer was not a salaried professional (who were occupied with the crowd disturbance), but an amateur sitting in the *tendidos*.

In Córdoba bullfighting photographers are honoured. One family has continued its involvement with bullfighting photography for several generations. Their collective work is commemorated in a book (see Ladis 1991). Whilst some practise solely bullfighting photography most work on many other assignments. Photographs stand for their producers' understanding of the bullfight since its photography requires knowledge of bullfighting, bulls, styles of particular bullfighters and the current state of affairs in the bullfighting world. In the words of the critic Jose Luis de Córdoba: "Some people think that an indispensable condition for being a good taurine photographer is to have been a bullfighter, or at least to be a practical *aficionado*" (José Luis de Córdoba 1990;11).

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<sup>7</sup> Robles was forced to retire from bullfighting after being seriously injured by a bull. He is now physically disabled.

Bullfighting photographers author their work with bold clear signatures which form part of the aesthetic affect of the photograph. Thus photographers identify themselves as author and artist, indeed their photography is an expression of their own relationship to and subjective understanding of the bullfight. It has been suggested that only knowledge almost equal to that of a bullfighter enables one to photograph a performance, from this perspective both bullfighter and photographer are artists.

In recent years an increasing number of women have become bullfight photographers. In Córdoba, one woman, Olga, stands amongst the official male photographers at the ringside. She is married to a *banderillero* and very involved in bullfighting both professionally and socially. Yet whilst in bullfighting circles Olga is referred to as a bullfight photographer, she in fact works on many photo-journalistic assignments for the local press. Women have been able to move into bullfighting as photographers. Their work shows that they have adequate *afición* to represent the event in the expected way. Those women who are already established and working on a newspaper may step into bullfighting assignments with relative ease.

### **(iii) Amateur bullfight photography**

Photography as an expression of *afición* was perhaps more evident amongst some younger informants who were keen amateur photographers. Some *aficionados* combine their interests in photography and bullfighting. There appears to be a trend amongst young middle class women, often in their late teens and in school or university education, to take up bullfighting photography<sup>8</sup>. The gendered identity of the photographer

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<sup>8</sup> I also worked with an older male informant who had combined his interest in photography with a lesser interest in bullfighting. The bullfight is said to be a good photographic

influences other people's expectations and interpretations of the photographs. Simultaneously evaluation of the *aficionado* status of the photographer (as a subjective gendered observer of the bullfight) is also contingent on the composition, subject matter, artistic value and conventional conformity displayed in the images. In other words, whilst the gendered identity of the photographer informs about his/her subjectivity as image producer, simultaneously, the image products inform about the integrity of the photographer's *afición*.

Keen amateurs tend to imitate professional styles. With a zoom lens, a high speed film and a seat near the ringside most amateurs can produce photographs comparable to journalistic work (see my photographs on the following page). The production of conventional "publication standard" images is not the exclusive privilege of professional photographers with a ring-side vantage point.

However, the financial outlay required for equipment and tickets restricts the production of publication standard images to those who can finance this rather expensive hobby. Images produced by amateurs and professionals have different destinations. Amateurs enter photographic competitions but photograph mainly for personal uses, sharing with friends and or display in bullfighting clubs. Whilst amateurs imitate professional formats they are not under similar pressure to produce. Some amateurs play self-assigned roles by collaborating with amateur bullfighters who are infrequently photographed until achieving success. These photographic alliances are often contextualised by kinship and social networks.

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subject and attracts a number of serious amateurs for this reason. Similarly art photographers and bullfight *aficionados* who are artists have found the bullfight to be an attractive subject.

The  
Suerte  
de  
Picadores



With a good zoom lens, fast film and a reasonably good seat it is possible for the serious amateur to take acceptable shots (I took these photographs with a Pentax Camera, Zoom lens, 400 ASA colour film, and good light conditions, sitting about a quarter of the arena away from the action). Note the professional photographer shooting these key moments from their closer ringside locations.

Finito  
performs  
the  
successful  
kill



The gendering of serious amateur photographic production cannot be understood in terms of a simple dichotomy between masculine and feminine activity. Men and women behave in ways, and express types of knowledge, which depending on context are classified as masculine and feminine. There appear to be certain trends in women's involvement in bullfighting photography and the ways this affects their *aficionado* identities. Whilst men more frequently combine bullfighting photography with a general interest in photography, an emergent generation of young women is creating new feminine roles by practising photography as an active element of their audience participation. These young women do not belong to a generation in which women are expected to be passive spectators, to accompany men to the bullfight as ornaments, rather they are active young women with a strong interest in bullfighting.

The model of "women as photographers" is increasingly acceptable in the bullfighting world. Since certain types of photography have long been classified as feminine professions it may have been relatively easy for women to move into bullfighting photography. There are few objections to female bullfight photographers, journalists or critics. Whereas young men are expected to express their interest in bullfighting by training as bullfighters or participating in country bullfighting *fiestas*, young women may do so through photography. A young woman who succeeds in combining photography with an informed viewing of the bullfight, represents her understanding of the event and proves her "true" *afición*. This allows her to disassociate herself from a feminine stereotype which portrays women incapable of understanding bullfighting and merely attracted to the sexuality of the bullfighters and the excitement of danger.

#### (iv) Snapshotters

Snap shot photography communicates in a way which is more akin to tourist photography than the visual imagery of *aficionado* discourse. It states "we went to the bullfight" as opposed to the "serious" documentation of a performance. The characters of the photographic story change as the visual quest seeks social rather than bullfight experience. Neither perfection of photographic technique nor documentation of the performance (rendered impossible by technological limitations) are feasible objectives. When the snapshotter chooses the performance as his/her subject, the resulting photograph lacks both aesthetic appeal and detail and the "larger than life bullfighter" of the close up shots becomes an inappropriately small figure in the middle of a large yellow arena. Snapshotters have few pretensions to professionalism, they aim to conserve personally meaningful moments and memories. The notions of "I was there", or "I took the photo of..." are important because the images express the identity of their producer. As "evidence" and part of the construction of memory the significance of their technical defects decreases. Snap shots are not usually for public display but tend to pertain to collections of photos and other artifacts which describe social contexts and individuals identities. They can be copied and are easy to distribute as shared memories.

Whilst serious amateurs' work is said to illustrate their *afición*, some snapshots are interpreted as representations of their producers lack of *afición*. Lack of "true" *afición* is sometimes classified feminine (and incomplete), in this case it refers to teenagers and women who take snapshots of bullfighters rather than bullfighting. This notion tends to be perpetuated since in the absence of a zoom lens photo opportunities occur only during a performer's triumphal walk around the ringside, and before or after the bullfight when performers walk between their cars and the bullring or hotel.

Crowds of fans gather outside the hotels where another style of bullfighting photography is practised. Some seek to be photographed with a bullfighter or to ask a performer to sign a similar photograph shot before or after a previous bullfight. This is the only opportunity that most teenage girls have to meet bullfighters and photography is woven into the process of meeting, recording, signing and remembering these fleeting moments of limited human contact with a star. Whilst young women who practise photography under these circumstances may also be "true" *aficionadas*, their actions may be interpreted otherwise. According to the "traditionalist" model feminine photography is inspired by sexual attraction and admiration, not by understanding. Unlike young women who use photographs to demonstrate their knowledge of the bullfight, the female snapshotter mode corresponds to the model of the female spectator who rather than appreciating and understanding the bullfighting fixes her gaze on the bullfighter.

## **Photography outside the professional arena**

### **(i) Family Photography**

Photo-journalists are seldom interested in minor taurine events in which aspirant, beginners or unknown bullfighters perform, most photos are taken by friends or family of the performers. Both men and women participate in this photographic activity. The images (often a combination of photography and video recording) have a dual role. They form a useful visual record of the performance which the performer may scrutinise with expert assistance and detect the strong and weak points in his or her style. The images taken during a bullfighter's first performances construct a memory or record of the early stages what may be a triumphant career.

Family photography is related to amateur and snapshot genres. However some serious amateurs disassociate the two activities,

insisting family photography was not of equal status. One young woman stressed that whilst she liked to photograph her family performing bullfighting activities her photography was too serious for the "trivial" snapshotter style. Her family bullfighting photography emphasised the family relationship to the bullfighting world. Other families affirm their *aficionado* identities through family bullfighting photography- shots of the older children or parents performing with young bulls were often part of family collections. The childhood images of *aficionado* families often include shots of young children attempting cape passes with the family dog, cat, or their siblings. These are representations of "normal" young *afición*: established bullfighters often cite their first bullfighting experiences as childhood games with domestic pets. Whilst many informants remembered playing at bulls and bullfighters with their siblings the images of those who become bullfighters have added significance as the celebrities first signs of *afición*.

#### **(ii) Promotion bullfights**

Photography and video recording motivated by kinship or friendship is common at promotion bullfights. The dual purpose is to produce promotional or publicity photographs and to record the technical detail for study and self-criticism.

If the performer's career folds before he or she achieves fame, photographs serve as memories and evidence of an *ex-novillero's* historical bullfighting identity. The initial stages of a bullfighting career are extremely precarious and future success is not assured. Every step tends to be marked by a photograph: not only performances are photographed and collections represent the "complete" torero identity of the aspirant. An ex-female bullfighter included in her collection performance shots, portraits of herself dressed in her suit of lights and country suit, shots of herself in taurine locations, with artifacts, with co-performers, and in bullfighting clubs.

### (iii) Bullfighting *peroles* and other semi-private events

Semi-private bullfighting parties are often held in the countryside in a small bullring, and usually accompanied by a *perol* (a late midday meal of a paella rice dish cooked outdoors in a large pan).

Some informants attended these *fiestas* to photograph and socialise. During my fieldwork a *perol* was organised as part of an event held in honour of a young bullfighter. A village bullring was hired and two young cows (*becerras*) purchased by the young man's supporters club so that he should practice with live animals. I attended with an informant, a man in his forties, a club member and amateur photographer who owned very good professional photographic and darkroom equipment, and a female friend interested in photography. We arrived at the bullring armed with our cameras, zoom lenses and a tripod. The aim of the excursion was both technical, artistic, and social: to practice photographic technique whilst producing images of the *novillero*. The photographs would aid the bullfighter in his assessment of his performance and provide the club with images for display. It was indeed a club event- the customary group photograph of the bullfighter with all those present signified its beginning. However, for the photographer the performance was less interesting than the photography. *Aficionados* who attend promotion bullfights like this one usually have a vested interest, special relationship with the performer, or other motive. *Aficionados* agree that promotion events are low quality performances- the *novilleros* are inexperienced and the animals are inadequate: one or two-year old cows do not equal bulls.

In contrast, large social events like the annual party held by the *peña* which supports *Finito*, Córdoba's most famous contemporary bullfighter, attract photo-journalists, serious

amateurs, and snapshotters. Photographers and journalists often belong to the same social circles as successful bullfighters and combine professional and social activities. Such events are reported in the bullfight pages of local newspapers. Other participants produce personal visual records, anyone who attempts a cape pass expects a friend to photograph their participation and expression of *aficionado* identity. The *paella* itself and socialising tend to attract less photographic attention, amongst the collections I was shown the click of the camera was largely reserved for the bullfighting, group photographs of the club, and shots of individuals with the bullfighter. When the bullfighter took up the cape to fight one of the bulls a great photo-opportunity arises. Shots of the bullfighter mixing with his "public", and demonstrating the social skill of the ideal *torero* figure, serve to promote his public image. One set of amateur photographs included several shots of a bullfighter posing with the children of club members and performing some cape passes alongside them. Informants approved: he was mingling with "the people". This was especially good publicity for the bullfighter concerned since many local people regarded him as snobbish and aloof<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Aficionados often express a preference for a bullfighter who is friendly and communicative to his fans. This could take priority over performance style when *aficionados* decided which local bullfighters informants to invest their loyalty in. When choosing between *Finito* or *Chiquilín*, Córdoba's two recently qualified bullfighters, many informants opted for *Chiquilín* despite recognising that *Finito* was the better performer. They stated that *Finito* was too aloof and unfriendly, he stayed out on his big country farm outside the city. Whilst *Chiquilín* who had been born in Santa Marina (the old neighbourhood where many bullfighting clubs are situated and there is much *afición*, and also the birth place of several other bullfighters) was more "of the people", less presumptuous and arrogant. This model is an interesting local way of distinguishing two performers and placing them in opposition to one another. But is not always consistent when the two performers are criticised separately: *Chiquilín's* uncle blamed

### Photography at bullfighting *Peñas* and other social events

The calendar of Córdoba's "bullfighting world" is documented in personal and press photography. I have suggested that local press photographers visually construct the formal social world of bullfighting. Below I discuss the roles of photographic subjects in the production of the images which record and represent these social events, activities and relationships.

Social photography is practised in the *peñas* to mark and record "events". Press reportage depends on the social status of the club's leaders or the guest speakers they attract. Amateur photographers seek shots of local celebrities, the "right to photograph" is an unspoken expectation, guest celebrities are on public display.

During a visit to Córdoba the female bullfighter Cristina Sánchez was photographed continually. I took the day-time shots and during her evening talk the two professionals (one male, one female) crouched in the aisle and stood in corners, conspicuously photographing whilst amateurs (mostly young women) clicked and flashed from their seats. The most intense photographic activity began after the speeches once everyone was out of their seats and the "distance" between speakers and audience was closed. Groups of young people wanted to be photographed with Cristina, I was asked to take the shots with their cameras. Some had brought photographs for Cristina to sign<sup>10</sup> (see the images on the following pages).

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his nephews lack of success in the ring on his being insufficiently *callejero* (sociable in public).

<sup>10</sup> Many were the magazine cover version of my prize winning photograph. I was asked to photograph Cristina with the editors of the magazine holding a signed copy of the magazine cover. Elements of plural identities were being represented in the different symbolic layers of the image. The protagonists had to collect the components, the group, the bullfighter, the magazine and the photographer to construct the image which I

Cristina  
Sánchez  
in a  
Córdoba  
Peña



On our trip around Córdoba's bullfighting bars photographing club members and bar owners was part of the event. I was responsible for producing these images.

With a  
Bar  
Owner





Two aficionadas (mother and daughter) meet Cristina after her talk. They were delighted with this shot and wanted it to be signed by Cristina.

Members of the University bullfighting club pictured with Cristina, holding the journal they publish which shows Cristina on its' back cover.



Cristina responds to one of numerous requests to autograph a photograph.

These photographic processes represent the "I was there", "shared moment" and "signed confirmation". Possession of a photograph and signature are strategies for combatting the momentary nature of experience. This type of photography is comparable to tourist photography where the sights are replaced by famous persons. Sontag suggests tourist photography helps "people take possession of space in which they are insecure" and to make "real what one is experiencing", when "people regularly travel out of their habitual environments for short periods of time" (Sontag 1973;9), This idea can also refer to social space and famous person tourism may operate in a similar way by which photography makes contact with the famous appear more familiar and less temporary allowing "an imaginary possession of the past" (Sontag 1973;9) and domination of the situation<sup>11</sup>. Holland describes tourist photography of "exotic peoples" as the "commodification of people made possible by photography". Similarly bullfighting photography makes bullfighters into collectable commodities in both amateur photography circles and formal photographic display.

Much social photography can be classified as "snapshot" style. Beloff associates the snap-shot genre with "informality, sincerity, spontaneity" (1985;177) which represents experience as opposed to the constructedness of studio work. However, the

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framed with my camera.

<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, to have photographed, or to have been photographed with someone who was so famous and so successful, and who is now dead, is to possess the permanent record which evidences a moment which can now never be repeated, and which no-one else can now experience. It implies that one may have a story to tell, that one may have information concerning that now dead person which is now exclusive. In other words the individual photographed with the deceased hero becomes the symbol of continuity with the past. Original and rare photographs of historically famous bullfighters are of course also of economic value; nostalgia is not the only culturally valued variable!

relation between spontaneity and construction in snapshot photo-sessions is complicated. On one level the snaps tell that the "star" made a visit and was photographed with the locals, photography is almost an obligatory part of the event, it is conventional and not extraordinary, anyone can participate. Groups wait their turn, although not in an organised queue, and photo-requests are made personally to the "star". The photograph presumes this amount of contact, and marks the experience of meeting a celebrity.

Photographs with and of bullfighters are expressions of bullfighting identity and of the individuals proximity to key human symbols of the bullfighting world. The photographic image visualises the individual's contact and identity with this otherwise distant realm of social life. People know that their heroes are simply ordinary people who are particularly skilled or successful, the distance makes them heroes; the momentary points of human contact confirm that they are "like us". The photographic context draws together self and admired/idealised "other"<sup>12</sup>. Difference can be subdued and the subject avoids elevating the famous and "othering" him/herself.

Personal photo-collections are not arbitrary accumulations, they contains image of the desired groups of persons in the desired circumstances. People wish to be photographed together for a variety of personal and political reasons. A photograph may symbolise a public statement of alliance between it's subjects and images gloss over the tensions underlying the apparent accord represented by the smiling faces the photograph. Some photo-groups represent actual political alliances: people with opposed local political loyalties are photographed together at "cultural" events to express unity and

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<sup>12</sup> In contrast to the "oppressed other" which has dominated the theory of photographic representations in anthropology (see for example Elizabeth Edwards (ed) 1992).

cooperation between the two camps. Comparison of what people say about one another in private, how they behave towards one another in public, and how they represent their public relationship in published photography, presents many incongruities. Human photographic subjects often play a crucial role in the construction of images. Those who appear in the images are often more manipulative than the photographer has ever been suspected of being. It is not only the subjectivity of the photographer which manipulates visual truth or "evidence". In these photographic processes the photographer and the photographed cooperate in creating public statements. They construct visual images which express individual identities and social configurations.

Thus *aficionadas* are able, by taking or appearing in photographs, to represent particular self-identities in the bullfighting world. However, since the photographs may be reinterpreted in multiple ways to correspond with a variety of gender ideologies, it cannot be assumed the feminine identities intended will remain fixed within the image. In a broader sense, young women are filling administrative and creative roles in bullfighting which exclude performing. In this way they function as active and influential individuals. Although these women's activities are approved by "traditionalists" they are often treated as novelty features; they do not challenge convention precisely because they are classified as complementary and novel deviations from it.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE LIFE OF A FEMALE BULLFIGHTER: GENDER, IDENTITY, POWER, AND ACCESS TO THE ARENA

#### Female bullfighters: how the main characters emerged

Four women were the main reference points in the answers to my questions about female bullfighters<sup>1</sup>: Conchita Cintrón, a *rejoneadora* active in the 1950s; Lola, a young local woman who had performed as a *novillera sin picadores*; Maria Gomez, a local woman who had performed in the 1930s; and Cristina Sánchez, Spain's currently most successful female bullfighter<sup>2</sup>. These women feature in the discussions of this and the following chapters.

Whilst gender role segregation is prominent in the bullfighting world, the extent to which an individual is empowered in this social context is not determined simply by gender. Success as a female bullfighter often depends on the interface of gender with other components such as: whether one wishes to be a foot or horseback bullfighter; social class; *enchufe* connections; economic power; skill, talent and training; "personality" and social skills. One of the questions posed is in this chapter

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<sup>1</sup> Conversations about these four women formed a substantial part of my research into opinions about female bullfighters. The case studies focus on the biographies of and knowledge about these women as well as the commentaries people made when evaluating them. The idea is to show how and why these particular women succeeded and failed. Two women's lives are singled out for case studies but many of my general points are derived from the many conversations I had about various different female bullfighters during fieldwork.

<sup>2</sup> In 1992 Cristina Sánchez graduated to performing with *picadores*. As she became increasingly successful informants' attention focused on her. This was partly due to the greater media coverage of her activities, her visit to Córdoba and my beginning to initiate discussions about her.

concerns the extent to which gender is crucial to the success or failure of a bullfighter.

### **The importance of biographies**

I paid particular attention to biography as a way of understanding informants' accounts of their own lives and to interpret their evaluations of other people. People living in the same town who participate in similar activities, and who superficially appear alike expressed contradictory opinions about gender roles. I became aware that my informants' contributions to local discourses were often political statements or strategies even when only communicated on a personal level.

Cultural models which differentiate between male and female life cycles form part of dominant discourses many people appear to conform to. The "traditional" female life cycle model assumes: pre-marriage boy-friend seeking, engagement, marriage, motherhood, caring for children, husband, and aging parents, and becoming a grandmother. Yet it should not be taken for granted that those women who follow this sequence do so in the same way or have the same experiences. This model is useful because some informants used lifecycle stages as points of reference when discussing female bullfighters. Many proposed that female bullfighters have relatively short careers spanning from their mid-twenties until marriage and the decision to have children in their mid or late-twenties. In 1992 the ex-bullfighter Angela Hernández (*Angela*), who had been quite prominent in the 1970s publicised her intention to make a comeback. Some informants criticised *Angela*, for being too old to bullfight<sup>3</sup>, proposing that since she had failed when she

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<sup>3</sup> Around the same time in 1992 a magazine article which traced the "history" of female bullfighting mentioned *Angela*. Concha Baeza briefly describes *Angela's* bullfighting career of the 1970s. She introduces *Angela* as "the mother of a child of

was young (at the appropriate point in her lifecycle) it was doubtful that she would succeed in middle-age. Whilst her opponents claimed that *Angela* was trying to cash in on *Cristina's* success, *Angela* emphasised that the greater acceptability of female bullfighting in the 1990s<sup>4</sup> may offer an opportunity to participate in fair competition.

The biographical approach was particularly successful for interpreting the experiences of *Lola*, a young woman from Córdoba who had tried to become a bullfighter. *Lola*, due to her local fame<sup>5</sup> and my interest in female bullfighters, was frequently mentioned in my conversations with other informants. I was able to compare other informants descriptions and accounts of her and her activities with her own version of her experiences<sup>6</sup>. By listening to and comparing different

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three years" and finalises her description of *Angela* and her achievements in that "Recently she has shown us her other facet: that of mother. José Ignacio her only child, born in North America, is the fruit of a sentimental relationship which began at the bullring in Nîmes" (*Estar Viva* n°188 31 Mayo-6 Junio 1992). Thus we are assured that not only are female bullfighters natural mothers who will eventually fulfil their destinies, but that also, bullrings themselves can be fertile zones for the initiation of such a process.

<sup>4</sup> In the 1970s *Angela* became famous, not so much for the quality of her performances, as for her campaign for female bullfighters to be legally granted the right to perform in public. The legal battle is discussed fully by Boada and Cebolla (1976; pp249-270). Permission was finally granted in 1974.

<sup>5</sup> Whilst generally known in local Cordoban bullfighting circles, *Lola's* career had little relevance outside the context of Córdoba's "bullfighting world" and the villages in which she had performed.

<sup>6</sup> I gathered a pool of information concerning a variety of perspectives on *Lola's* taurine activities in particular, and on the more abstract reflections on female bullfighters which accompanied them. *Lola* was for a time one of the main sources of local knowledge about contemporary female bullfighting, therefore understanding her story was fundamental to my

people's interpretations of the career and personality of this female bullfighter I also learnt much about the speaker; about how he/she defined the world around him/her, and where a female bullfighter fitted in with this way of organising reality. Often it was not really Lola herself who was under discussion but what she stood for to the speaker.

### Conversations with Lola

Shortly after arriving in Córdoba, I learnt that there had been a female bullfighter in Córdoba. The director of the bullfighting museum offered to introduce me to Lola, he described her as a very nice, tall, slim and pretty girl of about eighteen years old, we met two days later<sup>7</sup>.

I left our first meeting feeling very inspired. Lola had seemed to be genuinely pleased that someone was interested enough to want to meet her and learn about women and

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research. She became one of the reference points in conversations and by tracing her story through the social world of bullfighting in Córdoba I was able to understand both that social context and her position in it. I talked about her with her good friend and ex-trainer and his family, who offered their own accounts of her short lived career and their explanations of other peoples' versions. I also spoke with people who had a little personal contact with Lola, had attended her performances, or been introduced to her, as well as those who had never met her. All (including those who had neither met her nor seen her perform) tended to have well formed opinions about her characteristics as a person and as a bullfighter. These opinions were often offered to me in the form of visualised descriptions. Also I listened to discussions between her friends and those who knew of her and was able to observe how these interpretations were used in relation to more abstract notions about female bullfighters.

<sup>7</sup> He didn't have her telephone number but phoned around a few contacts (people whom I later met and was then able to fit together in the social network jigsaw). It turned out that Lola was not home, she was working part time looking after young children, her mother gave him another number and the following day at last we got in touch with her.

bullfighting. She had talked to me for two hours about how it was to be a bullfighter, why she had loved it so much, the people who had helped her and those who had stood in her way, the reasons why she had had to give up and what she would do if she had the chance to continue. We arranged to meet again and go to visit Juan, a man who had been Lola's trainer and swords handler. My meetings with Lola continued during a period of two months until she became too busy with the intensive training and studying which she hoped would earn her a place in the police force. Below I describe her experience in some detail so that the reader may gain a sense of my impressions as an introduction to the informants' descriptions discussed later.

### **Lola's story**

Lola's does not come from an *aficionado* family and received little paternal encouragement<sup>6</sup>, although her father managed to arrange performances in some village festivals organised by an influential friend. Her mother (like the "traditional" model of the bullfighters mother) was opposed to Lola's bullfighting ambition, but whilst extremely worried was never obstructive. Lola said that really her parents thought she was absolutely crazy to want to be a bullfighter, they felt it was ridiculous. When she later began training for the police force her mother commented that Lola didn't seem interested in a normal feminine career, she always had to try and do men's work.

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<sup>6</sup> Young men who aspire to be bullfighters nearly always attribute their passion for bullfighting to an interest stimulated by their fathers who are also ambitious for their sons and proud that they should be bullfighters. As I mention in Chapter 6, the notion of inheritance of *afición* along the male line is a common theme in bullfighting discourse. Women in contrast tend to be attributed with acquiring *afición* through association and socialization. In other words mens *afición* is biological whilst women's is cultural.

Lola realised she wanted to be a bullfighter at eleven years old, when her father bought some milk cows and she tried some passes with one. She later began training at the bullfighting school held in the bullring in Córdoba where she had some difficulties when men were unwilling to take her seriously or approve of her ambition. Although the ex-bullfighters who train students at the bullfighting school were helpful, Lola felt that most opportunities were given to the boys. She was often not notified when opportunities to practise with live animals or be observed by potential managers arose. The caretaker of the ring quite bluntly told her that the opportunities were "not for you", he appeared to quite deliberately withhold information. After some months Lola learnt about Juan<sup>9</sup>, and left the bullfighting school to begin training with him.

Superficially Juan is a typical "traditional" working class Cordoban. In his late fifties, he has a passion for bullfighting, flamenco and local fiestas, in short, a taste for "traditional" activities. However, unlike many other men of his age and socio-cultural, orientations, he believes that women can bullfight and describes those who think otherwise as "sexist". Juan sees no reason why women should not bullfight as well as men, and regards himself an expert on such matters.

Juan has devoted his life to bullfighting, and makes it his business to be aware of everything that happens in the local bullfighting world. Juan, his mother, his wife and two remaining unmarried daughters live in a modern flat about ten minutes walk from the old house where he grew up, a casa de

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<sup>9</sup> The information came from a teenage boy, who was training with Juan. He left Juan for the bullring and is now a moderately successful novillero with financial backing from his family and a bullfighting club supporting him.

*vecinos*<sup>10</sup> now owned by his mother, one of the few remaining houses in its street, most now being uninhabited, derelict or demolished. The front two rooms house Juan's private collection of bullfighting artifacts in an impressive private museum. The back kitchen is still used, in the patio are kept rabbits, chickens and other animals and on the roof vegetables are grown. Juan has converted the plot of land opposite into a practise bullring where aspiring bullfighters sometimes train and where Juan has organised bullfighting schools to give voluntary help to those who, like Lola, desire to be bullfighters.

Juan wanted to be a bullfighter and performed once in Córdoba as a *novillero*. He keeps copies of the poster announcing his performance and is proud that he is listed in the *Cossío* bullfighting encyclopedia. Despite failing to become a bullfighter Juan remained inside the bullfighting world, he works on a seasonal basis as part of the mule team which drags the dead bull out of the arena. Most of his time is spent in bullfighting clubs and organising his own collection. Locally Juan is well known, his collection is a local resource from which items are proudly lent for exhibitions and visited by persons seeking documentation. Local newspaper articles and television programmes have been made about his collection and activities. Although Juan's social network in the bullfighting world is extensive, his lack of formal education and lower class status allow him little power or access to upper class social circles.

Juan became Lola's trainer, manager, swords handler and friend.

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<sup>10</sup> *Casa de vecinos* translates literally as a "house of neighbours". Earlier in the C20 this was a typical form of cheap accommodation. Each family occupied a room and shared cooking facilities and usually a patio (courtyard) with other families. Most families who lived in *casas de vecinos* have now been re-housed in blocks of flats.

His wife and daughters also extended the emotional support and encouragement that it was difficult for her own family to offer. However, Juan's marginal relationship to the power networks which would have given Lola a good start in bullfighting barred access to other crucial resources. Neither Juan nor Lola had the money necessary to buy live animals or organise promotion fights.

Lola also spent about four years living and training at a bullfighting school in a Cordoban village<sup>11</sup>, but after dedicating eight years of her life to bullfighting relinquished her ambition due to lack of funds, parental pressure and insufficient contracts. She had no manager, nor funds to promote herself. She began training to enter the police force but was unable to continue due to a sight defect<sup>12</sup>.

### Stories about Lola

I was intrigued by informants' subjective interpretations of female bullfighters. I was especially interested in how opinions expressed by individuals changed according to social context. People did not simply "say one thing and do another",

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<sup>11</sup> She judged this school as superior to that of Córdoba, but felt both were inadequate in comparison to the Madrid bullfighting school.

<sup>12</sup> Lola told me that it would be her ideal to go to train at the bullfighting school in Madrid, and that if she failed to enter the police force she would consider leaving Córdoba, telling her family that she had gone to look for work, and enrolling herself in the Madrid bullfighting school. As far as I know she did not follow this course of action. On reflection I think that our series of conversations served to rekindle her interest in being a bullfighter and bring back the memories of the ambition she once had. When I first met Lola she saw very little of Juan and his family and seemed to have broken her links with bullfighting. It was through her putting me in contact with these people that her own association with them was reintensified.

they in fact said quite different things in different circumstances. The ways in which people visualise female bullfighters are often expressions of specific moral ideologies and moral judgements. However the morality referred to and the ideology being adhered to are context dependent. When they described Lola some informants wove notions of tradition into their constructions of her feminine identity.

Lola described herself as serious about her commitments, prepared to thoroughly immerse herself in her work and dedicate herself totally to achieving her ambitions. She adores bullfighting and the "traditional" aspects of Andalusian culture: whereas her friends enjoy discos and loud pop music, she prefers the Spanish *Copla* or *flamenco*. Lola believes that women can do anything that men can do. She personally needs an outdoor job with variety, doing something she cares about and enjoys, she couldn't do repetitive office work.

My impression was that Lola cared deeply for bullfighting, her ambition had been very important to her but she realised that she could not afford to spend another five years training because it was likely that she would finish no closer to her dream and unqualified for anything else. Our conversations were not trivial, Lola described her experiences of bullfighting, the people she met, those who helped her, and those who opposed her. Whilst blaming her failure partly on the lack of training facilities and financial backing available in Córdoba, rather than bragging about her own abilities or potential as a bullfighter Lola lamented that she had been unable to gain more experience and improve her technique, suggesting that she had been one of the worst female bullfighters. Lola wore little make up and dressed smartly but not ostentatiously.

Lola does not fit directly with either masculine or feminine

traditional Cordoban stereotype. However, some informants described her by interpreting and representing her activities in relation to these models. Different people used this local cultural knowledge to classify Lola in contradictory ways. I did not recognise Lola from the description given me before I met her. I suspected that my informant didn't know what she looked like but had elaborated on a vague memory. In fact they had met only once, when by coincidence both were invited to be interviewed on local radio two years earlier. My informant's description of Lola as pretty, dark haired, tall, slim, and shy, was a visualisation of "traditional" Cordoban beauty. By introducing Lola in this complimentary manner he implied that she embodied the "traditional" morality and virtue which this image symbolises. Simultaneously he maintained his own integrity and "traditional" masculinity by politely describing an individual woman with reference to a general stereotype. Effectively he constructed a gender dichotomy in which women are characterised by sameness.

Another informant described Lola as a bad bullfighter, someone who was not a true *aficionada* but who had instead "just wanted everyone to look at her" and "say how good she looked". This description fits the "traditional" local model of the male bullfighter. Other informants told me that the behaviour expected from a male bullfighter is not appropriate for a woman: bullfighters spit and shout, they spend lots of time in bars womanizing. My informant juxtaposed his negative evaluation of Lola with a description of a "true *aficionada*": this woman "would have been a bullfighter if she was a man", but had stayed in her place as a committed and informed spectator.

These informants dealt with the gender ambiguity of a female bullfighter with reference to a "traditional" gender model. The conflicting descriptions of the same person represent only

a very superficial knowledge of Lola, and disagree with her self-description<sup>13</sup>. The two informants constructed the personality and the behaviour of Lola in strikingly different ways. Whilst one classified her as a misfit by characterising her behaviour as wrong and ridiculous, the other treated her as if she were a normal girl with a silly dream of being a bullfighter.

One thing that the three commentaries, including Lola's own, have in common is their reference to "tradition". Each manipulated Lola's position in relation to "tradition" in different ways: Lola saw her bullfighting as traditional along with other metaphors for "tradition"- *flamenco* and *coplas*- all opposed to discos and night clubs. For her, enacting "tradition" did not entail conforming to its rules of gender segregation. In contrast, the description of Lola as an embodiment of traditional feminine morality identified her precisely with the gender segregation model. In this case my informant constructed her feminine identity in opposition to the bullfighter's masculinity, rather than representing Lola as a bullfighter. In the third example Lola is criticised precisely for not expressing "traditional" femininity and she is stripped of all the virtue that according to the first informant she embodied. Not all descriptions of Lola attempted to classify her in terms of traditional femininity, indeed for many informants the notion of many types of woman (multiple femininities), allowed them to argue that there was no reason why Lola should not have been a bullfighter, they saw

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<sup>13</sup> Conversely my argument could be attacked by the suggestion that Lola actually represented herself very differently on the occasions that she had met these informants, that in different circumstances she had behaved as if she was a "different person". However, in this particular case, I wish to use the data to show how my informants were expressing approval and disapproval and I believe that the example is valid.

opposition to her as being "sexist".

### The visual dimension

The statements about Lola's reputation visualised her: she was criticised for the intentions which were read into her visual appearance- "She looked like she thought...", " She walked around as if she..."; similarly, approval was granted in a visual description which symbolised moral virtue<sup>14</sup>. I now want to look at the way in which the visual dimension of her bullfighting career was organised by Lola herself.

Visual images became part of the narrative of her life as it was presented to me by both Lola and Juan's family<sup>15</sup>. The photographs, kept together in a small album were mainly of Lola performing<sup>16</sup>. Some were at public bullfights, others formed a sequence from a bull breeders ranch where young bulls and cows were being tested, and others were from a *capea* (a country bullfighting fiesta) just outside the city of Córdoba. Lola lamented the lack of closeups but self-criticism dominated her commentaries.

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<sup>14</sup> There is an important visual dimension to the ways in which individuals represent their own gendered identities in the different social contexts within which they act, and the ways in which they refer to the dominant discourses about gender in doing so. The visual dimension enters this analysis in two important ways: individuals' constructions of their visual self-representation; and the visualization of notions of tradition and change -the expression of these concepts in terms of visual description, and the processes by which they are invested in visual symbols.

<sup>15</sup> On my first meeting with Lola she promised to bring photographs to show me the next time we met. Several of my conversations with Juan were conducted around his collections of images from Lola's career.

<sup>16</sup> I did not feel that it was appropriate for me to ask to make copies of the images, therefore none are presented with these descriptions.

The collection included portraits shots of Lola dressed in her suit of lights. When I met Lola she was considering selling the suit of lights, it is an expensive piece of clothing. This costume is not only a prerequisite for performing, it also has symbolic meaning<sup>17</sup>, the torero is visualised wearing a suit of lights, wearing the suit is tantamount to declaring ones intention to perform. Furthermore the suit of lights becomes part of the history a bullfighters success story: a new suit of lights often marks a particular era in the bullfighters career. Lola's plans to sell her suit are more significant when juxtaposed with the practice of keeping suits of lights<sup>18</sup>.

Lola considered it important that one dress appropriately when training. She harshly criticised a girl who trained wearing a bikini during the high Cordoban summer temperatures (of over 40°C) Lola considered shorts and a T-Shirt appropriate in such temperatures. Similarly a girl at the bullfighting school demonstrated some cape passes for me one evening when she hadn't dressed to train, she commented that she felt and looked ridiculous training in a skirt. Whilst neither a skirt nor bikini present technical obstacles to performing cape passes, correct dress is important if ones bullfighting ambition is to be taken seriously. This is crucial for women because they are often presumed less serious than their male contemporaries.

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<sup>17</sup> Ownership of a suit of lights is significant since bullfighters with insufficient funds must hire one. A bullfighter's first suit of lights signifies his/her entry into bullfighting, suits of lights are sometimes given to bullfighters as gifts, some are felt to be "lucky". The suits are hand made by specialist tailors and involve a lot of detailed embroidery work. In Spanish to say that one will *vestirse de luces* is to say that he/she will dress to perform as a bullfighter.

<sup>18</sup> The bullfighting museum in Córdoba housed an exhibition of suits of lights during my fieldwork. Exhibits of over 100 years old were volunteered by the families of the bullfighters from whom they had been inherited.

In her visual self-representation Lola followed the conventional strategies. She dressed correctly and used her photographs in the established channels of publicity. Juan ensured that Lola was placed on the visual map of the bullfighting world. He used his network of contacts in Córdoba's *peñas* to hang framed black and white shots of Lola in triumphant pose in several wall displays. Lola was located in the bullfighting history of Córdoba, not only through Juan's work, but in the newspaper reports of her performances and the video of her performance in the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa*. The unusual element of Lola's visual representation of herself as a bullfighter was however that the images and her physical presence also represented her feminine identity.

#### **Why did Lola fail?: sex, gender, power and context**

Lola stressed two conditions necessary for her success. First, training at a good bullfighting school (such as Madrid) where she could learn theory and practice. Second, a good patron who would help to get contracts by using his money and power to finance and organise public performances. It is difficult for a woman to encounter such support; the few people able and willing to invest in the future of a bullfighter tend to support promising boys. Even potential patrons who believe that a female bullfighter merits support are faced with the question of whether they will see any return for their investments; female bullfighters face many additional obstacles even when they do have financial security<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>19</sup> The decision to give up was difficult, it involved many tears and entailed the withdrawal of a personal commitment to realise a dream. Lola had invested much time and energy in her ambition, and now had to seek a new course. The total involvement and dedication that bullfighting demands of its performers means that those who switch careers must start to rebuild a life. This applies any young bullfighter who decides that it is not worth perusing his dream any longer. He may find himself out of work and with few educational qualifications having devoted his school years to bullfighting.

Lola's inability to achieve her goal need not be classified as failure<sup>20</sup>. Indeed for those who regard female bullfighting as a novelty her serious ambition is regarded as a silly feminine excursion. Lola's lack of practical, economic and emotional encouragement from the key figures in local bullfighting was shaded by her sex. Her inability to find a patron was partly due to the way in which economic strategies are influenced by dominant discourses in the bullfighting world. An individual's skill and potential are often graded in ways which are contingent on the sex of the performer (see Chapter 8). For example, when some informants insisted that women could not perform with *arte* they were referring to the relationships between different types of bravery, fear, intelligence and the distinction between art and spectacle. It is assumed that female bullfighters cannot experience masculine fear, and therefore cannot master their fear through the combination of intelligence, bravery and sensitivity which results in the production of art (see Chapter 8). The relationship between art and bravery in this line of thought can be illustrated by one informant's comparison of two male bullfighters: one, he commented was very brave, but lacked intelligence, the other had the opposite problem, he was intelligent and capable of producing art on occasion, but unfortunately was not brave. Here a connection was set up between art and intelligence: it

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<sup>20</sup> Lisa Moore's comments on her changing notions of success and failure during fieldwork in Thailand invoke the question of what constitutes success or failure. Whilst Moore's "liberal background" proposed "that success and failure are the complete responsibility of the individual" she "found its explanations inadequate...seeing how refugee women depend on one another for strength, I became increasingly aware of the need for community among women" (1993;120). In bullfighting culture the potential and capacity for success are represented as personal and individual qualities: whilst it is through his/her relationship with other individuals and groups that the triumphant, successful individual emerges, responsibility for failure or success is not generally regarded as collective.

is not bravery which creates an artistic performance, bravery alone creates spectacle.

The gender role segregation model which dominates bullfighting discourse, appears to be reflected in the reality of women's experiences as bullfighters. Since dominant discourses represent women as unable to perform artistically, or be successful (high earners and continually performing) bullfighters, patrons are less likely to take them on. It was pointed out to me that even when a potential patron considers women equally capable as men, the "evidence" presented by women's experience makes a female bullfighter an unconvincing financial investment. This kind of "vicious circle" serves as an experienced limiting force for women who aspire to be bullfighters. When someone with the power, economic backing and desire to disprove the cultural constructions of gender expressed in dominant ideologies these restrictions may be lifted. Lola and Juan lacked the economic and power resources necessary to accomplish this feat.

Those who wanted to construct a positive and complimentary image of Lola represented her as a nice, attractive Cordoban girl who had tried to be a bullfighter and had performed several times, but had been confronted with the quite usual difficulty of lack of funds or a patron. They point out that this problem was magnified greatly by her being a woman, and thus the account comes to a close with a sad shrug of the shoulders. However, the other version which is related by those who wish to represent female bullfighters in a negative light, portrays her as an ugly threat to the natural order. Her morality and femininity are brought into question as are her motives for wishing to be successful- she is accused of having egotistical aspirations to self-glorification, and not being a genuine *aficionada*. Her failure, in this account is thus explained by her pretence, her lack of true *afición* is

evidenced by her non-conformity to the rules which dictate that the correct expression of feminine *afición* is as a spectator. Thus her reputation and integrity are questioned.

### **Gender, culture and success/failure**

Not all local explanations of women's failure to succeed as bullfighters were based in a binary distinction between male and female biology and personality. The nature or culture debate is also present Andalusian thought<sup>21</sup>- some informants explained the problems women encounter as "cultural". An ex-bullfighter who teaches at the bullfighting school attributed barriers men put up against female performers to "the continuation of Spain's sexist past into the present". He defined the contemporary situation as a result of many years of authoritarian government which left the Spanish very subservient- lack of liberty affected the peoples development

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<sup>21</sup> Some of the variety of different ways of understanding the importance of the binary sex distinction in bullfighting becomes evident through a consideration of the often repeated phrase "The bull doesn't distinguish between men and women". Depending on the context in which it is uttered this observation may support quite different points of view: as part of the commentary of a televised bullfight in which Cristina Sánchez was performing it was used as a dramatic device as Cristina confronted the bull, we were made aware of the danger she was in and that there would be no concessions made by the bull because she was a woman, we were reminded that we may be about to see a woman injured; informants have made similar points, remarking that a bull does not realise that women must be treated more gently than men, and therefore bullfighting is too dangerous an activity for women. When a female bullfighter made the same point it was intended differently, she was suggesting that the fundamental equality between men and women irrespective of their gender or sex was recognised by the bull, whereas it does not tend to be recognised by men and women. Her point was that through performing with a bull a woman could prove that she was equal to a man since the bull had no prejudiced bias against her based on her sex. The phrase also has some relevance in connection with the human/animal distinction since it proposes that the bulls' failure to distinguish between man and woman is actually more useful than the human cultural 'artificial' construction of gender.

to the extent that the last twenty years of freedom has been insufficient to remedy the situation. Whilst he cited many examples to back up the argument that women can perform as well as men he attributed the problem to the many years of restricted liberty in Spain which has resulted in men tending to treat women differently and obliged men to treat women carefully. For this reason he explained that he found training women problematic since it is impossible to say the same things to a woman as you could in a man to man conversation; women must be criticised more gently -he could not tell a woman that she was useless at bullfighting or call her names<sup>22</sup>. Other informants expressed similar opinions; they explained the problem for aspiring female bullfighters in terms of cultural obstacles. Press articles frequently express similar arguments. For example Baeza (1992) identifies the problem for female bullfighters as that "behind the bulls horns there is a public who will not excuse a bad performance". Also, Villan points to her male colleagues as the most likely to wound Cristina. He quotes the bullfighter Juan Belmonte's point that rather than brute strength and force, it is the intelligence and art of the bullfighter that controls the bull to argue that there is no reason why Cristina Sánchez should not triumph (Villan 1993;6). These perspectives see gender as culturally constructed and claim that the assumption that biological sex differences restrict women's physiological and intellectual capacity to perform is mistaken. The problem confronted by female bullfighters is that although a great number of people are happy to accept them they do not have any vested interest

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<sup>22</sup> Lola felt that the teachers at the bullfighting school had treated her less seriously than the male students, they had been happier to talk and joke with her rather than offer her the concentrated tuition that she needed. Several other girls attended the bullfighting school with the intention of improving their bullfighting knowledge, rather than to become bullfighters. In contrast, their presence at the bullfighting school was unproblematic for both their male peers and the tutors alike.

in pressing for changes.

I have suggested cultural constructions of gender contribute to making female bullfighters unviable economic investments and this reduces their chances of finding a patron. In the case of Lola this intersected with at least two other variables: kinship and social networking, or "enchufe".

Lola's parents were opposed to her bullfighting career and her decision to give up was influenced by parental pressure. Whilst she struggled against the odds to become a bullfighter, Lola received no encouragement from her own family and relied greatly on her allies in the bullfighting world for emotional backup. Her mother did not withdraw all support- she attended some of Lola's performances and accompanied her to hospital when she was injured. Her father organised some performances for her, but was not sufficiently powerful or involved in bullfighting to further her career. Family networks did not provide the often vital link between a young bullfighter and the bullfighting world. Lola's family, had no *aficionado* identity or history. In addition to the practical benefits of kinship ties for social networking, being the male "blood relative" of a bullfighter offers another significant advantage; bullfighting skill and understanding is commonly believed to be **inherited** (reproduced physically) along the male line whilst women supposedly **assimilate** *afición* through socialisation in bullfighting circles (see Chapter 6). However, often the notion of inheritance of some intrinsic compatibility with bullfighting is extended to female offspring. At least, being closely related to a male bullfighter adds to a woman's credibility and possibilities. In contrast to Lola's experience the case of Cristina Sánchez, whose father is a *banderillero* with a long-term involvement in bullfighting, shows how kinship connections can contribute to

an entirely more positive experience<sup>23</sup>. The kind of *enchufe* relationships which extend from family into the bullfighting world were not available to Lola. In Córdoba the limited resources which were available for aspiring bullfighters were far beyond her social scope. Indeed the local construction of Cordoban bullfighting history locates kinship connections at the very centre of bullfighting success. In the biography of one famous local bullfighter it is claimed by a commentator that all bullfighters in Córdoba are related by kinship (Filiberto Mira 1984) and informants often spoke of the bullfighters of Córdoba being "one big family", when identifying particular bullfighters informants frequently spoke in terms of their kinship connections with other local bullfighters. The recent case of the supposed illegitimate son of the bullfighter *El Cordobés* demonstrates that it is not necessary for one to be the legitimate, or recognised (the supposed father refuses to acknowledge his "son") kin of a bullfighter for the connection to lend one authenticity. In this particular case, the physical likeness and shared bullfighting skill of the "father" and "son" have been sufficient to give the younger man's (now highly successful) career a boost of publicity.

It proved impossible for Lola to break into a bullfighting world in which not only are kinship links instrumental for gaining access to vital resources, but the definition of the

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<sup>23</sup> Similarly other women who have achieved some fame as either bullfighters on foot or horseback tend to have some kin or personal relations to the bullfighting world. The father of Maribel Atiénza (who performed during the 1970's) was employed in the bullring at Albacete, and her mother is described as an "aficionada" (see *Estar Viva* n° 188 31 Mayo-6 Junio 1992). The *rejoneadoras*, Maria Sara and Carmen de Córdoba also both have strong connections in the bullfighting world. Maria Sara's partner has an interest in the bullring at Nîmes and breeds bulls, whilst the father of Carmen de Córdoba is a retired *rejoneador* known personally to some of my informants.

bullfighters who comprise the history of contemporary bullfighting success is often voiced in terms of kinship. Whilst not all successful local bullfighters are kin related, a substantial number are: the myth is perpetuated and the connections maintained.

Below I continue the theme of female bullfighters by discussing the route followed by Cristina Sánchez, whose is a success story. The purpose of juxtaposing these accounts of the success and failure of two young women of about the same age, attempting to launch themselves as bullfighters at around the same time in different parts of Spain is not to set up a typology of success versus failure. Rather, I intend to illustrate two examples of the contexts of success and failure<sup>24</sup>.

#### **Cristina Sanchez: Becoming a female bullfighter in a male bullfighting world**

Cristina Sánchez' success is a media history. Her initial triumphs inspired an abundance of press and journal reports about Cristina herself and the history of female bullfighters of which she was set up as "the latest". This first stage of publicity stemmed from Cristina having won the "best student" competition at the Madrid Bullfighting School, thus proving

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<sup>24</sup> In this sense my approach is rather different from that of Timothy Mitchell. Mitchell makes the valid point that

"We can learn a great deal about what it takes to be a bullfighter by studying the careers of the great ones. But we stand to learn even more by examining the failures. The best-selling biographies of successful bullfighters make it easy to forget that the general rule of bullfighting is not success but failure" (Mitchell 1991;96)

However, at this point I depart from Mitchell's argument because his comparison of success and failure is part of a larger project: he attempts to establish a model for the character type of the successful bullfighter and concludes that successful bullfighters are by definition masochists (Mitchell 1991;103). I disagree.

that she was "better" than her male contemporaries<sup>25</sup>. From the beginning her name was printed alongside those of the famous, initially, associated with ex-bullfighter Gregorio Sánchez, her trainer at the bullfighting school who was instrumental in beginning her career. Cristina's ensuing performances were well documented and sometimes given more print space than male novilleros with whom she shared the ring. For example, when Cristina appeared in 1992 alongside Juan Antonio Alcoba and Paco Ortega, both the sons of famous bullfighters, she was given a longer and praise filled report (see M.T Primera Quincena de Julio 1992 N°1.271 p22). Cristina was frequently photographed: performing, training, in casual clothes, in hospital. This suited many of my informants who wanted to "see what she's like" to get a sense of "who she is". Many expected a quite butch young woman. Their comments were to the contrary, both male and female informants approved of her "attractive" physical appearance. Some women especially remarked on her hair and eye make-up with admiration. These informants approved of her self representation as a performer and as a person, and of what she said, how she behaved, and her physical appearance. During the season of 1992 there was much speculation over when she would graduate to perform with *picadores*.

Reporting was positive. Some "traditionalist" informants shrugged this off by remarking that it would be too unkind to print the cruel truth about the low quality of a woman's performance. Conversely, many informants who saw her perform were impressed but generalisation beyond this is difficult since informants disagreed over whether she demonstrated *arte*.

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<sup>25</sup> There was an emphasis on the equal basis of competition at the school. In one bullfighting journal, for example, in defence of the argument that women **can** be bullfighters it is pointed out that "she went to the bullfighting school just like any other guy" (6 **Toros** 6 n° II 1992).

Bravery, of different types was conceded, but often its granting was tempered by the qualification that it still was not "the same" as seeing a male bullfighter perform.

When Cristina first appeared with *picadores* in February 1993 in a small village named Valdemorillo (Madrid Province) a new surge of publicity (advertising) and reporting was initiated. Cristina had already received good reviews from her season in Latin America and her publicity shots had been splashed over the covers of all the main serious bullfighting journals (eg **Aplausos**, **El Ruedo**). Her injuries and performances had all been reported on in detail<sup>26</sup>, mainly in the written media but also on television- several of her performances were transmitted live from Latin America.

The step to performing with *picadores* is a significant achievement which Lola did not arrive at. By this time Cristina's career was under the management of French businessman André Viard. Her potential for success had been well publicised, her performances had drawn the crowds and thus she had been able to attract a sponsor. The reports on the debut were positive and wide ranging but reflected Cristina's novelty status. Most male bullfighters' debut with *picadores* go unnoticed except for within their own circles. It is once a bullfighter has performed successfully with *picadores* for some time that he receives substantial press attention. In contrast, Cristina's performance featured in *El Mundo*

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<sup>26</sup> When she had to cancel a South American performance in 1992 due to not having sufficiently recovered from an injury, a debate developed over whether she had really cancelled due to fear after one goring. Rumours were eventually dispelled by Cristina's insistence that she had really not been permitted to return to the ring, and her subsequent performances. Informants tended to feel that it was perfectly normal that a female bullfighter should encounter these particular difficulties.

Newspaper's *Magazine* section (a six page colour article) in Spain, and reached amongst others the *Guardian* in England, and the *Jakarta Post* in Indonesia (via Reuters). To be a female bullfighter is also to be a media phenomenon. During the two weeks following this performance Cristina was constructed and reconstructed in different press media which served to inform the nation and beyond about the woman, the issues and the possibilities for the future. Media coverage soon died down however, and Cristina was left to follow a "normal" routine of training and performances "like any other *novillero*". She maintained her position amongst the top ten *novilleros* in the weekly listings.

Press reporting on Cristina merits a more profound analysis than I am able to devote to it here. However, the media image can be summed up as follows:

Cristina, aged 20 (in 1993), is the daughter of a *banderillero* and a star student of the Madrid Bullfighting School. She receives strong parental support, despite motherly worries, and her father is her day to day trainer. Cristina is serious, dedicated, determined and talented- there is no reason why she should not succeed (this point was also reiterated to me in conversation with her father) and she now has an influential manager. Furthermore Cristina pertains to a (supposed) long history of female bullfighting (see Chapter 9). The photographic representations present Cristina in poses which communicate triumph, success, seriousness, and ability in action.

These points reflect an image which portrays both "conventional", "traditional" representations of a correct background, and the main ingredients which are commonly agreed on as a recipe for success. Although Cristina is a woman it has still been possible for her to be conceded: a firm history in bullfighting (which has a male dominated history written by

men); kin support and networks in the bullfighting world; the correct attitude, "intelligence", skill and potential for success; a manager and sponsor. This media image had been broad based, ranging from the gossip magazines, serious newspapers and bullfighting journals. In interview, public speaking and discussion, Cristina represents a similar image. This is crucial because a bullfighter is a public figure; in public, reputation and integrity must be maintained. When a bullfighter speaks or gives question and answer sessions in public he/she often finds him/herself in a confrontational situation. It is important that the performer defend him/herself appropriately in public in order to maintain his/her reputation as a person capable of dealing with such situations, and also in order to re-affirm his/her public image and identity. Marvin describes public confrontations in terms of "honour". He stresses the importance of 'reputation' in conditions where people have to resort to self-help because they cannot rely on the state: "what is at stake in the competitive relations between men in such systems is 'reputation'- which is something that is accorded to an individual *by others*" (1986;125). Marvin argues that the bullfight plays out the "ideal behaviour" required of men when they are involved in public confrontations- when confronted a man must prove his readiness not to back down. "If the *matador* is able to meet the challenge successfully he gains prestige and status, and vindicates his claim to be a true man. Failure brings insult, ridicule and a loss of reputation" (Marvin 1986;126). This notion of honour is more useful than the honour-shame model discussed in Chapter 2. However, it is evident that the defence of one's reputation through dealing with some types of public confrontation is not exclusively a male concern. Not only female bullfighters, but also female politicians, business women, and many others working in the public domain are obliged to deal with such situations in order to maintain their reputations and integrity. The media image of

a female bullfighter is important because "traditional" discourse asserts that the life of a bullfighter is not suitable for a woman, and other versions of the argument describe it as an unpleasant life-style for a woman<sup>27</sup>.

### **Access and Allies**

I have described some of the difficulties faced by women attempting to break into bullfighting. Most female bullfighters have a male ally in the bullfighting world. Socialising in all male groups in bars, male camaraderie, dirty jokes etc are difficult for a woman to participate in. Not, because women necessarily find this behaviour offensive, but because many men, especially those who informants have referred to as the "traditionalists" refuse to make this type of social contact with women, they use different ranges of vocabulary and communicative metaphors when they are in the company of women.

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<sup>27</sup> It has been said that the life style of a bullfighter is not only unsuitable for a woman, but also disagreeable. Clearly a female bullfighter does not have to follow the life-style and behaviour of the "traditional" model of the torero figure, however, she does have to follow similar working patterns in order that she should be able to measure her success on a comparative basis with that of her male contemporaries. As one informant, the wife of an ex-bullfighter told me, "this life is not comfortable or glamorous, you are always travelling from city to city, and during the bullfighting season you almost live out of a chain of different hotels, you often have to spend the night travelling and sleeping in the car". Apart from that she thought that it must be unpleasant for a young woman to be always working and training and constantly surrounded by men. She felt that the life of a bullfighter, rather than being inappropriate, was not particularly pleasant for a young woman. Other informants expressed similar opinions about the nature of the bullfighting world. The mother of one bullfighter objected to it's atmosphere because she said it was one of corruption, professional jealousy and mainly run by commercial interests. She saw no reason why any woman should want to get involved in such a business. It was often pointed out to me that although the paraphernalia and visual display, the "festive" element of the bullfight was attractive, the business of bullfighting was a dirty game.

This tends to restrict women's access to the "confianza" necessary to make and manipulate good social contacts in the bullfighting world. Participation in these networks can be crucial for gathering information about performance and practise opportunities. Clearly the information is much more accessible to men and through male allies women can overcome some of the problem of access to power and information being allocated according to sex. To certain extent the possibilities that a young woman has depend on the influence held by her male representative<sup>28</sup>. Cristina Sánchez was well connected in the male networks which are especially important for a beginner bullfighter. In contrast, Lola did not have a sufficiently powerful ally in the power networks of Cordoban bullfighting. I heard many stories about girls who had wanted to be bullfighters but eventually given up after having performed a few times because they were unable to make the "big break" necessary to get their careers under way<sup>29</sup>. Cristina's

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<sup>28</sup> A similar system also works for male bullfighters. Especially once a performer has a manager, it is the manager and not the bullfighter who negotiates contracts and acts as the bullfighters representative. However, at the initial stages of a bullfighters career it is important to make these initial contacts. Whilst both male and female aspirants' careers are boosted strongly by a well placed ally, a man has far greater possibilities of coping with this alone if necessary.

<sup>29</sup> For example, for a time a young dutch woman lived in Córdoba, she worked in a gymnasium in order to support herself whilst she trained but never performed in the city. She later moved on to try her luck in a seaside resort. Her lack of "insider" contacts in Córdoba's bullfighting world was evident, she was little known within the bullfighting community and I learnt about her through a group of anti-bullfighting young people who knew of her by coincidence. It was said that she eventually took a job as a tattoo artist in Algeciras. Whether or not this is true it certainly reflects a marginalisation of her work activities akin to the marginalisation of female bullfighting. The association of female bullfighting with foreignness is not a new theme. In the 1970s it was fairly common for foreign women to perform as bullfighters, however, their route in to the bullfighting world was nearly always

success has brought female bullfighting to the forefront in the media and maybe increased the acceptability and commercial potential of other female bullfighters. However, the gender ambiguity of female bullfighters remains central to their performances whether they are sponsored or not, in the next chapter I discuss the ways in which the unavoidable issue of the sexed bodies of female bullfighters is dealt with.

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facilitated by their having achieved sufficient fame in another performing art and then moving across to bullfighting when it was legalised in 1974. Spanish "artistes" also followed this route into bullfighting however, they tended to maintain their original show-business identity and were not taken seriously as bullfighters. Other foreign female bullfighters of the time were wealthy or prominent figures.

## CHAPTER 8

### FEMALE PHYSIOLOGY, FEMALE BULLFIGHTERS, AND THE NATURALIZATION OF GENDER DIFFERENCE

#### Introduction

"She was the pure bullfight represented in the body of a woman" ex-bullfighter Domingo Ortega is reputed to have said of Juanita Cruz, the only woman ever to have performed with fully grown bulls. His words, intended as a compliment of the highest form to the woman in question, also refer to the supposed incongruity of combining the female body and the bullfight.

Practical objections to women bullfighters tend to refer to male/female physiological, psychological or simply "natural" differences and usually reflect "traditional" discourse. Whilst some informants modelled differential male and female ability and achievement levels, and types of behaviour to biology or "nature", others saw these differences as culturally determined. I begin this chapter by discussing the physiological models<sup>1</sup> offered by informants and in publications, their explanations form part of contemporary debates about gender and are represented not as the point of view, but as a contested standpoint. "Traditional" gender

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<sup>1</sup> For considering informants' comments about female physiology Frank's observation that "...`physiology' is at any given time produced in a discourse which seeks some `truth' of bodies, and the history of physiology proves that this truth may be redefined without apparent limit" (1991;49) offers a useful perspective from which to understand the cultural construction of female physiology. But, as Frank points out, "Empirical bodies do have real limits. Beyond the relative discourse of physiology, corporeality remains an obdurate fact". Frank's definition of body "is constituted in the intersection of an equilateral triangle the points of which are *institution, discourses, and corporeality*" (1991;49).

stereotypes are challenged by contemporary discourses; gender role segregation is unacceptable to many Andalusians in the 1990s.

### "Communicative bodies"

In this chapter I introduce the interface between bullfight, sexual, and body symbolism. Symbolic displacement may lead informants to feel that things are "out of place" when a woman performs as a bullfighter.

The obvious visual presence of a female body in the bullring, precisely in place of a male body, is blatant and unforgettable. The viewer is presented with the bullfight's usual format of visual play (and display), but the male body has been exchanged for a female body. This invokes the questions of: how the female body becomes meaningful to the viewer; and how this affects the rendering and interpretation of the performing body. Frank's concept of the "communicative body"<sup>2</sup> suggests an explanation. The "communicative body" entails a style of body usage which Frank describes as follows:

"What communicative bodies are about is the capacity for recognition which is enhanced through the sharing of narratives which are fully embodied. What is shared is one body's sense of another's experience, primarily its vulnerability and suffering, but also its joy and creativity. It is when narratives are spoken from the experiences of

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<sup>2</sup> Frank suggests that "bodies exist among discourses and institutions" (1991;48) and "'the body' is constituted in the intersection of...institution, discourses and corporeality" (Frank 1991;49). According to Frank's model "bodies are used purposefully by the consciousness within them" (1991;50). Body usage may be conceptualised in terms of 1) **control**, 2) **desire**, 3) its **relation to others**, 4) its **self relatedness** (1991;51-2). From this he develops a typology of "styles of body usage": "the **disciplined body**, the **mirroring body**, the **dominating body** and the **communicative body**" (1991). The last of which is relevant to my analysis.

the body that they can be shared most readily." (Frank 1991:89).<sup>3</sup>

Bullfighting discourse emphasises the bodily experience of the performance. It is said that to truly understand the bullfight one should have either performed, or at least practised the cape passes; thus the informed spectator identified with the bodily experience of the bullfighter. This suggests two ways in which female performers are problematic for the spectator: first, failure to identify a female body as a bullfighter's body; second, inability to identify ones own body with the performing female body, resulting in failure to imagine that body's "sense of experience". In other words the communicative body on display is one with which the (male) viewer has insufficient in common for him to imagine sharing its identity or experience; some people cannot share the embodied narrative of the bullfight represented by a female body<sup>4</sup>.

The bullfighter's body is also symbolic in that it signifies the life experience of a sexed body. Differentiation between female and male life plans and body life-cycles means that the biological and social expectations for differently sexed bodies vary. For those who identify the bullfighter's success as part of a male body life-cycle (physical peak of fitness and

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<sup>3</sup> Frank bases much of his discussion on dance (with which the bullfight is often compared by writers and *aficionados*). Frank describes one of the characteristics of dance: "Dance is producing in its expressiveness, and the dancer must be associated with her or his body" (1991:80), this is particularly comparable to the way the bullfighter is associated to his/her body and provides an informative contrast to the comparison of the bullfighter with the actor outlined in Chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> This model which asserts that the bullfight may only be experienced through a male body may also explain both why some men think that women cannot understand male bullfighting, and the stereotype of the woman who looks at the bullfighter's body because it is sexually attractive, but does not understand the performance which it is part of.

masculinity publicly demonstrated) and not a female one (which would be associated with things such as childbirth, menstruation, menopause, etc), women's bodily life-cycles cannot fit into the life-plan of a bullfighting career<sup>5</sup>.

### **Body Symbolism and the meaning of Bodily Functions**

#### **(i) Breasts and Vaginas in the bullring**

There has been a curious emphasis on the "problem" of the woman's breasts for bullfighting: this was highlighted by male and female informants, and featured in discussions, and the literature<sup>6</sup>

The "practical" problem of the position of the woman's breasts, is thought to prevent her from making the appropriate movements to bullfight. Both this and concern that breasts are excessively vulnerable to injury are denied by female performers: they state their breasts present no physical problem as regards following exactly the same bullfighting

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<sup>5</sup> This distinction has some parallels with Hargreaves' comparison of the relationship of male and female body experiences to sport: "For huge numbers of men the image and the experience of the body are ultimately linked to sporting experiences: for the majority of women the image and experience of the body have little or nothing to do with sports" (1994;146). Indeed Hargreaves reference to the body image also implies another dimension which my thesis does not address. This includes notions of feminine beauty and the body image and the erotic imagery of the female body. Similarly scarring from wounds incurred whilst bullfighting clash with conventional female body images, but for the female bullfighter are marks of her membership of her profession.

<sup>6</sup> There may also be a symbolic incompatibility between breasts and bullfighting at another level: an incongruity between breasts and bullfighting is suggested by the use of the word "pitones" to refer to both breasts and the horns of the bull. This is significant for the bull-woman analogy, the implication would be that if the bullfight is treated as being analogous to sexual intercourse between a man and woman then the possession of both participants of horns/breasts would upset the gendered nature of the symbolic balance of the event.

procedure as their male contemporaries. The "breast problem" has more to do with male understandings of breasts and their social and biological functions than female bullfighters' experiences of their own bodies<sup>7</sup>.

The two examples described below show how the "breast problem" is expressed in public bullfighting discourse in Córdoba. Informants have also expressed similar opinions.

1) In March 1993 the female bullfighter Cristina Sánchez gave a well attended talk followed by a question and answer session in Córdoba's bullfighting museum. The following question was put to Cristina by an elderly man, he did not appear to ask the question to make fun of the speaker, it was in fact presented brokenly:

"Cristina, I'm going to ask you a rather insolent question, but until now no woman, as far as I know, when she adorns herself by dressing for the bullfight...for example, the breast is the part of the woman's body which is most sensitive and because they can so easily be subjected to being knocked, do you wear any kind of special protection?"

Cristina's answer was more composed than the embarrassed male curiosity behind the question "The men don't wear anything "there"" she said, pointing towards her groin, the audience clapped their approval, not only her retort to what had indeed been an insolent question but also to her calm and down-to-earth approach to an otherwise delicate situation. "My clothing is the same as that of any man, isn't it? I dress myself at a tailors...Of course for men its worse, they have it "there"" she continued to further applause.

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<sup>7</sup> There has also been a stress on the concern for women's breasts in women's boxing. A stress which Hargreaves suggests is directly related to conventional images of masculinity and femininity, pointing out that men and women are equally vulnerable to the apparently more threatening eye and brain damage (Hargreaves 1994;282).

The question reflected general curiosity, but judging by the immediate response of the audience and comments made later by informants, some thought it inappropriate and ridiculous although relatively harmless. The question also presented a definition of femininity which demanded a denial from the female bullfighter.

2) This second example is from an article published in a local newspaper<sup>8</sup> in which a local writer, Jacinto Maña (*La Tribuna* 7.11.93) objects to the women performing as bullfighters. The argument focuses not on women's failure to perform successfully, but on the inappropriateness of the presence of breasts and vaginas in the bullring; the author objects to the female physiological characteristics fundamental to the biological distinction between the sexes. In the first paragraph the writer begins to strip the female bullfighter of her clothes. In the same phrase he both denies and displays what female informants have classified as paternalistic sexism which asserts that women must be protected from themselves. He writes:

"Let it be clear that I do not begin from any sexist premise- I love them too much not to give way to their whims and fancies- but however hard I try, I can't see such sweet, succulent and upright breasts amongst (the) embroidered adornments (of the bullfighters clothing)"

Both examples concentrate on the vulnerability of breasts. Informants suggested that the moment when injury is most imminent is when the bullfighter leans over the horns of the

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<sup>8</sup> I found this article sufficiently offensive to write a response to it in the form of a article which was published in the same newspaper two weeks later. My response was written and then re-written, I realised that any complaint must be tempered in order to avoid returning the kind way in which I had been treated by the bullfighting *aficionados* in Córdoba by angry accusations of aggressive sexism.

bull to kill by thrusting his/her sword in between its shoulder blades. They assumed that the location of a woman's breasts would make the perfection of this movement difficult. However others pointed out that the kill is the most dangerous in the repertoire of the male bullfighter, thus concern for breasts is inspired by the notion that women should not be publicly exposed to danger<sup>9</sup>.

Discussions of breast injuries revealed the assumption that medical treatment of such an injury may be somehow "different from usual", or that surgery may be more complicated than it would be for a "normal" male wound. It was suggested that doctors have no "special" ways of dealing with a ruptured breast because specialists have developed ways of attending *cornadas* (horn wounds) for a "male" physiology. This is voiced as a medical concern and scientific problem<sup>10</sup>. The local

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<sup>9</sup> I use the word *publicly* because there are many other cases in which women's work which is not on public display is dangerous. It is the visible, public actions of women as bullfighters which are objected to. In contrast, informants often stated that it is absolutely unproblematic for women to perform at private bullfighting or bull-related events and parties, even if these activities are sometimes mortally dangerous.

<sup>10</sup>Boada and Cebolla transcribe two articles from ABC newspaper (1974) just after the legalization of female bullfighting. Zúmel (16.11.74) a surgeon, argues that it is appropriate that reports of gore wounds use correct medical terminology without crude references to specific injuries to or amputation of sexual organs. Correspondingly, he states, it would be necessary to document the treatment of gore wounds to the female anatomy and incorporate gynaecologists into taurine medical teams, and calls for equal sensitivity to be applied in reports of breast injuries. His article stresses the incongruity of female bullfighting by linking it to a medical dilemma needy of discussion and resolution (Boada & Cebolla 1976; 362). The humorist, Tono responded the following week (ABC 23.11.74) pointing out that a woman does not need to be gored by a bull in order to suffer a breast injury and that referring to the breast is perfectly normal and inoffensive. He later (El Ruedo 17.12.1974) he suggests that "...decent men are afraid that the *toreras* will be gored by bulls in the zones

counter argument was that a breast *cornada* is as treatable as any other damaged tissue.

The extreme concern about breast wounds is explained partly by cultural discourses which proclaim the primary purpose of the breast to be for motherhood- the vocation of a "complete" woman in Broch-Due and Rudie's sense of "natural completion" as opposed to "cultural completion" (1993;7-8). In the bullfighting context this refers to gender difference where by male completion is cultural (ie it is achieved through social action) and female completeness is natural (ie it is achieved through biological processes) (1993;10). Those who consider the risk to a breast to be too great a risk to justify a woman performing do not usually regard the possible destruction of the male genitals as equally problematic. Serious genital injuries could prevent a bullfighter from ever fathering a child: in contrast damage to a breast need not impede pregnancy. The concern over breasts expresses an affirmation of the "proper" roles for two different classes of people- those with breasts and those without breasts. It is based on a masculinity and femininity constructed on the precept of the differential biological "functions" of men and women. It is usually expected that a female bullfighter will eventually marry, give up bullfighting and have children, several female bullfighters have indeed followed this pattern. The visual comparison of the bodies of male and female performers centres on the breasts as symbols of biological difference and social role<sup>11</sup>.

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which they consider to be sinful and which they believe shouldn't be shown, or at least should only be shown to them" (quoted in op.cit 364). This discourse highlights both the role of "science" and connections made between sexuality and biological difference.

<sup>11</sup> The connection between breasts and female beauty and sexuality also enters this cultural discourse but has not been fully investigated. Cultural concepts of the beauty of the

## (ii) The Bullfight and Rape symbolism

In the newspaper article quoted above Maña goes on to refer to a Cordoban bullfighting anecdote. The Spanish word "conejo" translates as "rabbit", but also means "vagina". During the last century a Cordoban bullfighter nicknamed "Conejito" (little rabbit) on one occasion fought alongside a female bullfighter. The woman suffered minor injuries which were reported in an ensuing telegram which ended with the note that "the Conejito" had remained unharmed. In Maña's text the anecdote becomes a vehicle for ridiculing the idea that a vagina should ever have been in the bullring. This source of local amusement was brought to my attention by several informants. Two themes underlay its frequent re-telling: first, a stress on the biological or "natural" distinction between the sexes; second, since the female bullfighter's vagina had remained undamaged, she remained just as much a woman as before- she was not de-gendered. The joke is not universally appreciated, and its repetition must be contextualised by the local custom in bullfighting circles of telling and retelling various historical bullfighting anecdotes.

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female form and the sensuous qualities of breasts form part of contemporary cultural discourses and are significant as both aspects of models of "woman" and in the cultural construction and reconstruction of gender models. The breasts of the female bullfighter are usually those of a young woman, thus as the writer quoted above has put it they are "succulent, sweet and upright". They may also be related to concepts of purity or virginity since the bullfighter is a young unmarried woman, without children and as yet normally has the reputation of being sexually "pure" or inexperienced, this "virtuousness" being connected to a certain extent to the idea of her dedication to bullfighting at the exclusion of an extensive social life or an interest in having boyfriends romance or sex at least for the time being. As such in a sense her breasts are not being put to use since their sensuous quality is being denied. Indeed for many people the initial idea that comes to mind concerning what a female bullfighter would be like is to label her with the "Mari-macho" image -that of a masculine, butch woman whose sexuality is in question.

The anecdote has two further possible interpretations: first, the woman's vagina having emerged from the bullfight "without incident", intact, may be analogous to the idea of a woman, having stepped out of the safety of her "proper" female domain, escaped being raped. The amusement derived from this telegram message may be interpreted as a way of ridiculing the suggestion that the a vagina should be violated in such a way in the bullring, thus stressing that neither *real* sex nor *real* rape have any role in the bullfight and likewise a *real* female vagina contributes nothing.

### (iii) Marriage, childbirth and mothering

The notion of woman as childbearer is not totally incompatible with that of female bullfighters. Nevertheless the life-cycle model it represents imposes certain restrictions on the career of a female bullfighter.

Female bullfighters are expected, by those who identify a woman's role as that of wife and mother, to confirm this stereotype. It is assumed that once married the female bullfighter will stop performing; her taurine activities are classified as a short pre-marriage occupation. The 1950s *rejoneadora* Conchita Cintrón was often quoted by informants and in the literature as the model female bullfighter. She became famous for her *rejoneo* (horseback bullfighting- sometimes considered more feminine) but once engaged to be married ended her bullfighting career<sup>12</sup>. It is often added that she had children, emphasising that she fulfilled her natural function as a mother<sup>13</sup>- further proof of her "completeness".

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<sup>12</sup> See Lola Verill Cintrón (1960) for an English language biography of Conchita Cintrón.

<sup>13</sup>Ignacio Saez Boil, for example, emphasises the point that Conchita Cintrón married and had six children.

"Traditionalists" expect female bullfighters to marry and fulfill the feminine potential of motherhood. I met no one who considered motherhood to be compatible with the life of a bullfighter, in contrast male bullfighters are expected to be both fathers and toreros at the same time. "Traditionalist" aficionados regarded the wives and children of bullfighters as blameworthy for their declining performance standards<sup>14</sup>, thus they varied the equation between parenthood and bullfighting according to gender: whilst bullfighting threatens motherhood, fatherhood threatens good bullfighting. In contrast, other contemporary Andalusian discourses about female physiology, motherhood, and feminine life-cycles represent a variety of models for feminine life-plans.

#### (iv) Menstruation and bullfighting

Pitt-Rivers (1984) has suggested a symbolic connection between menstruation, menstrual blood and the bullfight. His work is aptly described by Buckley and Gottlieb's observation that "the majority of ethnographic reports of menstrual customs and beliefs have been restricted to terse statements on "the" meaning of menstrual blood - seen always as symbolically dangerous or otherwise defiling" (1988;4).

Pitt-Rivers interprets the final sword thrust which kills the bull, as the violation of a menstrual taboo and the denial of male fear of female sexuality (Pitt-Rivers 1984;38). He cites Andalusian popular beliefs which stress the dangerous powers of menstruating women, for example, to spoil food or put out fire

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<sup>14</sup> During my fieldwork the bullfighter *Espartaco* who had previously topped the league of professional bullfighting, became a father. After his highly publicised and scandalous (because he eloped with the daughter of a wealthy banker) marriage and particularly since the birth of his first child, he began to perform in fewer bullfights and both media reports and informants comments suggested that he had begun to perform in a much safer and more cautious style now that he had a family (see also Chapter 5).

by looking at it (1984;39). In contemporary urban Córdoba these beliefs are not reiterated and had no bearing on my informants' interpretations of menstruation. Whilst not specifying that sexual intercourse with a menstruating women was taboo, Pitt-Rivers asserts that the "hero (bullfighter) is always a violator of taboos", who being symbolically "divine" (rather than earthly) completely ignores earthly taboos as do the (supernatural) gods. Thus Pitt-Rivers argues that the bullfighter demonstrates his bravery in two ways: by mastering nature (the bull); and overcoming the "supernatural danger" of the menstruating woman (1984;39). He interprets the bullfight as a symbolic demonstration of male refusal to be intimidated by female menstrual blood and a reaffirmation of male power.

Certain menstrual taboos, usually limited to food preparation are practised in southern Europe (see Lawrence 1988). However, contemporary Spanish models of menstruation<sup>15</sup> reflect the scientific-medical paradigm which dominates Euro-American interpretations of the body (see Martin 1987, 1988). My approach is centred on the compatibility of this model of menstruation to bullfighting.

During fieldwork I speculated with female informants about how a female bullfighter's performance may be affected by menstruation or PMT; we felt that reduced "rationality", concentration, and physical accuracy which characterise much interpretation and experience of menstruation in the west, could be disadvantageous. I was not surprised when a male informant expressed the opinion that menstruation must be problematic for female bullfighters. He did not protest

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<sup>15</sup> Thurén has shown how in Valencia (Spain) cultural meanings of menstruation have been redefined since the 1970's. Whereas in the past menstruation was considered "shameful" it is now "a hassle" (1994;225). Thurén locates these changes within a wider process of change and a "move towards a new gender system" (1994;226).

against female bullfighters but was concerned that physical and emotional symptoms of menstruation would endanger women in the arena. Martin has shown that "An overriding theme in the changes women articulate is a loss of ability to carry on activities involving mental or physical discipline" (1987; 121) and cites examples of women competitive tennis players who say that "their reaction times can be slower" and professional singers who say "they lose voice control" (op.cit). Martin demonstrates that in western capitalist society where the dominant production model is one for which time- and cost-effectiveness are given high positive value, such loss of body discipline is disadvantageous (1987; 121-2). For bullfighting, control over mind and body is fundamental; whilst a tennis player's sluggish reactions may lose her a match, a bullfighter may lose her life. In bullfighting discourse the deaths of male bullfighters are often attributed to a similar loss of rationality and physical control: lack of responsibility is induced by alcohol, and drunkenness caused by emotional pain (see Chapter 5). For one female bullfighter at least, menstruation is also a matter of mind over body: Yolanda Caravajal has stated "that if on the first day of menstruation, it hurts to bullfight, she quickly forgets it through force of will" (MacClancy 1995).

Buckley and Gottlieb (1988) demonstrate how the experience and meaning of menstruation differs both cross-culturally (see for example Shostak 1990;353) and sometimes within the same culture. Given the lack of cross-cultural correlation between experience and understanding of menstruation, it is more useful to compare the so-called "symptoms" of menstruation in the west, with similar "symptoms" in other cultural contexts. In particular, the case of spirit possession displays significant similarities (eg. Strasser 1993), to hormonal power. As Martin observes, whilst anthropologists recognise that for other cultures it is the real person that needs to express their

problems under the guise of a possessing agent, in our society "possession" is classified as hormonal malfunction and whilst the physical symptoms are treated "the social environment which may be the real cause of such expression and discontent are not attended to" (Martin 1987;33)<sup>16</sup>. Martin suggests that a more positive perspective would be for women to understand their premenstrual anger as legitimate rather than as an illness (1987;35). Whilst women continue to believe their behaviour to be hormonally driven and socially unacceptable they effectively exclude themselves from participating in socio-public life to the same extent as men. Women who withdraw from the public sphere of (work, school, or social activities), during menstruation locate themselves in the *casa* rather than the *calle*, and thus conform, even if temporarily to a "traditional" stereotype: they become publicly ineffective.

Many women feel obliged to plan their monthly calendar of activities around their menstrual cycle, which becomes a framework for ordering their lives. In order to free themselves from what some see as a "hormonal dictatorship" many Spanish women depend on medical science (which legitimizes these beliefs) for the administration of pills to "regulate" hormones, avoid pregnancy, alleviate tension, or prevent pain: to **control** what is "natural". Thus the natural state of the female body is biologically/medically defined -and identified as being in need of treatment<sup>17</sup>. If treatment is successful:

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<sup>16</sup> This is reflected in some Spanish Anthropology. Buxo Reyes (1988) argues that production of different hormones at different ages in the development of male and female children affects their behavioural patterns and aptitudes towards aggression and socialisation, producing ultimately different role specialisations, ways of communicating, and problem solving between the sexes.

<sup>17</sup> It has been argued that medical science is a male technology which suppresses femininity. Theoretically this may be correct in some instances, but if the aim is to resolve women's immediate problems rather than to change the world

if medical science administers a medicine which prevents these conditions, the "natural" hormonal force is conquered rendering one of the "natural" physiological differences between the sexes irrelevant. In the case of bullfighting, untreated or uncontrolled menstruation stands for gender difference and constructs an obstacle to female bullfighters.

The bullfight embodies values which are integral to modern society- a society which values constant productivity of a high standard and quality (Martin 1987;127). Martin suggests that menstrual cycles may inhibit women's maintenance of constant performance levels in the work place; when performance drops women "malfunction"<sup>18</sup>. The nature of the "work" demanded of

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overnight, birth control is a technology which helps individual women to cope and organise their lives effectively in modern society. Some sociological discussion has focused on fertility, Héritier-Augé sees fertility as "a dual principle of social organization and domination" and identifies fertility as the key difference between male and female. The conclusion to this argument thus defines male domination as "ultimately the control, the appropriation of a woman's fertility when she is fertile" (Héritier-Augé 1989;295 quoted in Frank 1991;41). Whilst Héritier-Augé's argument is problematic for my thesis in that inherent to it is the assumption of universal patriarchal dominance (the inspiration for the discussion is the search for an explanation of patriarchal dominance), the general message is important because it involves a stress on the centrality of women's fertility and the importance of their own control over it. It is, in Frank's words "the capacity of the body to claim itself for itself (which) remains the issue" (1991;78).

<sup>18</sup> Martin goes on to reformulate the issue by suggesting that women actually

"...function *differently* during certain days in ways that make it harder to tolerate the discipline required by work in our society" (Martin 1987; 127 Emphasis mine)

Since research implies that many women tend to experience "increased capacities of other kinds" for example increased artistic, creative or intellectual activity, Martin switches the emphasis to suggest that society could be better adapted to women, rather than vice versa (1987; 129). Recent studies of menstruation in small-scale societies have shown that women often completely change their life-styles during menstruation and the few days before it (Gottlieb 1988, Buckley 1988). In

bullfighters highly values quality (of bulls and performances), continuity (bullfighters are expected to fight almost continuously: this signifies success); high levels of productivity (bullfighters are often measured by their annual number of performances). A model of continuous training and performance and constant or improving quality is clearly incompatible with Martin's model of the menstrual cycle as a pattern for changing levels of performance quality. This is characteristic of most professions in the public sphere. The bullfight was constructed by men, for male participation, it is based in a masculine perspective on the world. Martin observes that "women find in the concrete experience of their bodies a different notion of time that counters the way time is socially organised in our industrial society" (1987;197). Bullfighting has effectively been able to avoid the order implied by the menstrual cycle.

Bullfighting, a business which depends on modern western capitalism and the menstrual cycle represent two incompatible systems of organising time: modern industrial society versus the female menstrual cycle. However, the empirical evidence shows, that some women are able to "control" menstruation and begin careers in this profession<sup>19</sup>.

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these cases women's roles in food acquisition and production drastically alter and they dedicate more time to creative or spiritual domains of life. Whilst in some cultures activities which break with the otherwise "continuous" production patterns are considered to be positive, in contemporary western society the negative classification of "under-productive" or "unproductive" time is applied.

<sup>19</sup> This notion of control of the body appears to be comparable with Hargreaves general comment about women in sport: "Female sports are part of the battle for control of the physical body- an intensely personal process" (1994;289).

**The gendering of strength, intelligence, fear and other "human" characteristics.**

Just after Cristina Sánchez performed her *début* with *picadores* in February 1993, she was featured in the colour supplement of *El Mundo* newspaper. The text and colour photographs documented Cristina's career to date, the question of whether women's physical build and strength are less adapted to bullfighting than that of their male contemporaries was broached by a diagram showing Cristina's height of 1.60m -only 10cm taller than the average bull. The caption read: "Cristina's physique is a handicap with regard to the disproportionate power of the *torera* and the animal" (*El Mundo MAGAZINE* 20-21 Feb 1993, p5).

In conversation, books, newspapers and bullfighting journals, it is frequently proposed that between the sexes there is an uneven distribution of strength, intelligence, fear, sensitivity, predictability. These points of difference enter into debates over female bullfighting<sup>20</sup>.

**(i) Strength and intelligence**

The assumption that both female humans and animals pertain to the "weaker sex" is fundamental to Andalusian gender

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<sup>20</sup> These qualities are inextricably linked to ideas concerning sexuality and reproduction, but I have separated them for the purpose of this discussion because informants tended to discuss them separately. The reason for this may be the apparent contradiction between some definitions of female strength and feminine roles; for example the risk to a woman's life in childbirth may be no less than that she would encounter if fighting a bull, yet those who argued that a woman's natural role was childbirth often also argued that it was wrong that a woman's life should be risked in other activities. Similarly problematic are relationships between ideas of female sexuality and character, the functions of the female body and strength: Whilst for some informants the comparison between the pain of childbirth and of a *cornada* suggested no reason why the latter physical ordeal should not be withstood by a woman. For others, a woman is naturally conditioned to give birth but not to withstand a wound.

constructions. The general consensus amongst informants was that most men are physically stronger than most women. I discuss strength and intelligence under the same heading because informants often indicated a relationship between them in their commentaries on differences between men and women.

Informants' arguments were usually based on the premise that men are stronger than women although not necessarily more intelligent<sup>21</sup>. Examples from sports were often cited to support the point that men and women are normally segregated for competitions involving physical strength, whilst they compete against one another in those based on intelligence. Manuel de la Fuente reflects a common perspective when he writes that it seems ridiculous to prevent women from bullfighting given that women are as successful as men in other professions (such as government, medicine, law, engineering and even as astronauts) which until 50 years ago were exclusively male fields. La Fuente compares bullfighting to sport, where women "recognise" that they cannot compete against men. He interprets this as a limitation but neither an implication of inferiority nor a reason why women should compete against one another (de la Fuente 1993;604-5). Some informants echoed the suggestion of all-female performances or suggested that alternatively at the *novillero* level (when the bulls are younger, lighter and smaller) performers should be of mixed sex. Others argued, like the Spanish writer Ignacio Saez Boil that the bullfight has always had to be adapted to the physical possibilities of female performers- the "size and the integrity of the bull is

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<sup>21</sup> Not all informants believed women to be as intelligent as men, and most certainly male informants are not all that likely to express their doubts about the intelligence of women to a female university educated researcher. My conversations with male informants about women were normally focused on the subject of female bullfighters, whilst more general discussions over their attitudes to women, opinions over women's roles, and sexual practices were normally conducted by a male Spanish friend in all male conversations.

reduced" (Saez Boil;89). Informants suggested that whilst they may fight *becerros* in non-serious events, women lack the strength and height to perform on foot with full-grown bulls. Most informants distinguished the problem as one of physical strength rather than intelligence, but some (men) thought women insufficiently intelligent to bullfight. Others distinguished between masculine and feminine intelligence and specialisations, concluding that women's intelligence was not that required for either understanding or fighting bulls<sup>22</sup>.

Often a distinction was made between male and female physical strength. Exhibitions of feminine strength are appropriate whereas a woman who demonstrates masculine strength may be thought "unnatural". Whilst women are strong enough to do housework, lift heavy objects, and in the past to do manual labour in the fields, these activities do not challenge gender stereotypes. In contrast, one informant, spoke of a young woman from his home village who was extraordinarily strong - "as strong as any man". He said that although she was "biologically female, physically it seemed that she was almost a man", when one saw her walking down the street it was as if she wasn't really a woman. He considered it possible but not "natural" for a woman to be as strong as a man. The physical strength exhibited by this particular woman had led people in the village to doubt that she were classifiable as a woman. The "living proof" that masculinity can be embodied in women was indeed considered to be sufficiently strange that it merited comment both inside and outside the village. My informant suggested that male physical strength is a

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<sup>22</sup> One informant characterised women's intelligence as deviant, his model of an intelligent woman was the bullfighter's wife: a very clever woman married to an extremely rich man who furthermore does not truly risk his life every time he steps into the bullring. She is confident that her husband knows how to prevent himself from being killed by a bull and does not suffer.

evolutionary phenomenon: over many generations, due to an emphasis on the development of muscles and strength men have evolved as the physically stronger sex, thus the masculine woman becomes an evolutionary biological freak. The same informant applied this perspective to the bullfight, pointing out that whilst Cristina Sánchez (a "natural" woman) is constantly tossed by the *novillos* she fights but usually survives her performances uninjured, she is too small and weak to fare so well with fully grown bulls. The counter argument is that it is unlikely that Cristina would fight a fully grown bull in the same style that she has developed with *novillos*: bullfighters say the step between *novillero* and *torero* status involves a significant change in style to deal with the heavier, larger fully grown animals; risks can be taken performing with a *novillo* whilst a bull must be fought seriously.

The comparative weakness of women's arms was frequently remarked on as a disadvantage for female bullfighters. This issue first emerged at the beginning of my fieldwork in a series of conversations about Maria Gomez, a Cordoban female bullfighter, active in the 1930s before the civil war and subsequent ban on female performers (see Chapter 9). Her friend explained that Maria Gomez did not kill the *novillos* herself because she took seriously the belief (which her granddaughter says is masculine and sexist) that women's arms were not sufficiently strong to kill a bull. Believing this, she never attempted this final phase of the bullfight.

In the 1990 similar assertions repeated that women's arms are "naturally" weaker than men's and this causes their main problem in bullfighting. Cristina Sánchez's difficulties in performing the kill were often attributed to weak arms, whilst male bullfighters suffering similar problems were said to simply need to practise and develop their technique. Some

informants said that female bullfighters have difficulties working with the cape due to the weakness of their arms- capes are heavy and one needs to train to develop the endurance to hold and accurately manipulate a cape during the twenty-minute performance. A male informant commented on Cristina Sánchez's televised bullfight that one could see that she did not work well with the cape because her arms were too weak to hold it out correctly.

Generalisation is problematic because people interpret the distribution of strength and intelligence between the sexes subjectively. The four following examples show how four informants with different subject positions come to understand the significance of gendered strength and intelligence for female bullfighters in relation to their own particular circumstances:

1) Enrique is an elderly ex-bullfighter living in Córdoba. He spends his spare time at a bullfighting club of which he is president and is involved in training boys who aspire to be *novilleros*. He feels that women cannot enter any profession which requires the level of strength and intelligence demanded by bullfighting. Rather than simply physical maladaptation "something else" prevents women bullfighting, initially he settled on women being less intelligent than men as an explanation, but changed his mind saying that this was not necessarily the case. He was certain that no woman could do anything as well as a man (apart from her proper role of cleaning and cooking).

2) Juan, a man in his late sixties, lives in the countryside. His income derives from renting holiday homes. He was once a *novillero* but never successful enough to become a bullfighter. As a penniless young man he dedicated himself to the business of making enough money to be able to accept the honour and

expense of heading his religious brotherhood for a year (an expensive affair). Now retired, he lives with his wife on his small ranch where he keeps several *becerros* and a small bullring where he sometimes organises festivals. He lives by the saying "women and sardines belong in the kitchen" (*la mujer y la sardina a la cocina*) - apart from that the only thing women are good for is sex. He says women do not have the intelligence required to understand bullfighting, even women bull breeders are not involved in their businesses, which are usually inherited from a male relative. Even those who are interested at first soon lose interest, leaving the business to be administered by men. For him, neither the body nor the mind of a woman is adapted to bullfighting.

3) Carmen, a woman in her late thirties is the owner of a well known bull breeding ranch in Andalusia. She is very involved in the administration of her business and the breeding and selection processes. Her opinions on female bullfighting were based on differences between male and female strength. She saw the significant biological difference as allowing women to fight small novillos, but not to perform as a *picador* or to kill a fully grown bull. For Carmen the problem was not one of intelligence or understanding, she is respected in the bullfighting world for her bullfighting knowledge. She argued that a woman can play any part in bullfighting which didn't demand physical strength. In agreement with another male breeder she saw the idea of a woman working as a cowgirl to be problematic for the same reason because the job requires one to be strong enough to lift and carry calves and physically handle strong animals. Carmen's philosophy is that women in contemporary Spain can achieve almost anything they like within the limits imposed upon them in terms of physical strength. She feels that many women continue not to be accepted in public activities and other male dominated spheres of life through lack of trying and fear of entering what have always been

"male" areas of socio-cultural life.

4) Lola is in her early twenties, she has trained to be a bullfighter. When she was in the gym one day, just about to begin pull-up exercises on a high bar, a man approached her and told her that she would never be able to lift her own weight because women's arms are not strong enough. Lola was able to disprove his assertion. She knows that women are able to reach high levels of physical fitness and feels that a woman can be both strong and intelligent enough to be able to follow any career which a man can practice. For her the main barrier to women becoming bullfighters is male sexism rather than female physical weakness. With neither financial backing nor an appropriate social network she was not able to succeed as a female bullfighter. The idea expressed by Carmen (above), that women are able to overcome sexism to succeed, does not fit with Lola's own experience in bullfighting, from her point of view the real barrier was sexism, not lack of strength.

Informants' interpretations of the difficulties confronted by aspiring female bullfighters are not consistent. Gender, class, age, economic situation, education, occupation, etc, strongly influenced their explanations.

#### **(ii) Fear**

Whilst some informants stated that fear is feminine, others distinguished between masculine and feminine fear. A model of irrational feminine fear has been applied to the female bullfighter figure, said to be "terrified of mice but unafraid to confront a dangerous bull". Masculine fear has been referred to as "natural"; in order to display a masculine strength of character men must overcome fear. The bullfighter

is expected to experience fear before and in the first moments of a performance, bullfighters happily admit to this. Failure is not overcoming fear whilst the triumphant hero is he who dominates both himself- his fear -and the bull. It was suggested that if a woman sensed such fear she would not consider trying bullfighting because women are not capable the bravery required to overcome masculine fear. Therefore aspiring female bullfighters are sometimes characterised as unaware of the real danger and fear of bullfight. Men suggested that since the bullfight looks very easy from the audience, women wish to try it due to their lack of understanding and oblivion to both its danger and difficulty.

Other informants said that awareness of danger deters women from bullfighting. Several *aficionadas* told me that they would be too scared to bullfight. Similarly some male informants claimed that a female bullfighter who had been present when a bullfighter was killed in the arena did not perform again herself because witnessing the death of one of Spain's best bullfighters made her finally understand the danger and sense fear.

### **(iii) Strength, Fear and Horse-back Bullfighting**

Whilst women were banned from fighting on foot during Franco's dictatorship they were allowed to perform on horseback in *el rejoneo*. Many *aficionados* regard *el rejoneo* as more appropriate for women than *el toreo*, classifying horse-back bullfighting as more feminine than fighting on foot, and more suitable for women both to watch and participate in. *El rejoneo* is credited with neither equal danger nor seriousness as *el toreo*, it is a display of horsemanship and extravagance rather than a serious attempt at the domination of a bull. *Novillos* with shaved horns are normally used to minimise the danger to the highly trained and very expensive horses of the *rejoneador*. In short *el rejoneo* is not considered real



The French rejoneadora, Maria Sara maintained a place amongst the top performers of her category during the early 1990's and at the time of writing is still one of the highest rated rejoneadores. Whilst some informants criticised the style of her rejoneo they did not use her sex as a basis for criticism.

bullfighting.

Informants frequently explained that *el rejoneo* was suitable for women because it was an activity in which they were not limited by their inferior physical strength. Moreover, many *aficionados* see horse riding as feminine activity, and regard its extension to the bullring as perfectly normal. Informants who are equestrian experts related horse-riding to the intelligence/strength issue: they agreed that men and women are equally intelligent and in equestrian events compete on an equal basis. Although a woman must be physically fit to ride well, physical strength is not the most important issue because the rider depends on the strength of the horse. Similarly, in horse-back bullfighting, the horse comes into closer contact with the bull than its rider, the horse is endangered by the bull and the rider must use his/her intelligence to complement the horse's strength and guarantee its safety. Since *el rejoneo* is less dangerous than *el toreo*, informants who felt women should not be put in direct danger from a bull found it more suitable for women.

### **Biological sex and gendered activities**

The visual display of a female bullfighter illuminates the physiological differences between the sexes and embodies notions of the "natural" differences between them. The biological-scientific basis of this binary difference reinforces the notion of a natural and unalterable inequality between categories of man and woman. The "natural" difference between men's and women's biological and social roles are thus reaffirmed for some people. Similarly this reinforces some people's conviction that women should not perform a role which according to "nature" is masculine. Nor is it considered natural for women to aspire to do so. One informant drew the analogy that for a woman to be a bullfighter is as unnatural as for a man to be a midwife; many feel that the desire to fight

bulls is simply not "normal" or not "right" for a woman<sup>23</sup>.

Biological sex differences are fundamental to the gender constructs on which arguments against female bullfighters are based. However the "naturalness" and biology of these differences are themselves cultural constructs. Moore stresses Stolke's point "that views of nature, biology and physiology-natural facts- are socio-political conceptualizations" (1993,196). Stolke argues that this "tendency to ideologically "naturalise" prevailing socio-economic inequalities" is characteristic of class society and helps to serve to maintain existing inequalities in the social order. She rightly points out that "in advanced industrial society, women tend ...to be defined in an unmeditated way by their sexual characteristics as first and foremost mothers and as the essential, incommensurable biological others to men", and that "on account of their "natural" function as mothers, they cannot compete on equal terms with them (men)" (Stolke 1993;36). Against female bullfighters both men and women argue that because of the "natural" shape, size and functions of their bodies that women cannot equal men in their suitability for successful professional performance. Similarly intelligence and fear are gendered by those who argue that feminine intelligence does not understand bullfighting (thus women could not embody the intellect required to direct their female bodies as if they were bullfighter's bodies (male bodies)). Hence successful female performers have been referred to as having "the body of a woman with the mind of a bullfighter". Feminine emotions, in this case, fear, have also been cited as sources of taurine misjudgment. The body (embodied emotions and thoughts) is

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<sup>23</sup> Whilst it is quite "natural" for a man to be a bullfighter, it is however, not "normal"- very few men actually become bullfighters. It is nevertheless considered both "natural" and "normal" for a man to want to be, or to wish that he could be, a bullfighter. In contrast, these aspirations are neither "normal" nor "natural" for a woman.

central to the ways in which performers are believed to internalise, think and express the bullfight.

The "traditionalist" perspective stresses that sexual difference is coterminous with inequalities between men and women. This implies a fundamental equality amongst men which is represented in the idea that all men regardless of their social class are born equal and will naturally find their place in the social order<sup>24</sup>. This is manifested in the idea that a bullfighter can emerge from any social class and that his success will represent his reputation as an individual. Whilst wealth is thought to sometimes affect a bullfighter's style by reducing the extent to which he is willing to expose himself to danger, it cannot influence the level of his "natural" embodied skill as a bullfighter.

### **Conclusion**

The 'naturalization' of gender difference and the 'de-naturalization' of those who transgress the boundaries of masculinity and femininity are constant themes in the arguments against female bullfighters: the hybrid creatures with male minds and female bodies, women who don't even seem as if they are women, and the supposed 'natural' tendency of women towards careers such as mid-wifery- the business of life-giving, rather than the life-taking and life-threatening profession of bullfighting.

For the women performers themselves and many of their supporters who are able to identify with both the sensations and emotions of the bullfight and the success story of the bullfighter being part of the embodied experience of a woman, there is nothing ominous about female bullfighting. Moreover,

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<sup>24</sup> Some informants perceived a political "lie" inherent in bullfighting and some people do even go as far as to claim that their rejection of the event is on these terms.

there need be no problem with the actions of a female body being gendered masculine. Frank describes how feminist performance artists have consciously used their bodies as a medium through which to critically comment on culture, thus through the intentionality of their performances some women aim to deconstruct certain ideologies of the female body (Frank 1991;83). Such performance art and "postmodern dance" is contrasted to "traditional dance" which serves to affirm gender differences and female inferiority (Frank 1991;82 cf. Hanna 1988;51). Female bullfighters as performers fit into this framework in a an ambiguous way- they perform in the "traditional bullfight" a traditional "dance", but through their use of a female body to do so they effectively function in the same way as postmodern performance artists in that they "deconstruct certain ideologies of the female body" (ibid) in doing so. It is likely that there is a certain amount of intentionality involved in this process- not in the design of the female bullfighter's body movements (the traditional dance is already choreographed), but in the knowledge that their enactment of these movements may "prove" something about the potential of the female body and mind for masculine action. Thus this is a way in which a point is made about the embodied woman and her feminine potential.

However, for those who set and naturalize the limits of masculinity and femininity in more clearly segregated zones, the female bullfighter may be seen as a threat to the 'natural' order, and thus challenges the individual's position in that order. This is not uncommon in situations where women perform in public domains which have previously been exclusively male<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>25</sup> Mansfield and McGinn write about female body-builders, drawing attention to how the 'nature of female body-builders' becomes the focus of some areas of discourse about them. Women's body-building is a fascinating case study because it "raises unavoidably questions about both the naturalness of the body AND the meanings centred via the body upon sexual

In the case of female bullfighters 'de-naturalization' is in some contexts resolved by a play on the novelty element of female bullfighters; since they are not natural, uncommon, and novel, they tend to be classified as curious oddities-exceptions to be marvelled at rather than revolutionary or change producing phenomena. From such a perspective female bullfighters may be regarded as "harmless". Thus the extent to which female bullfighters are able to use their performance skills to deconstruct "traditionalist" ideologies of the female body is limited. Questions of classification are fundamental to whether or not female bullfighters are considered acceptable. In the next chapter I consider an other set of alternatives which present themselves in the relationship between female bullfighters, tradition and change.

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difference" (1993;56). Mansfield and McGinn quote Kuhn to show how a "double transgression" occurs in female body-building: "...a twofold challenge to the natural order is posed. Not only is the naturalness of the body called into question by its inscriptions within a certain kind of performance: but when women have the muscles, the natural order of gender is under threat as well" (Kuhn 1988;17).

FEMALE BULLFIGHTERS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF HISTORY:  
COSTUME, TERMINOLOGY AND FEMININE IDENTITIES

Introduction

In this Chapter I focus on some examples from the history of taurine costume and terminology to discuss how classifications of female bullfighters interface with notions of the "traditional" and the "modern". An analysis of costume and terminology in the bullfighting context cannot be separated from other processes of change, in this case especially those related to fashion, clothing and language.

**Does the "suit of lights" have a gender?**

On my return to Córdoba from Cristina Sánchez' *debüt con picadores* at Valdemorillo in 1993 two elderly male informants expressed curiosity about her performance. They asked if she had been dressed in a suit of lights, telling me that they were especially interested in this because in the past the women who they had known to perform had done so wearing a long skirt: an outfit which they compared to the suit that women used to wear for side-saddle<sup>1</sup> horse riding.

When I responded that Cristina had been wearing a suit of lights they agreed that this change in costume would facilitate greater ease of movement for female bullfighters. They suggested that it had been much more difficult for women to perform in long skirts and that it was perfectly logical that women should now perform wearing trousers. As one observed, I

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<sup>1</sup> In Spanish the term side-saddle is not translated literally, instead it is referred to as *el estilo Inglés* - "English style". This could be taken as an association of female bullfighters as something "foreign", in that it is something which is not "traditional".

was wearing trousers myself and, after all, nearly all women wear trousers now. In fact the historical account that these men referred to was based on local history: one of them was the son of the man who in the 1930s was the manager of *Mary Gomez* (Maria Gomez) (a local female bullfighter who was active in the 1930s). Maria Gomez did indeed perform wearing a skirt, and Gustave Dorés' well known drawing of Teresa Bolsí who was active in the 1870s depicts her standing triumphantly over the bull wearing a crinoline dress)<sup>2</sup>. However, this was not necessarily the norm: according to Boada and Cebolla's documentation of the history of female bullfighting some female bullfighters did dress in suits of lights with trousers. Dolores Sanchez *La Fragosa* who performed in the 1880s was sketched in the bullring dressed in a full suit of lights<sup>3</sup>, and publicity photographs of a whole *cuadrilla de señoritas toreras* (team of female bullfighters) wearing suits of lights exist from the end of the C19 (see Boada and Cebolla 1974;121, 129 & 130). Nevertheless, the earliest era of female bullfighting which was most frequently commented on amongst my informants was that of the 1930s<sup>4</sup>, dominated by a woman named Juanita Cruz, and when Maria Gomez began her short career. Juanita Cruz did perform wearing a skirt, she had country style suits and suits of lights made with specially designed skirts in the same style as the trousers worn by male bullfighters. Juanita Cruz is said by many people to have been the greatest ever female bullfighter. She performed alongside the top male bullfighters

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<sup>2</sup> It is not entirely clear whether or not Teresa Bolsí did perform wearing crinoline dress. Boada and Cebolla were able to find little documentation on her and although some reports confirm that she did indeed perform several times the drawings and a few photographs is all that is known of her.

<sup>3</sup> Image produced by Gonzalez, reproduced by Boada and Cebolla (1976;116).

<sup>4</sup> Whilst informants spoke of the female bullfighters of the 1930s, their knowledge tended to be general and information about individual female performers usually very scanty.

of her time and is said to be the only woman ever to have performed with fully grown four year old bulls (although in Latin America, not Spain). Juanita Cruz expressed a type of femininity which was accepted by many as appropriate to bullfighting in the 1930s and is often represented in the documentation and in hearsay as something of a revered novelty. She was not however unopposed and as Boada and Cebolla show (1976;168-190) she was severely criticised by some writers.

Marvin argues that in the 1980s one of the things "immediately wrong" with the suit of lights being worn by female performers is that it has trousers (1988;152). Whilst mentioning that many women wore trousers (although not for formal occasions) Marvin stresses that trousers are "traditionally male" (1988;152). I propose that the point that trousers are "traditionally male" does not necessarily mean that modern *aficionados* need have any objection to them being worn by a female performer. Furthermore, whilst people may regard trousers as **traditionally** male, they may also consider them to be **currently** no more male than female. My informants were accustomed to seeing women wearing trousers for both formal and informal occasions. I have seen women wearing trousers for work, formal receptions and presentations, weddings, and in the bullfight audience- an event which many women dress up for. However, it is evident both from the literature and my informants that the argument that women should not be permitted to perform in suits of lights still holds some popularity. This perspective corresponds with the idea that women should not imitate male bullfighters. Several of my informants stressed that women should perform in country suits, they thought there was something ridiculous or "wrong"- out of place- about seeing a woman wearing a suit of lights. Indeed when women wear suits of lights they are sometimes described as being "dressed up" in suits of lights, not to perform, but as if they were wearing them in a capacity not entirely congruent

with the role they intend to play (as have singers and other performers- see below). However it is significant that today female performers do dress in the same way as male bullfighters. Lola possessed both a suit of lights and a country suit which she wore according to the norms for the occasion on which she was performing, in the same way that male bullfighters do. Similarly, I have seen all of today's performers, (Cristina Sanchez, Yolanda Carvajal, Mari-Paz Vega, Angela de los Angeles, amongst others) either performing live, on television, or photographed wearing suits of lights. This visual dimension of their self representation is instrumental in making three important distinctions: first it implies a similarity between themselves and their male contemporaries -in that all bullfighters, regardless of their biological sex, wear suits of lights and there is nothing novel, feminine, or different about a woman's suit of lights except of course that it is made to fit a female body. Second, wearing a suit of lights differentiates them from the stereotype of female bullfighters which was established by the very successful career of Juanita Cruz in the 1930s. Third, women who perform on foot distinguish themselves from *rejoneadoras* (horseback bullfighters) who never wear suits of lights<sup>5</sup>. This is necessary because the *rejoneo* is often classed as a more feminine type of bullfighting which is entirely appropriate for women. Sometimes female bullfighters are relegated to

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<sup>5</sup> The currently successful French *rejoneadora*, Maria Sara wears some jackets and waistcoats which are designed to resemble those of the suit of lights but not to be a suit of lights. Maria Sara tends to wear more elaborate and "feminine" costumes than her Spanish male contemporaries. Indeed the theme of the costumes of the *rejoneo* as an expression of identity is an interesting area which merits further research: *rejoneadores* have much greater freedom and scope by which to vary their costumes than do bullfighters who perform on foot. Their suits can be understood as sites of the expression of multiple aspects of identity, most notably: nationality (especially evident in the case of Portuguese performers); regionalism; gender; tradition; class.

performing with *rejoneadores* or in all female events, thus they tend to be set aside from mainstream bullfighting. In order that they should achieve their goals to become bullfighters, rather than simply being accredited with a feminine version of bullfighting female performers must identify themselves with the main current rather than the more marginalised horseback events.

In the past, visual representations of women dressed in a suit of lights, published reports of women's performances and anecdotal accounts have expressed a problematic gender ambiguity. For example, the front cover of Boada and Cebolla's (1976) volume features a painting entitled "Female Bullfighter breast-feeding her child". The female bullfighter is dressed in a suit of lights and sitting on a chair breast-feeding in a chapel (presumably that of the bullring) before performing. Her husband, half her size, is knelt in prayer below a small figure of Christ (a gender role reversal of the "women who pray", see Chapter 5)<sup>6</sup>. The gender ambiguity of those women who did perform wearing suits of lights in the 1930s (and also

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<sup>6</sup> The much cited case of *La Reverte* who was active in the early C19, (see Boada and Cebolla 1976;133-6, Rivas 1990;294-7) stresses gender ambiguity and confusion that was implied by the notion of a female bullfighter. *La Reverte* was in fact a biological male, named Agustín Rodríguez, who had disguised himself as a female bullfighter (a man who had imitated a woman playing a feminine version of a masculine role). He was photographed and performed in the suit of lights with trousers and was reasonably successful as a female bullfighter. However with the post civil war ban on female performers he revealed his male sexual identity and continued to perform relatively unsuccessfully for a short period until taking up a position as a guard. The implications of this case were problematic for the general credibility of female bullfighting since whilst compared with women Agustín Rodríguez had excelled as something of a legendary performer, however, when he returned to the bullring to have his performances compared with those of other men he fared badly. This case approaches mythical status in the "history of female bullfighters" and as a story of ambiguous gender stresses the ambiguity of the role.

# Plaza de Toros de Tetuán

EL JUEVES 25 DE JUNIO DE 1908

se verificará (si el tiempo no lo impide) una

## GRAN CORRIDA DE NOVILLOS-TOROS

REPARACION DE LA SIN RIVAL Y CÉLEBRE MATADORA

LA REVERTE



LA REVERTE

PRESIDIRÁ LA PLAZA LA AUTORIDAD COMPETENTE

Se lidiarán **CUATRO HERMOSOS NOVILLOS-TOROS**, con divisa ce-  
leste, de la muy acreditada ganadería de

**DON MÁXIMO HERNAN**

de Colmenar Viejo.

### LIDIADORES

**PICADORES**.—Julio Vicente (*Cerrajas*), Eugenio Montes (*Niño bonito*), Mariano Linau (*El Fran-  
cés*) y Florentino de la Flor (*Florito*); en el caso de inutilizarse los cuatro, no podrá  
exigirse otros.

### ESPADA

**María Salomé Rodríguez (La Reverte)**

**SOBRESALIENTE DE ESPADA**.—Antonio Navarro (*El Moro de Madrid*)  
con obligación de matar al cuarto novillo.

**BANDERILLEROS**.—Manuel Romero (*Manolé*), Antonio Navarro (*El Moro de Madrid*), Francisco  
Hernández (*Jardínero*), Casimiro Reina (*Sevillita*) y Romualdo Puerta (*Mont. Ate*).

**PUNTLERO**.—Tomás Martínez (*El Morro*).

La corrida empezará a las **CINCO Y MEDIA**

Las puertas de la plaza se abrirán dos horas antes.

Una brillante banda de música amenizará el espectáculo tocando escogidas piezas

Se observarán con todo rigor las disposiciones dictadas por la Autoridad para el régimen de las  
corridas de toros.

### PRECIOS DE LAS LOCALIDADES

Tendidos	1 y 7	3, 4 y 5	2 y 6	Meseta del Toril	Sol	3 y 4	1, 2 y 5
	Ptas.	Ptas.	Ptas.		Ptas.	Ptas.	Ptas.
Barrera.....	1.25	1.50	1.50	Delantera .....	1.25	»	»
Contrabarrera.....	1.10	1.25	1.25	Asientos.....	0.75	»	»
Delantera.....	1	1.25	1.10	<b>Gradas</b>			
Asientos.....	0.85	1.10	1	Delantera.....	»	1	1.10
<b>Sobrepuestas</b>				Asientos.....	»	0.75	0.85
Delantera.....	»	»	1.50	Grada de meseta delantera.	0.75	»	»
Asientos.....	»	»	1	Asientos de ídem.....	0.65	»	»

### PASEOS, 50 CÉNTIMOS

Toda localidad pagará el 15 por 100 de impuesto con arreglo a la ley del Timbre

Los billetes para esta corrida se venderán el *Miércoles 24* y *Jueves 25 de Junio*, en los Despachos establecidos en la *Corredera Alta*, 16 (tienda de vinos) y en la calle de la *Victoria*, 12 (tienda de vinos de D. Damián Barral) y el día de la corrida, en el Despacho establecido en los Cuatro Caminos, en la tienda de vinos «LA PERLA», en la Mezquita de Tetuán y en los de la Plaza de Toros.

No se darán contraseñas de salida y los niños que no sean de pecho necesitan billete.

**NOTA.** La Empresa no dispone más que de **SEIS** caballos; muertos éstos quedará suprimida la suerte de varas.

**NOTA.**—Si alguno de los toros se inutilizase durante la lidia no será reemplazado por otro.

La Empresa de Tranvías de la Ciudad Lineal, tiene dispuesto un servicio especial de Cuatro Caminos a la Plaza.

Se arrienda la Plaza para novilladas y becerradas, con becerros ó sin ellos y ganado para las novilladas. Informes: *Corredera Alta*, 16, tienda de vinos.



# Plaza de Toros de Tetuán

¡GRAN ACONTECIMIENTO TAURINO!

## ¡LA GUERRITA!

EL DOMINGO 25 DE AGOSTO DE 1907

se verificará (si el tiempo no lo impide) una

## GRAN CORRIDA EXTRAORDINARIA

PRESIDIRÁ LA PLAZA LA AUTORIDAD COMPETENTE



Se lidiarán **seis hermosos novillos-toros** de una acreditada ganadería.

Los dos primeros toros serán muertos por la célebre matadora

### LA GUERRITA

En el tercer toro, el arrojado sugestionador

### GONZALITO

ejecutará por primera vez en Madrid la arriesgada suerte titulada

### LA FUENTE MILAGROSA

#### LIDIADORES

PICADORES.—Enrique Salvador (*Alcalá*), José Ortega, Luis Salvador (*Alcalá*), Manuel Pérez, Federico Castillo (*Castillito*), Nicolás Martín (*El Formal*), Ulpiano Lario (*Morenito de Castilla*) y Daniel Fernández (*Foto*).

#### ESPADAS

**Ignacia Fernández (La Guerrita)**  
**Julián Fernández (Salamanguino)**  
**José Romero**

#### NUEVO EN ESTA PLAZA

BANDERILLEROS.—Clemente Pastor, Rafael Espejo (*Ouco*), José Pérez (*Lolo chico*), Pablo Bao (*Judas*), Gregorio Castejón (*Chiquito de Madrid*), Manuel Pérez, Federico Castillo (*Castillito*), Nicolás Martín (*El Formal*), Ulpiano Lario (*Morenito de Castilla*) y Daniel Fernández (*Foto*).

PUNTIILLERO.—Tomás Martínez (*El Moreno*).

### La corrida empezará a las CUATRO Y MEDIA en punto

Las puertas de la Plaza se abrirán dos horas antes

Una brillante banda de música amenizará el espectáculo tocando escogidas piezas

Se observarán con todo rigor las disposiciones dictadas por la Autoridad para el régimen de las corridas de toros.

Para que el público pueda apreciar la hermosa lámina y tipo de los toros, éstos se podrán ver en los corrales de la Plaza, el DOMINGO 25, de nueve a once de la mañana.

### PRECIOS DE LAS LOCALIDADES

	Ptas.		Pesetas
<b>Tendidos</b>		<b>Meseta de Toril</b>	
Barrera.....	1.50	Delantera.....	1.10
Contrabarrera.....	1.25	Asientos.....	0.85
Delantera.....	1.10	<b>GRADAS</b>	
Tendido.....	1	Delantera.....	1
<b>Galería central</b>		Asientos.....	0.75
Barrera.....	1.75	Gradas de meseta delantera.....	0.75
Contrabarrera.....	1.50	Asientos de ídem.....	0.65
Asientos.....	1.25	<b>PASEOS, 0.40</b>	

Toda localidad pagará el 15 por 100 de impuesto con arreglo a la Ley del Timbre

Los billetes se venderán el *Sábado 24*, víspera de la corrida, en los despachos establecidos en la Corredera Alta, 16, y Bravo Murillo, 77 (establecimiento de Luis Ferns) y el *Domingo 25*, además de los antes citados despachos, en los Cuatro Caminos, en «LA PERLA», en el café titulado el BOHIO en Tetuán y en los de la Plaza de Toros.

En el caso de suspenderse la corrida, los billetes son valederos para otro día.—No se darán contraseñas de salida y los niños que no sean de pecho necesitan billete.

**NOTA. La Empresa no dispone más que de SEIS caballos; muertos estos quedará suprimida la suerte de varas.**

**NOTA.** Si alguno de los toros se inutiliza durante la lidia no será reemplazado por otro.

El espectador que no ocupe su localidad será reconvenido por los empleados de la Plaza a que ocupe la que le correspondía.

Se ruega al público conserve su billete durante la corrida.

La Empresa de Tranvías de la Ciudad Lineal, tiene dispuesto un servicio especial de Cuatro Caminos a la Plaza.

later in the 1970s) must be understood in its historical context; in the 1990s when a woman appears dressed to perform in her *traje de luces* (suit of lights) she presents herself by means of visual metaphors which are both related to the visual history of bullfighting and the contemporary visual world in which she lives. Partly this is to do with changes in the wider socio-cultural uses and meanings of the suit of lights. We should note that whilst the suit of lights has changed little since the mid C19 (cf. Pitt-Rivers 1990) modern fashion is constantly changing: "modern fashion **plays** endlessly with the distinction between masculinity and femininity" and "With it we express our **shifting** ideas about what masculinity and femininity are" (Wilson 1985;122). Fashion clothing is a class of costume to which the suit of lights as special ritual clothing does not pertain. Unlike fashion clothing which goes out of fashion and becomes "ugly" or "tasteless" in retrospect (Coward 1984;34), the suit of lights continues to be revered unchanged by the followers of the bullfight. The change and variation seems instead to lie in the way in which ugliness, tastelessness or impropriety is perceived when the suit of lights is worn by particular bodies. Whilst an increasing number of people find it appropriate that a physically fit woman should wear a suit of lights, men who are overweight may be ridiculed when they don the tight trousers of the *torero*. As clothing the suit of lights is will unavoidably be classified in relation to other clothing. Thus its meaning will change as fashions alter.

The suit of lights always has been identified with the bullfight but not limited to it exclusively. The historical usage of the "*torero*" image or costume merits a deeper piece of research than has been the scope of this thesis however the data available indicates that there has been a long term relationship between this ritual clothing and fashion. An analysis of the French *Carte de Visite* photographic genre of

the nineteenth century<sup>7</sup> shows that other male and female public figures, especially "artistes", singers, and dancers posed for photographs dressed "torero style"- in a suit of lights or some variation of it<sup>8</sup>. In recent years the "torero" image has been represented in various forms in fashion photography. The style has also been represented in fashion garments themselves. Several female informants mentioned to me that particularly in the late 1980s a short cropped jacket called a "torera"<sup>9</sup>, reminiscent in shape to that of the suit of lights had been very fashionable. They continue to use the term torera to refer to short jackets of this type. Pérez Molina (1991) also observes that during the 1980s torero style was becoming popular in Spanish youth culture. He draws attention to Pedro Almodovar's film *Matador* and to the popular music group named *Toreros Muertos* (Dead Bullfighters) and the emergence of bullfighting themes in rock music and lyrics in general. The suit of lights, taurine settings, and 'torero' postures featured on record covers whilst simultaneously youth fashion adopted certain facets of the suit of lights. Pérez Molina interprets the "ambiguous look" cultivated by "smoothfaced and childlike teenagers with short hair and a coleta [the small plait grown by the bullfighter], lithe, agile bodies etc" as being related to the torero "look" (1991;447). Whilst it would be a mistake to read too much into the filtering of

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<sup>7</sup> See for example McCauley (1985;172-187) for an analysis of the work of the french photographer Disdéri.

<sup>8</sup> My archival research on Cordoban newspaper reports of bullfighting at the end of the C19 and beginning of the C20 shows a strong French interest in bullfighting. There were reports of the existence of a bullfighting school in Paris and intentions to construct a bullring there.

<sup>9</sup> Grammatically the word torera serves (in this context) as an adjective, the full terminology would be "chaqueta torera" which translates as "bullfighting jacket" or "bullfighter jacket" and was shortened to simply "torera" which takes the feminine form because the word *chaqueta* is feminine.

bullfighting imagery into popular youth culture it is important to recognise the relationship between the two. This connection may be viewed more broadly in the context of the incorporation of "tradition" into popular culture. For example, the references to bullfighters and bullfighting which appeared in the lyrics of pop music are likely to reflect the appropriation of "traditional" *flamenco* and other Spanish song by popular music as a commercial strategy.

As my elderly *aficionado* informants pointed out, there is now, in the 1990s, nothing remarkable about a woman dressing "*torero style*". Women's fashions, leggings, and short jackets are not so far from the style of the suit of lights as was women's clothing sixty years ago. If we take up their previous analogy to horse-riding, it can be observed that women now wear tight fitting jodhpurs when they ride- thus the relation which these informants set up between women's horse-riding and bullfighting attire for the 1930s still holds in the 1990s. Similarly images of sports women wearing tight-fitting clothing are common-place in the 1990s. The extent to which women dressed in this way are viewed as erotic objects is variable. I found that there was always a male element of the audience at female performances who made comments such as "she's got a nice bum". For such spectators, Marvin's argument applies: "Whereas the tightness of the trousers around a male performer's body is not commented on by members of the public, the tightness around the groin and buttocks of the female performer is; the costume becomes the focus of erotic interest and the performer an object of sexual rather than artistic interest" (1988;153). Whilst according to "traditionalist" *aficionado* discourse the female bullfighter's body may be eroticised by her costume, this is not necessarily the case for all male or female *aficionado* interpretations. Whilst those male *aficionados* who speak of female bullfighters' artistic worth may also view them with sexual interest, the same applies for *aficionadas*. Women

may speak of male bullfighters' performances in terms of their artistic value because this is an appropriate way to speak of them whilst simultaneously appreciating the erotic imagery of their tight clothing. It is not a case of a female bullfighter's performance being the object of either sexual or artistic interest, it could well be a combination of both. According to the imagery of contemporary fashion the suit of lights is an appropriate feminine outfit<sup>10</sup>. Thus set within contemporary conventions of women's clothing it becomes clear that in the 1930s and the 1990s the possibilities for interpretation implied by the visual image of a female bullfighter dressed in a suit of lights are very different.

Wilson describes how "Fashion in its 'modernist' mood flirts with...dangers of the boundary, not only the boundaries of androgyny, but also the boundaries of decency, good taste and sanity" (1985;117). Whilst the evolution of the suit of lights has not been dependent on swings in fashion, it is reasonable to assume that the breaking down of boundaries will affect ways in which *aficionados* interpret a women wearing a suit of lights: a costume which according to many of my informants need not be inappropriate<sup>11</sup> for a female performer. In contrast Marvin explains his informants' objection in terms of the ambiguity implied by the woman drawing attention to the "femininity of the costume" thus increasing "the ambiguity between the role and the costume in which it is performed" (1988;152).

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<sup>10</sup> In this instance I mean that the outfit is respectable feminine attire- rather than to stress that it is a costume with "non-masculine elements" (Marvin 1998;153). It is its former rather than latter characteristic which makes it appropriate that a woman should wear the suit of lights in the contemporary context.

<sup>11</sup>Marvin attributes this opinion to "the majority of those with whom I spoke" (1988;152). It would be interesting to know whether this was a mainly male *aficionado* group.

According to Marvin's analysis it is the ritual context of the bullfight which "controls any ambiguous response to or interpretation of the suit of lights" as a feminine costume worn by a "superman" (1988;152). In this interpretation the female bullfighter upsets the balance of the ritual by stressing the femininity of the costume. For "traditionalist" *aficionado* culture this model stands. However, in a wider context it is foiled by many *aficionado*'s positive reactions to seeing a woman in a suit of lights<sup>12</sup>. Such disagreements can be explained in terms of the relationship between the ritual context and contemporary cultural change, and, the contrast between "traditionalist" thought and changing gender relations. The data implies that changes in the meaning of clothing which take place outside the ritual context bear on the ways in which different members of the audience interpret the meaning of ritual costume.

Epstein and Straub have recently shown how gender ambiguity has come to the forefront of contemporary and recent popular culture<sup>13</sup> and is prominent in current critical theory. Developing Diana Fuss' ideas about the conflictive relationship between the "politics of gender ambiguity" and identity, taking gender ambiguity to be pitched against essentialist identity and right wing conservatism, they ask if "gender ambiguity" can "liberate" us from "identity" (1991;9)<sup>14</sup>. The female

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<sup>12</sup> With reference to clothing and gender it is also significant to note that sociologists of clothing have argued that some of the ambivalences of western society, connected with women's entry into professional careers and business are represented in clothing (Davis 1992, quoted in Corrigan 1992;152), and that women have "more rights to play with sartorial gender signs that men do" (Corrigan 1992;152).

<sup>13</sup> Epstein and Straub draw from examples such as Michael Jackson, film, and fashion photography.

<sup>14</sup> Epstein and Straub's discussion focuses on varieties of homosexuality versus heterosexuality, but is equally applicable

bullfighter of the 1990s certainly represents both conservatism (in the name of "tradition") and at the same time challenges the gender role to which "traditional" convention allocates her. There is on the one hand no doubt that she is a biological woman and if her style of bullfighting can be defined as feminine, as opposed to masculine (and conventional), her gender is not in doubt either. However, if she is seen as "masculine woman" or a person with both masculine and feminine traits then her gender ambiguity threatens the binary gender identities which are dictated by conservative/"traditional" discourse. This interpretation supports the case for contemporary female bullfighters being very different from those to whom they are connected by "history". Indeed, one final example serves, by means of a juxtaposition of past and present, to illustrate one instance of the variation between the meanings of strategies of visual self-representation in different historical contexts<sup>15</sup>. For her *debút con picadores* Cristina Sanchez dressed in a suit of lights which, as she emphasised, was made at the same tailors as those of her male contemporaries and does not vary from the conventional design. Cristina's suit of lights is in tune with her policy of following the same career path as male

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in a general sense to the gender ambiguity of female bullfighters.

<sup>15</sup> Corrigan stresses the importance of the analytical distinction between "the observer of the clothing and the wearer of the apparel" (a distinction which he criticises sociological work on clothing for having neglected (1993;145). The intended meanings of the attire of these female bullfighters do not necessarily correspond with other peoples interpretations of them. In these particular cases the meanings of the costumes worn by Juanita Cruz and Cristina Sanchez were not only intended, but also publicly stated by their wearers. Clothing is not simply used to express meanings intended by the wearer, and subsequently interpreted in a manner independent from the wearer's frame of reference. Rather the process is more complex, for example, both wearers' and observers' interpretations may become part of verbal discourse.

bullfighters, for her wearing the same outfit is a mark of her seriousness and conformity to the same rules which are applied to male bullfighters. In contrast Juanita Cruz is reported to have said:

"I remember...my first performance with picadores with my *cuadrilla* in Granada, the 5th May 1935, dressed in a suit of lights, in my own style, substituting the trousers for a skirt-trouser, which by feminising my clothing reflected my concept of the seriousness and responsibility of what I was doing" (Juanita Cruz, quoted in Boada and Cebolla 1976;177)

This brief survey of the multiple and changing symbolism of the suit of lights implies that the notion of historical continuity can only be very cautiously applied to the case of female bullfighters. However, there has been a tendency for said continuity to be cited at various levels of discourse.

#### **Female bullfighters of the 1990s and "their history"<sup>16</sup>**

On the 17th August 1993 the Spanish television channel TVE1 transmitted a bullfight from Zaragoza in which performed: two *rejoneadores*, the Portuguese *forçados*<sup>17</sup> and the *novillera*

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<sup>16</sup> Part of this section is a re-written and elaborated version of an article which I published in Spanish in 1994 (see Sarah Pink 1994a).

<sup>17</sup> The *forçados* are considered to be unique to Portuguese bullfighting. They practice a performance which is very different from the "Spanish" bullfight, which can be classified as a bull-related event but is in many ways directly opposed to the conventions of "traditional" bullfighting. The performers consist of a group of young men who confront the bull in a line, standing one behind the other. The front man takes the initial impact of the bull with the other members of the team backing him up from behind. The idea is that the first man should be able to gain sufficient control over the bull by sheer physical force and brute strength, usually by maintaining hold of the bulls' horns, that his companions may then join him in pushing the animal down and pinning it to the ground. This act is only performed with bulls who have had their horns shaved, thus the *forçados* performances are normally restricted to events in which *rejoneadores* feature (the bulls which *rejoneadores* perform with generally have their horns shaved to

Cristina Sanchez<sup>18</sup>. During Cristina's performance the commentator occupied himself with recounting the history of female bullfighting, he mentioned *La Pajulera* (who is thought to have performed on horseback in the 1770s<sup>19</sup>), and mentioned that most women who had performed had only done so in smaller scale bullfighting festivals, although amongst those who had achieved some level of fame Juanita Cruz was the most important. Meanwhile, oblivious to the television narrative

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prevent them from damaging the well schooled and extremely valuable horses). *Forçados*, in Spain at any rate, do not kill bulls, they usually take a turn during the performance of a *rejoneador* with the horseback performers bull. A full investigation into the roles of *forçados* fell out of the scope of the research, but would be a worthwhile subject for further study. For the present context it is interesting to note that in Spain the event is something of a novelty, it is not considered to be an element of the "true" bullfight and some informants have said that they cannot bear to watch it, since in practice the simple process described above can be quite bloody (usually involving broken noses). I mentioned above that the *forçados*' performance appears to be opposed to the Spanish bullfight in some ways, mainly I refer to the physical contact between the performers and the bull, the absence of one "hero" figure, the event not being considered to have the artistic value that the bullfight has, and the absence of the inevitability of death for the bull at the hands of the *forçados* or their own danger of death.

<sup>18</sup> The very composition of this event is significant because neither a female bullfighter, a horseback bullfighter nor the Portuguese *forçados* pertain to mainstream conventional "Spanish" bullfighting. All three classes of performer are marginalised in the bullfighting world. By many *aficionados* they are respected for their novelty value but are not credited with the status that is reserved for serious bullfighting. Thus it is quite predictable that female bullfighters should share the bullring with these other marginalised performers, and indeed some informants who were against the idea of women trying to compete in male bullfighting saw it as quite appropriate that this should be so.

<sup>19</sup> Boada and Cebolla were able to find very little documentation about this woman but from what they were able to glean from the archives and Goya's drawings in which *La Pajulera* is featured it seems that she was active in the 1770s and appeared on horseback (see Boada and Cebolla 1976;35-7).

Cristina continued her performance, whilst she was preparing for the kill, (an act she had to repeat several times on this occasion) the commentator continued relating to the audience the case of *La Reverte* (see above), the man who had performed in the first decade of this century disguised as a woman; with this accompaniment Cristina finally succeeded in putting the bull to death.

Previous to this performance Cristina Sánchez had visited Córdoba to present a talk and question and answer session on "The presence of women in the national fiesta (the bullfight)" at the Bullfighting Museum<sup>20</sup>. The event was opened by Antonio Aguilera, a local man who regularly speaks in public at official functions. In order to introduce us to a female bullfighter of the 1990s he spoke not of contemporary bullfighting but of the appearance of women in the bullrings of Spain in the nineteenth century, and went on to mention *La Fragosa* (1930s), *La Garbancera* (1890s) *La Guerrita* (1880s and 1890s), *La Reverte* (see above), Juanita Cruz (1930s), Conchita Cintrón (1940s and 50s) and Maribel Atienza (1970s).

Contemporary press reports and articles establish similar connections, for example, a short feature on Cristina Sánchez published in 1992 (when she was first coming to the attention of the media) contained as the main body of its text the following passage:

"Her ancestors are Angela and Maribel Atienza, but the veteran aficionados remember Conchita Cintrón, the *rejoneadora* of the 40s who when she set her feet on the ground performed better than many bullfighters of her time. Cristina Sánchez, whose ambition is to make

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<sup>20</sup> The event was called a *tertulia* and in Spanish it was called "*La presencia de la mujer en la fiesta nacional*". It took place on the 26th March 1993 and was organised by Rafaél Portillo, the Director of the Bullfighting Museum and of Municipal Museums in Córdoba.

herself a figure in bullfighting finds herself in the same line. And she's already on the way." (Joaquín Vidal 1992)

In fact the success of Cristina Sánchez inspired a series of press articles about female bullfighters which tended to locate her as the most recent character in a C19 and C20 history of female bullfighters. Thus the media emergence of Cristina served as base for a new construction of a history of female bullfighters.

Intellectual contributions to the commentaries on female bullfighters have also seldom deviated from this genealogy. Fernando González Viñas discusses the question of why women are unable to succeed as professional bullfighters<sup>21</sup>. González Viñas cites the historic cases of Teresa Bolsí (see above), *La Pajuelera* (see above), *La Reverte* (see above), Petra Kobloski (a Polish woman who performed in the 1880s) and Conchita Cintrón (see above) (González Viñas 1992;10). González Viñas like the commentators cited above assumes a historical continuity between female bullfighters from the end of the last century to the present day. It is not only Spanish academics who have constructed or assumed a historical continuity and fundamental sameness for contemporary female bullfighters and those who were active either one hundred or sixty years ago. Pitt-Rivers (1993;14-15) attributes the success of Cristina Sánchez and other contemporary female bullfighters to the same dynamic symbolism as that with which he claims to explain the success of female bullfighters in the previous century.

Such constructions of female bullfighting as an historical tradition may be viewed as attempts to establish historical

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<sup>21</sup> Gonzalez Viñas develops his argument from ideas concerning the difference between male and female spatio-visual perception, concluding that men develop a greater capacity for the type of vision necessary for bullfighting.

continuity. What is of particular interest to me is how this activity relates to the themes of "sameness" and "difference" and thus to identity. In the case of contemporary female bullfighters, particular interpretations of their sameness or difference to, first the female bullfighters of the past, second the other novelty or "non-serious" performances of their own times, and third their male contemporaries, is crucial to the ways and extent to which they become empowered and are able to complete their own missions or life plans. The identity of a female bullfighter tends to be understood as if it were a group identity. The extent to which female bullfighters' gender ambiguity is either perceived or considered problematic depends on which group the subjective individual relates them to. Therefore, the establishment of historical continuity between contemporary and historical female bullfighters serves to resolve the gender ambiguity of female bullfighting: it identifies contemporary female performers with a feminized bullfight (in the past recognised as an appropriate feminine activity by some), and classifies female bullfighting as an activity separate from male bullfighting and which has its own history. The historical continuity model is easily assimilated by "traditional" discourse because it poses no threat to gender role segregation and the conventional models of masculine and feminine identities.

Nevertheless the model of historical continuity is unstable because the notions of "sameness" and "difference" which it employs as regards female bullfighters, their history and their contemporaries, can be challenged. The connections between these women are rather tenuous. Below I examine some of the ways in which notions of sameness and difference are applied both amongst and between male and female bullfighters.

## Sameness and difference

### (i) What's in a name? *Torero* or *Torera*<sup>22</sup>

The term *torero* is the most commonly used label for a male bullfighter. The word *matador* is also used, but means precisely "killer"<sup>23</sup>, not bullfighter, and therefore can only refer to the main figure, the *matador de toros*. The correct term for all contemporary female bullfighters is not *torero*, but *novillero*, which refers to the bullfighter who has not yet reached the fully professional and high earning level at which he (or she) performs with the larger and more dangerous fully grown four-year-old bulls. Nevertheless, in conversation the term *torero* is often used indiscriminately, unless the speaker wishes to make the specific distinction between the *novillero* and *torero* stages of the career of the bullfighter. The term *novillero* is also used in its proper way in advertising and posters announcing bullfights, newspaper reports of performances and other listings.

The movement of women into professions which have been exclusively male until recently has presented some linguistic problems and dilemmas. As a result the ways in which the gender of professional titles has been changed to suit the biological sex of the person filling that occupation has been inconsistent<sup>24</sup>. The feminized versions of bullfighting terms

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<sup>22</sup> Some of the problems of terminology and translation are discussed in the Appendix.

<sup>23</sup> Although *matador* differs from the term which is translated as "murderer" -*asesino*.

<sup>24</sup> Informants remain baffled as to whether they should be calling a female doctor *medico* or *medica*. In the case of school teachers the terms *profesor* and *profesora* are well established. The role of school teacher has long since been regarded as a feminine role and appropriate for a woman. However other professions, such as that of *abogado/abogada* (lawyer) present similar problems.

are *torera* and *novillera*, the term *matadora* has also been used but with much less frequency<sup>25</sup>. The usage of these labels and their masculine counterparts in conversation and written accounts about female bullfighters is inconsistent although I suggest that there is some, however slight, pattern to the way the usage of these terms is developing and certain meanings are attached to them. Until recently all female bullfighters were called *toreras*, especially those of the early C20 who were commonly called "*Las Señoritas Toreras*"<sup>26</sup>. At present the female bullfighters who are active on foot in the 1990s ask to be called *toreros* rather than *toreras*. When Cristina Sánchez was in Córdoba she asserted firmly that she objected to the term *torera*:

"In the arena we are all *toreros* and I am the first to demand that I should not be called *torera* because of the way in which it differentiates between whether you are a man or a woman. In the bullring I am another *torero* whilst out of the ring I am super-feminine. And I say very clear and loud that last year a *matador de toros* said something to me which has stayed imprinted in my mind: "To begin with you were a woman, I watched to see what you do, but there was a moment in which you became neither man nor woman, you were a *torero*".

The bullfighter had clearly said just what Cristina wanted to hear. Some *aficionados*, television commentators, journalists and critics take this plea seriously and refer to her as a *torero* or *novillero*, however, this is a more recent move and the initial reaction was to almost universally refer to her as a *torera*. Now as I noted above there is some inconsistency,

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<sup>25</sup> *Matadora* tends to emerge more in literary accounts, see for example William Fifiield's (1960) novel *Matadora* and Lola Verill Cintrón's (English language version) biography of Conchita Cintrón which includes the word *Matadora* in its title. The terms *matador/a* tend to form a more important part of the English language bullfighting vocabulary than it does in the Spanish, where the full term *matador de toros* is more common.

<sup>26</sup> This is indeed the title of Boada and Cebollas book on the same subject (see Boada and Cebolla 1976).

and informants tended to be aware of this. I made the point about the linguistic reference in an article which was published in the *Tribuna* Newspaper in Córdoba in 1993. Although I entitled my article "*La Mujer en el Toreo: reflexiones sobre el éxito de una mujer novillero en la temporada de '93*" (Women in the bullfighting world: reflections over the success of a female bullfighter in the season of 1993), the editor took up the issue of the *torera/torero* distinction and headed the article "A woman who wants them to call her *torero*" (see Pink 1993a)<sup>27</sup>.

**(ii) *Toreros* and *toreras* in history: women in a history written and acted out by men**

Historically the *torero/torera* distinction was significant, the *toreras* were in a class apart from their male contemporaries. They often performed in separate events and formed their own *cuadrillas*. The performance offered by the *toreras* was considered quite distinct to when men held the stage. Female bullfighting was in short a feminine activity, and quite separate from masculine activities. Whilst female performers often performed in events with novice (as evident from the posters) and comic bullfighters, they rarely shared the ring with professional bullfighters<sup>28</sup>.

The history of bullfighting is indeed a history which was

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<sup>27</sup> Informants were aware of the linguistic issues before I published this article. Certainly the fact that I was active in producing local cultural information about the very subject of my research influenced informants' interest in and attitudes to some of the themes of my investigation. However I have attempted to always be aware of this factor and account for it both during research and in writing up.

<sup>28</sup> There were of course exceptions (the most notable being Juanita Cruz). However, as is exemplified by the anecdote about the woman who performed alongside the Cordoban bullfighter *Conejito* (see Chapter 8), mixed sex performances were normally subject to critical comment or ridicule.

written by men about men. As such women were written into this history in terms of their relation to men, most usually, as I show in Chapter 5, in the capacity of their role as spectator, mother or seductress<sup>29</sup>. One commentator, Alfonso de Aricha, did concede that Juanita Cruz may be the exception in this history. He wrote that:

"Juanita Cruz was not a *señorita torera*, like so many of those that are registered in the history of bullfighting. She was a *torero* with all the responsibility which is coupled with such a dangerous profession" (Alfonso de Aricha 1996:127. Cited in Boada and Cebolla 1976:170)

The difference between *torero* and *torera* was therefore not simply a biological distinction for all critics. The categories are in fact problematic because they are not necessarily fixed by biological sex either historically or in terms of their contemporary meaning. Some informants argued that there had never been a female *torero* simply because no women had actually taken the *alternativa* in Spain and graduated to the status of *torero*, instead, women had managed to become *novilleros*. As I mentioned above this distinction is not always made, but does have some force because the difference

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<sup>29</sup> A history of women's bullfighting itself (Boada and Cebolla 1976) has only recently emerged, and although women get a mention in some of the larger bullfighting encyclopedias and volumes (for example the famous Cossío encyclopedia includes a small section about female bullfighters and diligently lists all the women who ever performed as bullfighters either on foot or on horseback. However, Cossío is critical of women as bullfighters and does not allow them the status that Cristina Sánchez begs for (see above). Natalio Rivas has written a short chapter entitled "*Las Mujeres en la Tauromachia*" (Women in Tauromachy) (1990;286-293 nb. Rivas was born 1865, the original publication date is not given in the 1990 volume). Rivas is a well used source for those interested in the history of female bullfighters. He is highly critical of the women he saw perform from the late C19 to the 1930s and concludes that although women have not "lacked bravery" they are "mysteriously" distinctly not adapted to bullfighting (1990;293).

between the two stages of the bullfighter's career is crucial to the question of whether he or she really "makes it" as top bullfighter. A man who does not take the *alternativa* and then perform regularly in the main arenas is considered a failure.

The case of Juanita Cruz is however an exception and the fact that some people highly respected her does not mean that she had any significant impact on the history of male bullfighting. Her career, although outstanding, was short - she began in the 1930s and female bullfighting was curtailed by the onset of the civil war in Spain and banned by the mid-1930s. Women were banned from performing on foot in public throughout the Franco dictatorship. Juanita Cruz, marginalised from her profession, was forced to continue performing only in South America. The *torero* model continued to develop as a masculine image, the main figures who mark the styles and changes in bullfighting which were predominant in the C20 were all men (for example Manolete and Belmonte were the two leading figures around whose styles the contemporary bullfight is said to have grown).

As a result of the campaign of Angela Hernandez, which was supported by various bodies including, significantly, the commission for women's work and numerous bullfighters and "people of the bullfighting world" (Boada and Cebolla 1976; 249-70)) the prohibition was lifted in 1974. When women re-entered bullfighting the performance which had become by then thoroughly established in the rule books was an activity which had been developed exclusively by and for male performers, and as such was dominated by a strong masculine identity. In 1990, Maribel Ati3nza and Angela Hern3ndez, the female bullfighters of the 1970s, were referred to as *Señoritas toreras* with the conviction that "*El toreo es cosa de Hombres*" (The bullfight is a thing for men) (Ladis 1991;85-7). Marvin (1988;164) points out that Maribel Ati3nza strove to maintain a feminine image in

her bullfighting style, so as not to appear to be attempting to copy male bullfighters. Maribel was a *novillera*, she did not classify herself or represent herself as a *novillero*, nor did she aspire to be a *torero*. The feminized performance of Maribel stated her gender unambiguously.

**(iii) Male and female toreros of the 1990s**

In the 1990s the situation is more complex because women and men are both claiming to be *toreros* regardless of their biological sex. The strong masculine identity of the bullfighter figure means that her femininity endows the female *torero* with an ambiguous gender identity which some people find disturbing. Others however, take this ambiguity for granted. Indeed, as I have noted above, gender ambiguity or plurality is quite characteristic of contemporary modern western culture in general.

I have shown that the few female bullfighters who are active or aspire to be so in the 1990s tend to follow similarly structured career paths and training routines to those of their male contemporaries. I have cited several commentaries which assert that women should have just as good a chance as men of succeeding as *toreros*. The career structures and both long and short term aspirations of contemporary female bullfighters are much more closely matched with those of their male contemporaries than with those of the *señoritas toreras* of the past. They aspire to perform in mixed sex events, participate in the lottery by which each performer is allotted two bulls on a random basis (unlike *rejoneadores* who are usually separately allocated more appropriate bulls often with shaved horns<sup>30</sup>).

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<sup>30</sup> *Rejoneadoras* are easily incorporated into mixed sex *rejoneo* events. There is no male opposition to their participation and I have never heard of a male *rejoneador* refusing to share the bull with a female performer in the part of the event where the *rejoneadores* perform in pairs.

At the same time male opposition has an interesting role to play. Several male novilleros have refused to perform with Cristina Sánchez (eg. *Pedrito de Portugal*, one of the most promising young performers of 1993). Subsequent to *Pedrito de Portugal's* publicised rejection of the offer to perform with Cristina, it was announced that she would perform alone in a single-handed performance, in which she would kill all six bulls herself. Some informants saw this as a brave statement on Cristina's part. Performing continuously for two hours with six bulls is a tiring and difficult feat; it was certainly taken by some informants to be a denial of the suggestion that Cristina was not worthy of sharing the ring with one of her male colleagues.

*Aficionado* opinion over the issue of whether or not women and men should perform alongside one another tends to be divided. Some informants argued that it was much more appropriate that women should perform separately whilst others suggested that just what was needed was that *Pedrito de Portugal* should be made to perform with Cristina Sánchez. Proponents of the latter point of view said that the reason why he refused to share the arena with a woman was because he was frightened that she would show him up, he was therefore accused of being a coward. They asserted that he should face up to the challenge of recognising that Cristina was a talented and worthy young performer and in every way his equal.

Several bullfights in which all the performers were female have been held (and transmitted on television). These events involved the female performers listed above and sometimes the addition of *rejoneadoras*. Such events have certainly not escaped being feminized by some of the media by which they are represented. In 1993 in the bullfighting journal **Aplausos** a bullfight was announced as "a superfeminine bullfight". The novelty factor of all women events has certainly been

capitalised on, indeed it is a commercial venture and female bullfighters, especially at the beginning of their careers, may have to sacrifice their ambition to be integrated directly into mainstream bullfighting in order to get a chance to perform at all.

**(iv) "Las Señoritas Toreras" and "Las Mujeres Toreros"**

The title of this section is difficult to translate because the gender of the words holds great weight (see above). It means: "The Little Lady-bullfighters" and "The women who are bullfighters". The point of distinction is between the former as feminized bullfighters and the latter as conventional bullfighters who are of the female sex. As I have shown above, although the term *torero* or *novillero* is now applied more frequently and the *señorita torera* label has been dropped for the main part, this does not mean that women's performances are not sometimes feminized. The feminization of a performance occurs in different ways at different stages of the communication process and may be initiated, experienced or imposed by a whole variety of individuals; for example, the bullfighter herself, the television commentator, informal spectator commentaries, other personal subjective interpretations. Whether or not a performance is feminized will sometimes indeed depend on the subject position of the individual who interprets what he or she sees. The main point I wanted to make above was the conceptual difference between the "new" female bullfighters and the previous lady-bullfighters. Nevertheless, the discontinuities between self representation and the way in which this is interpreted must be kept in mind.

### The history of women in bullfighting

The supposed history of female bullfighters pertains to a general history of women in bullfighting. The stereotype of "woman as spectator" also has a history and an analysis of styles in art and photography of women at bullfights again implies a construction of historical continuity which lends the model a traditional-historical justification. Women bull breeders are similarly associated with a tradition by which women have been given or inherited breeding ranches<sup>31</sup>. Other feminine roles do not have a history in bullfighting, for example, photographers, journalists, managers and business women (discussed in Chapter 6). The question of whether women should work in direct physical contact with the bulls was straightforward: breeders said that they had never employed women on their establishments, nor had it occurred to them to do so (see Chapter 6)<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Although it is considered normal that a woman should find herself in the position of being the owner of a breeding establishment, it is considered less common that she should really involve herself in the day to day administration of the animals and the business. The degree of a *ganadera's* involvement is clearly up to the woman in question

<sup>32</sup> It was mentioned that the women who may participate in the work of the ranch would be the wife and daughters of the live-in workers. However it was said that this would most likely consist in them riding around the land with the manager whilst he was checking on the animals. A "classic tale" has emerged both as a "true story" (the case of the bull *Civilón* in the 1930s) and in fiction (Ricardo Horcajada García's (1968) novel *Soñador*) which portrays the relationship between the daughters of the manager and a particularly noble bull. In these tales the bull responds to the feminine "touch" of the daughters of the manager and becomes their pet, female tactility is represented as they stroke and caress him. The nobility of the creature is manifested in that he would never harm them and later in his outstanding performance in the arena which leads to him being granted his life and return to the fields. In the case of the bull *Civilón* however the story did not really end so happily since he is said to have been later killed for meat and eaten during the civil war.

In comparison with the *ganadera* and spectator, women bullfight photographers and journalists cannot be justified by tradition. Rather their acceptability lies firstly in the contemporary context where professional photography and journalism are considered appropriate activities for women, and secondly, in that as photographers and journalists women appear not to pose the direct threat to the "traditional" bullfight that female bullfighters may.

### **Conclusion**

One of the central issues to the discussion in this chapter has been classification, focused on the question of "to which "tradition" of bullfighting do female performers pertain?". I have described how they have been associated with both "feminised" bullfighting and professional male bullfighting, and how their acceptability depends upon different criteria in each context. In the next chapter I examine one further and newer context: that of televised bullfighting. The taurine contexts referred to above are also relevant to the ways in which *aficionados* interpret the televised event but, I shall argue that the latter has certain characteristics which change the way in which both bullfighting traditions are viewed.

## CHAPTER 10

### TELEVISED PERFORMANCES AND MEDIA BULLFIGHTERS: SUCCESS, THE SMALL SCREEN AND THE LIVE ARENA

#### Introduction

Media representations (constructions) of the bullfighting world in general, of specific performances and of bullfighters themselves and other individuals are an integral element of the contemporary bullfighting world. The bullfighting media is part of the composition of bullfighting culture and is related in complex social, cultural and economic ways to live performances, individual bullfighter's success stories, and to the spatial and temporal construction and perception of the bullfighting world. Media enters into *aficionado* discourse and the media ordering of the places, events and personalities of the bullfighting world offers a structure by which that world can be drawn together as a cohesive whole and understood in its supposed entirety. Hierarchies are also created in and by the media, both explicitly and implicitly. Listings are produced showing registered performers positions in the bullfighting league (measured in terms of numbers of performances and trophies awarded). Also, importance is conferred when a performance is televised. Cordobans complained that since their *feria* bullfights coincided with a series of important bullfights in Madrid, Madrid not only got all the best bulls but more media coverage<sup>1</sup>. The relationship between live and

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<sup>1</sup> The televised bullfight has become a commercial and competitive enterprise "at present concentrated on the transmission of live performances" (Carabias 1993). Whilst some see this as being a negative indicator of the corrupt "business" dimension on bullfighting - a threat to the purity of art- others see advantages. The journalist Carabias considers the enormous promotion and publicity, the additional money it generates and the advantages of competition to outweigh the disadvantages. He argues that the *aficionado's* opportunity to chose between different channels, to partake in

televised performances has complex social, cultural, economic and political elements, some of which are developed below, but which in reality are largely unresearched. Apart from the publicity which television affords both bullfighters and bullrings, screening rights may become an important issue in the future. For example, the ex-bullfighter *El Cordobes* signed a "come-back" contract which bound together a television company, the bullring and himself as performer. Although he eventually pulled out, the event would have been both media spectacle and live bullfight. Bullfighting is big business and the commercial potential of televised bullfights, plus the whole range of new jobs which have developed around them, are significant. Ex-bullfighters and less successful performers are able to supplement their incomes by working as television and radio presenters and journalists (although some bullfighters now have university degrees, many are trained for nothing more than the bullring), and as such take on a new type of public role once retired. The affects of television on "traditional" events and the relationship between media representations and experienced events is an topical issue in both the anthropology of contemporary Europe (cf. Boissevain 1992, Crain 1992)<sup>2</sup> and media studies.

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"taurine zapping", makes TV bullfights worthwhile. Carabias cites female bullfighters amongst the performers that one has had the privilege of zapping amongst, indeed the chance to zap means that performers get the chance to be seen; the *aficionado* is not forced into a choice. Carabias also praises the increase in audience sizes and identifies the effect of competition as being that channels seek the best bullfighters in order to screen the most popular performances to increase the audience ratings.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Crain shows how the Andalusian *El Rocío* religious pilgrimage has been transformed through three decades of mass-media attention, tourism and new social composition. These new elements have led to a stress on regional, national and secular dimensions in what previously was a western Andalusian localized religious celebration. Crain shows how the media event may have quite different meanings from those of its local context: "separated from their historical and social context

Television and video have made bullfights available at almost any time and from any place<sup>3</sup>. The bullfight has been affected by the globalization of TV culture- satellite transmissions of South American bullfights, and air travel, have served to bring distant arenas into domestic spaces and to take family groups to the bullrings in Mexico as part of a bullfighting holiday package tour to see local heroes perform. Distant and disparate aspects of the bullfighting world are held together by the national bullfighting press and television whilst local bullfighting events are broadcast on local TV.

In Córdoba the local *feria* bullfights were all broadcast the next day on municipal television. The role of local media representations of Cordoban bullfighting events is an important area of formal and public local production and definition of Córdoba's traditional culture and identity. The bullfight is

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and reformulated in new settings these images often conflict with local conceptions of community" (Crain 1992;95).

<sup>3</sup> As Boissevain writes of the Rocío pilgrimage the bullfight has become a media spectacle"...its constituents no longer need to take part physically to participate: they can consume it via television, newspapers, magazines, and video" (Boissevain 1992;4-5). Not only bullfighting but most Andalusian "traditions" have been affected by increasing national and local media coverage. We should be careful to distinguish between the differential experiences of the media and experienced live events, but also the interface between the two: in the case of *El Rocío* the media has had a significant impact on the pilgrimage-

"The explosion of media interest in the event has created tensions. Many have abandoned the over regimented mass spectacle at the shrine, where church and media collude to separate the public from many of the ritual events" (Boissevain 1992;5)

Whilst many *aficionados* complain about the commercialization of bullfighting and blame television partly for this, the participatory experience of the live audience does not appear to have been affected. Whilst it is suitable to draw parallels between different events like the Rocío and bullfighting to a certain extent, it must be remembered that they are very different events.

also concerned with local and regional identity, local details and elaborations (costume, the architecture of the bullring, local bullfighting history and local public figures in the audience) are always highlighted in TV bullfights. Furthermore at the local level television allows people to "participate...from their armchairs" (Boissevain 1992;9), watch more *feria* bullfights than they could otherwise afford to see, search for themselves on TV in the audience and view the bullfights in the context of the televising of a selection of the whole series of *feria* events. Some older informants who lived near enough to the *feria* ground to hear its music and see its lights went to the *feria* only once or in some cases not at all, they had a sense of *feria* from the sounds, lights and television.

#### **The Setting of the Television**

Televised bullfights are viewed in a variety of locations—predominantly in bullfighting bars and clubs and in family homes. The *ambiente* (atmosphere) created by viewing the bullfight on television is generally said to be lacking, to not approach that of the live performance. This will be explored in more detail later, for the moment we should note that the precise *ambiente* depends on the viewing context. Motives for going to a bar may not be entirely social; some *aficionados* go to bars to see some bullfights transmitted on the subscribers' channel which they may not have at home. Furthermore, in bars the specific viewing context and social relations of place are significant. I have watched bullfights in bars with very different levels of attention paid to the bullfight and of communication between the audience. Discussion may or may not take place, the bullfight may be either background, or central to the social activity of the bar.

Since many performances are screened live in the afternoons

whilst most people are at work they are often videoed and viewed later. In the summer the different channels may screen four bullfights simultaneously, video may allow one to view more than one performance and to do so more studiously. During the winter season clubs screen recorded performances, often to review, scrutinise and discuss the previous season's performances.

The televised bullfight becomes woven into sets of public and domestic relationships in both family and *peña* contexts. Once broadcast in the domestic space of the family home it is relevant to ask to what extent the televised performance becomes shaped by and conceptualised in terms of family relationships, and how it affects these relationships. As Ang points out: "...watching television is generally a domestic consumer practice, and as such not at all the one-dimensional, and therefore measurable, type of behaviour it is presumed to be" (Ang 1992;132). For one informant TV bullfights were about her resentment of paternal dominance and her father's monopoly of the colour TV nearly every summer afternoon when she, the teenage daughter, wanted to watch soap operas on the other channel and instead had to sit on her bed watching them on an old black and white TV<sup>4</sup>. In contrast, for some *aficionado* families who shared their interest in bullfighting watching the

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<sup>4</sup> In my experience male family heads often tended to control the television (by means of the remote control usually) when they were at home, their preference tended to take precedence. Several families solved this problem by having two televisions (and a video). However, much more research would be necessary to make any sure statements about patterns of television use. Generalization about the use of technologies in families is of course difficult; "Domestic space, leisure time, financial resources, and ownership of technologies all combine to permit different living arrangements of family life" (Livingstone 1992;128). Further research would possibly show that programmes are timetabled according to particular domestic activity patterns and a gender role model which identifies specific times as gendered leisure or viewing time.

bullfight or bullfighting news programmes were family occasions. For the teenage girls these programmes were to be discussed with their school friends the next day. For an elderly spinster, TV bullfights were a means of appreciating and following the bullfight, she had no desire to attend live performances alone and no other members of her family had any interest in accompanying her.

As a domestic commodity TV and debates and discourses which may involve it in a domestic context also bear some influence on the way the content of TV programmes are interpreted in the home. Not only does TV influence people in their homes through ideologies represented on TV, but also members of the family and domestic group, and those who pass through, cooperate in debating, interpreting, and defining the issues which are presented in the programmes they watch. Judgements of TV female bullfighters may be related to family discourses on gender roles. The TV female bullfighter is viewed in a domestic context where gender roles are enacted and negotiated, rather than in the bullring where (following Marvin) masculinity is dominant and both presented and represented, and reaffirmed (by audience consensus). The TV is central to much of Andalusian domestic life and interaction (especially meal times) and the domestic group is an important context where gender roles are produced, reproduced and modified. Domestic television use in Andalusia must be considered in relation to culturally and household or family-specific (notions of family and household in Córdoba were difficult to separate; siblings, cousins, and other family members frequently ate in one another's houses) domestic activity patterns and gender relations<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> Existing work illustrates the importance of this: Cynthia Cockburn cites research which has demonstrated how "social contexts mould technological choices" and points out that feminist research (eg. Cowan 1983, Bose et al 1984) has shown how the ways in which domestic technologies are adopted

Initially televised bullfights were not easily accessible, in the 1960s when the famous bullfighter *El Cordobes* appeared on television for the first time the whole of his natal village clustered around the TV in the local bar to see him perform. Now almost every home has a television and many have videos-access to televised bullfights no longer signifies a public occasion nor is it restricted to the wealthy classes. Indeed televised bullfighting permits access to bullfighting on a daily and global scale, the media bullfight transgresses the temporal and spatial limits of the live performance, time and location become encapsulated in media frames.

### **Defining the "media bullfight"**

Dayan and Katz take as their point of departure the notion that when an event is televised "An anthropological artefact, a ritual hybrid, is thus born" (1987;174). They suggest the media event is "altogether another experience" involving a new form of spectatorship which transposes "the celebration into an

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and used are powerfully shaped by the gender relations and sexual division of labour in Western households (Cockburn 1992;36). Research into the domestic viewing of televised bullfights must pay attention to the domestication of technology, and must as Strathern advises, investigate how technological devices are "domesticated into the society of family life and shaped by the complexities of family interactions; only by investigating the uses to which they are put will one gain some insight into how the devices behave" (Strathern 1992;ix). Technologies become part of family life and may "become crucial to daily routines", "they are as much pressed into the enactment of already existing social relationships as they stimulate the creation of new ones" (Strathern 1992;viii). Similarly Morely, arguing that media studies should take up anthropological research methods in order to understand television audiences (1992;173) proposes "the family" as the starting point for such projects (see Morely 1992, 1986). Televised bullfights must be understood in connection with the social relations in which the technologies by which they are transmitted are situated.

intimate register" (1987;194)<sup>6</sup>. I want to define the "media bullfight" in relation to the live bullfight. I have shown how the live bullfight has been defined as a ritual performance which generates emotion through the communication processes between performer and audience and I have shown how female bullfighters are problematic for both the ritual structure and the communication process. If we compare the televised bullfight to the live bullfight it is claimed that the TV bullfight is "cold", without "ambiente"- the emotion generated by the communication between bullfighter and audience is lost. Therefore the element of presentation which I referred to above is lost; the media bullfight is a representation in which performers and performance are constructed as media bullfighters and media bullfights<sup>7</sup>. The ritual structure is replaced by the structure imposed by television and the direct presentation of the communicative body is re-presented through media communication. The televised bullfight is restructured and re-framed by the editor, camera person and narrator; the event is tailored and presented as complete- an idea reflected in an appraisal of the *Tele Madrid* coverage of the *San Isidro*

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<sup>6</sup> Dayan and Katz discuss public ceremonies such as royal weddings arguing that when these are televised "Ceremonial space has been reconstituted, but in the home. Attendance takes place in small groups congregated around the television set, concentrating on the symbolic centre, keenly aware that myriads of other groups are doing likewise in a similar manner and at the same time" (1987;194). The model appears to have some parallels to the case of domestic viewing of the televised bullfight.

<sup>7</sup> Mantillas represents some *aficionado* opinion against televised bullfights, arguing that the television transmits colour and shape (although he suggests that even these may be manipulated) but not art, because it cannot transmit depth, vibrations, nor emotion. It transmits the trappings but not the art of the performance. Mantillas differentiates between this and the live bullfight stating that TV directors and commentators are thus obliged "to create a new spectacle - which will never be a complete taurine spectacle" and will attract a new type of public. He sees the commentated TV bullfight as "another type of spectacle" (Mantillas 1993;14).

and *Feria de la Comunidad* bullfights. The writer concludes that it was "...all in a complete taurine programme which attempted to increase in type and style the number of *aficionados* who become involved in the bullfight by means of knowledge and participation". The series of reviews, summaries, commentaries and interviews offered by these programmes were praised in particular (6 *Toros* 6 1992). As I suggest in the title of this Chapter, both performers and performance become packaged commodities (not only on television but also by the press). They are wrapped with media narratives<sup>8</sup>. The bullfight is part of consumer society and as such it becomes a commodity. The case of the media bullfight is a particularly good example of how this may occur<sup>9</sup>.

With the home video recorder these complete performances can be saved and watched later; they are fitted into the structure and routine of a busy life and are not only for those who have the leisure of a free afternoon to go to the bullring. Recorded performances are also collectable commodities; they can be videoed from the TV, and some famous performances can be purchased. Series of bullfight videos are sold in kiosks and

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<sup>8</sup> The commodification of the bullfight is connected to the televising affect. The advertising so frowned on in live bullfighting is an integral element of the televised bullfight on all but the subscribers channel. Most media bullfights are riddled with commercial breaks. The televised bullfight therefore unfolds in a context of consumerism, the commodification of the bullfighting and individual bullfighters is both stressed and normalized by its intercutting with the commercial breaks which structure most of television viewing in Andalusia.

<sup>9</sup> An analysis of the live and media bullfights as elements of and shaped by a consumer culture would offer interesting insights into the relationship of the bullfight to contemporary culture. It would be worth while connecting this with recent debates concerning the relationship between modernity, post-modernity, consumption and the symbolic value of commodities (eg Featherstone 1991, McCracken 1988, Featherstone 1991a).

given away with collectable volumes. Many *aficionados* or bullfighting clubs have collections of performances on video and some collectors boast with great pride of their extensive collections. Even death is a marketable commodity and the video of the death of one bullfighter is a popular seller. In 1992 the death of a *banderillero* also became a media death, this performer was killed when the bull's horn pierced his heart during a public performance, his death was broadcast closeup in slow motion over and over on the news programmes of all the Spanish TV channels on the day of and that following his death. The televised bullfight can be easily chopped up like this, it is normally shown as complete but can be separated into many parts. Indeed some collections run along themes (in a way somewhat akin to footballing themes like "101 great goals"). One *aficionado* had video recorded hundreds of short takes of bulls entering the arena. Other *aficionados* collect along themes of, for example, particular performers or particular breeds of bull. The collection facilitated by the media representation of the bullfight is again an interesting field for further analysis. Collection, exhibition and display are important themes in bullfighting culture.

I have argued that the structure and organisation of the TV bullfight is different from that of the live performance. As regards the process of representation, the TV bullfight involves new characters and new narratives. Television provides additional oral and visual information - there is always expert commentary and discussion and often visual and graphic information about the bulls and the bullfighters. The relationship between the aural/oral and the visual changes in the TV bullfight where oral narrative predominates and the voice of authority replaces the more direct relationship between vision and knowledge which forms part of the live bullfight. The relationship between the viewer and viewed is mediated by the narrator and the camera shots and led by the

narrator. The performer does not exclusively hold the attention of the viewer, nor does the viewer seek to identify with the body experience of the performer, but with what is being said about the performance by the disembodied voice of the commentator. Television bullfights rely on a combination of oral description and visual communication which stresses the former much more than in the live bullfight. On television, visual communication becomes the domain of the media, not of the bullfight. The bullfight and bullfighter are fragmented by the visuals of the media bullfight: The camera zooms into the bullfighter's feet to tell us whether they are correctly positioned, to the bullfighter's face to show us its expressions, to the audience to show us who is in there and how they are reacting. The TV camera facilitates a closeness that a viewer of a live bullfight could never achieve; the head of the bull fills the screen and we may scrutinize the animal at a proximity which would be impossible in a live situation<sup>10</sup>. Similarly the viewer may scrutinize his/her heroes, a closeness and distance are simultaneously manifested as bullfighters become TV stars. Contact with the bullfighter is facilitated by the televised interviews and closeup shot, but since this communication is always mediated by the producers and journalists of television, distance is established.

The narrative of the bullfighter's life is made explicit in the media bullfight. Performers' lives are packaged as complete bullfighter life histories often illustrated with photographs and told by the voice of the narrator. Thus specific performances are (through voice over narration) contextualised with the narratives of the individual performer's whole career and personal history. Rather than being any bullfighter representing the drama of being a man (or woman) in a

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<sup>10</sup> It is not usual for *aficionados* to take binoculars to the bullfight.

particular culture though a dramatic performance, the individual, whose face we see in close up during his/her performance, is acting out part of his or her own life. The performance represents a personal story rather than a general story, and chopped up and reconstructed in the media, the continuity of the drama of Marvin's notion of "ritual performance" becomes obscured by slow motion playback, commercial breaks, interviews with performers and audience celebrities and the authoritative voice of the narrator<sup>11</sup>. Emphasis on close ups of bullfighters faces, their emotions, their feet, their technique, or their sword thrusts, constructs drama in a new way. Since emotion is not transmitted from the bullfighter to the TV viewer (although one can imagine that in the arena it is) the TV bullfight tells another story; it is "an other type of spectacle" (Mantillas 1993;14).

It may be no coincidence that in this epoch female bullfighters are becoming successful in a way that women have previously been unable to achieve. The implication is that the relationship between TV bullfights and live bullfights permits

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<sup>11</sup> The question of whether the televised bullfight may be classified as "ritual" is complex. In terms of Parkin's definition of the particular relationship between physical action and words in ritual, the televised bullfight may be rendered non-ritual. Parkin's model is summed up in the following passage:

"I have never come across a ritual in which the spatial movements and orientation counted for nothing and the words were all important. By contrast, I have never met a ritual in which the words, though sometimes claimed to be essential for proper performance were not inscribed in spatially arranged phases and sequences: it is less that their utterance heralded a new phase than that certain points and places in the ritual process were chosen as appropriate niches for verbal expression" (1992;17-18).

Although it could be argued that television narration of bullfights follows certain general patterns, I suggest that these, with (for example) their series of "spontaneous" interviews and verbal "asides" spoken over images of the performing bullfighter, are not rigid enough to satisfy the model of the relation between words and physical action described in the passage above.

female bullfighters greater acceptability. I have shown above that it is the ritual and direct communication elements of bullfighting which are problematic for female performers (or conversely, from a feminist perspective (cf. Martin 1989) which female bullfighters problematize). It appears that the media bullfight is a context in which female bullfighters are accepted and that their being approved in the media context (Press and TV) is related in a mutually supportive way to their success as live performers. After all, TV performances are live- never performed just for TV. Most of my informants based their judgements on female bullfighters on media reports and television bullfights. During my stay in Córdoba no female bullfighters performed in the city and initially very few *aficionados* were willing to travel to another city to see a woman perform. Nevertheless female bullfighters appeared regularly on television and through watching televised performances and actually meeting one female performer who gave a talk in Córdoba many people began to make either positive or negative evaluations of her ability and potential. This inspired one informant at least to travel to Malaga to see her perform, and several suggested that as soon as she perform within reasonable travelling distance we should make the effort to go. Success for female bullfighters is partially dependent on media publicity and coverage; the contemporary bullfight is a media phenomenon as well as a live performance.

This raises many questions. First, what is seen in the performance of a female bullfighter? How are her body movements and her physical self-presentation interpreted by subjective individuals? What dominant discourses do these individuals refer to when they interpret the female bullfighter's expressions of her identity? Second, what role does frequent televising of bullfights play in communicating explicit and implicit representations of gender? Third, how does television serve to promote female bullfighters' careers?

Fourth, can the same *ambiente* be created in the live female bullfight as in the male event? Given that audience consensus is lower in female live bullfights it is possible that female bullfighters are more successful on, and due to, televised bullfights where the *ambiente* of the live male bullfight is not expected.

It is now necessary to look in some more detail at the differences between live and televised performances and the ways in which female bullfighters are represented on television.

### ***Ambiente***

I have argued that in the media context the female bullfighter may avoid some of the ritual and bodily limitations which make some people think she is out of place in live performances. This may be explained to some extent with reference to the notion of *ambiente* and the sensuous nature of the bullfight.

Whilst the bullfight is a visual performance other senses are also essential to its experience<sup>12</sup>. One of the crucial

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<sup>12</sup> Although it is unusual to suggest that the bullfight has a "taste", the bullfight is associated with certain flavours. Taste is not a main theme of sensory experience of the bullfight but is significant. In Córdoba most people eat during the bullfight, outside the ring nuts, crisps and other snack foods are sold. Most popular are sunflower seeds (*pipas*) which one eats during the performance, spitting the husks out onto the ground. Bars are located underneath the seating area, and during the performance refreshment vendors make continuous rounds of the audience. The early-afternoon performances in the north of Spain include a break for the *merienda* snack of cakes or sandwiches. At Pamplona it is "traditional" to eat a snack of cooked beef during the performance. Similarly it is customary to have a drink before and after the bullfight. Bars near the arena are full at these times. Whilst physical satisfaction associated with eating and drinking may affect the sensation of attending a bullfight, and be related to the production and experience of *ambiente*, people do not tend to arrive at, or leave the bullfight obviously drunk or unruly.

differences between the televised and live bullfight is that sensory experience is organised in different ways in each. Generally this difference may be summed up by the term *ambiente*<sup>13</sup>; the *ambiente* of a televised bullfight is not that of the live bullfight and it is often said that the televised bullfight lacks the *ambiente* which is created in a context of human socialisation. Televised bullfights are viewed under various circumstances, for example, at home with family or friends, or in a bullfighting bar. The type of *ambiente* created is context-dependent.

Marvin describes *ambiente* as: an atmosphere of human socialising which combines with the "sense of excited expectation" to create "the proper *ambiente* (atmosphere and emotion) in which the *corrida* should take place" (Marvin 1988;15). Marvin emphasises the role of music (1988;20)<sup>14</sup> and crowd's cries of *olé* (1988;70) in creating *ambiente*.

Marvin's informants commented that nocturnal bullfights had either no *ambiente* or a different *ambiente* which was not proper to a serious bullfight<sup>15</sup> (Marvin 1988;77). It is essential that

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To do so would be inappropriate behaviour.

<sup>13</sup> The term *ambiente* (when a positive meaning is intended) is usually used to refer to a lively and social atmosphere and is not limited solely to performances or specific events. It and is also used to comment on general atmosphere and, for example, can be applied to a city, or neighbourhood (see Marvin 1988;129, Dreissen 1981;27, Murphy 1978;23 (Dreissen and Murphy quoted in Marvin 1988)).

<sup>14</sup> "The music also gives *ambiente* and reinforces the emotion generated by a good performance in the arena. To some extent it actually helps to create that emotion in the first place, for the matador usually responds to the music by committing himself even more" (Marvin 1988;20).

<sup>15</sup> Similarly some of my informants commented that nocturnal bullfights were not even worth going to. One informant told me that when in the past nocturnal bullfights had been held in

the *ambiente* is of the correct balance, and it is less likely that this balance will be achieved when female bullfighters perform. There is some confusion and inconsistency about how women's performances should be interpreted and the audience often tends to remain divided, thus the consensus necessary for *olé* to be shouted in whole hearted unison is often not arrived at when women perform.

I suggest that one of the affects of televised bullfights is that the *ambiente* of the event is either "lost" or is changed. Neither can the *ambiente* appropriate to the serious live bullfight be created when female bullfighters perform: informants have suggested that *ambiente* is either lost or different for both women's and television performances, although in different ways. Moreover, I have shown how Cristina Sánchez and other young women who aspire to equal fame are becoming successful as female bullfighters at a time when televised bullfights are becoming increasingly abundant. Indeed most of my informants were able to comment on these women's performances because they had seen them on television, not live.

However, it would be a mistake to think that TV offers a new gender neutral context; technology is not gender neutral and is more likely to reflect existing notions of gender and debates about gender than to formulate new ones.

#### **What are the bodies saying?**

People do not interpret the actions of a female sexed body as if it were **any** body. Furthermore the presence of the female body is made more noticeable because it has been put in a place

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Córdoba the tickets could only be sold if they were also entered in a lottery with prizes as big as a car or even a flat. He was exaggerating, but the point was made.

which is usually occupied by a male body. On television the visual tends to be framed to some extent by voice-over descriptions a typical example is that of the female bullfighter as having "the body of a woman" with the mind of a "male" bullfighter". An incongruity between the female mind (or mentality) and the profession of the bullfighter is implied and we are invited to stare at this novelty- the hybrid creature with a masculine mind and a feminine body. Thus we are not always encouraged to watch the way in which she manages the bull so much as to note that she uses a female body in doing so. In order to watch the bullfight one is obliged to concentrate ones gaze on the two bodies of the bull and the bullfighter.

During live performances of female bullfighters there always tends to be a male element in the audience which delights in shouting out comments about the size and attractiveness of the performers bum and her general sexiness. In a more polite tone, the two male commentators of a recent *novillada* bullfight in Badajoz (Spain) transmitted on television, made frequent mention of the attractiveness of Cristina Sánchez, announcing her before her performance as "La guapa torera, Cristina Sánchez...una bellísima mujer..." (The pretty bullfighter, Cristina Sánchez...a lovely woman) and later during her performance commenting that she is "...guapa de verdad, guapa, guapa" (truly pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty). On this occasion Cristina shared the bullfight with two male *novilleros*, in my opinion the commentary over her actual bullfighting was voiced in much more patronising tones than those for the two male participants. What is seen in the above cases is primarily a **woman**, not a bullfighter. Of course some people found these commentaries amusing, sexist, or inappropriate. Both the remarks from the audience and commentator are expressions of "traditional" attitudes, but differ as they intersect with notions of class, education, and

what is appropriate behaviour for the individual subject<sup>16</sup>.

Nevertheless technology does construct a context in which the significance of gender may change. The feminine voice is often heard more clearly (and unambiguously) in the bullfight media (press and TV) than the female body is seen live in the bullring. The media is indeed one route by which women are making a notable entry into the bullfighting world. The voice of authority has never been exclusively male in Spanish TV and women have always dominated news reading. However, the entry of women into bullfight commentating and journalism should not be seen as a continuation of female news reading. Women's movement into bullfight reportage, commentary and journalism should be understood in the context of contemporary redefinitions (and debates over) women's work and the emergence of women as prominent public decision makers, business managers, and politicians. Female bullfight commentators are critics and active producers of bullfighting news, they are not passive news readers.

TV bullfights fragment their protagonists in two ways : (i) the voices of the commentators are "disembodied" we hear them but we don't see them very often, however, they are gendered voices and we know the sex of the body which they are coming from, thus their speech is gendered; (ii) the bodies of the performers are partially muted: they do not communicate themselves directly to the TV audience and receive no response from it. Rather than the bodies communicating, the media

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<sup>16</sup> Although the application of such an analysis falls out of the scope of this thesis, Turner's point that "different social classes develop different body images" and "the body is brought into fashion and consumer culture as a mark of distinction, as a symbolic representation of class differences, as a field for gender differentiation..." (Turner 1992;47) is worth noting. People of different class and gender identities may evaluate and speak of female bullfighter's bodies in different ways. Further research would be necessary in order to discern if there are any particular patterns of this.

communicates, the bodies are studied and represented by the camera and narrated by the commentators. A comparison of the ways in which the visual/aural relationship changes from the live to televised bullfight serves to explain how the communication processes differ between these different types of event.

### **Narration and response**

Amongst the legitimate sounds of the live bullfight are the officially sanctioned music played during performances and the unofficial but conventional commentaries shouted from the audience.

Official bands are present at bullfights of any importance. The musicians have a vantage point in the arena giving them a good view of the bullfight and making them audible and visible to the other spectators. The music usually a "traditional" *pasodoble* (double or 'fast' step)<sup>17</sup>. Music is not simply a response to the visual display of the bullfighter, it comments on and compliments the visual dimension of the performance. Moreover, music changes the sensory experience of the event, it is said that the addition of music can change one's way of seeing the bullfighter- his/her performance can "look different" and more specifically "look better". Marvin suggests that a bullfighter's performance may improve as he responds to music. Music refers to the visual by inferring description because it signifies that the visuals are impressive. However, it only offers the binary options of "music" or "no music". "No music" subsequently invokes the question of "will there be music?". The specific reasons for calls for music are context-dependent. A local bullfighter who gives a mediocre performance may be rewarded with musical

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<sup>17</sup> This music is not confined to bullfighting, but is associated with "traditional" culture.

accompaniment whilst a performer from a rival town whose performance is of better quality is received in silence. If these motives for the call of "*musica*" were explicitly stated they would provoke accusations of unfairness, they are however, obvious to the "insider".

Although spoken language has greater scope for description, conventional audience participation/response tends to refer to binary meanings. The conventional words imply either approval or disapproval; for example, ";Ole!" or its absence. These commentaries are not individual but the expression of a consensus on performance quality. This is only elaborated on occasionally when an individual shouts a direct criticism of the bullfighter's performance. Such individual comments are usually regarded as either inappropriate or non-legitimate sounds, those who utter them are often criticised for their untimely intervention. Neither are sounds made by the bull relevant to the performance. Bullfighters make customary and practised sounds to supplement their cape and body movement, to attract the bull's attention. The bullfighter's shouts are made in the course of the quest for visual perfection; as a strategy for achieving the visual goal, they are subordinate to the visual. The final judgement on the bullfighter's performance is represented visually and orally, the audience shake their white handkerchiefs and chant "*oreja*" demanding that the president award a trophy. Official response comes in visual form, as do all of the president's interventions: he displays a handkerchief of the appropriate colour according to the instructions that he wishes to give. It would be unheard of for the president to make announcements over a loud speaker. Even the details of the bull's weight and cast are displayed chalked up on boards. Bullfighting has none of the electronic display panels and netcalls of a sport like international tennis.

The relationship between the visual and the aural/oral changes in the televised bullfight: although the television audience has more freedom to express extensive commentaries, it cannot actively participate in the live event. The television audience receives detailed and continuous oral responses to the visuals of the live event and selected images. The presence of spoken commentary on TV and its absence in the arena illustrates one of the key differences between the experience of televised and live bullfighting. The distinction between commentaries which are responses (at the bullring) and commentaries which presume distanced judgement (at home) are parallel to the contrast between presence/absence or participation/distance. It is precisely because of the spectator's participatory role in the live event that he/she is not in a position to commentate on it (apart of course from the "commentators" whose job is to do precisely this to provide voice over descriptions of the visuals for television and radio). In the experienced event there exists no "voice of authority"; the authority is inherent in the visual display. The most significant differences between televised and live bullfighting are apparent in the presentation of images and the relationship between the visual, oral, and aural.

#### **Media definitions, power, novelty and success**

The live bullfighter must dominate not only the bull but the event itself to succeed. Once televised the TV bullfighter loses this central role because his/her control is ceded to the media crew. Whilst the bullfighter directs his/her live performance the TV director takes charge of the televised performance. The TV bullfighter shares centre stage with the commentators who define not only the performance but also the issues. Female bullfighters are certainly an issue on television and tend to provoke interesting commentaries precisely because they invoke some pertinent questions.

The female bullfighter's plea of "when I am performing see me as a professional, not as a woman" is not a simple demand for the audience to respond to. It is difficult for the viewer to answer to this request when he/she is constantly reminded of the novel visual evidence that the person bullfighting is a woman. The commentary shared by two critics/commentators, one male and the other female, over a bullfight televised in Spain in 1993 from Lima (Peru), seems all too perfect for the anthropologist who is listening for the stereotypical repetition of contemporary debates about gender: whilst Cristina Sanchez continued fighting her bull the male voice began to speak about Cristina's beauty and attractiveness as a woman. He was swiftly interrupted by the female voice reprimanding him with a reminder that they as commentators were at the bullfight in order to observe Cristina's ability as a bullfighter, not to comment on her beauty relative to that of others of her sex. This is also a reminder that competing ideas about how one should speak about women form part of public discourse, and that "women" are a political issue in contemporary Spain.

However, this is not always the case and many commentaries are focused on Cristina's beauty or the history of feminized bullfighting over the last one and a half centuries. That the biological sex of a female bullfighter is, if not problematic, then novel is made explicit by commentaries which refer to her as if she were some hybrid creature with "the body of a woman and the mind of a bullfighter" (see above). Thus the TV performance is heavily laden with many of the assumptions which problematize female bullfighters (or which make female bullfighters a problem for the bullfight).

#### **(i) Sexed Bodies and Gendered Minds**

Returning to the question of the representation of female bullfighters in televised bullfights, the voice-over

commentaries on physical appearance merit further consideration. These comments vary in style and intention, some emphasise the strangeness of the presence of the female body whilst complimenting its form (when in the opinion of the critic, the woman in question is attractive). TV commentaries refer to the shape and form of Cristina's body: Cristina is not tall, skinny, masculine looking or almost sexless, she does not have "the body of a torero", and has long blonde highlighted hair, physically she approaches a feminine ideal. There are certain cultural expectations concerning the physical appearance of female bullfighters. Most informants visualised a rather butch and not particularly good looking woman. There is much curiosity even amongst those with no particular interest in bullfighting to "see what they are like".

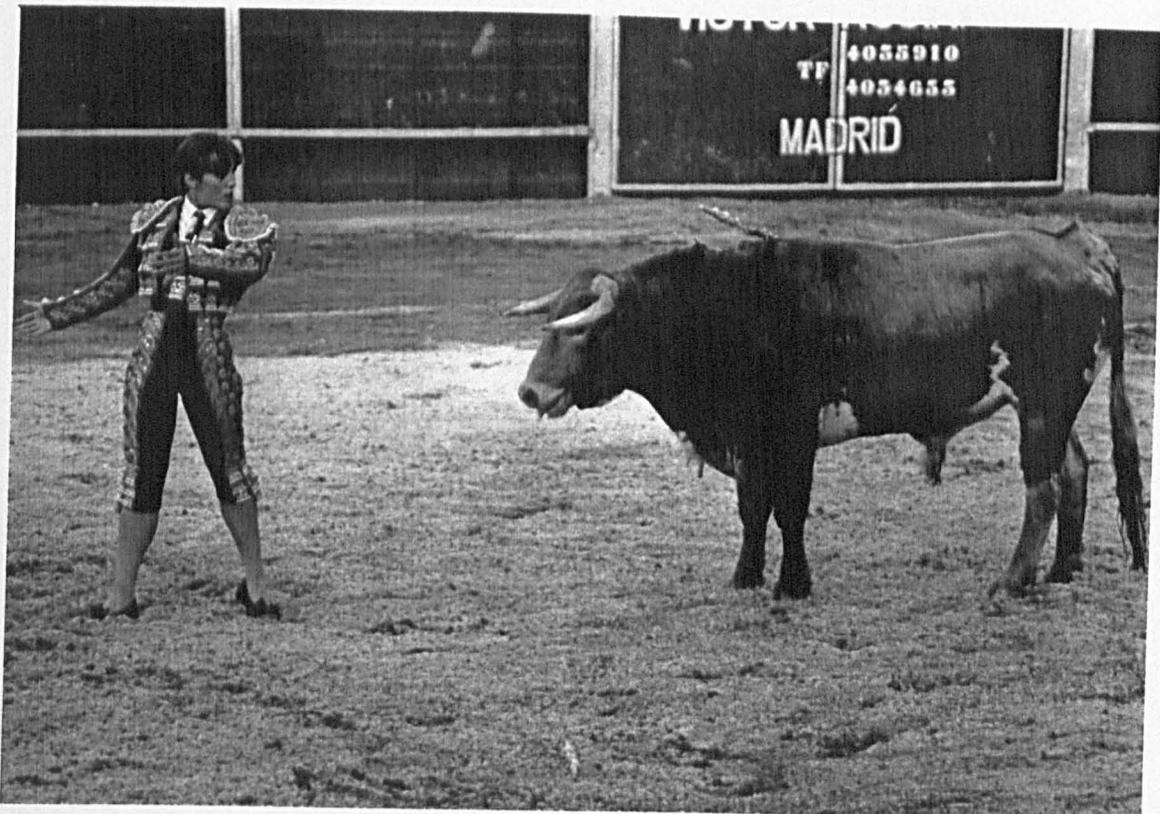
The body of the female bullfighter is on display and its shape is emphasised by the suit of lights. The way in which one looks at the body of the female bullfighter is significant and is represented by the debate over whether the audience should be looking at her body - as the female commentator quoted above said, or watching her *toreo*- her performance as a bullfighter. This gaze is not limited to female bodies although more commentaries are publicly voiced over the physical appearance of women in the bullring. During the 1993 bullfighting season one male bullfighter had the misfortune to have his trousers torn by the bull's horn. Although luckily he was not injured the tear revealed his penis which, since it was hanging outside his clothing for the bullfighter's remaining time in the ring, provided an ideal visual opportunity for the TV camera persons (who are nearly always male), and the camera zoomed in for a closeup. Needless to say this clip was shown more than once but without any strong public comment, complaint, outcry or debate. I imagine that a closeup of the naked breast of a female bullfighter would have provoked a different response.

The male commentator's reference to the body of a woman with the mind of a bullfighter/man classifies the female bullfighter as a biological or medical-scientific novelty . Differentiation between male and female "mentalities" or psychologies pertains to both formal medicine and folk beliefs about male and female behaviour. The TV camera closeup images of Cristina Sánchez's face as she is about to kill the bull may be interpreted as an affirmation of the notion that the female bullfighter embodies masculinity and femininity: Cristina's face is shown in closeup performing what some informants identified as a "masculine" routine of facial expressions and breathing practised by male bullfighters and frequently represented in bullfighting photography. Although Cristina is on television, and her performance is visible, interpretation of it can never be gender-neutral because her identity is feminine. Whether or not the femininity she embodies is problematic depends on the subjective interpretation of the viewer. Since TV audiences do not necessarily trust the opinions of commentators and critics, and the *ambiente* of the bullfight is not transmitted by television, the TV bullfight provides a new context for the evaluation of female bullfighters.

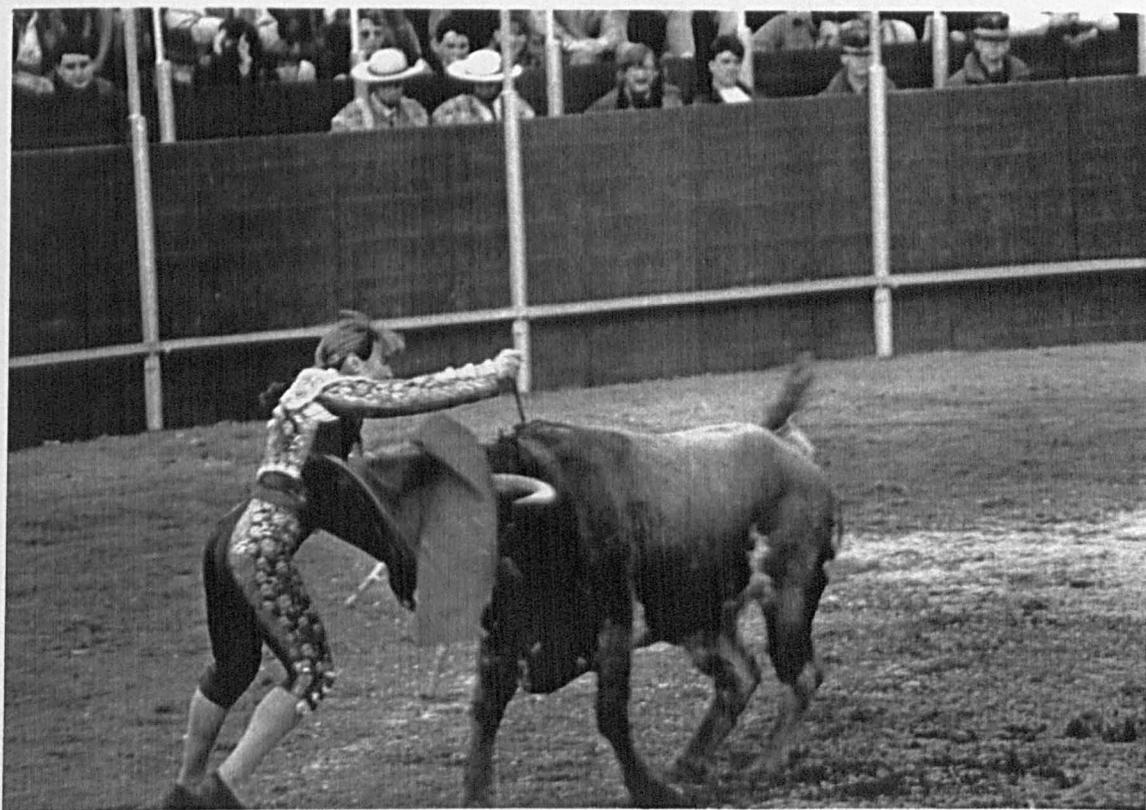
The frequent television transmission has introduced a new way of watching the bullfight which involves different forms of participation, a geographical "closing" and greater accessibility. Cristina Sánchez has entered the bullfighting profession during this epoch and under these circumstances she has been seen and approved or disapproved by a great number of TV bullfight *aficionados*. As such she has been defined by television- by the cameras, by the commentators. We have been able to closely scrutinise her body, her face, her hairstyle, her bullfighting skills, and even her father who works with her in the bullring as part of her *cuadrilla*. Male bullfighters are subject to similar scrutiny, however, the dynamics of the

relationship between viewer and viewed vary not only according to the sex of the bullfighter, but returning to Strathern's point, "in what kinds of bodies are the eyes of (the viewer) set" (Strathern 1993a;142).

When performing Cristina Sánchez presents herself visually in the same way as a male bullfighter, her long highlighted blonde hair and gold earrings are the only intentional marker of difference. Her suit of lights made to the same design as those of her male contemporaries (see Chapter 9), however, some wrongly suspect that special protection is inserted for her breasts (see Chapter 8). Another aspect of Cristina's visual self-representation is her visual performance itself, she follows the same patterns and employs the same strategies and physical posturing to as male bullfighters. Such body movement has often been identified as masculine, or as a display of male sexuality. Cristina's visual self-representation is an interesting contrast to what Garry Marvin has identified as one of the keys to the success of Maribel Atienza, a female bullfighter who was fairly successful in the 1970s. He argues that Maribel's custom of dressing in a country suit rather than the "male" suit of lights and her not imitating male posturing, were part of her successful strategy to enact a feminine version of the bullfight, thus not appearing as a woman trying to be a man (Marvin 1988;164-5). Whilst Maribel avoided the problem of gender ambiguity, contemporary performers force the issue: whilst for informants who insisted on gender role segregation and a binary notion of gender, the gender ambiguity of female bullfighters is inevitable, for others female bullfighters are simply women expressing another version of femininity in a society where meeting multiple masculinities and femininities are part of everyday life.



Cristina Sánchez uses the same poses as her male contemporaries



On this occasion Cristina successfully kills her bull

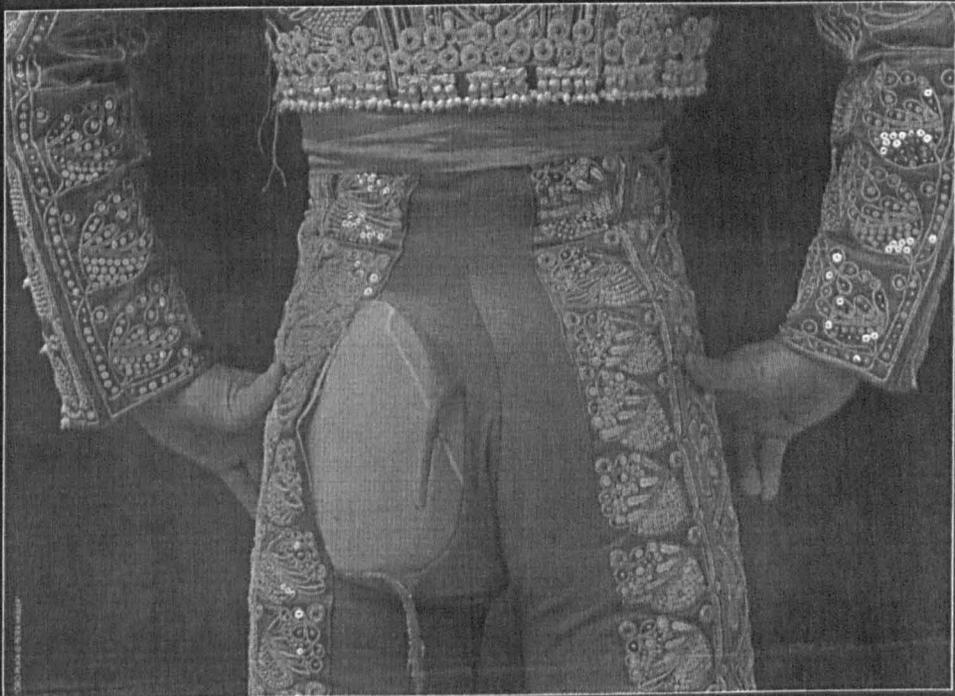
Suggestions that the bullfight is a display of masculinity<sup>18</sup> imply looking at the body of a male bullfighter is non-problematic. Focusing ones gaze on his buttocks, (rather than looking at the entry of his sword into the bull's neck) as he leans over the horns to kill, would imply ones lack of true *afición*. However, sometimes, one may stare without endangering one's *aficionado* credibility: TV even offered the opportunity to stare "in our own homes" by broadcasting the moving image of a naked penis in the bullring, and a recent advertisement for a series of televised bullfights tempted the Spanish public with another insight into the bullfighters trousers (*El Mundo* 22.4.1994, p65)- see the image entitled *Nadie se arrima más a la feria* (No one gets closer to the festival).

Nevertheless, the gaze is gendered in "traditional" models which state that women who attend bullfights because they find bullfighters attractive, are not "true *aficionadas*"; they look at the bullfighter, not at the bulls nor the bullfighting, and

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<sup>18</sup> Some English informants (including anthropologists) have commented on what they regard as the femininity of the bullfighter. They associated his clothing (the tight trousers and short jacket) and shoes with the attire of a ballet dancer, and commented that his very movements were "feminine". Firstly it should be noted that in Andalusian culture bullfighters are not thought of as being feminine. Even though several performers are reputed to be homosexuals, the masculinity of their self representations during their performances is not questioned on these terms. In fact during my fieldwork I never heard a bullfighter's performance being criticised in terms of his homosexuality. Secondly, in certain cases "feminine" traits, when exhibited by men are considered to enhance their masculinity. Frank cites the example of male tennis players and other sports men who break down into tears. He points out that whilst some viewers may criticise these actions as being unmasculine (thus feminizing the players), others regard them as an appropriately masculine expression of emotion (see Frank 1991). The point that certain versions of masculinity may have feminine components, need not put the sexuality of the performer into question. The point that femininities and masculinities coexist within the same individuals subjective identity holds here.

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focus on the bullfighter as sex object. Whilst such lack of *afición* is criticised, it is "normal (for a woman)". However, a man who spoke of female bullfighters as sex objects was treated differently: whilst some criticised his sexism, other male *aficionados* tended to excuse him with the justification that "he is a great *aficionado*, but he doesn't think that women can be bullfighters- but he's not sexist". According to this interpretation women see only male sexuality because they lack *afición* and understanding of the bullfight, whilst the men sees only female sexuality when they are too dedicated to male bullfighting to accept a female bullfighter. From this perspective a woman who can not only demonstrate an understanding of the bullfight when it is performed by a man, but enact it herself, is a true oddity.

**(ii) Successful, safe, novelties**

Female bullfighters are thus often constructed by the media as novelties, albeit successful novelties. I suggest also that this novelty veneer makes them seem less of a threat to the male dominance of bullfighting. After all, how many of these rare hybrid creatures with female bodies and male minds is one likely to find in the "natural" world? By using natural metaphors to suggest that female bullfighters are not natural and unlikely to recur very often then they are easier to accept since they predict no great change in the bullfighting world.

If female bullfighters attract media attention, get publicity, popularity, contracts to perform and success due to a mixture of approved good technique and novelty value this does not necessarily do them any harm. Being successful as a novelty may be offensive to feminists, but since female bullfighters tend to disassociate themselves from feminism for them being classified as a novelty is not necessarily problematic. Cristina Sánchez has however expressed her wish to be accepted on the same basis as a male bullfighter and calls for a stop to

the differentiation between male and female performers and discrimination against women.

Bullfighters will always be gendered, the gender neutral bullfighter role does not exist in the present. In the past female bullfighters have never been able to achieve a high level of success in the male bullfighting league. However the contemporary situation is different, when I ended field work one female performer had maintained a position amongst the top ten *novillero* bullfighters and several others were rising. Cristina Sanchez, the most successful at present, was taken up by the media ever since she began her career as the top student of the Madrid bullfighting school in a televised event. She has been featured in press and TV and her performance approved in terms of its technical and aesthetic value. She gets contracts and draws crowds. Her success in doing so is measured in numbers of live performances and numbers of trophies she is awarded. Due to many contracts and trophies she has stayed near the top of the league. Television does not implement this process, the crowd and contract makers are the decision makers who give out the trophies and contracts which get counted. Nevertheless media plays an important role in facilitating her success. For every bullfight that most *aficionados* attend they will watch many more on TV. It is media representation of live events on TV and press coverage and reportage of performers and performances which help *aficionados* decide which performers they will spend their money on expensive tickets to see. The bullfight may have characteristics of a ritual but it is also on the one hand a media event transmitted into the domestic space of many households and on the other a commercial enterprise driven by economic and market forces influenced by advertising and publicity campaigns and riddled with power networks and corruption.

The key to becoming a successful performer is indeed a complex formula when one considers the expanding contexts in which bullfighting is being produced and reproduced. For example, whilst *ambiente* is central for the purist *aficionados* of live bullfights, being able to create *ambiente* is not necessarily the only key to becoming a successful and popular performer. Furthermore *ambiente* is not a fixed concept, as I have argued the *ambiente* of a female bullfighter's performance is likely to lack the audience consensus of that of a top male performer (although this may not necessarily be the case). The perception of *ambiente* is also a subjective act and as subjectivities take different foci in the future notions such as *ambiente* will be evaluated in different ways. Indeed some informants have already said that *ambiente* is produced at female bullfighters' performances, and on occasion consensus is apparent. However, division is rife and it would be incorrect to argue that female bullfighters are established (yet?).

## CONCLUSIONS

Certain themes have recurred throughout the ethnography. In conclusion, I want to sum these up under some of the headings which I suggested were relevant in the opening paragraph of this thesis. I have broadly divided these themes into the following sections: tradition and change; ritual, performance and media; the body; gender, prestige and reputation; and finally feminism and the changing position of women.

### Tradition and Change

Contemporary female bullfighting raises the issue of what is "traditional" in two ways: what should be the limits of behaviour which adheres to traditional morality, and what measures would be taken to preserve the integrity of tradition. These questions are neither simply nor uniformly answered. In some contexts female bullfighters are able to appeal to tradition in that they are participating in a traditional activity and conforming to the rules set by established tradition<sup>1</sup>, except of course they defy one vital norm- that of the gender of the performer. In this situation the "tradition" as structured procedure is untouched. Conversely, when one considers that tradition in a wider sense as a living event whose participants are part of its existence, then the introduction of female performers may challenge its traditional composition.

Lewis stressed the significance of the rules for participation in ritual:

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<sup>1</sup> Here I refer to the definition of tradition which is offered by Hobsbawn when he distinguishes between the rigid and repeated character of traditional activities and the more flexible nature of custom (Hobsbawn 1983;2).

"To take part in ritual properly demands knowledge of the conditions for performance and demands attention to social status and identity. The actor may not openly say that through ritual something about social relations is expressed but nonetheless he must know the rules which permit or constrain his participation" (1980;12).

Female bullfighters break these rules but still insist that they are taking part in the bullfight "properly". This is stressed by their intention to obey all the other rules dictated by bullfighting conventions. Lewis continues by emphasising the ways in which such customs are justified by tradition (in the sense that 'our ancestors have always done things this way') (1980;12) and proposes that actions which are "artificial" may be justified by an appeal to tradition, whether or not the actions appear appropriate to their circumstances (1980;13). The argument for the exclusion of female performers is sometimes justified by an appeal to tradition. This does indeed, when considered in relation to the contemporary position of women in public life in Andalusia (and Spain in general), appear utterly inappropriate. Whilst Lewis' model allows us to see how tradition may be used as justification, the case of female bullfighters illustrates that in some instances tradition may not be a sufficiently weighty vindication for the continued practice of an exclusionist policy which clashes with the values of many people. The subjectivity of the *aficionado* bears on the specific meanings which are invested in different performers<sup>2</sup>. Whilst for some it did not seem to matter that a woman should participate in traditional male bullfighting, others identified the integrity

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<sup>2</sup> This applies not only to differentiation between male and female bullfighters. Tastes in bullfighting styles vary and "purist" bullfight *aficionados* tend to reject those male performers whom they regard as exhibiting a vulgar rather than artistic style of bullfighting. Furthermore there is a certain lack of consensus over which bullfighters do and do not demonstrate *arte* in their performances.

of the event as being one which demanded that female performers be excluded.

As I have shown in Chapter 9 female bullfighting has a history which is often constructed as the separate tradition of a feminized bullfight. When *aficionados* allocate female bullfighters to this feminized version of the bullfight, they simultaneously avoid the issue of whether women threaten the integrity of the male bullfighting tradition. Even when women perform in mixed sex events, it is still possible for *aficionados* to argue that they are practising one tradition whilst their male contemporaries are involved in another. Thus male and female performers are not seen to be competing against one another since the context shifts along with the sex of the performer (in a similar way to when foot and horseback bullfighters perform in the same event). Whilst this is a fine solution for some *aficionados*, others argue that women should perform in separate all female events and furthermore that they should have their own bullfighting leagues in the same way that horseback performers do. Despite the separation of male and female bullfighting implied by reference to a female bullfighting "tradition", men and women do actually compete because they are fighting against one another for higher ratings in the bullfighters' league which is not segregated by sex.

The changing socio-cultural context of Andalusia certainly has some bearing on how the traditional bullfight and other rituals are viewed. The values symbolised by ritual performances and events and the morality and aspirations of their participants are frequently at variance with one another. As I showed for the case of the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa*, whilst traditional values may be seen to be embedded in long-standing repeated rituals, these values may be unrelated to the experiences and everyday lives of those who participate in and

interpret the event locally. Similarly many of those who participate as audience members (and in the culture of the bullfighting world) disagree with the "traditionalist" gender ideologies of the masculine bullfight. Nevertheless they are able to appreciate the professional bullfight regardless of the sex of the performer. Tradition does not **always** justify the continuation of established ritual practices.

Lewis approaches the persistence of ritual forms throughout periods of social change by distinguishing between ritual message and stimulation. He suggests that "To say that people in the society continue to do it [perform a ritual] because they feel an obscure appropriateness or satisfaction in what they do is to speak in terms of stimulation and response rather than in terms of communication and message" (1980;180). For Lewis it is the very indeterminacy of ritual which both lends it significance and which rather than being "a defect of communication...also contains a way of seeing that ritual may survive, still seem worth doing, offering some feeling of continuity, message and enrichment to those whose circumstances and experiences have changed from what they were for the people who first formed and performed the rites" (1980;38). Such a model may be applied to the *becerrada* and the bullfight. However, a woman's performance -if it is to be considered a ritual- begs further questions about the relationship between ritual and society. Some people are demanding that the public 'ruling' (Lewis 1980;19) of this ritual should correspond to non-traditional gender configurations. Tradition fails to consistently justify the 'ruling' against female performers. In contrast, in the case of the *becerrada*, the label of "tradition" and the blatant references to its historical context stress that its lack of fit with contemporary gender ideologies does not matter; "tradition" acts as its stamp of credibility in a world which it inverts in several ways (see Chapter 4).

The bullfight is in an ambiguous situation: it is a "traditional" ritual in a changing socio-cultural context<sup>3</sup>. The contemporary success of not only female bullfighters but also women critics, journalists, photographers, managers and organizers in the *peñas* shows how it is obliged to accommodate gender models which are being established in contemporary discourse. Nevertheless such feminine advances should not be read as an indication of the de-gendering of the bullfighting world. Those who define, accept and reject women who play masculine roles may chose from several different sets of criteria when evaluating them.

Whether female bullfighters are accepted as rare novelties, modern and admirable young women, or participants in a trivial feminized bullfight, they are nonetheless popular. No doubt there is some correlation between changing attitudes towards work and sexuality described in Chapters 2 and 3 and the following of female bullfighters. At least it is clear that this contemporary socio-cultural context is one in which arguments for female bullfighters would appear to be justified. Furthermore, the bullfight is a "living" tradition and a commercial enterprise which must be both contemporary and

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<sup>3</sup> Pérez Molina also argues, from research in Madrid, that there is lack of fit between the bullfight and contemporary urban culture. Noting a general decrease in the number of *aficionados*, and a predominance of older (often retired) *aficionados* in the audiences, and the corresponding rise in the popularity of football, Pérez Molina suggests that "for the young urbanite bullfighting appears a grandfathers' *afición*, something out of date and out of context" (1991;442). He suggests that the rise of "ecologist ideology", along with the contemporary stress on environmentalism and the protection of animals, is partly responsible for this. Moreover, the rapid process of urbanization in Madrid has discontinued the practice of many village bull festivals (1991;443), and furthermore, many councils, considering bull-related festivals violent and anachronistic, have banned them (1991;444), thus preventing young urbanites from growing up with experience of taurine events.

"traditional" in order to satisfy its broad range of potential audience. Media producers<sup>4</sup> and the live performance contract-makers know this: the bullfight must be a marketable tradition. The crux of the issue is whether female bullfighting can be considered a part of "contemporary-traditional" bullfighting. As I argued in Chapter 1 this is a problem for both anthropologists and *aficionados*. It is possible that in a context where tradition and change are played against one another, attempts to maintain the integrity of gender role segregation within the bullfight may serve to marginalize it from the processes of change which are occurring in the wider Andalusian society. The actual roles which women, and especially girls in their late teens, play in the bullfighting world (as I described in Chapters 6 and 7) are strikingly different from the "traditional" feminine stereotypes of beautiful spectator, wife, mother and seductress (see Chapter 5).

Those who participate in the bullfighting world manipulate the notion of "tradition" to their own advantages: as in the case of Lola (see Chapter 7) whilst a female bullfighter identifies herself with "things traditional", others identify her in relation to her "fit" with traditional gender stereotypes. The question of "can a modern participant enact a traditional ritual?" has many answers, all of which fit into Andalusian culture in different ways.

#### **Ritual, Performance and media**

The live bullfight is undoubtedly a ritual performance. However, as I suggested in the introduction, in order to either accommodate or exclude female performers from participating in

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<sup>4</sup> European broadcasting (including in Spain) has seen a demise of public-service broadcasting institutions and a "general tendency in European broadcasting to move 'from service to business'" (Ang 1991a;104).

this ritual an exercise in classification is called for. Marvin has shown how the bullfight may be interpreted as a statement about masculinity. What is at issue is whether the female bullfighter makes a complementary statement about femininity, or whether she is simply out of context in the male arena in which her actions stand for a nonsense. In view of the fact that many people do accept female bullfighters the first alternative seems plausible. When men and women perform in mixed sex bullfights, this may be regarded as simply an extension or modification of a statement about masculinity which may represent the similarity of men's and women's experiences of public life. The explanation does allow for the contemporary bullfight to be rooted in Andalusian culture because it locates processes of change both within the bullfight and within the wider social system. Parkin's model of ritual change is useful if one wishes to treat female bullfighters' performances as ritual. Parkin stresses the paradox between the repeated reproduction of rituals over time (as in Lewis' (1980;11) idea of the 'ruling' by which ritual is supposed to follow a set procedure) and "the fact that rituals are also always partly being made up as they are carried out" (1992;19). Parkin shows how "Ritually 'proper' spaces, positions, and directions may be prescribed by those in authority, but individuals can slip, if only slightly and gradually, beyond boundaries and can widen, narrow, or shift these spatial orientations" (1992;19). Rather than "slipping" beyond boundaries female bullfighters tend to break them in one fell swoop. Whilst the gradual changes which Parkin cites from Kenyan burials and funerals (1992;20-22) are rather different from the abrupt change of biological sex in the bullfight, his general comments apply:

"however much participants in a ritual may dispute and debate the significance, meaning and propriety of ritual behaviour, using words to great effect in doing so, they can only demonstrate the saliency, success, and effectiveness of what they have to say through performative

practice, and the issues of spatial orientation and position are the only means at their disposal, being fundamentally constitutive of the ritual itself" (1992;22)

It is only when the female bullfighter puts herself (or is allowed to) in the space of the ritual that discourses about female bullfighting become articulated within the ritual context. Actual performance may affect the direction of non-ritual discourses about the practical and artistic problems of female bullfighting. However, since the discourse does not establish a general consensus, this is reflected in the audience response to the actual performance. As ritual the female bullfighter's performance contains a statement which denies the male exclusivity implied by that of the conventional male bullfight. In this sense the ritual is also a medium by which the debate is expressed. Nevertheless the connections are not clear-cut and this model of the relationship between the bullfight and its wider cultural context fails to identify the bullfight as having a specific ritual message because it leaves the message to be decoded in various different ways according to the particular tastes and standpoints of the audience participants.

Further to the contexts of "tradition" and "contemporaneity" I have examined the media as a domain in which female bullfighters may become successful. I also suggested that there may be some connection between the prolificness of televised bullfights and the success of female performers. First, in Chapter 7 I described the way in which Cristina Sánchez was constructed in the bullfighting and news press. Then, in Chapter 10 I argued that the ritual statement of the performance was fragmented, reconstituted and rendered incoherent when the live performance is converted into a media event. Up to a point the televised bullfight quashes the problematic relationship between ritual statement and contemporary culture by forgoing atmosphere for technique and

ceding the performer's control of the event to the media directors. The relationship between televised and live bullfighting is under-researched. My data suggests that publicity for individuals, economic considerations, and both domestic and club-orientated viewing and discussion contexts affects TV *aficionados'* attitudes to and reviews of both performers and breeds of bull. Indeed a new strand of television bullfight culture is developing. The televising of the bullfight reflects its increasingly national (and global) projection of the bullfight out of the local context. This is especially clear when the bullfight is compared with the *Becerrada Homenaje a la Mujer Cordobesa*, a local festivity which is in many ways an inversion of the professional bullfight. The *becerrada* is maintained as a "local tradition" being valued as part of local historical traditional identity rather than as a model for contemporary life-style. The ritual message of the *becerrada* goes little further than to state traditional identity through its status as a tradition. The national bullfight in contrast is a more dynamic event, subjected to public gaze and affected by the changes and attitudes which develop in the society on which it depends for its audience and to produce its performers.

### **Bodies**

I have stressed that the body is central to both the performance itself and to ways of thinking about and experiencing bullfighting. The emphasis on the body in Andalusian ethnography is not entirely new: differences between male and female physiology are fundamental to Corbin and Corbin's and Marvin's analyses. My focus of the body stresses body uses, body communication, and embodied experience. My discussion of the female bullfighter's body has focused largely on *aficionado* and other discourse. However, if we are to classify the live bullfight as ritual and also concede that the

female bullfighter's live performance is also ritual (rather than spectacle), it is useful to consider the kind of ritual process her body is involved in. I have stressed the feminine life drama and new feminine body images, now I want to look briefly at how these can be reconciled with the idea of ritual as rite de passage. Parkin (1992) develops a model which treats the body and body-mind relationship as central to ritual. Parkin extends his "spatial idea of ritual to the body itself" by referring to both physical and metaphorical bodily movement (1992;22). I have argued that the female bullfight involves a statement about female body use and body image. The performance may be seen as a ritual statement about these notions of the female body through which the female body is relocated in a new position in society and culture- both physically in the bullring and metaphorically. The new body use symbolises a new body relationship to the rest of the society in that the female body stands for not a reproducing body, but a publicly proven physically fit body, and a successful dominating body.

Parkin goes on to emphasise that in ritual the inseparability of body and mind are stressed (1992;23). This is an important theme in the bullfight. The female bullfighter who uses a "reproducing body" and "feminine mind" for male action, oversteps the boundaries set by conventional bullfighting discourse and the ritual 'ruling', thus challenging traditional definitions of her body and mind. For those who accept this boundary-crossing, the female bullfighter's body and mind move into new space; they are re-classified. In this sense the female bullfight is a ritual which is about redefining the female body, and akin to a "rite de passage". In a non-ritual context, it is an exercise in proving that traditionalist definitions of the female body and mind are incorrect.

I have tried to account for the variety of different ways in

which in women may experience their bodies in contemporary Andalusia. Feminine body life-cycles may be organised in non-traditional ways (some would regard these as un-natural ways). Correspondent to this plurality of Andalusian models of the ways women may appropriately experience their sexuality and use their bodies during their life courses, there is an expansion in the number of ways in which a woman may be judged as using her body for an appropriate or respectable purpose; and a woman's body will not always be considered to be out of place in the bullring. Thus I have argued that the female body as a symbol of feminine experience may, for a proportion of the audience, legitimize female bullfighting as a perfectly appropriate representation of a feminine life plan and use of a female body. The female bullfighting body clearly corresponds to models of the feminine body image which many of my (male and female) informants in their twenties found attractive or aspired to. However, the body remains one of the main battlegrounds for debates about whether or not women can be bullfighters.

### **Gender, prestige and reputation**

In chapter 2 I argued that rather than "honour" the notion of reputation seems to be a more appropriate category to assume as a means for understanding the ways in which individuals and groups are measured in moral terms. I stressed that whilst in one social context a woman may be admired for being sexually active, in another she may be scorned. The same goes for female bullfighters, for some people female bullfighters are models of successful women behaving in an appropriate if not exemplary fashion, whilst for others they are nothing but silly misguided girls to be at best ignored or despised. As a contrast to much of the existing ethnography I have offered a description of a certain socio-cultural context in Andalusia (which I believe is becoming more influential) in which women can: (i) be successful public actors; (ii) compete against men

and win and be respected for doing so; (iii) use their bodies in ways which have "traditionally" been classified as masculine ie, become sports women, bullfighters, and enter other physically demanding previously male dominated professions in for example fire-fighting and the armed forces; (iv) follow career paths and life-plans which have "traditionally" been seen as masculine, this may include avoidance of childbirth and mothering. Male prestige systems are not decisive in the allocation of reputation in these instances, nevertheless the success of the women who operate in such ways listed above is measured against that of men.

Whilst emphasising this dimension of Andalusian culture I would not like to exaggerate to the extent of claiming that this is the new Andalusia. Indeed the gap and often the clash between traditional women and modern women is noted not only by each category as opposed to the other, but also within the lives of individual women. Some women who reject traditional life plans feel that in certain situations it is to their advantage to either appear to conform, or do conform, to models of femininity which are inconsistent with their career aspirations. This is not problematic nor schizophrenic, individuals negotiate their gendered identities as they move through different situations.

Opinions that individuals express, and the roles they enact in one context are not necessarily consistent with their behaviour in other contexts. Individuals represent their own identities and profess their beliefs to other people as part of a continuous process of the negotiation of identity and social relationships. In this way individuals express elements of their multifaceted selves as required in order to fit different social relationships and locate themselves in a variety of

social worlds<sup>5</sup>. An individual's movement between different contexts where he/she emphasises different shades of his/her identity need not imply inconsistency of personality. Only when inconsistency becomes too blatant is an individual's reputation at stake. A few examples will suffice to make this clear.

One female informant voiced opinions against women's domestic subservience to men, she called for women's independence and acted as an independent agent in her business and social dealings. Yet in her home, in accordance with the agreement negotiated with her husband, gender role segregation was practised and she played several of the roles which she condemned in conversation. This woman was aware of the inconsistency inherent in her life style, but did not see it as particularly problematic.

Individuals must "play" the system of discourses on gender roles. Allegiance to and participation in certain discourses may be advantageous in certain situations. Some informants were quite conscious of the ways they slipped in and out of different identities in different contexts, and were aware of the ambiguity of their plural identities. One young woman said "sometimes I don't even feel sure about who I am, when I am at the university I am a research student, I work very hard and I am very serious, but when I go out with my friends I am a totally different person. If I meet a man for the first time when I'm out socialising I normally don't tell him that I have two university degrees or that I'm highly educated because that

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<sup>5</sup> This kind of movement between social contexts and identity adjustments was also evident in a piece of earlier research which I carried out amongst "permanent" migrants from Northern Ireland living in London (see Pink 1990). In this case individual identity often became contingent on place and social context, informants own subjective interpretations of identity and notions of "home" changed according to where they were and whom they were with.

in the past has been intimidating to men and they have left me alone once I have introduced myself in that way... Men tend to be jealous if their wife or girlfriend has better studies than them". Her comments may not necessarily be true for all situations, and indeed some informants would argue that she is wrong. However, the example reveals that some people consider it necessary to appear to conform to certain dominant gender discourses in order to participate in the social relationships which they desire, or feel they "ought to " pursue. This informant felt it necessary for her to construct and reconstruct her identity for different social situations. One of the key elements of identity at issue for her was the representation of her femininity. A female bullfighter also commented that she did not usually admit her true profession when she first met a potential boyfriend (in her case success and media attention may eventually render such expressions of conformity impossible). Other women did not attempt to hide their professional aspirations- this may be a matter of personal style and attitude. Whilst some women may profess to be against "traditional" life-styles, those may be the very ones they live out in their homes, and women who play superficially traditional feminine social roles in certain situations may be living out life and career plans which fit more closely to traditional models of masculine public life-cycles.

Reputation<sup>6</sup> is about representing oneself appropriately in any

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<sup>6</sup> Here I use the term 'reputation' to refer to the way in which one is seen by others; to the way in which one gains a particular status in a social context. In this sense "reputation" is both one of the affects of, and influences on the way an individual deals with his or her self representation (with the expression of his or her identity). Having an appropriate reputation may endow certain individuals with respect, status and power. 'Reputation' is part of the more widely encompassing concept of 'integrity'. Following John Corbin I argue that the notion of 'personal integrity' (which is similar to the notion of 'complete persons' discussed below)

given context. It is concerned with showing that one is a person of integrity. Inconsistency can lead reputation and integrity to be questioned. The observation that a person may not be all that he seems is often followed by an account of his personal history intended to evidence that the identity he expresses in some contexts would discredit him in others. For example, it was claimed that one man, the holder of a responsible and respected position was actually not worthy of the respect implied by the position he held. He was said to be irresponsible because he was divorced and had led, it was claimed, a sex life which verged on perversity. In addition to being flexible in the present, an individuals identity is historical.

Female bullfighters must consistently represent themselves in a fashion which is appropriate to the context in which they wish to succeed; in this case a traditional activity.

#### **Women, bullfighting and feminism**

Whilst the phenomenon of female bullfighting would appear to have some significance for feminism, the quest of female bullfighters tends to be personal rather than political. Unlike for women's sports, there is neither a feminist bullfighting movement nor literature. Below I consider the relationship between female bullfighting and certain types of feminism.

Representations of the bullfight as analogous to flirtation is commonplace amongst *aficionados*. In Spanish folklore there are many analogies between the bull-bullfighter relationship and flirtation, Mitchell observes that "Most of the taurine metaphors to be found in Spanish folklore are connected to

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is more suitable than the concept of 'honour', a term which is almost never used in Andalusia.

courting behaviours, and most of these limit themselves to a projection of male and female behaviours onto *toreros* and *toros*, irrespectively" and "...both men and women have pictured themselves as the bullfighter and the opposite sex as the bull" (1991;155). Cristina Sánchez plays on one version of this relationship in order to make a point about the gender association of the particular role she plays by comparing her communication with the bull to that between a man and a beautiful woman in which she represents the man. Cristina identifies herself and her role in terms of existing models despite the gender contradiction. She purposely locates herself in a *torero* role rather than expressing her bullfighting as either masculine or feminine (see Chapter 9) and thus manipulates the analogy for her own benefit to emphasise that she is a bullfighter, without implying that she is either a man or a lesbian. However because the *torero* role is not gender-neutral, Cristina's analogies do not fit with the "traditional" order. A female sexed body in a masculine role disrupts the conventional relationship between biological sex, gender and role playing in traditional *aficionado* discourse. Cristina's argument is that a woman can perform as well as a man. She does not treat the gender symbolism as being problematic, rather she attempts to demonstrate that although metaphors for courage and the *torero-toro* relationship are masculine they are applicable to individuals of both sexes. The gender contradictions inherent to this situation are more problematic for feminists<sup>7</sup> and anthropologists than for this

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<sup>7</sup> Feminism is not a united cause, it is more useful to speak of feminisms. Female bullfighting tends to fit better with recent attempts to redefine feminism (eg in America, Christina Hoff Summers *Who Stole Feminism*, Kate Riophe *The Morning After*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese *Feminism without Illusions*) than with classical or post-modern feminisms. The current debate is one in which "Most of the new wave of feminist debunkers criticise mainstream feminism as "victim feminism" or "gender feminism" and call for a return to "equality feminism" (Muir 1995;17-18). A recent contribution

individual woman who has set out to be successful in an activity normally reserved for men. The female bullfighter must try to adapt existing gendered categories to meet her own ends: she cannot de-gender a masculine activity in order that she should take part in it. Similarly those who support and argue for female bullfighters did not relate this debate to political or ideological issues (although some non-*aficionados* who considered themselves feminists sometimes found the subject appealing because of its political potential). This tendency is similar to that Hargreaves notes amongst those whom she labels "sports feminists" who "accept the values of mainstream sports" whilst failing to "relate the concept of equality to wider economic, ideological and political issues" (1995;28).

The political project of the female bullfighter is to reconcile a masculine role with a feminine identity and become a successful individual actor. The female bullfighter must play the "system" in which she acts- one which is dominated by "traditional" thought and individualism. One of the problems for women who want to be bullfighters on equal terms with men is that they have to be *female* bullfighters; they are obliged to emphasise their sex in order to illustrate that they are "as good as men" and justify their activity. The battle of a female bullfighter tends to be personal rather than political. Cristina Sánchez is keen to disassociate herself from feminism; asked directly if she was a feminist in an interview she

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is Rene Denfield's *The New Victorians - A Young Woman's challenge to the Old Feminist Order* (1995). Denfield, an amateur woman boxer, rejects mainstream feminist arguments which promote the value of femininity as opposed patriarchy and argues that

"The fact that women are shut out of the culture of violence and its myriad forms of culturally sanctioned aggression is instrumental in creating our secondary status. It'll be hard for women to achieve real equality unless we acknowledge those aggressive aspects. Being cast in the role of the better, more gentle, more peaceful sex- that ends up being used against women" (quoted in a interview with Muir 1995;18).

responded: "I hate *feminismo* and *machismo*"<sup>8</sup> (*El País* 21.2.93). Later, in 1994 when she gave a charity performance for an exclusively female audience of women she qualified the event, stating that "This is not a feminist bullfight...rather I simply wanted to relate to this part of the public which has always put a lot of faith in me, as seems logical in this sexist world of bullfighting" (*El País* 26.6.1994). Whilst her actions may have political significance, they do not have political or feminist intent. In this context the female bullfighter has an ambiguous relationship to "traditional" culture because whilst she challenges "tradition" she plays out her life within many of its conventions. A female bullfighter must manipulate her self-representation to negotiate herself a favourable status in relation to "traditional" stereotypes (see Chapters 7 and 9). She must maintain her integrity in the bullfighting world and therefore cannot afford to identify herself with feminism or the feminist movement. Her quest is to publicly prove that women can "do as well as men" and that their exclusion is unjustified and unreasonable<sup>9</sup>. Those who support female bullfighters argue in the name of reason, they fight to establish their "truth" as superior to "traditional assumptions" which exclude women from bullfighting. Their mission is comparable to what Flax describes as an "understandable attraction to the (apparently) logical orderly world of the Enlightenment" (Flax 1990;42), proposing that:

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<sup>8</sup> The most appropriate translation of this phrase is "I hate feminism and sexism". Whilst *feminismo* refers to feminism and a "women's movement" in Spanish, *machismo* is used to refer to sexism- not a "mens movement".

<sup>9</sup> As I show in Chapter 7 this is often formulated in a way which implies another parallel with sports feminism which "implicitly rejects biological explanations for non-participation and embraces the belief that if women are given the opportunity they can participate in the full ranges of sport that men can enjoy" (Hargreaves 1995;28, cf. Dyer 1982, Ferris 1981).

"...it is not unreasonable for persons who have been defined as incapable of self-emancipation to insist that concepts such as the autonomy of reason, objective truth, and beneficial progress through scientific discovery ought to include and be applicable to the capacities and experiences of women as well as men. It is also appealing for those who have been excluded to believe that reason will triumph..." (1990;42).

The changes proposed by the integration of women into bullfighting are distant from the departure from enlightenment thought proposed by post-modern feminists for whom "Feminist notions of the self, knowledge, and truth are too contradictory to those of the enlightenment to be contained within its categories"... "feminist theorists enter into and echo postmodern discourses as we have begun to deconstruct notions of reason, knowledge, or the self and to reveal the effects of the gender arrangements that lay beneath their neutral and universalizing facades" (Flax 1990;42). The female bullfighter does not seek to deconstruct gender arrangements, rather, if she is to succeed she must use them to her advantage. Cristina Sánchez works along male social networks and in her family home depends on a traditional division of labour which frees her from domestic responsibilities and allows her to play a conventionally masculine role. The aims of the female bullfighter who identifies herself in male terms whilst insisting that her biological sex is irrelevant are closer to the type of "liberal feminism" that Hargreaves equates with sports feminism. Sports feminists, like those who promote women in bullfighting "are both men and women who want discrimination...on account of gender to be eradicated" (Hargreaves 1995;26) they are concerned with providing access to "traditionally masculinized activities" for women- whilst they pose a challenge to the inequalities in sports, they do not threaten the "'essential' nature of modern capitalism and

patriarchy" (1995;27)<sup>10</sup>.

Whilst new femininities and greater gender role flexibility do not necessarily deconstruct "traditional" stereotypes, they may alter the meanings of existing models. Some *aficionadas* who criticise other women for their passive femininity appear superficially to challenge "traditional" gender stereotypes. However they suggest a gender hierarchy by associating the exclusion of women with feminine weakness, and male domination with masculine privilege. Such women identify themselves as pertaining to a third group which is equal to "men" but not masculine and feminine in a way which is superior to "traditional" femininity. The feminine identity of these "new women" is expressed as a challenge to tradition and is critical of the gender category to which they are assigned by their biological sex. They set out to prove that they are superior to "woman" and equal to "man". This model of new woman devalues "traditional" femininity in a way similar to that which Susan Bordo describes for women academics for whom "any celebration of "female" ways of knowing or thinking may be felt by some to be a dangerous alliance professionally and perhaps a personal regression as well", such women need to disassociate themselves from the "other" which in this case is things gendered female (Bordo 1991;148). Thus "traditional" femininity is considered negative and new categories are constructed as its positive opposite. The processes of change which are occurring in the bullfighting world involves some women identifying with new feminine models which co-exist

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<sup>10</sup> In contrast, the political agenda of postmodern feminism calls for a type of individualism which means freedom, rather than one which involves a duality in which the male gendered individuals master the rest (Yeatman 1990;290). The (utopian) aim of this vision of society is what Yeatman calls "a universal culture of individual agency, a democracy" (1990;290).

alongside the old.

### **Gender and change in contemporary Andalusia**

I have tried to describe an element of Andalusian culture which shows how in the contemporary context many people do not practise (or practise a modified form of) the Andalusian lifestyles and social relationships described in existing ethnography. This is not to say that the old values do not coexist with and come into conflict with the ways of life and values which are emerging. My informants in the bullfighting world included people of all social classes and whilst much of my data on work and sexuality originated from the experiences of the now massive middle class (a class itself which has extremes of wealth) it also encompassed poor and wealthy families.

Of course one's data is always limited and I could be criticised for over stressing the extent to which morality is changing. However, I do think that it is important to emphasise that however much young people identify with "things traditional", go to church and pay lip service to both religious values and those expressed by their parents, this morality may not impinge on the way in which they experience their social lives or their bodies. Whilst this has possibly always been the case, there appears to be an awful lot of sexual activity going on, women compete with men in public, and female bullfighting (for example) is practised, without anyone losing their reputation or being "ruined for life". Notions of what one may acceptably do in public are changing, as are the criteria for assessing reputation.

An appreciation, or declared love, of bullfighting is shared by a broad range of dedicated and occasional *aficionados* of both live and televised performances. Men and women of different generations and with different values and beliefs are able to

enjoy and enthuse about the bullfight. Many disagree on matters of taste and style, on favourite performers and on whether women should participate. When the topic of female bullfighters was introduced informants often became involved in quite passionate arguments. The future is unclear. Those who trivialise female bullfighters argue that this is just another temporary wave of *señoritas toreras* akin to those of the 1930s and 1970s. I am inclined to a more positive prediction- that the young women who are becoming bullfighters or active *aficionadas* today are part of a generation of young women who see the public sphere as pertaining to them as much as to their male contemporaries. It seems that many of those who give these young women support in the form of recognition founded in a judgement which grants them equality with men, will emerge from the generation of *aficionados* which is now entering adulthood, rather than the "traditionalists" of their parents' generation who tend often to reject female bullfighting by classifying it as a novelty or (with the best paternalist intentions at heart) couch their acceptance in terms of their own chivalry.

Bullfighting will not be de-gendered nor do I imagine that its formal structure will alter substantially. Attitudes to gender and sex are however changing dramatically and the live bullfight, if it is not to be marginalized, may have to accommodate the changes which the contemporary televised bullfight has flourished on. This for "purist" *aficionados* could mean a disastrous transformation of the artistic bullfight into nothing but spectacle, but one which I think will be avoided. Bullfighting is still dominated by men who adhere to traditional ideologies and they hold both the purse strings to the bullrings and many of the pens and cameras which define female bullfighters and active *aficionadas* in the media. Whilst women are beginning to produce some of the culture of bullfighting both in media and through their performances and

organisational practices, this does not signify any great transformation or revolution in bullfighting culture. The impact of women in bullfighting is at this point difficult to measure. Many women speak of their experiences in the bullfighting world as a battle, they perceive of their own actions as having posed a challenge to the wall of masculine exclusionist policy and those who succeed feel that they have made some headway. But as in the cases of Lola, and the girls who were only laughed at when they tried to begin a bullfighting *peña*, without contact with this male dominated world through an influential social network or sponsor access can be denied. Nevertheless it does seem that women will continue to attempt to work their way into the bullfighting world and every act of resistance to the male privilege it exudes combined with a wider socio-cultural context of change may serve to weaken the masculine stronghold of its gatekeepers.

## APPENDIX

### PROBLEMS OF TERMINOLOGY AND TRANSLATION

The translation of cross-cultural concepts, linguistic terms and (especially for the purposes of this thesis), gender (or gendered) terminology is a complex matter for which there seem to be no hard and fast rules in anthropology. Questions concerning which terms anthropologists should use to denote the identity of a woman who plays a male role in a ritual (or non-ritual) context cause dilemmas for those working in western urban contexts and non-industrial rural societies<sup>1</sup>.

In Chapter 9 I show how whilst everyday use of the terms used to refer to women who are bullfighters are inconsistent. In some contexts the use of a particular term (eg *torera* or *novillero*) may be especially significant as such terminology implies not only the sex of the performer, but also the way in which their performances are classified and possibly expresses an opinion over whether or not women should be excluded from "traditional" male bullfighting. Since the Spanish terminology is never neutral I chose for the most part of the thesis to call the performers "female bullfighters" and their activity "female bullfighting". Although I found the latter term less satisfactory<sup>2</sup> I have maintained it with the purpose of

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Signe Howell has spoken of "female priests" who play the role of "male priests" amongst the *Leo*, Malaysia (Presentation at the University of Kent, 16.5.1995). In the indigenous language however, when "female priests" enact the roles of "male priests" both men and women are referred to by the same priestly term which does not indicate their biological sex (personal communication). It is often necessary for anthropologists to use certain terminology for the purposes of describing how gender difference is (or is not) expressed. One is often obliged to do so knowing that these terms do not represent the closest possible translation from the original language.

distinguishing between bullfighting when performed by men or by women.

However, there are also some general problems related to the label "female bullfighter" which are not related to the gender theme. The term "bullfighter" is controversial due to the problematic nature of the translation of the Spanish *corrida de toros* (literally, "running of the bulls") to the English "bullfight" which "gives an immediately false impression of its character...men do not fight bulls; only the bull fights" (Marvin 1988;203). Marvin resolves this problem by substituting the inadequate English translations of bullfighting terminology for the original Spanish terms. This is particularly useful since many of these terms refer specifically to bullfighting and as such have no direct translation into English. Marvin's (1988) text thus incorporates these Spanish language concepts in a way which facilitates description and reference unhindered by inappropriate English language analogies. This strategy enables Marvin to communicate an informed Spanish *aficionado* perspective on the bullfight. Mitchell, in comparison, denies the *aficionado* interpretation of the bullfight, insisting that "bullfighting *aficionados* do not truly understand bullfighting"- they "cannot see the wood for the trees" (1991;3). Whilst Marvin (1986) argues that in *aficionado* terms the bullfight is not an act of violence, Mitchell proposes that it is a "national pornography" (1991;174). For Mitchell's analysis, the indigenous terminology would only serve to contradict his argument; he maintains the English "bullfight". As I have stressed, my own reasons for using "bullfighter" and

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<sup>2</sup> The possibility that "female bullfighting" could be taken to mean "feminized bullfighting" (which in my thesis is something quite different) was a concern, but I decided to maintain the term due to its compatibility with "female bullfighter".

"female bullfighter" are motivated by a desire to produce a text which accounts for, but remains neutral concerning, the various implications of *torero/torera*, *mujer torero*, *señorita torera*, *novillero/novillera*, etc. In comparison, for Marvin's analysis, where appropriate female bullfighting was interpreted as a feminized activity, the term *torera* was an suitable label for a female bullfighter.

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