

These criticisms of detail do not of course detract from the usefulness of the report as a whole in collating scientific evidence which will be invaluable to members of the public who are determined to bring pressure to bear at this crucial time of re-evaluation of the battery cage.

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**Dance of Death**, a colour VHS video produced by the World Society for the Protection of Animals (European Region), London (1991) in conjunction with the International Council Against Bullfighting, 24 min. Price: £8 post free.

This campaigning video has been produced to promote the abolition of bullfighting. There is a critical commentary by Ed Asner, with a strong emphasis on the gruesomeness of the spectacle. Particular note is taken of the cruelty meted out to the bulls and the damage and distress inflicted on the horses.

The first 10 minutes or so show Spanish bullfighting scenes. This is followed by sequences on the training of matadors which, seemingly, begins when they are as young as eight years - yet children under 14 years of age are, in theory, excluded from watching the fiesta itself.

The bulls at the time of the fight are four years old, weigh half a ton and have been selectively bred from distinctly savage blood lines dating back over thousands of years. They are apparently docile while within their herd but fierce when isolated and intimidated in the arena. From the material presented in the video it seems that the bulls are not fed prior to the fight; they are usually sore after being battered with sand bags, and are held in darkness before being admitted to the bright arena. The horses of the picadors are blind-folded and have their ears stuffed with cottonwool so they neither see nor hear the approach of the bull. Furthermore, they are numbed by the administration of morphine. They never scream in spite of severe treatment, which occasionally leads to their death, and this is thought to be evidence that their vocal cords have been cut.

The involvement of tourists in the continued commercial success of bullfights in Spain, Mexico and parts of Latin America (Portugal no longer kills the bull in its version of the fight) is emphasized.

Repetitive sequences follow and show the contributions of picadors and banderillos to the 'fight', the death of a bull in the preliminaries to the main part of the performance and another sequence in which an incompetent matador kills a bull after four attempted coups de grace.

For me the repeated sequences represent somewhat of an overkill. However, the glory message of 'no glory' and 'little art' is effectively ramed home.

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