Bull Fighting Essay, Research Paper

BULL FIGHTING

The immediate reaction of many non-Spanish people to bull fighting is that it is sick, animal killing, unmoral entertainment. To many others around the world, though, bull fighting is a sport which involves courage, skill, and power, in a struggle between man and beast. This purpose of this paper is not to discuss the moralities of bullfighting though, it is to give some information on a sport which is loved by many throughout the world.

A bull fight, or corrida de toros, consists of three matadors, and six matches, which each take about 20 minutes to complete. These fights take place in a bull fighting arena, or plaza de toros. The least experienced matador will take the first and fourh matches, and the best matador will fight in the third and last matches.

The matadors are not alone. They are accompanied by three banderilleros and two picadores. The matador wears a brightly colored costume known as the suit of lights. His assistants wear less flashy costumes.

The movement from act to act in the bull-fight is divided by a trumpet blast. The first trumpet signals the paseo, or march of the bull-fighters. The second trumpet proclaims the entrance of the bull. The matador first watches his chief assistant perform some passes with the yellow and magenta cape, in order to determine the bull’s qualities and mood, before taking over himself. During this period the matador is testing the bull’s speed, power and tendencies to hook one way or the other. Information learned now is crucial for a successful fight

The third trumpet signals the entrance of the picadores, mounted on horse back, who carry long pikes with a steel tip which is prevented from going more than four inches into the bull’s flesh by a metal guard. The bull carries its head and horns high, so the aim of the picador is to weaken the massive tossing muscle (the morrillo) between the shoulder blades. When the bull charges, the picador leans out and thrusts the pike into the bull’s shoulders.

The brave bull disregards the pain and charges harder into the pike. The cowardly bull backs away and is reluctant to charge again and may be booed by the crowd. The trial of the picks is over at the bull-ring president’s descretion, but usually after 2 or 3 picks, which are spearated by a quite, or rescue, in which the bull is lured away from the horse by the banderilleros.

Following the fourth trumpet the banderilleros attempt to place their banderillas in the bull’s withers, again trying to weaken the bull so that the matador is able to work more closely with it. The banderillas are wooden sticks decorated with colored paper and with a steel harpoon on the end. The banderilleros usually run in a quarter circle leaning over the bull’s horns to place the banderillas.

On the fifth trumpet blast, the matador removes his black winged hat and dedicates the death of the bull to the president or the crowd before beginning his faena. The faena is the most beautiful and skillful part of the fight. This is where the matador must prove his courage and artistry.

The faena consists of a series of passes made with a muleta. This is a piece of thick cloth draped over a short stick, which is held in the left hand. The matador also uses a killing sword, which is always held in the right hand. The classic pass is called the natural, in which the muleta is first held in front of the matador to site the bull and is then swung across and away from the matador’s body hopefully leading the bull toward it. The matador will continue to perform a number of different passes varying in skill until he has demonstrated his complete control over the charging bull.

The bull is now ready to be killed. The matador stands about ten feet from the bull, keeping the bull fixated on the muleta held low in the left hand, and aiming the sword between the shoulder blades. The matador attacks pushing the sword over the horns and deep between the shoulder blades. If the sword goes in to the hilt it is an estocada but if it hits bone it is a pinchazo. An estocada usually results in the bull dropping immediately to its knees and dying. If the bull fails to die, the matador may bring out a descabello (a sword with a short cross piece at the end) which he stabs into the bull’s neck severing the spinal cord. Finally, the fight is over.

According to the bravery and skill of the matador, they can be awarded trophies by the president. These “trophies” are actually the ears, tail, and hoof of the bull. The crowd shows their respect by waving white handkerchiefs. If the mantador feels that the were a worthy audience, he throws the trophies into the stands. In return, the people throw hundreds of flowers, which are collected by the mantador’s assistants.

To me, bull fighting sounds like very interesting and exiting entertainment. I hope that some day, I have the oportunity to attend a corrida de torros.