

Opinion Page

On Entertainment Today

By Scott Curnow

Edited for graphic material content:

It seems everywhere I go I hear people talking about the excessive violence and explicit sexual content of entertainment in today's western culture. Is this true? Have we as a society desensitized ourselves and degraded our moral standards in recent times? Hardly, some of us just chose to remember the past through blinders, much like those of a nervous horse, so that we only see what directly affects us in the present. If anything, we only need to look at history to see some improvement in entertainment today.

In Roman times it was a spectator sport for the whole family to go down to the coliseum to watch gladiators fight, or better still, to watch wild animals chewing on Christians that would not honor the emperor as a god. Some of the ancient Roman cults even encouraged drunkenness and fornication in the practice of their religion. We must keep in mind that Roman culture is considered by most historians and laymen alike to be one of the most socially advanced civilizations in the history of the earth, Was their behavior proper, even by their own standards, for a society that was considered cultured and educated?

How about the Crusades? It seems that for a while, during the Middle Ages, only one form of religion was correct, depending on which one you believed in. So in the ultimate blasphemy, Christians killed each other and Muslims, among others, in large numbers, rather than tolerate the beliefs of their neighbors. In my somewhat limited understanding of history, this seems to have been a form of land gathering, profiteering, and also entertainment mainly for the Catholic Church and its subjects. They justified this form of entertainment through many of the same tactics used today to support the opinion of the Church. "We are right, they are wrong and will burn in hell for it!" Perhaps the world would fair better in pagan hands in the future.

What about the cruel, public torture and executions, most often hangings, that were public throughout much of America's history? The private citizens were asked by law enforcement to form a "posse" to hunt down suspected criminals. These individuals were denied rights and beaten, among other things, as recently as the last century. If that constitutes equal rights for all men, it doesn't sound too appealing to me. Slaves were also mistreated and most likely used for some perverse form of entertainment throughout the history of the world. I'm quite certain there was more than one overzealous sadist that took pleasure in being cruel and inhuman. Thus making some of them a form of entertainment for demented souls.

Then there is the story I heard on Christmas Eve at the impressionable and naive age of fifteen, at a time when I thought everyone was "normal" and "decent"

to some extent. While drinking dark Barcardi and milk with co-workers and their friends, I was told of a time, by one of the old gentlemen present, when he and his friends used to frequent an old apartment in downtown Washington, DC. For only a dime they were allowed entry to a crowd of people so large the room was overflowing. As they paid their admission and shouldered through the crowd, their young adolescent eyes found the main attraction- a woman on all fours with a Censored) [REDACTED]. The thought and the mental picture drawn are still shocking to me this day. So have we really degraded our entertainment? I think not. Some of us just do not look at the past in all its glory or darkness, depending on whose looking. So when I hear those people talking, I smile inside, knowing they only see the past they wish to see, and that we have come a little way towards decency in all aspects of entertainment.

Is it safe to get back in the...air?

By: Vicki Scott

In June I bought airline tickets to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico for my annual soccer tournament that's held the first weekend in November. Little did I know, little did anyone know, that the September 11 events would occur. My team and I didn't know how our airline would be affected. I think I secretly wanted them to tell us we couldn't go. I've always been leery of flying on a plane anyway. Yes, I know, it's safer in an airplane than in a car. Oh well. Now I was even more uneasy than before. I kept up with the news, as I'm sure everyone else was doing. As time drew closer to the beginning of November we realized the game was still on. Everyone was being told to go on with his or her lives. Don't let the evildoers control or alter your lives. Be brave. So, on we went as I'm sure many Americans who also had previous plans laid out to fly did. There were some that didn't fly to the tournament and say they will never fly again. There was a whole team that didn't come due to some airport problems where they lived. All the teams were from around the United States.

There definitely have been some changes at the airports. I was in the Charlotte and the Houston airports in the states and then in Puerto Vallarta's airport in Mexico. All airports had more security. Men standing with guns at the places where my bags and I were checked looked ominous even though they were in place for our own good. My sister-in-law (our awesome goalie) couldn't take her lighter on the plane when leaving Mexico to come home. Razors, pocketknives, etc. had to be packed in the check-in luggage and could not be in the carry-on bags. More thorough checking of our luggage and carry-on bags occurred at more than one location. They even scanned several passengers with a metal detector wand in Mexico before they could get on the plane.

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