

Things in Motion

All things are in motion and nothing is at rest...you cannot go into the same (river) twice. --Heraclitus (540?-480?) B.C.

REALISM: FACT OR FANCY?

Today when a movie is touted as being realistic, we expect to see more blood and gore along with profanity, yet viewers with a bent for unvarnished truth would have a field day pointing out errors in realism. The truth is that our producers and directors call the shots on where realism gives in to “good taste” or to one or more of the many social and political taboos that hold us captive. For instance, has any reader ever seen a pile of manure in a movie scene? We are shown a plethora of bloody acts where bodies are blown asunder, yet in the unpaved streets of any town where mules or horses are commonly seen there is no sign of the animals having been there. This is far from realistic. With few exceptions, large herds of cattle do not include scenes where breeding is taking place, yet such action is occurring. Until recently, films depicting the pioneers traveling west across the plains never showed buffalo chips, yet the settlers depended on them for fuel because much of the plains was lacking in wood.



From the age of ten, I learned to shoot a rifle and to maintain it properly. It was a subject of scorn to note that Roy Rogers, Gene Autrey, and other wild west heroes whose exploits were shown on the movie screens, could shoot their sixguns as many as twenty-two times without reloading. It also was

noticed that the hero usually wore a white hat and that he could participate in brawls, stop runaway horses, rescue ladies from stampeding cattle and engage in battles with hostile Indians, all without ever losing his hat, or even getting it soiled. No matter how vicious the fight may be, that same hero never showed a mark on his clean-shaven chin, nor a wrinkle in his tight-fitting clothing. If he was killed in action, the only sign of injury was a trickle of blood from the corner of his mouth. With the passing of the horse operas, the most blatant examples of the misrepresentation of truth moved to the comedy genre.



Warfare and the horrors of combat were often glossed over in favor of the romantic aspects, if any, of dying with your boots on. Soldiers were never wounded in their backsides and the more macho side of a hospital ward was never shown. For my taste, most of the action films of today show an exorbitant amount of violence, but when I note the reports of murder, rape, kidnapping, et. cetera on the nightly news, I have to admit that reality is beginning to surpass the worst of what our movies portray.

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