


6-2014

Spartacus the Liberator: Modern Reception of an Ancient Narrative

Charlotte Lehman

Union College - Schenectady, NY

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses>

 Part of the [Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity Commons](#), [Film and Media Studies Commons](#), and the [Military History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Lehman, Charlotte, "Spartacus the Liberator: Modern Reception of an Ancient Narrative" (2014). *Honors Theses*. 549.
<https://digitalworks.union.edu/theses/549>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at Union | Digital Works. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of Union | Digital Works. For more information, please contact digitalworks@union.edu.

Spartacus the Liberator:
Modern Reception of an Ancient Narrative

By
Charlotte E. Lehman

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors in the Department of Classics

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2014

Abstract

LEHMAN, CHARLOTTE Spartacus the Liberator: Modern Reception of an Ancient Narrative. Department of Classics, June 2014

ADVISOR: Stacie Raucci

Spartacus, the Thracian gladiator who led the rebels of the Third Servile War, is one of the most widely known figures of Ancient Rome. Despite the lack of ancient sources describing him, Spartacus has become popular in modern society. After being held as a slave in a gladiator training school, Spartacus inspired a revolt in which almost 100,000 slaves stood before several Roman legions and won. Before being subdued by the praetor Marcus Licinius Crassus, the escaped slaves won many battles against the powerful Roman army.

Spartacus' story has been adapted in novels, films, and even ballets. This thesis examines the history behind these adaptations and explores the ways the story has been manipulated to promote certain views and ideologies in modern society. Using Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* and Yuri Grigorovich's ballet of the same name as case studies, this thesis looks into the motivations and messages behind the modern reception of the classic story.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	iii
Chapter One: <i>The History and Reception of Spartacus</i>	1
Chapter Two: <i>Stanley Kubrick's Spartacus (1960)</i>	12
Chapter Three: <i>The Use of the Spartacus Story in the 1968 Soviet Ballet</i>	44
<i>Conclusion</i>	59
<i>Bibliography</i>	62

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Union College Classics Department, whose persistent and inviting faculty led me to my perfect discipline. Thank you especially to Professor Hans-Friedrich Mueller, my academic advisor who has supported me for the past three years and pushed me to become to most passionate and successful Classics student I can be.

Thank you to those who have supported me during the process. I would like to extend my gratitude to Professor Kristen Fox and the Committee on Undergraduate Research whose Undergraduate Research Grant allowed me to travel to the 2014 American Philological Association Annual Meeting and speak with leading scholars in the field of reception. Thank you to Ms. Ruth Cotter for the support and management of this research grant. I am also grateful to Nick D'Angelo for his support during this project by providing me an outlet for ideas and giving me the fresh and unique perspective of an American historian thinking about Classics.

My deepest thanks go to Professor Stacie Raucci, my thesis advisor and mentor who has given me direction throughout the thesis process, as well as emotional support and postgraduate career advice. Without Professor Raucci's calming demeanor and true passion for classical reception, this project could not have been realized.

Chapter One: The History and Reception of Spartacus

We've all seen the famous Kirk Douglas film. We've heard of Howard Fast's famous novel and we've lusted after Andy Whitfield and Liam McIntyre. Maybe even a few of the ambitious have tried his workout. No matter your age, every generation knows about Spartacus.

However, before we can truly understand the reception of Spartacus, we must first understand the historical figure. Not much is known about the Thracian gladiator who inspired a revolt against the Roman state. And although that is about the extent of our knowledge, the ancient sources tend to agree on the background of the man and the events of the revolt.

Spartacus does in fact seem to have been a Thracian¹, although he certainly was not the son and grandson of slaves, as portrayed in the Douglas film. In fact, Spartacus was actually born free in Thrace, an area that encompassed parts of modern-day Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey.² Prior to his tenure as a Roman slave, he actually served as a paid mercenary for the Roman army.³ Plutarch even references a Thracian wife who was taken into captivity and later escaped from slavery with Spartacus, although its singular reference and Plutarch's novelistic writing style makes this hard to verify.⁴

¹ Plutarch *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234; Appian *Roman History*

² Brill's New Pauly <<http://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/brill-s-new-pauly/thraci-thracia-e1211890#>>

³ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

⁴ Plutarch *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234

There are not any details available about how Spartacus was captured, but we do know that he was taken to Rome afterwards and sold as a gladiator.⁵ He then entered the gladiator training school of Gnaeus Lentulus Batiatus in Capua, comprised primarily of Thracian and Gallic slaves.⁶

It is said that the first night Spartacus was brought to Rome, a serpent wrapped itself around his face while he slept. His wife, a prophetess, claimed this to be a sign of “great and formidable power.”⁷ Indeed, Spartacus’ later escape lends credence to the augural powers of his wife. Using kitchen items as weapons⁸, Spartacus escaped from the school of Batiatus with 35-80 men, with most sources hovering around 70.⁹

As in the Douglas film, the escaped slaves established a camp on Mount Vesuvius, after collecting troops and arms and plundering the nearby countryside.¹⁰ Throughout the three-year war, their numbers would swell to around 70,000-90,000.¹¹

⁵ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

⁶ Plutarch *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

⁷ Plutarch *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Plutarch *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹⁰ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹¹ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

The more conservative Lucius Annaeus Florus claims that Spartacus' troops numbered only 10,000, perhaps in an attempt to diminish the significance of the war and the power of the slave army.¹² Spartacus was not the sole leader of the rebel forces; Crixus and Oenomaus, two other escaped gladiators from Gaul, formed the other two legs of the slave triumvirate.¹³

The Spartacus War, though ultimately a failure, was the most successful slave uprising Rome had ever faced. The escaped slaves fought a series of battles against the well-organized Roman army. With the slaves having beaten the armies of Clodius Pulcher, a praetor,¹⁴ Publius Varinus,¹⁵ and Lentulus and Cassius,¹⁶ the Romans had good reason to fear the slaves. The success was relatively short-lived, however. Though Spartacus is reported to have wanted to march toward the Alps and return to their respective homelands and freedom, his men became lustful for power.¹⁷ Crixus and

¹² Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5

¹³ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95-97. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹⁴ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95-97. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹⁵ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Sallust, *The Histories* Book 3 in Winkler (2007), 241; Livy *Periochae* 95-97. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Frontinus *Strategies*. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 245-6

¹⁶ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹⁷ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

Oenomaus broke away from Spartacus, taking thousands of his men with them. The two were defeated by the Roman army.¹⁸

The ancient sources disagree regarding Spartacus' feelings on marching on the city of Rome itself. Florus reports that Spartacus wanted to attack the city,¹⁹ but Appian claims that while he had entertained the idea, it was soon abandoned because "he did not consider himself ready as yet for that kind of fight, for he was not suitably armed, for no city had joined him, but only slaves, deserters, and riff-raff."²⁰

Instead, Spartacus marched south in an attempt to leave Italy and potentially take over the island of Sicily. Unfortunately for the revolt, the leader was deceived by pirates and cornered in the toe of the Italian peninsula.²¹ Trapped, Spartacus faced a stand-off with Marcus Licinius Crassus, the recently elected praetor.²² Crassus ordered his men to build a wall, simultaneously keeping them from boredom and also starving the Spartacans of their provisions.²³ There were several battles that followed, but in a final stand-off, Crassus finished the war and decimated the rebellion, leaving Spartacus dead in battle.²⁴

¹⁸ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95-97. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

¹⁹ Florus *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243-5

²⁰ Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 239

²¹ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243

²² Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

²³ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

²⁴ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240; Livy *Periochae* 95-97. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Frontinus *Strategies*. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 245-6; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

Plutarch and Appian claim that Pompey played a major role in ending the servile war. Plutarch writes that although Pompey himself was not present for the final battle against Spartacus, he is the one who ended the war and accepted the glory that came with such credit:

But although Crassus had been fortunate, had shown most excellent generalship, and had exposed his person to danger, nevertheless, his success did not fail to enhance the reputation of Pompey. For the fugitives from the battle encountered that general and were cut to pieces, so he could write to the senate that in open battle, indeed, Crassus had conquered the slaves, but that he himself had extirpated the war.²⁵

It is hard to know the extent of Pompey's credit for ending the war; Plutarch and Appian are the only ancient sources who mention Pompey's involvement.²⁶ Indeed, Livy, Paterculus, Frontinus, and Orosius all neglect any mention of Pompey, though they do reference Crassus' victory.²⁷

Before investigating how Spartacus' revolt is regarded in modern society, we must also look at how it was viewed in Rome. Unfortunately, of this our knowledge is fairly limited; the sources we have detailing Spartacus' revolt were all written long after the actual events occurred. The writings closest to the actual events are those of Sallust, who wrote about the Third Servile War approximately thirty years after it occurred. Paulus Orosius, whose writings we must view skeptically since he wrote about the events almost six hundred years after they transpired, claims that Spartacus' war "caused a general fright since it was no longer a show for just a few but a cause of fear

²⁵ Plutarch *Crassus* 11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 236-8

²⁶ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8; Appian *Roman History* 1.14.116. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

²⁷ Livy *Periochae* 95. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Paterculus *Compendium of Roman History* 2.30.5. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 243; Frontinus *Strategies*. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 245-6; Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

everywhere.”²⁸ Orosius cautions that although “it is called a slave war, nobody should mistake it for something insignificant according to its name.”²⁹

If we are to believe Orosius and Plutarch, who suggests that the Senate made significant efforts to keep the revolt quiet,³⁰ it appears that Spartacus did in fact inspire fear in the Romans. Indeed, C.A. Robinson, Jr. writes that although “the war was over...the memory of the terrible fear it had instilled lasted on.”³¹ Slaves’ living conditions were gradually made better, in an effort to avoid the chaos caused by Spartacus’ revolt.³²

Though it is difficult to find mention of Spartacus, later writers provide clues into the Roman psyche regarding this rebel. Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, writing to his brother in AD 393, referred to 29 gladiators who killed themselves prior to fighting as “worse than Spartacus.”³³ Stothard writes that “to the ancient Romans who lived in 73 BC, and their successors for a long time after 73 BC, the rebel leader of the Third Servile War, as modern history books describe him, was an obscenity.”³⁴ Stothard also observes that to Marcus Tullius Cicero, one of the most revered Roman orators, “[Spartacus] name was a term of abuse to be used against the vilest of state enemies.”³⁵ Indeed, in his *Philippics*, Cicero uses the name as the highest of insults: “O you Spartacus! For what name is more fit for you?”³⁶

²⁸ Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

²⁹ Orosius *History against the Pagans* 5.24. Translation is by Martin M. Winkler in Winkler (2007), 246-7

³⁰ Plutarch *Crassus* 8-11. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234-8

³¹ Robinson, Jr. (2007), 123

³² Ibid.

³³ Quintus Aurelius Symmachus, as quoted in Stothard (2010), 9

³⁴ Ibid., 10

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Cicero *Philippics* 13. Translation is by C.D. Yonge, as quoted on
<<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11080/11080.txt>>

It should also be noted that no heroic role was given to Spartacus in antiquity. Despite modern receptions having adopted him as a leader in the rights of the oppressed, Romans viewed him less sympathetically, with only Plutarch even giving him the title of an adversary of Rome:

Even as wartime enemies, slaves were not considered equals: a Roman general who defeated unworthy enemies like slaves could not, as was customary, celebrate his victory as a triumph...most surviving texts documenting the so-called 'slave war' waged under Spartacus do not consider this war honorable, nor do they describe him as an enemy commander. The slave war, moreover, is merely one episode in a series of external and internal threats during a century of civil wars...only Plutarch's biography of Crassus, who was given command against Spartacus, establishes the slave leader as one of the Roman general's adversaries. Plutarch thus renders tangible a few anecdotes shaping an ancient image of Spartacus around 170 years after the events. However, this by no means establishes Spartacus as an ancient hero.³⁷

Understanding the historic context of Spartacus, in particular the lack of detail that surrounds him, is crucial to understanding the modern reception of him. We don't know much about Spartacus from the ancient sources, allowing the story to be manipulated without necessarily being inaccurate. Details and motivations can be inserted into the storyline in order to reflect modern concerns such as freedom from oppression, equality, and socialist ideology. The figure of Spartacus has become a myth of sorts, larger than history; his story is politically malleable and can be tailored to specific audiences. As with many adaptations today, the story of Spartacus has become the basic story of the hero who faces a variety of obstacles, exhibits entirely positive traits, and is sympathetic to the audience.³⁸

Spartacus' tale has been adapted in many forms, both formal and informal. There are Spartacus films, plays, novels, and ballets. He is the namesake for several political

³⁷ Renger and Solomon (2012), 46

³⁸ Paul (2013), 175-6

parties and journals. One can easily find fan fiction devoted to Spartacus. He even inspired a Pepsi commercial and was the basis for a recent improv skit held in a Starbucks. There are hundreds of counts of the modern reception of Spartacus; this study focuses on two of these significant events. I will delve more deeply into the 1960 Kirk Douglas film, perhaps the most well known adaptation of Spartacus, and look at the 1968 Bolshoi ballet of the same name, which presents Soviet ideology in the form of Ancient Rome. These receptions of the Spartacus story, though created on opposite sides of the world, complement each other perfectly, having faced similar production and ideological challenges. The film and the ballet effectively create a sympathetic hero and champion of the people through the creation of a central conflict and pairing the “a single heroic protagonist with an equally important antagonist.”³⁹

Before we begin looking at Spartacus, however, we must truly understand classical reception itself. Reception can be defined as the modern use and reaction to classical stories, which are often manipulated to achieve certain political or moral messages. Reception is the link between the ancient and the modern, showing us the similarities and differences between our societies and allowing the receiver to actively consider the messages portrayed.

As one may expect, classical reception studies is a relatively new discipline, truly beginning around the 1970s with the publication of Jon Solomon’s *The Ancient World in the Cinema*, which discusses films and “how they might tell us about our own century and about our modern perception of antiquity.”⁴⁰ Solomon notes that “the study of antiquity and the cinema began with a rudimentary theoretical approach and an exegetical

³⁹ Paul (2013), 179

⁴⁰ Wyke (2003), 434

methodology dependent on applying classical learning to a limited, newly collected corpus”⁴¹ and indeed that the products of classical reception “were being produced not only faster than we could analyze them but in greater abundance than we could even locate, let alone collect, them.”⁴² Such rapid creation of a relatively new subject in academia might certainly contribute to its reputation as neither serious nor academic. However, as Solomon proved in *The Ancient World in the Cinema*, classical reception is not something to be taken lightly; it is indeed the study of how we view our own history, since our society ultimately stemmed from those of the ancient Greeks and Romans.⁴³

Since Solomon first broke into the study of classical reception, “there has been a proliferation of classical allusions, adaptations, and historical reconstructions in feature films and television series...as well as an ever-increasing body of classical scholarship on film and popular culture more generally.”⁴⁴ Prior to this first scholarship, the use of classics in film was looked down upon as merely “low culture” and ruining the wealth of historical documents worthy of study on their own. However, in recent years, a new view has become increasingly popular:

“the aim of classics is not only to uncover the ancient world but also ‘to define and debate *our* relationship to that world’...classics concerns not high culture but whole cultures, and not just an elite response but a whole range of response to them.”⁴⁵

Certainly, classical reception studies have become a more legitimate academic discipline, worthy of respect, particularly as we study them from a slightly anthropological viewpoint in examining how the Classics play a role in our modern culture.

⁴¹ Solomon (2010), 438

⁴² Solomon (2010), 439

⁴³ Solomon (2001), 3

⁴⁴ Wyke (2003), 432

⁴⁵ Wyke (1997), 7

This thesis examines Spartacus in (relatively) modern culture. Spartacus is a man everyone knows because he has been built up to resemble a far more important character in Ancient Rome than he actually was. Few people actually know the history of Spartacus and the Third Servile War and most certainly aren't aware of just how little we know of him. The man is politically and morally malleable and his story is very general and lacks detail. It can thus be easily adapted to promote certain values and ideologies.

This thesis examines the different ways this particular historical character has been received in modern society and why. What is the effect of the modern reception of Spartacus? What does it reveal about the attitudes of the time period and the culture in which the reception was produced?

This will be explored through two case studies. The first, the famous 1960 Kirk Douglas film *Spartacus*, was produced in democratic America, but during the time when fear of communism gripped the nation. The film confronts moral and ideological restrictions and its production is as much a representation of the time period as the film itself.

The second, Yuri Grigorovich's ballet *Spartacus*, produced by the Bolshoi Theatre in Russia, was created as a piece of Soviet propaganda for the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. Meant to bolster the spirits of the masses, *Spartacus* espouses socialist ideology in an interesting adaptation of a man who simply wanted his freedom from the Romans.

Despite being produced in societies politically opposite from each other, there are many similarities in the 1960 film and the 1968 ballet. Both reflect concerns with restrictions on freedom and the power of a capitalist government. Additionally, the

context of production of the film and ballet can teach a modern student much about the nature of our society in the 1960s, effectively explaining political situations in that time period and providing a primary source reaction to events that occurred, policies present, and the general atmosphere of the time.

Chapter Two: Stanley Kubrick's Spartacus (1960)

Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* (1960) is one of the most famous receptions of the classic story. The film uses ancient Rome as a lens for commentary on modern society, making political and social statements using the famous slave rebellion as a plot device. Kubrick uses many cinematic techniques and plot devices to manipulate the sympathies of the viewers, alternatively allowing the audience to sympathize with the Romans and the slaves in a film technique known as distancing and identification.

Distancing and identification are two complementary techniques that often evoke questions from the viewers about where their sympathies lie. Projecting certain ideologies through characters allows the audience to either sympathize with or disassociate from a character. These categories are fluid and in *Spartacus* especially, the mix of distancing and identification begs the audience to consider “a complex and ambivalent projection in which the Romans are both self and other.”⁴⁶ Most frequently, the viewer of *Spartacus* is meant to identify with the gladiators but also understand the perspective of the Romans, a tentative balance conducive both to the political goals of screenwriter Dalton Trumbo and the Universal's fear of promoting leftist ideology.

Historically, Roman society has frequently been portrayed as “a society of might and vice,” allowing the film “to distance the audience from the Romans and to invite that audience to identify with Rome's victims or opponents.”⁴⁷ *Spartacus* is not original in this respect and is merely one instance in cinematic history where the Romans are portrayed as the enemy. What makes *Spartacus* unique is the use of distancing and

⁴⁶ Joshel, Malamud, and McGuire (2005), 6

⁴⁷ Ibid.

identification to effectively make political comparisons to American current events and promote certain ideologies. Especially when considering the context of the film's production, these political statements become even clearer.

Historical Context

The story of Spartacus begins not with the film, but with the novel. Written in 1951 by Communist Howard Fast, the book *Spartacus* is filled with political ideology. More important than that, however, is the social and political climate of America that inspired Fast to write the novel. Neither literature nor film can be separated from the time at which it was produced, and the film and novel are no exceptions.

During the first half of the 20th century, fear of Communism ran rampant. In 1937, Congress created the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Created to investigate political activity, HUAC soon became an all-powerful group of men with the power to ruin lives and careers. Frederick Ahl describes its tyranny:

[HUAC] evolved over the next two decades into a kind of modern Inquisition before which ideological heretics of selected types could be summoned for questioning. If they failed to cooperate, they could be jailed or, if foreign-born, stripped of their citizenship and deported. It was particularly sinister that the congressional response in the days of crisis preceding World War II was to force a general consensus on what was not American rather than to undertake the more complicated task of suggesting what it meant to be American.⁴⁸

People lived in fear of being labeled as a Communist, as HUAC's "investigations persuaded a sufficiently large section of the American public to accept that anyone who was, or could be represented as, a Communist was an actual or potential traitor."⁴⁹ The

⁴⁸ Ahl, (2007), 67

⁴⁹ Ibid., 68

culture of fear grew and soon people “turned informer,” whether or not the accused was guilty of the crime of free expression of Communist values.⁵⁰

As Ahl has said, “restrictions on free thought and free speech produce results.”⁵¹ Under the HUAC regime, employees could be fired for participating in “leftist” activities such as union involvement.⁵² There was “a total ban on books, music, and paintings produced by ‘communists, fellow travelers, et cetera.’”⁵³ Fearmongering even led “nervous librarians [to burn] books placed on what appeared to be a State Department blacklist.”⁵⁴ Before long, a hostile environment had been created in which “the Left was...totally isolated in Hollywood.”⁵⁵

Thus, the political climate was not particularly friendly to leftist Howard Fast. Perhaps as a show of patriotism, perhaps as a demonstration of Capitalist control in America, HUAC called prominent members of the Hollywood film industry and other suspected Communists to hearings in 1947 and again in the early 1950s. J. Parnell Thomas presided over the 1947 hearings, beginning with a statement recognizing the social reach of Hollywood and questioning whether Communists in the organization were using films to promote their “anti-American” ideology:

However, it is the very magnitude of the scope of the motion-picture industry which makes this investigation so necessary. We all recognize, certainly, the tremendous effect which moving pictures have on their mass audiences, far removed from the Hollywood sets. We all recognize that what the citizen sees and hears in his neighborhood movie house carries a powerful impact on his thoughts and behavior.

⁵⁰ Ahl, (2007), 68

⁵¹ Ibid., 70

⁵² Ibid., 68

⁵³ Ibid., 72

⁵⁴ Thomas Reeves, as cited by Ahl (2007), 72

⁵⁵ Humphries (2008), 109

With such vast influence over the lives of American citizens as the motion-picture industry exerts, it is not unnatural--in fact, it is very logical--that subversive and undemocratic forces should attempt to use this medium for un-American purposes....⁵⁶

Despite having worked for the United States government in producing wartime propaganda during the early 1940s,⁵⁷ Fast was called before HUAC in 1947 for his support of the Spanish Refugee Appeal, “an innocuous enough organization raising money for food and medical supplies for displaced persons in Span.”⁵⁸ When asked to testify, Fast refused to turn over a list of supporters of the Appeal (also referred to as the Joint Antifascist Refugee Committee), citing the Fifth Amendment.⁵⁹ Fast, who admittedly was “impolitic in the extreme, calling the committee members names and pointing out their stupidities”⁶⁰ was found guilty of contempt of Congress and began serving a three-month prison sentence in West Virginia in the Spring of 1950.⁶¹

Spartacus the novel was written in 1951 after Fast’s tenure in prison. In the 1996 introduction to *Spartacus*, Fast describes conceptualizing the novel in prison and the difficulties he faced when seeking publication.⁶² As with many receptions of the *Spartacus* tale, Fast used the past as a lens to examine the political and social aspects of present society. *Spartacus* contains “strong sympathies for the political empowerment of the working class.”⁶³ Fast creates a world with “a simplified class structure with heavy moral overtones” in which the Romans, or the “proto-bourgeois overlords are evil, which the working classes, including slaves, free workers, common soldiers, peasants...and the

⁵⁶ Mintz and McNeil (2012)

⁵⁷ Macdonald (1996), 14

⁵⁸ Ibid., 20

⁵⁹ Fast (1996), vii; Douglas (2012), ch.1; and Macdonald (1996) 20

⁶⁰ Macdonald (1996), 20

⁶¹ Ibid., 21 and Futrell (2001), 91

⁶² Fast (1996), viii

⁶³ Futrell (2001), 91

poor, are good.”⁶⁴ No one wanted to publish something so radical by a blacklisted author; nor could they have afforded to:

Commercial publishers, given the political climate, wouldn’t touch Howard Fast’s novel *Spartacus* in 1950. The FBI advised against publication. Angus Cameron, the editor-in-chief of Fast’s usual publisher, had been forced to resign because he, too, was under scrutiny for publishing left-wing manuscripts.⁶⁵

Kirk Douglas describes the bravery of Fast, fully dedicating himself to a book on freedom in ancient Rome while “his own freedom as an American citizen was being systematically reduced and restricted.”⁶⁶ By the time Fast sought publication for *Spartacus*, “the blacklist had found its way into the publishing business.”⁶⁷ After being rejected from seven publishing houses, it became clear that the *Spartacus* manuscript would never be printed by a major publishing house while Fast remained blacklisted.⁶⁸ Howard Fast was forced to self-publish, making the book’s success even more of an achievement. *Spartacus* sold 45,000 hardcover copies and millions of paperbacks.⁶⁹

As a book about a slave rebellion and inspired by the limiting of American freedom, the story told in Fast’s *Spartacus* is inherently riddled with political subtext. It thus contains parallels between Spartacus’ lack of freedom and the ever-decreasing freedom of the citizens of the United States. Howard Fast’s struggles to print the novel in the political climate of the time reflect and further strengthen this narrative. A film adaptation of the story would of course contain similar themes.

⁶⁴ Futrell (2001), 92

⁶⁵ Homberger, as cited in Ahl (2007), 71

⁶⁶ Douglas (2012), ch. 2

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Fast (1996), viii

Although *Spartacus* the film was produced and released many years after Fast's novel was published, HUAC still had a hold on American minds. As Maria Wyke says, the film presents themes of socialism and oppression, revealing "surviving traces of the general Marxist commitment to class struggle" and also suggesting "a more immediate, liberal concern with the American Communist Party" and the tyranny of HUAC.⁷⁰

The HUAC hearings had led to the condemnation of members of the film industry, known as the "Hollywood Ten." The Hollywood Ten were blacklisted by production companies; no one would associate with them for fear of being associated with Communism, since "'guilt by association' [had] become a basic weapon with which to (browbeat) unfriendly witnesses in the future."⁷¹ In the famous Waldorf Statement, it was decided that production studios would not give work to blacklisted actors, directors, or screenwriters. The Hollywood Ten were "placed on a blacklist by a group of Hollywood executive and producers who vowed...that these men would receive no further employment in the film industry."⁷²

Dalton Trumbo, the screenwriter for *Spartacus*, had been associated with the Communist Party and leftist ideology. Despite Trumbo's actual credentials, he was condemned as one of the Hollywood Ten for his previous involvement with the Communist Party. Ironically, "one could hardly criticize his patriotic service in American war-time propaganda."⁷³ During World War II, Trumbo was a war correspondent for the US Army Air Force and wrote the script for *Thirty Seconds over*

⁷⁰ Wyke (1997), 66-7

⁷¹ Humphries (2008), 83

⁷² Ahl (2007), 70

⁷³ Ahl (2007), 68

Tokyo (1944), “a film commemorating the first raids on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”⁷⁴ But however patriotic Trumbo was, it was not enough to save him from HUAC.

As seen with Dalton Trumbo, HUAC targeted even those who were not likely to be a threat to America. Indeed, Douglas tells us that many of those blacklisted were of Russian or Jewish heritage.⁷⁵ Their politics didn’t matter, Douglas argues, adding that had he been more famous, he may have been targeted for his questionable heritage and therefore questionable patriotism.⁷⁶ Reynold Humphries lends credence to Douglas’ assertions, describing the anti-Semitism that was so prevalent among the anti-Communists in order to secure the southern vote, thus “[keeping] alive the myth of the Judeo-Bolshevik conspiracy.”⁷⁷ Notable Americans, including the famous inventor of the Model T, Henry Ford, spoke out against the supposed Jewish influence in Hollywood, suggesting that the Jews were “controlling Hollywood and churning out Jewish propaganda.”⁷⁸

Even after the HUAC hearings had ended and their perpetrators were out of office, the Hollywood blacklist continued and blacklistees could not get work under their real names. Some persisted and continued to work in the business; Trumbo “invented as many as a dozen other names for his work, which was then ‘fronted’ for him by sympathetic friends.”⁷⁹ The use of blacklisted writers was not uncommon; in 1957, Robert L. Rich, a pseudonym for Dalton Trumbo, was awarded an Oscar for *The Brave One*, much to the chagrin of the Academy.⁸⁰ However, those who continued to work in

⁷⁴ Ahl (2007), 68

⁷⁵ Douglas (2012), ch.1

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Humphries (2008), 12

⁷⁸ Ibid., 13

⁷⁹ Douglas (2012), ch.2

⁸⁰ Hanson (2001), 4

Hollywood under other names suffered financially while the studios reaped economic benefits: they were able to pay the screenwriters far less than they deserved or had made prior to the blacklist.⁸¹

During the production of *Spartacus*, which was released in 1960 and written long after the HUAC hearings, Trumbo used the alias “Sam Jackson” so that Universal, the production studio, didn’t drop the film.⁸² Despite being “the worst-kept secret in Hollywood,”⁸³ Douglas describes hiding Trumbo’s identity, since “after a dozen years, no studio wanted to be the first to hire a blacklisted writer.”⁸⁴ Indeed, the *New York Times* published an article on February 22, 1960, elaborating on Universal’s conundrum. On the one hand, “Universal was party to an agreement in 1947 in which the movie studios agreed, in effect, not to employ writers who defied the House Committee on Un-American Activities.”⁸⁵ Giving Trumbo credit was “likely to provoke a boycott and a strong campaign against the film by the American Legion.”⁸⁶ On the other hand, “Universal may win wide support within the industry by becoming the first major studio to renounce the 1947 agreement openly instead of evading it through [hypocrisy].”⁸⁷

Eventually, there were suspicions that Trumbo was the screenwriter and conservative members of the Hollywood scene were furious “at the prospect of Communist sympathizers creeping back into the movie business.”⁸⁸ However, Douglas soon wanted to give Trumbo the credit he deserved and, according to Douglas, lobbied

⁸¹ Meroney and Coons (2012)

⁸² Hanson (2001), 4

⁸³ Cooper (2007), 24

⁸⁴ Douglas (2012), ch. 7

⁸⁵ Schumach (1960)

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Douglas (2012), ch. 7

for Trumbo's name to be attached to the film. The Trumbos and Fast argue otherwise, claiming Douglas had to be pressured into publically releasing Trumbo's name.⁸⁹

Regardless of who can claim credit for breaking the blacklist, for the first time in over a decade, Trumbo's name was attached to the film.⁹⁰ Although there is some debate as to whether *Spartacus* was the film that *technically* broke the blacklist, it was certainly the largest and best known. *Spartacus* is now the film credited with ending the censorship of the Hollywood blacklist.⁹¹

Despite the political challenges and uncertainty involved in the production of the film, it was a resounding success. The public was drawn to the fundamentally American story telling the tale of an underdog slave who started at the bottom of the mines and eventually rose to become a threat to the security of the most powerful Empire in the world. Such a story is a fundamental part of the American psyche; modern films like *Gladiator* and *The Blind Side* show essentially the same story, changing the details that make each particular film unique.⁹² The story itself can be applied to many social and political situations and is not what necessarily makes *Spartacus* so groundbreaking. But in context of the production challenges and political background of the members of the cast and crew, the story is clearly a commentary on the Anti-Communist ideals of the timeperiod.

⁸⁹ Meroney and Coons

⁹⁰ Douglas (2012), ch.11

⁹¹ Hanson (2001), 148

⁹² Winkler (2005), 19-20

Plot and Use of the Story for Political Purposes

Because Fast's novel was written in response to the unfair treatment of communists during the McCarthy years, the film adaptation necessarily promoted certain political ideologies. However, the film, having faced its own political challenges, differs from the novel in its portrayal of some of these themes. Universal took a particular interest in the production of *Spartacus*, fearing that too much leftist sentiment would negatively affect the film's success.⁹³ As a result, the film is a significantly watered down version of what Douglas and Trumbo originally planned, with crucial battles omitted and wording changed.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, it provides a clear message to the oppressed.

The film itself, separate from the polarizing politics involved in its production, portrays leftist ideology. Spartacus begins beaten down in the mines, where "slaves are worked to death in a hostile and barren environment, a physical manifestation of the institution of slavery."⁹⁵ Spartacus is barely even human. He hardly speaks in the first twenty minutes of the film and is even compared to an animal. In one segment of the mining scene, Spartacus attacks a Roman guard, biting his leg in retaliation for beating down another slave. He is referred to as a "Thracian dog" and is unkempt and dirty. The animalistic associations are clear, although this scene also serves to establish his deep moral convictions; even from the beginning of the film, Spartacus is fighting for those who do not have a voice and cannot otherwise help themselves. The mining sequence provides subtle but necessary characterization for Spartacus and establishes the story with several levels of meaning. Such characterization is necessary, as it is a "careful

⁹³ Futrell (2001), 99

⁹⁴ Cooper (2007)

⁹⁵ Futrell (2001), 99

underscoring of Spartacus's motivation...grounding us in events that we experience with Spartacus on a human level, [so] we don't lose sight of the man inside the hero."⁹⁶

Against advised methods for survival, when Spartacus arrives at the gladiatorial school, he begins building a community of slaves, establishing trust and camaraderie. Throughout the beginning of the film, "the scenes regularly include shots connecting Spartacus to groups of other characters—therefore clearly identifying that he is not unique, but rather representative of a social class."⁹⁷ The beginning of the film shows the viewer how "the slaves try to balance their hatred of Rome and their need to resist Rome's oppressive control with the need for self-protection."⁹⁸ Such a character is inherently sympathetic, appealing to the audience's emotions. In particular, this character would appeal to an American audience, considering our history with overthrowing the tyranny of an imperial power in 1776.⁹⁹

Such an American reading of the film is evident elsewhere. One quickly notices that the majority of the Roman characters are played by English actors and that the slaves, with the exception of the refined Varinia, are portrayed by Americans. This pattern of typecasting was common during the time period; Wyke points out that "Hollywood epics of the Cold War era frequently cast British theater actors as villainous Egyptian pharaohs or Roman patricians, and American film stars as their virtuous Jewish or Christian opponents."¹⁰⁰ In fact, such use of accent has become a *topos* of cinema on the ancient world and what Cyrino refers to as a "linguistic paradigm":

⁹⁶ Hanson (2001), 139

⁹⁷ Hanson (2001), 136

⁹⁸ Futrell (2001), 100

⁹⁹ Cyrino (2005), 100

¹⁰⁰ Wyke (1997), 23

In that paradigm, British theatrical actors with their elite accents [are] cast as evil, decadent Romans, while American film stars with their broad Midwestern vowels [play] the roles of heroic slaves, Hebrews, and Christians struggling against their posh-sounding oppressors. The paradigm [allows] post-war American film audiences to distance themselves from the Romans, as the characters' British diction [evokes] both the imperial power of England over its American colonies and the Old World foreign autocracies defeated by the United States in recent world wars.¹⁰¹

Even if the viewer is not actively watching for reference to the conflict between the colonies and the British during the Revolutionary War, the association is still there and is so ingrained in the minds of Americans that it further serves to characterize Spartacus, Crassus, and the rest of the characters. Spartacus is the rebel fighting against tyranny, while the Romans are the oppressive British Empire. Such an association has a double meaning: not only is it a form of characterization, but it implies success on the part of the oppressed, as in 1776.

In a particularly domineering scene, Draba and Spartacus are matched against each other in a battle staged for the entertainment of Crassus, Glabrus, and their women. Instead of killing Spartacus, as demanded by the women, Draba throws his spear directly at the camera and the Roman spectators, “in a doomed attempt to usurp Roman control.”¹⁰² The scene creates a visual hierarchy of the characters by placing the upper class Romans at the top of the screen and the gladiators at the bottom of the vertical axis.¹⁰³ Draba's trident causes tension in the viewer when it flies through the air toward the camera, not only “penetrat[ing] the space between the two aristocrats” and “effectively sundering the power of the Roman male authority,” but also violates the

¹⁰¹ Cyrino (2005), 232

¹⁰² Futrell (2001), 101

¹⁰³ Cyrino (2005), 107

established hierarchy visually, disrupting the cinematography the viewer has come to expect.¹⁰⁴

This scene, by emphasizing the level of spectacle and voyeurism involved in the film's events, further helps the audience identify with the plight of the slaves. When Draba and Spartacus fight to the death in the arena, the camera switches angles, alternating from wide-angle shots from behind the spectators, looking down on the gladiatorial spectacle, and close up shots of Spartacus and Draba fighting, as though the viewer is also in the arena with the gladiators.

When the viewer is a spectator of the spectators spectating at 48:44, the element of voyeurism enters. It is though we are above the scene, watching over everything that happens.

Additionally, the conversations occurring during the scene contribute to the voyeurism of the viewer. The women are enthralled by the fight ensuing below, but the men are oblivious to it, instead discussing private business, making the viewer a spy of sorts. This voyeurism contributes to the casual spectacle of the gladiatorial fight; Crassus and Glabrus have no interest in the fight below or that a man is about to be killed. Instead, they discuss the more important matters of politics and business. The men's lives are worth nothing; they are nothing more than objects.

Our role as spectator in this scene is not without consequence. When Draba refuses to kill Spartacus, instead throwing the spear at the stand, he is not truly throwing the spear at Crassus. Rather, it flies right between Crassus and Glabrus; its real target was the camera. This scene is a rare moment of the *alienation effect*, also known as the *distancing effect*. The alienation effect is primarily when "actors step out of character,

¹⁰⁴ Cyrino (2005), 107

face the camera, and directly address the audience.”¹⁰⁵ The effect is generally used to “remind the audience of the artificiality of the theatrical performance” and does so quite effectively in *Spartacus*.¹⁰⁶ The viewer of the film, as the supreme spectator, is ultimately the one to blame for the gladiators’ unfortunate circumstances. This is a rare moment in which “the camera seems to accuse the movie audience of siding with jaded Roman spectatorship;”¹⁰⁷ without our fixation on the violent parts of Roman life, Draba might not have been in the fight with Spartacus. Thus, his stepping out of the world of the film to throw the spear at us is a direct criticism of the viewer.

Though the objectification and spectacle are the primary focus of this scene, the filmmakers made sure to include shots that would make the viewer sympathetic to the plight of the slaves, helping them retain their humanity. In the fight between Spartacus and Draba, there is a shot where Draba’s net is placed over the camera. For a few seconds, the viewer watches the fight from within the net, creating a heightened sense of fear and a greater empathy for the tragic situation of the gladiators. This shot places the viewer in the action, both as a voyeur who admires the fight of the gladiators up close and yet separate, and as a participant, fully engaged in the action of the fight and truly understanding the risk of death.

Trumbo meant Spartacus’ revolution itself to promote leftist ideology. As Maria Wyke describes, “it is possible...to read the representations of slave labor and incarceration in the first part of the film as a visual translation to screen of the Marxist concern with the conflict between labor and capital.”¹⁰⁸ Indeed, Ward claims the film

¹⁰⁵ Barsam and Monahan (2010), 299

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Cyrino (2005), 107

¹⁰⁸ Wyke (1997), 65

“goes too far in turning the makeshift community of slaves and desperately poor peasants into a proletarian utopia,” when the actual camp would have suffered from “harsh conditions, desperate struggles, and internal tensions.”¹⁰⁹ However, the filmmakers are persistent in portraying socialist ideology through the ancients, despite the lack of evidence of such a society existing in Spartacus’ camp.

Furthermore, there are fairly direct references to the fearmongering present during the time when *Spartacus* was produced. During the “I am Spartacus!” scene, the survivors from Crassus’ massacre refuse to turn Spartacus in, even though it means they will lose their lives, a clear reference to the refusal of Trumbo and Fast to identify Communist members to HUAC.¹¹⁰

Later on, Crassus threatens Gracchus, saying “The enemies of the state are known. Arrests are in progress. The prisons begin to fill. In every city and province, lists of the disloyal have been compiled.” Such a threat is “familiar Cold War rhetoric of vigilant patriotism.”¹¹¹ Additionally, the name of the character Gracchus further establishes this association. Gracchus, who frees Varinia and her son in the film, is modeled after “the two martyred popular reformers.”¹¹² Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, the famous Roman populist reformers, “tried to revitalize the moral fabric of the Roman state by moving the urban rabble back to the land or by planting them in colonies abroad.”¹¹³ While not precisely the goal of Trumbo’s Gracchus, it is clear the screenwriter drew inspiration for his Gracchus from these historical figures.

¹⁰⁹ Ward (2007), 103

¹¹⁰ Wyke (1997), 67

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ward (2007), 103

¹¹³ Robinson (2007), 117

One of the last scenes in the film, where Gracchus and Batiatus conspire to free Varinia, provides a very direct reference to the HUAC hearings and censorship the film encountered during production:

Batiatus: I've more stripes on my back than a zebra! Every time I touch my wounds...they sing like larks. But in spite of that, I think I've found something...I never had before with all my wealth.

Gracchus: What is that?

Batiatus: Don't laugh at me, but I believe it to be dignity.

Gracchus: In Rome, dignity shortens life...even more surely than disease. The gods must be saving you for some great enterprise.

Batiatus: You think so? Anyone who believes I'll turn informer for nothing is a fool. I bore the whip without complaint.

Gracchus: Yes, indeed, that sounds like a bad attack of dignity. I hope, however, this will not deflect you...from the revenge you were going to take on Crassus.

Batiatus: No, on the contrary. It only strengthens my resolve.

Batiatus, despite being greedy and rather unlikeable at the beginning of the film, proves to be of decent moral character, exhibiting growth by the end of the film. He encounters dignity, which he “never had before with all [his] wealth,” perhaps a reference to an inherent lack of human decency in capitalist society. Further, Batiatus now pleads the case of those interrogated by HUAC, refusing to “turn informer.” Finally, Batiatus warns the anti-Communists who fuel the fearmongering, saying that instead of beating him down, their oppression will only “strengthen my resolve.” Such references to the fear and oppression in America during the time period are not hidden; their only mask is that an ancient Roman is saying them, rather than Trumbo directly.

An important part of the viewer's identification with Spartacus and the revolution is the portrayal of the slaves. While the Romans are portrayed almost exclusively in scenes of political machinations in the bright halls of the Senate, the slaves are shown in a variety of actions and places. Furthermore, the battle scenes are shot in a distinct manner that separates the slaves from the Romans and encourages viewers to identify with the former. In the large battle scene, the camera focuses on the faces of the slaves, emphasizing their humanity. Conversely, the viewer sees the Roman army in thick, organized columns and from a wide angle. In fact, the Roman army was so large, the camera shooting the scene had to be placed almost half a mile away from the actors.¹¹⁴ The Roman army is one big mass, a machine, while the slave army is made up of unique individuals, appealing to the melting pot of the American audience.

The scene immediately following the large battle, which shows the bodies of the decimated slave army, similarly focuses on the faces of the slaves. Although the panning used in the scene shows the devastation faced to the thousands who followed Spartacus, the close up camera technique emphasizes their humanity and roles as individuals. Furthermore, this close up camera technique serves as an emotional appeal to the audience, while the successful Romans climbing among the bodies do not appear to regret the loss of so much human life.

Ultimately, Spartacus' slave revolution was doomed for failure. Of course, the film must follow the basic history of the revolt. Spartacus' army failed in 71 BC and so must fail in 1960. However, the extent to which they fail in the film lacks veracity and rather reflects the American politics of the time. In a film with a running time of over three hours, only one major battle is shown between the revolutionaries and the Romans.

¹¹⁴ Cooper (2007), 28

The only scenes of success in the film are those following the battles, when the slaves are collecting loot; *Spartacus* merely “hints at further victories recounted in much more detail by the ancient sources.”¹¹⁵

While understandable in terms of dramatic effect¹¹⁶, the battle is presented as a massacre. Trumbo and Douglas fought hard for the film to retain some of these battle scenes or at least present Spartacus’ victories as a battle montage.¹¹⁷ The battles would have emphasized the triumph of Spartacus’ socialist utopian society over the oppression of the Romans. Unfortunately, “the executives at Universal Studios were anxious to avoid arousing the ire of conservative Americans with too much proletarian revolution and wanted scenes of the slaves’ military victories kept to a minimum.”¹¹⁸

In analyzing *Spartacus*, it is equally important to look at what is not included as what is. As with any film, much of what was shot didn’t make the final cut; however, what is left out is particularly enlightening in context of the conservative politics of the day. Many of the scenes written reveal Trumbo’s leftist principles; however, Universal either wouldn’t film them or refused to allow them in the final release of the film. One scene shows “a terrified citizenry [beginning] to flee the city,” intending to show “the Spartacus’ revolt reached such proportions that it precipitated a panic.”¹¹⁹ Another scene shows Rome offering Crassus command against the slaves and warning that “if he does not accept, Rome will fall to Spartacus.”¹²⁰ Such a scene was never allowed in the film; it asserts that Spartacus may in fact have some chance at winning the war and defeating

¹¹⁵ Ward (2007), 89

¹¹⁶ Cooper (2007), 27

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 23

¹¹⁸ Alison Futrell, as quoted by Ward (2007), 105

¹¹⁹ Cooper (2007), 36

¹²⁰ Ibid.

Rome. Because “*Spartacus* is an allegory of the contemporary world, the Romans are, in Trumbo’s terms, the affluent of America.”¹²¹ In America during the filming of *Spartacus*, the affluent were establishing control as the ruling elite, having more power in government, politics, and society because they had more in their pocket. Ultimately produced by the ruling elite, *Spartacus* would give no indication that an uprising of the beaten down and oppressed was possible.¹²²

It should be noted that the Romans themselves participated in distancing and identification, manipulating the story of *Spartacus* for political purposes. While modern Americans have attempted to draw a clear distinction between the Romans and the slaves, ancient sources often did the opposite. Plutarch describes *Spartacus* as “more Hellenic than Thracian,” emphasizing his intelligence.¹²³ Florus begrudgingly accepts the similarities between *Spartacus*’ army and the Romans, referring to the slave army as a “class” in Roman society:

One can tolerate, indeed, even the disgrace of a war against slaves; for although, by force of circumstances, they are liable to any kind of treatment, yet they form as it were a class (although an inferior class) and can be admitted to the blessings of liberty which we enjoy. But I know not which name to give to the war which was stirred up at the instigation of *Spartacus*; for the common soldiers being slaves and their leaders being gladiators—the former men of the humblest, the latter men of the worse, class—added insult to the injury which they inflicted upon Rome.¹²⁴

It is, however, important to note that while some ancient sources served to highlight their similarity to *Spartacus*, many also distance the Romans from him, suggesting that he was despised in Rome. Appian describes the Romans as having

¹²¹ Ahl (2007), 84

¹²² Ibid., 85

¹²³ Plutarch, *Crassus* 8. Translation is by Bernadotte Perrin in Winkler (2007), 234

¹²⁴ Florus, *Epitome of Roman History* 2.8. Translation is by Edward Seymour Forster in Winkler (2007), 243

“ridiculed and despised [the war] in the beginning, as being merely the work of gladiators.”¹²⁵ Sallust and Orosius describe particularly savage behavior, including widespread rape, in order to dehumanize the slaves.¹²⁶

Most of the ancient writings on Spartacus were produced long after his death. It is important to consider the times at which these authors were writing in order to better understand the ancient opinion of Spartacus. While ancient sources like Plutarch seem to be embarrassed by the success of the slaves, and thus build them up into a more formidable enemy, others attempt to distance Roman society from something so evil as slaves who rise up against their superiors. The slaves’ brutality seems to be described in worse terms over time, suggesting that the opinion of Spartacus grew more and more negative as time went on. However, it is also important to note that many of these ancient sources, having been written so long after the Third Servile War, also constitute a form of reception of the story. We cannot be sure of their veracity; indeed, several of the sources contradict each other, primarily in the number of slaves involved and the significance of the threat they posed to Rome. The sources themselves provide insight into Roman society and the social morals of the time period at which they were written, an ancient form of popular culture historical reception.

Use of the Body

The male body is used in a way uncommon in other movies. The 1960s *Spartacus* is no exception, containing many sexualized scenes. These create blatant and subtle undertones of both heterosexual and homosexual love and desire, primal

¹²⁵ Appian, *Roman History* 1.14.118. Translation is by Horace White and rev. E. Iliff Robson in Winkler (2007), 240

¹²⁶ Sallust, *The Histories* Book 3 in Winkler (2007), 241; Orosius, *History against the Pagans* 5.24 in Winkler (2007), 246. Translations by Martin M. Winkler.

brotherhood and “bromance”, and objectification of the body, both of males and females. There are several notable scenes throughout the film, aiding in characterization and furthering the narrative.

In the beginning of the film, there is a clear contrast between the levels of clothing worn by the gladiators and those worn by the free men at the gladiator school. The gladiators are shown in short tunics that leave almost nothing to the imagination. Depending on the training activity, the gladiators’ undergarments are even revealed, with fake battles being the worst offender. A wide angle shot at 24:40 shows upwards of thirty gladiators enclosed in a small and crowded training field. Very few wear more than a glorified diaper, or *subligar*.

Conversely, Marcellus mills around the training yard in much more modest clothing. Though it may still appear to the modern viewer to be revealing, it is far less so compared to the outfits the gladiators wear. Marcellus, however, is a retired gladiator, and thus still wears an outfit that emphasizes his athletic build. His clothing can best be seen as a transition piece—he is no longer a slave, subject to the gaze of his masters, but he is not quite the status of a freeborn Roman man.

Batiatus presents the other extreme in male clothing. A pudgy and indulgent Roman, he wears loose clothing with greater decoration. His tunic falls past his knees and his shoulders are completely covered. Batiatus is clearly not there for the spectator’s gaze. Later in the scene Crassus and his family visit the school, wearing clothing even more ostentatious than Batiatus’. The four are dripping in jewels and wear many different layers and colors. The colors of the clothing further serve to draw a distinction between the Romans; while the gladiators wear clothing of muted, earthen tones, the

Romans wear bright and clearly unnatural colors. Their bodies are the most modestly covered of all the characters; it is their wealth that is on display rather than their bodies. The costumes of the scene make it clear: the visually stunning Romans are different. Such presentation of the Romans allows the viewer to admire their wealth while simultaneously identify with the natural and unassuming gladiators. Furthermore, the differences in costume create a negative stigma of the body. Instead of being something all humans have in common, it becomes associated with the difference in social classes.

Naturally, a gladiator school is filled with men. With so many strapping young males around, there are many opportunities for the male body to be objectified. At 25:55, Spartacus is used as a tool to educate the gladiators on the most effective killing methods. His body is painted different colors corresponding to areas that, when struck with a weapon, will result in the quickest death. Spartacus is wearing almost no clothing in this scene, very clearly on display for the entire school to observe:

A stoic Spartacus makes this scene particularly effective. Spartacus resists revealing any emotion at such treatment—a perfect, silent tool. He is no longer human, having been objectified as simply an animal to be killed, reduced to a visual representation of his weakest points. By using such bright colors to draw attention to his body, the viewer can visually see the spots recommended for most effective fighting. The colors draw further attention to the effect that Spartacus is a body made up of various parts, not a sentient human being.

Later in this section of the film, Crassus and his family visit the school, seeking entertainment. Claudia and Helena, the women of the party, choose which gladiators will fight to the death. Here we have another scene of male objectification. Helena makes

very clear that she and Claudia are only interested in the appearance of their chosen gladiators; they pace in front of the line of gladiators slowly and deliberately, closely inspecting each man. Thick metal bars separate the women from the gladiators, just as if Helena and Claudia are spectators of animals at the zoo. When Draba is chosen, Batiatus protests, saying “Draba? Oh no, for you I want only the best, Lady Helena.” He is abruptly interrupted by Helena, who denies that she wants the best gladiator, firmly stating “I want the most beautiful. I’ll take the big black one.” Her objectification of Draba is obvious. Batiatus refers to the gladiator by name but Helena prefers to describe him only by his physical characteristics that she deems “most beautiful.” After choosing, Helena tells Batiatus that the gladiators should wear “just enough for modesty.” She and Claudia do not even attempt to hide their desire to admire the bodies of the enslaved gladiators, “peer[ing] through the fence of the training yard as if at a stockyard or zoo.”¹²⁷

As though the content of this scene isn’t enough to convince the viewer of the potency of the objectifying gaze, the way it is shot allows the viewer to personally experience Helena’s and Claudia’s piercing eyes. The majority of the scene “takes the perspective of the caged gladiators,” encouraging the viewer to identify with the enslaved.¹²⁸ The scene is primarily focused on the women, while the viewer, in the position of the gladiators, looks out at their spectators from behind the bars of their cage: When the camera angle does change to reflect the view of the women admiring the gladiators, the bars are still clearly visible in the foreground, serving as a constant reminder that the women and gladiators are separated and that the women are in control, viewing the men as though they are caged animals. Though the viewer has the advantage

¹²⁷ Cyrino (2005), 106

¹²⁸ Ibid.

of being in both perspectives at once, the ever-present cage intensifies the women's objectification of the gladiators, making it particularly noticeable.

This scene reverses stereotypical gender roles, with the women admiring the male bodies in a condescending fashion. Ina Rae Hark notes that such use of the body as a means of subjugation, particularly by reversing the stereotype of the dominant male, is especially effective in portraying political weakness.¹²⁹ Hark claims that "looking at bodies, regardless of their gender, marks a principal form of control exercised in the discourses of institutional power"¹³⁰ This theory of film is clearly evident in this scene. The women's gaze on the caged gladiators clearly shows control and dominance, effectively distancing the Romans from the gladiators politically. The way the scene is shot, specifically emphasizing the viewer's position with the gladiators behind bars, also allows the viewer to identify with the slaves, thus distancing the viewer from the Romans, both physically and in ideology.

Throughout the film, there is strong theme of slave brotherhood, often promoting this notion through the vehicle of the male body, suggesting the primal nature of the brotherhood.. This motif is established early on in *Spartacus* and is present in this section of the movie. The slaves in the film, as discussed above, are often dressed in much less modest clothing than the free men. Even in the opening scene of the film that takes place when Spartacus still works in the mountains, the slaves wear very little clothing. As the film goes on, their bodies are more on display, with the gladiators at the school often wearing little more than armor over one arm and a *subligar*.

¹²⁹ Cohan and Hark (2002), 151

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Spartacus does not speak at all in the beginning of the film and throughout the rest of the film proves to be a man of few words. Though he speaks at 17:11, telling Marcellus his name, the first time we really hear him talk is during the slave bathing scene at 18:07. With almost all of the men shown bare-chested in the bath, there is a tangible element of brotherhood in the scene. Furthermore, the scene is dimly lit and the clothing of the gladiators is made of course, brown cloth and is very earthen, suggesting the ease and naturalness of the slaves and their relationships. The context of Spartacus' first real speech cannot be ignored—for the first time in the film, among many half-naked fellow gladiators, he is comfortable enough to speak.

The slave bath scene contrasts with the social Roman bath scene later in the film. A Roman bathing scene has come to be expected from toga films; certainly *Spartacus* could not ignore the well-established *topos* of a bathhouse scene featuring half-naked elites. This scene shows Crassus' attempts to persuade the young Caesar to join forces with him. Instead of a scene of brotherhood, this is a demonstration of political pressure, corruption, and speaks to Crassus' evil nature. The scene also moves at a languid pace with Crassus and Caesar calmly strolling through the bathhouse. The pace emphasizes the social nature of the Roman baths, presenting a further contrast between the slaves and Romans. For the slaves, the baths serve a purpose, there to clean themselves and establish deep brother-like connections. The Romans, however, use the baths purely for social and political purposes, thus encouraging the hierarchy established between the Romans and the slaves. Furthermore, scholars have drawn contrasts between this scene and that of Varinia bathing, suggesting that the Crassus-Caesar scene in the ornate

Roman bathhouse suggests bisexuality, while the Varinia-Spartacus scene suggests that the slaves are, again, more in tune with natural, and heterosexual, forces.¹³¹

Spartacus' fight with Draba is perhaps one of the strongest scenes of resistance in the film, with undercurrents of brotherhood and perhaps homoeroticism. Again, the gladiators are bare-chested, bare-legged, and each has one bare arm. All their well-toned muscles are available for viewing, accentuated by the sweat that builds up from fighting under the hot sun. Draba fights with a long trident, Spartacus with a shorter Thracian sword. Fitting with Western literary tradition, some have identified the sword and trident as weapons "symbolically represent[ing] the phallus."¹³² The men fight with their weapons, their instruments of power. While Dhiraj interprets Draba's refusal to kill Spartacus as a "homoerotic inability to penetrate another slave," I prefer to view this scene as a demonstration of brotherhood. Draba doesn't just refuse to kill Spartacus; he fights back against the oppression that led them to such a horrific end. Draba knowingly sacrifices himself for Spartacus, "refusing to kill at another's command."¹³³ Often there is an element of brotherhood in the actions of the slaves and this scene appears to me to show both Draba's rejection of the Roman indulgence at the expense of others and his deep, brother-like affection for Spartacus.

Arguably the most controversial scene in *Spartacus* is the 'oysters and snails' scene, an interaction between Crassus and his slave, Antoninus. The first half of this scene is shot through a sheer black curtain, giving the effect of voyeurism: it is clear that Crassus and Antoninus are meant to be alone, though they are interrupted by the presence

¹³¹ Kuberski (2012), 29-30

¹³² Dhiraj (2013)

¹³³ Peirce (2009), 39

of the viewer. The viewer, through the curtain, is able to see Crassus bathing and Antoninus assisting him. Both men are almost naked and are alone in the room:

The scene is shot in one long take and is filmed with a wide angle so the viewer can see the entire scene. There is very low lighting, accentuating the body and defining the men's muscles. Slow, deep, eerie music plays throughout the scene, a score interestingly repeated when Crassus makes advances on Varinia at the end of the film, thus "draw[ing] parallels between Crassus's initial encounters with Varinia and with Antoninus" and contributing to the eerie tone of Crassus' later advance on Varinia, which is even reminiscent of rape.¹³⁴

Crassus asks a series of questions of Antoninus while he is bathing, culminating in his focus on snails and oysters, a reference to sexuality:

Crassus: Do you eat oysters?

Antoninus: When I have them, master.

Crassus: Do you eat snails?

Antoninus: No, master.

Crassus: Do you consider the eating of oysters to be moral and the eating of snails to be immoral?

Antoninus: No, master.

Crassus: Of course not. It is all a matter of taste.

Antoninus: Yes, master.

Crassus: And taste is not the same as appetite and therefore not a question of morals, is it?

Antoninus: It could be argued so, master.

Crassus: My robe Antoninus.....my taste includes both snails and oysters.

¹³⁴ Cohan and Hark, (2002), 165

Crassus here presents “an oblique reference to bisexuality.”¹³⁵ The reference to sexual ‘perversion’ was clear enough that Universal, under pressure from the American League of Decency, insisted the scene be cut from the film. It was reinserted into the 1991 restoration of the film, with Anthony Hopkins providing the voice of Crassus for the late Lawrence Olivier.¹³⁶

After Antoninus subsequently dresses Crassus, he draws the curtain, allowing Crassus to proceed into the adjoining room and toward the viewer:

The camera pans out as Crassus walks toward it, implying that the viewer is trying to escape Crassus’ advances:

Antoninus stays put in the background and doesn’t follow when Crassus calls him to watch the Roman legions marching past:

Crassus continues:

“No man can withstand Rome, no nation can withstand her. How much less, a boy. There’s only one way to deal with Rome, Antoninus. You must serve her. You must abase yourself before her. You must grovel at her feet. You must love her.”

His commanding tone, coupled with the aggressive oysters and snails conversation, makes clear that he is not referring to the state of Rome. Rather, Rome is a metaphor for Crassus himself and he is directing Antoninus how to treat him, regardless of Antoninus’ sexual preferences. Ina Rae Hark describes the transition of Crassus’ tone in this scene to characterize his sexual preferences:

[Crassus] splits off the physical enjoyment of sex, now just a matter of taste, from the ecstasies of desire, which can only arise for him in relation to the signifier Rome. Thus Crassus’s bantering tone in the first half of the seduction scene with

¹³⁵ Cyrino (2005), 119

¹³⁶ Ibid.

Antoninus shifts to sado-masochistic fervor when he characterizes himself as an avatar of Rome.¹³⁷

In exhibiting no respect for Antoninus, the scene comes off as very aggressive and perhaps even implying rape. Luckily for young Antoninus, he is able to escape before Crassus can continue his seduction.

The oysters and snails scene is a clear expression of Roman power and ties Crassus to that power. By portraying the character of Crassus as sexually dominating and perverse and then likening this behavior to the strength of the Roman army, Roman power is simultaneously on display and repulsive. The image of the Roman troops walking past Crassus' villa is reminiscent of the later battle scene, in which the sheer numbers of the Roman machine are emphasized.

This scene also serves a major role in developing the viewer's identification with the slaves rather than the Romans. It clearly depicts Crassus' sexual perversion, distancing him from the presumed 1960s viewer, although this scene was not seen until 1991. However, what really distances the viewer from Crassus in this scene is the sheer aggression he displays. By equating this behavior with the Roman troops, it further distances the viewer from Rome. Playing on the viewer's emotions, this distancing will increase the viewer's sympathy for the slave army, who are the victims in this power struggle.

In the modern world, Spartacus has come to represent a hero figure and an advocate for the oppressed. In making the male body such a crucial part of the characterization, *Spartacus*, by having Spartacus, Antoninus, and the other slaves reject the traditional servile role, asserts the body's importance in the struggle against the

¹³⁷ Cohan and Hark (2002), 166

oppressors. Furthermore, the relationships slaves and Romans have with the male body suggest the natural and unnatural states of these social groups, entreating viewers to identify with the plight of the slaves and distance themselves from the wealthy, oppressive, and perverse Romans.

Chapter Three: The Use of the Spartacus Story in the 1968 Soviet Ballet

When one thinks of the rebel gladiator Spartacus, Eastern Europe doesn't immediately come to mind. Yet the rebel gladiator has captivated the minds of many Eastern Europeans and some of the most famous modern receptions of the story have emerged from the Soviet Union and former Soviet states. As the leader of a slave army, Spartacus has grown into a hero figure, viewed by socialists as a "genuine representative of the ancient proletariat."¹³⁸

The most famous of the Eastern European receptions of the Spartacus story is of course the ballet produced by Russia's Bolshoi Theatre, based on the novel by Raffaello Giovagnolli and choreographed by Yuri Grigorovich.¹³⁹ Ultimately resulting in a beautifully danced piece that has found success even after the fall of the Soviet Union, *Spartacus* went through four productions and three choreographers in the twelve years it took to "get it right."¹⁴⁰ Interestingly, the ballet only found success after the release of the 1960 film in America. In the final release of the ballet, basic structural elements echo those in the film, suggesting that the underdog story is one that resonates with audiences, regardless of nationality or political ideology.

Previously, the Spartacus story had been adopted by Soviets in *The Mystery of Free Labor*, an open-air mass spectacle performed on May 1, 1920 in the streets of Petrograd.¹⁴¹ *The Mystery of Free Labor* served as a form of propaganda for Soviet ideals, tracing the history of "Russian" revolutions from the well-intentioned but

¹³⁸ Karl Marx, as quoted by duBois (2010), 33

¹³⁹ The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia (2011)

¹⁴⁰ Ezrahi (2012), 203

¹⁴¹ Deák (1975), 8

unsuccessful revolt by Spartacus in Ancient Rome to the success of the October Revolution.¹⁴²

The tale of the Thracian soldier turned rebel gladiator has come to take on a meaning of equality. The historical Spartacus merely fought for his freedom, not against an oppressive institution run by an all-powerful imperial state.¹⁴³ Yet the character has become a symbol, a champion of the people. In particular, such use of Spartacus has been adopted in leftist propaganda efforts in Eastern Europe, somewhere with almost no connection to the historical figure of Spartacus.

History of the Soviet Use of Spartacus: The Mystery of Free Labor

There is a long history of the Spartacus story in Eastern Europe, particularly in the promotion of leftist ideals; Soviet history, traced back to the early 1900s, frequently portrays Spartacus “as a Marxist leader in a class war.”¹⁴⁴ The Soviet “revolutionary mythology was to treat the October Revolution as a final link in a long chain of previously attempted revolutions.”¹⁴⁵ On May 1, 1920, approximately 2,000 Red Army performers depicted the history of people’s revolts in the open-air mass spectacle titled *The Mystery of Free Labor*, also known as *The Mystery of Liberated Labor*.¹⁴⁶ The story begins with the revolt of Spartacus and culminates in the people’s reaching of the Tree of Freedom during the October Revolution in 1917.¹⁴⁷

The Mystery of Free Labor adopts the Spartacus tale in an attempt “to create a genealogy for the new state.”¹⁴⁸ Terence Smith elaborates, claiming that “contrary to

¹⁴² Deák (1975), 9

¹⁴³ Stothard (2012)

¹⁴⁴ Lillard (1975), 22

¹⁴⁵ Deák (1975), 9

¹⁴⁶ Bokina (2005), 6

¹⁴⁷ Deák (1975), 9

¹⁴⁸ Clark (1995), 127

Marx's understanding of the proletarian revolution as constituted around nothing but the future, the Soviets 'anxiously conjure up the spirits of the past to their service...to present the new scene in world history as in this time-honored disguise and this borrowed language.'"¹⁴⁹ It thus makes Spartacus a part of Russian history, even though his revolt occurred in Italy. There is a clear and, irrespective of geography, logical progression of revolutions in the show, beginning with Spartacus in 73 B.C., moving onto the Cossack Stenka Razin in 1670, and finally reaching success in the October Revolution of 1917.¹⁵⁰ In *The Mystery of Free Labor*, "the oppressed...constitute the historical genealogy of Bolshevism."¹⁵¹ Such a show would have been incredibly uplifting for the Soviet crowd of 35,000, creating pride in and allegiance to the leftist politics upheld by the government.¹⁵² *The Mystery of Free Labor* established a pattern for the Soviet use of Spartacus that can be seen later on:

Among others, the historian A.V Mišulin produced a series of works between 1934 and 1937 that explained the victory almost 2,000 years later [and] termed the Spartacus uprising an actual revolution, and, in employing the state-approved typological method of historical analysis, made Spartacus 'the herald of the first liberation movement in history' (quoted in Rubinsohn 1987:8). In this way, Mišulin translated a narrative from antiquity into a proleptic allegory of contemporary political exigencies.¹⁵³

In *The Mystery of Free Labor*'s characterization of Spartacus, the Thracian gladiator takes on Roman imperialists during a luxurious banquet. Particularly in the Communist Soviet Union, this setting would increase the distance the crowd felt from the Romans by creating an elite aristocracy. Furthermore, this scene would fuel anti-capitalism in viewers by showing the excesses social stratification creates. Such

¹⁴⁹ Smith (1997)

¹⁵⁰ Deák (1975), 9; Smith (1997)

¹⁵¹ Bokina (2005), 9

¹⁵² Deák (1975)

¹⁵³ Kodat (2005), 491

portrayal of classes was visually represented by the three-tiered stage on which the scene was performed, similar to the visual hierarchy created during the match between Spartacus and Draba in the 1960 film.¹⁵⁴ Visual representation of the struggle of the oppressed was frequently used in Soviet mass spectacles, and “the central figure for the revolution was movement in space rather than time” with “the binary opposition (oppressed/oppressors)...always represented spatially.”¹⁵⁵ Combining the show of wealth and the visual representation of the lower class literally moving up in space to overcome the elite with Spartacus’ revolt against the Imperial Romans serves to both undermine capitalist theory and promote communism, thus serving as an effective form of Soviet propaganda.

The Bolshoi Ballet: Context

The most famous Bolshoi production of Spartacus premiered on April 9, 1968.¹⁵⁶ Based on the novel by Italian Raffaello Giovagnolli, the ballet tells the story of Spartacus and his wife, Phrygia. The ballet faced its own series of obstacles and went through four productions and three choreographers before creating a story that resonated with audiences.

In the 1930s, there was a strong need for ballets promoting Soviet ideology and “Soviet ballet began to look actively for heroic themes.”¹⁵⁷ Aram Khachaturian, *Spartacus*’ composer, described his motivations in composing the music for the ballet, reflecting Soviet sentiments towards the ancient gladiator, which do not appear to have

¹⁵⁴ Deák (1975)

¹⁵⁵ Clark (1995), 128

¹⁵⁶ The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia (2011)

¹⁵⁷ Ezrahi (2012), 204

changed between the 1920s, when *The Mystery of Free Labor* was performed, and the 1950s, when the score was composed:

The image of Spartacus had always appealed to me. Some were surprised at my choice of the topic and reproached me for delving deep back into history. But I feel that the theme of Spartacus and the slave revolt in Ancient Rome has huge significance even for our times and a big public resonance today, when all the nations are fighting for their freedom, when colonialism is finally due to collapse, the people need to know and remember the names of those who at the dawn of human history bravely rose against the enslavers to struggle for their liberty and independence.¹⁵⁸

Aram Khachaturian was known for his ballets, which frequently present “the ethic of Soviet ideology, including the heroism of the working class and peasant builders of socialism.”¹⁵⁹ Composing music of such patriotic themes was vital to survival; at the time, “the bolder spirits among composers and critics were silenced.”¹⁶⁰ Khachaturian himself was formally listed in a 1948 document, similar to the Hollywood blacklist, “that accused the leading composers of ‘formalistic distortions and anti-democratic tendencies.’”¹⁶¹

In 1954, Khachaturian finished the score for *Spartacus* and the ballet was picked up by Leningrad’s Kirov Theatre¹⁶² and performed on December 27, 1956.¹⁶³ Choreographed by Leonid Iakobson, the first production of *Spartacus* was a flop. Although it was successful at the box office and received 197 performances at the time of the 1987 statistics, the story lacked a driving force.¹⁶⁴ As Iakobson interpreted the score

¹⁵⁸ Aram Khachaturian, as quoted by duBois (2010), 34

¹⁵⁹ Kanet (2007), 409

¹⁶⁰ Schwarz (1965), 260

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 259

¹⁶² Ibid., 268

¹⁶³ Ezrahi (2012), 205

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 206

and choreographed the dancing, “Rome’s degeneration was the ballet’s central subject, relegating the themes of heroism and the uprising to a secondary role.”¹⁶⁵

When the Bolshoi Theatre initially produced *Spartacus*, it enlisted the talents, or lack thereof, of choreographer Igor Mosieev. The production received only nine performances and “was openly called an artistic failure.”¹⁶⁶ Mosieev’s production “lacked a dramatic outline and a well-developed dramatic plot” and was harshly criticized.¹⁶⁷ In the Bolshoi’s second production, Kirov choreographer Iakobson was hired. Like Mosieev’s production, Iakobson’s interpretation for the Bolshoi “failed to create the heroic epic everyone was expecting.”¹⁶⁸

The ballet only found success when Yuri Grigorovich was solicited to choreograph the 1968 production. Where the ballet had previously exhibited a “complete rejection of classical ballet technique,”¹⁶⁹ Grigorovich adhered to classical techniques and made the roles of Crassus and Spartacus danced instead of mimed roles.¹⁷⁰ In context of the contemporary Moscow dance style, which “had become so riddled with pantomime and so bogged down in acting out the story,” Grigorovich’s choreography featuring “nonstop dancing seemed clean and fluent.”¹⁷¹ The previous style of mime and pantomime favored by Iakobson and Mosieev reduced the roles played by Spartacus and Crassus, while Grigorovich created “strong and active dance roles for men,” a style so successful that it would become standard practice in future choreography.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁵ Ezrahi (2012), 204

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 206

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 208

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 205

¹⁷⁰ Banes and Harris (2007), 67

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

Furthermore, instead of focusing on the excesses of the Roman elite, the Grigorovich choreography “extracts the figures of Spartacus and Crassus, twins them with female counterparts, and...polarizes the story into a simple conflict of tyranny and revolt.”¹⁷³ By focusing on the characters of Spartacus and Crassus, Grigorovich creates a central conflict that was previously unseen in the *Spartacus* productions. Similar to the 1960 film, the ballet focuses on the conflict between Spartacus and Crassus and the slaves and the elites, adopting the successful pattern of a proletariat uprising established by *The Mystery of Free Labor*.

The Bolshoi Ballet: Story

In Act I, the viewer is introduced to Spartacus and Phrygia, born free but captured and forced into slavery during Crassus’ campaign. Separated in a slave market, both are in despair over their loss of freedom and each other.¹⁷⁴ Like the 1960 Kirk Douglas film, the Spartacus of the Bolshoi ballet is motivated by his intense love for a woman.

Phrygia, having been purchased by Crassus, is subjected to a massive Roman orgy, at the climax of which, Spartacus and another gladiator are forced to fight to the death for the amusement of the partygoers, in the same vein as the film’s fight scene between Spartacus and Draba. As in the film, Spartacus is victorious, but he is in despair that he has been forced to murder another. He decides that he must win his freedom and later in the gladiators’ barracks, “Spartacus incites the gladiators to revolt.”¹⁷⁵ An appropriate ending for Act I, the viewers are left with a thorough understanding of the immorality of the Roman Imperialists, an admiration for the rebellious gladiators, and a desire for the action that is bound to occur in the next two acts.

¹⁷³ Elley (1984), 109

¹⁷⁴ The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia (2011)

¹⁷⁵ The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia (2011)

Act II provides the viewer with hope. Spartacus attracts a large following of other revolutionaries. Unable to stand the thought of Phrygia in captivity at Crassus' house, the slaves storm Crassus' villa. In a scene almost identical to one in the 1960 film when Spartacus disgraces Glabrus, Spartacus captures Crassus. Ever the moral hero, Spartacus allows him to return to Rome alive, though dishonored. Act II satisfies the viewer's desire for action and maintains the excitement of Act I, leaving the viewer to wonder whether the slaves will succeed in their mission.

In Act III, the power of the revolution begins to diminish. Aegina convinces Crassus to seek revenge and he summons his troops. After some of Spartacus' cowardly troops desert him, Aegina, using "wine and vice' to weaken and distract...his troops" and weaken Spartacus, delivers them to Crassus.¹⁷⁶ Roman legions surround Spartacus and his men. The revolutionaries fight valiantly, but Spartacus ultimately "dies a hero's death, crucified on Roman spears."¹⁷⁷ This solidifies Spartacus' role as a Christ-figure in the ballet, creating "a Christlike vision of heroic martyrdom in the name of freedom from oppression."¹⁷⁸

The ballet ends with Phrygia's lament at Spartacus' death. During this monologue, Phrygia "[raises] her arms skywards...[appealing] to the heavens that the memory of Spartacus live forever."¹⁷⁹ Reminiscent of the 1960 American film, where Kirk Douglas is crucified and Varinia holds their child up to him, Phrygia's appeal that Spartacus be remembered cement Spartacus' role as a Christ-figure who has tried to free his people from imperial tyranny and whose message will not die.

¹⁷⁶ duBois (2010), 35

¹⁷⁷ Ezrahi (2012), 219

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 224

¹⁷⁹ The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia (2011)

From just the bare bones of the story, one can see how leftist ideals could be easily transmitted through *Spartacus*, making it the perfect show to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the October Revolution. The Spartacus story “was the perfect Soviet allegory.”¹⁸⁰ As frequently interpreted, the story “mirrored the Marxist vision of a virtuous underclass fighting to free itself from decadent rulers.”¹⁸¹ The characters of Spartacus and Crassus contribute to the socialist message of the story itself, “placing the freedom-loving, freely moving Spartacus in opposition to a stolid, tyrannical Crassus”¹⁸² and thus creating a conflict that, as in the film, emphasizes the naturalness of the oppressed class.

Though the entire story lends itself to the promotion Soviet ideals, there are certain scenes in particular that emphasize these values. A very striking example is the orgy scene, during which the characters of Phrygia and Aegina are contrasted through sexuality and morality. One of the largest numbers in the show, this scene is used as characterization. Ironically, Phrygia is the center of the very immoral scene, serving to characterize her as an upstanding moral woman, as opposed to Aegina, Crassus’ evil lover, a vamp character.

Phrygia is dragged into the orgy, but won’t partake in any of the activities. While couples are engaged in sexual activities in the background, Crassus and Aegina pass around a wine goblet and become increasingly drunk. Crassus tries to force Phrygia to drink the wine, but she loudly protests and as soon as the cup is in her grasp, she hands it to the closest guest, not even wanting to touch it. She scrambles throughout the scene, obviously confused and upset about the activities.

¹⁸⁰ Rockwell (2005)

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Kodat (2005), 494

Phrygia eventually manages to escape the festivities in a manner that goes completely unnoticed by even the viewers, as the wild orgy distracts. The party continues to grow rowdier, leading to explicit simulated sex and culminating in a gladiatorial combat between Spartacus and another slave.

This scene serves as the primary point of contrast between Phrygia and Aegina, clearly establishing their characters and morality. Phrygia refuses to partake of immoral activities, an action which perhaps has Christian undertones in comparison with the pagan Imperial Rome. Phrygia is innocent and pure and refuses to let the Romans be a corrupting influence. Aegina, however, is the center of attention, making very clear that she enjoys these corrupt and immoral activities.

During earlier productions, there had been a “fear that Soviet audiences would be tempted to sympathize more with the seductive enemy than with the steadfast heroism of the revolutionary.”¹⁸³ However, in the 1968 production, Grigorovich successfully creates an unlikeable vamp character that audiences cannot sympathize with, instead being drawn to the heroic Spartacus and pure Phrygia. The orgy scene is just one example of unlikable characterization of Aegina as a vamp. Furthermore, such a scene inserts cultural values into the show. The women of the ballet provide an avenue for the promotion of cultural values in Soviet society, while the men serve as a means to promote Soviet political values.

There are also significant character contrasts between Spartacus and Crassus, furthering the story of the ballet. Opening with a scene of Crassus commanding his army, the imperialist is dressed in a costume resembling typical Roman armor. He wears a chest plate that is attached to a skirt with flaps. The costume is made of shiny gold and

¹⁸³ Ezrahi (2012), 212

silver material and is very elaborate, containing many details to emphasize its extravagance. Followed by an ensemble of similarly dressed men, the opening of the ballet is “a striking dance image of the might of imperial Rome.”¹⁸⁴ There are even several men, including Crassus, carrying standards emblazoned with the famous “SPQR.” All together, the scene is highly reminiscent of the stereotypical view of Imperial Rome.

Crassus’ extravagance is contrasted to Spartacus’ plain costume, a reminder of the inequality present both in imperial Rome and in Capitalist societies, inciting the oppressed (in this case, the gladiators) to revolt. Spartacus enters in chains after just having been enslaved. He wears much less than Crassus—just a simple tunic that is held up by a single strap across his chest. The outfit is plain, without elaborate details or loud colors.

Additionally, Spartacus’ costume is far less modest than Crassus’, something that emphasizes his basic humanity. He is clearly a natural person, an every man, and is not a part of the Roman elite, something also emphasized by his entrance as the sole dancer on the stage. Spartacus is alone, as opposed to the mob surrounding Crassus, further showing his independent spirit.

The women of the ballet reflect their men in costume. Phrygia, Spartacus’ wife, is dressed similarly to Spartacus. Her costume is plain and unassuming, in dull colors that, as in the film, identify the slaves with nature and condone the struggle for the natural state of freedom. Later, when the character Aegina, Crassus’ wife, enters, Phrygia’s costume plays a greater role in her characterization. Aegina is dressed loudly and ostentatiously like her husband. Her costume is also made of a shiny gold and silver material, calling attention to her and hinting at a royal or imperial background. All her

¹⁸⁴ Barnes, "Spartacus: A Turning Point." (1968)

costumes are revealing, contributing to the importance of sexuality for this character. Aegina is also made up as the typical Roman woman with heavy makeup and elaborately curled hair that almost appears plastered to her forehead. This costume is in clear contrast to the simple, natural one of Phrygia.

Furthermore, the dancing styles of the characters play a role in the characterization and further promote the ideals suggested in the ballet. Spartacus and Phrygia both move with a simple elegance and grace. Their limbs move in a free-flowing fashion and each step transitions smoothly into the next. They interact often, touching each other tenderly to convey to the viewers their deep love. They have a softer style that is easy for the viewer to sympathize with. Indeed, Vladimir Vasiliev, the original dancer of Spartacus, was “praised for his sensitivity and dramatic intensity in a wide variety of roles” and “even his Spartacus is as well known for the projection of the character’s tender side as for its heroics.”¹⁸⁵

Crassus, on the other hand, moves very abruptly, an “elegant, Fascist-like champion of Rome...the perfect antagonist to such a hero.”¹⁸⁶ His jumps are shorter and he uses his joints to create a more angular style that is harsher than Spartacus’.¹⁸⁷ His steps do not flow smoothly from one to the other. As a man, this style of choreography creates a militaristic feel, further feeding into the characterization of Crassus as an evil Roman imperialist. Clive Barnes goes so far as to describe this Crassus as “a kind of Nazi storm trooper.”¹⁸⁸ Additionally, Crassus usually dances with a cohort of Roman soldiers following him. As “lines of soldiers cross the stage,” their dancing style is

¹⁸⁵ Rockwell (1975)

¹⁸⁶ Barnes, "Dance: Bolshoi Offers New 'Spartacus'" (1968)

¹⁸⁷ Kisselgoff (2002)

¹⁸⁸ Barnes "'Spartacus': A Turning Point." (1968)

characterized by “pirouetting with parallel legs, or goose-stepping, or leaping, all in unison.”¹⁸⁹ Even when Spartacus raises a slave army and his dancing is synchronized with the others, his movements lack this austere nature; the slaves “have a stooped posture that gradually changes to proud, upright defiance.”¹⁹⁰ Spartacus’ army moves more smoothly and the dancing is far more natural and sympathetic than that of Crassus’ army.

Aegina dances in a similar style to Crassus, although even more so. Her movements, while having the typical grace of a well-trained Russian ballerina, are clearly choreographed to be disjointed and harsh. The steps don’t flow together at all and the dancer, Svetlana Zakharova,¹⁹¹ acts the part well, complementing the severe steps with a small conniving grin. The October 19, 2013 production of the ballet from the Bolshoi Theatre was broadcast around the world with commentary and interviews during the intermissions. During an interview, a retired dancer who once played Aegina put it best, saying that “Plastic is very important to Aegina in movement.”

Additionally, Aegina is involved in several scenes of sexual seduction, where her style of dancing is more obvious. Not only is she harsh, but she also flaunts her body. In one scene she even acts as a vamp, using her sexual prowess to manipulate soldiers who have left Spartacus’ army in order to overthrow Spartacus. Such use of the body, emphasized through the medium of dance, creates a clear statement of the sexual morals of Roman imperial women. The combination of this dancing style and her costume add much to the story, making the woman a truly evil character. Furthermore, for a Soviet

¹⁸⁹ Banes and Harris (2007), 68

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ The dancer performing in the role of Aegina in the October 19, 2013 production of *Spartacus*.

audience who would have viewed the ballet in context of capitalism vs. communism, Aegina's character suggests the inherent immorality in capitalism, and thus, the West.

Aegina's severe sexual nature is in stark contrast with the moral Phrygia. Phrygia's movements are smooth and natural but not sexual. All the scenes where she dances with Spartacus, which have the potential for sexual tension, are merely tender love scenes. Phrygia's costumes are extremely modest compared to the flashy low-cut leotards worn by Aegina.

Furthermore, one must take historical and social context into account when analyzing something like a ballet. *Spartacus*, a Soviet ballet, premiered in 1968, not long after the end of WWII. After the breaking of the Hitler-Stalin Pact, Soviets did not look kindly upon the Nazis. Contemporary politics certainly play a role in the ballet, assisting in the characterization of Crassus and other evil characters. The very first scene of the ballet introduces Crassus and his army and throughout the dance, he does what is known as the "Roman salute," with his arm extended about 135 degrees and his palm down.¹⁹² This action is never used lightly; as Clark describes, "the salute was, and still is, the most familiar symbol of a variety of nationalist movements such as Nazism, Fascism, and Falangism."¹⁹³ Although the salute is not a Roman invention and would not have been used in antiquity, it effectively draws a parallel between the Nazis and Romans.¹⁹⁴ In 1968, at the time the ballet was released, the use of the salute was certainly a nod to contemporary politics, suggesting the Soviet audience distance themselves from the Romans that were so eerily reminiscent of Nazis. Crassus' use of the salute is certainly no accident of the choreographer, especially when watching the other characters dance.

¹⁹² Clark (1995), 636

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Winkler (2009), 182

No one else makes a similar movement except for Aegina, suggesting that Crassus and Aegina are the most evil characters of the show. For someone watching the ballet when it premiered, this immediate use of an offensive gesture would have characterized Crassus as evil, further emphasizing the cruelty of the Imperial Romans and distancing the audience from the evils of Crassus and Rome.

The ballet's choreography clearly reflects modern Soviet sentiment and society in 1968. Although it did not specifically depict current events, it contained a "revolutionary historical plot that could be given contemporary significance by drawing parallels between the oppression of slaves in ancient Rome and the oppression in contemporary—capitalist—countries."¹⁹⁵ By establishing contrasts between the character pairs of Crassus-Aegina and Spartacus-Phrygia, the ballet invokes moral and political messages, begging viewers to distance themselves from the morally decrepit, capitalist Romans and identify with the upstanding proletariat slaves. The final choreography of the ballet, released eight years after Kubrick's *Spartacus*, maintains the leftist ideals established by the film, creating a Spartacus of the people to uplift the citizens of the Soviet Union.

¹⁹⁵ Ezrahi (2012), 212

Conclusion

Throughout the past hundred years, there has been a pattern of reception of the Spartacus tale in popular culture. From films to workouts to fan fiction, modern society is fascinated by the ancient gladiator who took on the most powerful country in the world.

We don't have much information about Spartacus. Through just a handful of historical documents, historians have been able to form a rough outline of events. Spartacus, born a free man in Thrace, served as a mercenary soldier for the Roman army. After leaving the Roman army, he was captured and sold as a gladiator to Gnaeus Lentulus Batiatus, the lanista of a gladiator training school in Capua. Here, Spartacus led an uprising, escaping the school with approximately 70 other slaves. Over the next three years, the escaped slaves' numbers would increase to around 70,000 and the makeshift army would work their way up and down the Italian peninsula, successfully fighting against the Romans and pillaging towns as they went. While escaping to Sicily, the rebel leader was deceived by pirates, leading Spartacus and his troops trapped in the toe of the Italian boot. In a final stand-off, Crassus destroyed the army, killing Spartacus in battle and crucifying the remaining troops on the road between Rome and Capua.

The story seems fairly black-and-white. A man born free and resentful of his captors escapes and gathers other slaves to fight with him and punish those who have wronged him. We don't know what exactly motivated Spartacus—definitely freedom, possibly heightened emotions and anger, potentially the opportunity for revenge. However, we know he had no altruistic goal and did not seek to rebel against the institution of slavery, as so frequently depicted in modern receptions.

However, the lack of detail surrounding this man's life has allowed the story to be adapted to suit modern needs. Spartacus has become a symbol, frequently representing socialist ideals and freedom, and always a champion of the oppressed. These adaptations of Spartacus actually reveal more about modern society and its morals than they do about the ancients. Spartacus has become a legend, representing modern concerns through an ancient lens.

This thesis has only explored two of the countless adaptations of the Spartacus story. While these two provide insight into the reception of the history, there is certainly much opportunity for further study. Something about Spartacus resonates with people, to the point that it has become one of the most adapted ancient tales.

There is a strong modern tradition of ancient-inspired literature. Fiction enables authors to promote certain values cloaked in an engaging story, thereby reaching a larger audience. Howard Fast used his *Spartacus* as a vehicle for promoting communist ideology and criticizing the restrictions on freedom of speech that occurred during the late 1940s and 1950s. Other notable literary adaptations include Raffaello Giovagnoli's *Spartacus* and Ben Kane's *Spartacus the Gladiator*. One also cannot ignore the numerous children's literature adaptations of ancient stories; Robin Price's *I Am Spartapuss* and Toby Brown's *Spartacus and His Glorious Gladiators* are only two examples of many books written on the ancient world for children.

Spartacus has also been used in dramatic representations of the ancient world to portray modern concerns. In 1920 his revolt was shown as a part of Russian history in the open-air spectacle *The Mystery of Free Labor* and in 1943 he was the star of a Latvian play. In 2004, a made-for-TV movie was produced in his honor in America.

Pepsi customers will not forget the 2005 commercial spliced clips of the 1960 film, proclaiming the drink's popularity with rebel gladiators and Romans alike. Of course, most recently, the TV network Starz has produced a successful television series adaptation, starring hunky Liam McIntyre.

There is also much to study in informal representations of Spartacus. The character resonates with regular individuals, provoking many less formal interpretations. There has recently been an increase in fan fiction inspired by the Spartacus tale, most frequently in context of Starz' *Spartacus*. For those motivated by the athleticism of the characters in Starz' *Spartacus*, a "Spartacus workout" has recently become popular. The famous Improv Everywhere group performed the 1960 "I am Spartacus" scene in a Starbucks coffee shop, much to the amusement of customers and confusion of employees.

If there is one thing to take away from these countless interpretations of the Spartacus tale, it is this: Spartacus is not going anywhere. As time passes, his story becomes more popular and can always be adapted to be relevant to the current time period. Like it or not, the Spartacus story and all its lessons are here to stay.

Bibliography

- Ahl, Frederick. "Spartacus, Exodus, and Dalton Trumbo: Managing Ideologies of War." Martin Winkler, ed., *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 65-86.
- Banes, Sally, and Andrea Harris. *Before, Between, and Beyond: Three Decades of Dance Writing*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007. Print.
- Barnes, Clive. "Dance: Bolshoi Offers New 'Spartacus.'" *The New York Times*. 30 July 1968. Print.
- Barnes, Clive. "'Spartacus': A Turning Point." *The New York Times*. 14 July 1968. Print.
- Barsam, Richard Meran, and Dave Monahan. *Looking at Movies: An Introduction to Film*. 3rd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2010. Print.
- Bokina, John. "Spartacus in Socialist Culture." *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association*, 2005. Print.
- Clark, Katerina. *Petersburg, Crucible of Cultural Revolution*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Print.
- Cohan, Steve, and Ina Rae Hark. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in the Hollywood Cinema*. Taylor & Francis, 2002. Print.
- Clark, Christina A. "The Roman Salute: Cinema, History, Ideology by Martin M. Winkler." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 17: 636-641. Web. 30 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40930934>>.
- Cooper, Duncan L. "Who Killed the Legend of Spartacus? Production, Censorship, and Reconstruction of Stanley Kubrick's Epic Film" Martin Winkler, ed., *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 14-55.
- Cyrino, Monica Silveira. *Big Screen Rome*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2005. Print.
- Deák, František. "Russian Mass Spectacles." *Drama Review: TDR*. 19.2 (1975): 7-22. Web. 11 May. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1144942>>.
- Dhiraj, Harmeet. "Steve Neale's theory of masculinity in mainstream cinema." *Harmeet Dhiraj*. N.p., 28 May 2013. Web. 7 Nov. 2013. <<http://harmeetdhiraj.wordpress.com/2013/05/28/representing-gender-in-film-essay-steve-neales-theory-of-masculinity-in-mainstream-cinema/>>.
- Douglas, Kirk. *I Am Spartacus!: Making a Film, Breaking the Blacklist*. Open Road Media, 2012. Kindle file.

- duBois, Page. *Out of Athens: The New Ancient Greeks*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010. Print.
- Elley, Derek. *The Epic Film: Myth and History*. London: Routledge, 1984. Print.
- Ezrahi, Christina. *Swans of the Kremlin: Ballet and Power in Soviet Russia*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012. Print.
- Fast, Howard. Interview by AncientSites. *Spartacus: An Interview with Howard Fast* 28 Jun 2000. Jun . Web. <<http://www.trussel.com/hf/ancient.htm>>.
- Fast, Howard. *Spartacus*. M.E. Sharpe, 1996. Print.
- Forster, Edward Seymour, and Martin M. Winkler. "Lucius Annaeus Florus: Epitome of Roman History." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Futrell, Alison, Sandra R. Joshel, Margaret Malamud, and Donald T. McGuire, Jr.. "Seeing Red: Spartacus as Domestic Economist." *Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001. 77-118
- Hanson, Peter. *Dalton Trumbo, Hollywood Rebel: A Critical Survey and Filmography*. McFarland, 2001. Print.
- Humphries, Reynold. *Hollywood's Blacklists: A Political and Cultural History*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008.
- Joshel, Sandra R., Margaret Malamud, and Donald T. McGuire. *Imperial Projections: Ancient Rome in Modern Popular Culture*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005.
- Kanet, Roger E. "Identities, Nations and Politics after Communism." *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 35 (July 2007): 407-410. Web. 4 Feb. 2014.
- Kisselgoff, Anna. "DANCE REVIEW: A Slim Spartacus and a Powerful Crassus From Russia." *The New York Times*. 3 Apr. 2002. Print.
- Kodat, Catherine Gunther, James Phelan, and Peter J. Rabinowitz. "'I'm Spartacus!'" *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 484-498.
- Kuberski, Philip. *Kubrick's Total Cinema: Philosophical Themes and Formal Qualities*. : Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2012. Print.

- Lillard, Richard G. "Through the Disciplines with Spartacus: the Uses of a Hero in History and the Media." *American Studies* 16 (1975): 15-28. Web. 2 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40641138>>.
- Macdonald, Andrew. *Howard Fast: A Critical Companion*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996. Print.
- Meroney, John, and Sean Coons. "How Kirk Douglas Overstated His Role in Breaking the Hollywood Blacklist." *The Atlantic*. N.p., 5 Jul 2012. Web. 11 Mar 2014. <<http://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2012/07/how-kirk-douglas-overstated-his-role-in-breaking-the-hollywood-blacklist/259111/>>.
- Mintz, S., and S. McNeil. "HUAC Hearings on Communist Infiltration of the Motion-Picture Industry, 1947." *Digital History*. N.p., 5 Jul 2012. Web. 16 Jan 2014. <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/historyonline/huac_infiltration.cfm>.
- Paul, Joanna. *Film and the Classical Epic Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Print.
- Peirce, Merle. *Transgressive Masculinities in Selected Sword and Sandal Films*. MA thesis. Rhode Island College, 2009. Web. <<http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1018&context=etd>>.
- Perrin, Bernadotte, and Martin M. Winkler. "Plutarch: Lives." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Renger, Almut-Barbara, and Jon Solomon. *Ancient Worlds in Film and Television: Gender and Politics*. Boston: Brill, 2012. Print.
- Robinson, Jr., C.A. "Spartacus, Rebel Against Rome." Martin Winkler, ed., *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 112-123.
- Rockwell, John. "A Soviet-Era Vision of a Rebellion by Roman Slaves." *The New York Times*. 25 July 2005. Print.
- Rockwell, John. "A Tender and Heroic Spartacus." *The New York Times*. 4 May 1975. Print.
- Schumach, Murray. "U.-I. is Pondering Credit to Trumbo." *The New York Times* 22 Feb. 1960. Print.
- Schwarz, Boris. "Soviet Music Since The Second World War." *The Musical Quarterly* 51 (Jan. 1965): 259-281. Web. 20 Jan. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/740904>>.
- Smith, Terence. "Engineers of the Masses: Fordism, Fascism and the Theatre." *Engineers of the Masses: Fordism, Fascism and the Theatre*. Center for Digital Discourse

- and Culture, Virginia Tech, 1 Dec. 1997. Web. 11 Jan. 2014. <http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/digitalfordism/fordism_materials/smith.htm>.
- Solomon, Jon. "Film Philology: Towards Effective Theories and Methodologies Cinema and Classical Texts: Apollo's New Light by Martin M. Winkler." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*. 17.3 (September 2010): 435-449. Web. 21 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/40931342> .>.
- Solomon, Jon. *The Ancient World in the Cinema*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001.
- "Spartacus." *Spartacus*. The State Academic Bolshoi Theatre of Russia, 1 Jan. 2011. Web. 17 Nov. 2013. <<http://www.bolshoi.ru/en/performances/47/>>.
- Stothard, Peter. *Spartacus Road: A Journey Through Ancient Italy*. New York: Overlook, 2010. Kindle file.
- United States. United States Senate Committee on Governmental Affairs. *Executive Sessions of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Government Operations*. 2003. Print. <<http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/Volume1.pdf>>.
- Ward, Allen M. "Spartacus: History and Histrionics" Martin Winkler, ed., *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. 87-111.
- White, Horace, rev. E. Iliff Robson, and Martin M. Winkler. "Appian: Roman History." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Winkler, Martin. *The Roman Salute: Cinema, History, Ideology*. : Ohio State University Press, 2009. Print.
- Winkler, Martin M.. *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Print.
- Winkler, Martin M., and Martin M. Winkler. "Gladiator and the Traditions of Historical Cinema." *Gladiator: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 16-30.
- Winkler, Martin M. and Martin M. Winkler. "Livy: Periochae 95-97." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Winkler, Martin M. and Martin M. Winkler. "Paulus Orosius: History against the Pagans 5.24." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Winkler, Martin M, and Martin M. Winkler. "Sallust: The Histories, Book 3." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

- Winkler, Martin M. and Martin M. Winkler. "Sextus Julius Frontinus: Strategies." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Winkler, Martin M. and Martin M. Winkler. "Velleius Paterculus: Compendium of Roman History 2.30.5-6." *Spartacus: Film and History*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007.
- Wyke, Maria. *Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Wyke, Maria. "Are You Not Entertained?: Classicists and Cinema The Ancient World in the Cinema by Jon Solomon; Classical Myth and Culture in the Cinema by Martin M. Winkler." *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*. 9.3 (Winter 2003): 430-445. Web. 21 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30224339>>.