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Spartacus Before Marx

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Abstract: The story of the pre-Marxian ideology of Spartacus is not without its own peculiar interests. It is a strange narrative prompted both by the birth of a modern analytical, and political, interest in slavery, and in parallel debates over the meaning of liberty and servitude.

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Spartacus before Marx: Liberty and Servitude

There are still a fair number who are old enough to remember seeing the first theatrical showing of the Hollywood film epic Spartacus directed by the then young Stanley Kubrick.¹ A greater stretch of memory is required, now beyond the reach of most, to recollect the heyday of 'tail-gunner' Joe McCarthy, whose anti-Communist jihad of the early 1950s provided the backdrop for the publication of Howard Fast's novel Spartacus—the work of fiction which was, in turn, the basis for the blacklisted Dalton Trumbo's screenplay for the film. Thereby hang many tales, amongst them the letters written by J. Edgar Hoover to major New York publishing houses making quite clear his displeasure should they ever agree to publish Fast's manuscript.² They did not. In those days, Hoover was not a man to be crossed. And there is the tale of how Fast nevertheless managed to print and publish the novel, virtually out of the basement of his home. This same story also entails the fact that prospective producers of a film on Spartacus, including Yul Brynner, had been bargaining to obtain the rights to the novel The Gladiators by Arthur Koestler, also on the slave war, that the Hungarian expatriate writer had published in 1939, just before the outbreak of the Second World War.³ It was only their lack of success in acquiring rights from Koestler that forced them to pursue Fast's Spartacus as an alternative. The triad of Koestler, Fast, and Douglas, with their roots in debates within socialist and communist circles from the mid-nineteenth century, substantially make up what I call the main twentieth-century myth of Spartacus.

Despite the considerable success of the novel and the film, another fact needs accounting: that neither the publishing world nor Hollywood after the 1960s felt any need to duplicate their success. The next great epic gladiatorial film followed after a long interval of four decades, and Ridley Scott's 'Maximus,' as played by Russell Crowe, does not belong to the same lineage as Kirk Douglas's 'Spartacus.' The hiatus and the break are perhaps explained in part by a chronological metashift in the film industry's interests, exemplified by the fact that Kubrick, following the great success of his treatment of the past, turned, almost immediately, to the future, with 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968) and The Clockwork Orange (1971).⁴ These films were part of the transfer of big budgets films to imaginary futuristic scenarios, a trend that was to dominate the decades from the 1970s to the turn of the millennium. But there must be more to this hiatus, a systemic avoidance of Spartacus as an important theme in literature, film or most of the other traditional mass media that appears to have become almost permanent. Spartacus' main iconic importance now — and by far, if the sheer quantity of references is counted — is as a symbol of gay liberation on a huge number of internet websites. This change alone signals a different sort of freedom and a different sort of politics characteristic of our new age.

The lineages of this twentieth-century interest in Spartacus that precedes our own time have been well studied. They are attached, directly or obliquely, to the socialist and Marxist interest in Spartacus. Advancing backwards through time we find, first, the leaden pronouncements of Stalin, and then the German socialist and communist movements around the turn of the century: the SDP, Karl Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, the so-called 'Spartacists' and the Spartakusbund. Parallel to the Spartacists' claim to the icon were the

exhortations of Lenin. And behind both, the primal interests of Marx himself.⁵ All these parts of the Spartacus story are reasonably well known. In this investigation, my interests are focussed on different earlier parts of the story. How was it that a rather obscure actor in the history of the later Roman Republic came to be exalted as a figure of some great historical significance? And how was it that a rebel slave came to be chosen as an ideological icon, a cultural mandala of western political contemplation.

We might begin with a simple fact: Before the mid-decades of the eighteenth century Spartacus was, for all intents and purposes, unknown as the mythical historical figure that he was to become.⁶ It is true that by the mid-sixteenth century the Spartacus war was sufficiently well known as an event for his armed resistance to Rome to be included in debates over technical and juridical aspects of Republican history: for example, to have Carlo Signorius debate, in a work of 1550, whether or not the Spartacus slave rebellion was a tumultus or a bellum.⁷ In terms of theory, however, in this matter, as in so much else, it was Jean Bodin in his Six Livres sur la République who was the real watershed.⁸ His revolutionary questioning of the relationship of the family and the state, provoked Bodin to rethink the nature of power tout court and the power relationships between the two, and what consisted of legal resistance to the imposition of force on the household by the state (naturally entailing control over slaves). Even in works such as these, however, mentions of Spartacus are brief and quite tangential to the main concerns of their writers, whether it was the place of the family in the structure of the body politic or the question of what was or was not a 'just war.' How little Spartacus concerned scholars of this type is evident in the works of the Italian scholar Lorenzo Pignoria (1609) and his

Dutch counterpart at the end of the same century, Titus Popma (1672), men who essayed some of the first serious monographs on the subject of Roman slaves and the Roman slave system. In these works, as in the general histories of the time, neither Spartacus nor his rebel slaves were given more than the shortest of notices. Yet by the mid-nineteenth century, Spartacus had acquired sufficient notoriety to be enshrined at the center of socialist and then Marxist discourse.

Two things are immediately apparent right at the birth of the early modern myth of Spartacus. First, by the end of the sixteenth century there already existed some scholarly discussion and debate about slavery that at least brought Spartacus to the attention of anyone who might be seeking an historical figure of this kind in the historical repertoire. But there is no indication that scholars, least of all historians, were going to take Spartacus much further than the simple annotation of his existence, much as they found him in their primary sources: as a minor appendage to the deeds of a Crassus or a Pompey the Great. A first step to something larger might possibly be found in a more popular form of broader artistic communication: the opera. The possibility of a critical turn would be embedded in a paradigm shift of the same type in which the film industry engaged (to which I have made reference at the beginning of this talk). This story begins with the opera entitled Spartaco composed by the Neapolitan Giuseppe Porsile.⁹ In Naples in the early decades of the seventeenth century a similar change was taking place in the nascent world of operatic production. Since its birth, the principal themes for opera had been derived from the realm of Graeco-Roman mythology. In the mid-1720's, however, Giuseppe Porsile shared in the widening of scope to include scenarios drawn from historical records.¹⁰ Given his focus on personalities, it was natural that the lives of Plutarch were the

favorite source for this new material. But why Spartacus in particular? In this specific case, one might speculate that it was surely some species of 'local interest' that was involved. After all, much of the original action had taken place in the regions of Italy just inland from Porsile's patria of Naples. If so, this *Spartaco* might represent the starting point of the modern myth.¹¹

Several attendant aspects of the production, however, argue against making too much of this first appearance of our hero in the modern age.¹² Porsile himself had already been absent from Naples for some time at the Barcelona court of Charles VI, the Habsburg claimant to the Spanish throne, and *Spartaco* received its first performance not in Naples, but in Vienna, in February of 1726, at the imperial court by command of the emperor.¹³ And, as with many, if not most operatic scenarios, despite the apparent choice of an historic rather than a mythical theme, there is not much, if anything, in the libretto of *Spartaco* that indicated any of the history of Spartacus apart from his name. The libretto, written by Giovanni Claudio Pasquini, a Siennese priest, took what can only be called the usual operatic liberties with the facts.¹⁴ Spartacus is portrayed as the king or a 'big man' of the city-state of Capua who is in love with one Vetturia. He also exhausts much of his time trying to persuade his daughter, Gianisbe, to marry the Roman Licinio (Marcus Licinius Crassus). She, however, loves Popilio, a gentleman of Capua. When, for no apparent reason, a Roman army approaches Capua, *Spartaco*, being unable to resolve these various romantic attachments, goes stark raving mad. In the end, however, each of the intended romantic couples does end up with the other. First performed at the Kleines Hoftheater in Vienna on 21 February 1726, *Spartaco* was a success of sorts — for its music, however, and not for its historical content. One should not expect more. Porsile's

interest in Spartacus ran no deeper than the historical antiquarians of his own time: a name and not much more. He was left with his imagination to fill in the rest. In the late 1710s, when he followed Charles, the claimant to the Habsburg throne, to Barcelona, he became maestro di cappella to the court. He later followed Elizabeth, the wife of his patron, now Charles VI, to Vienna when she returned there from Barcelona in 1713, and spent the rest of his life in the royal capital. From December of 1720, he had held the official position of court composer. Although a modest success on the occasion of its first performance, Porsile's Spartaco was not performed often thereafter. The reasons for the disinterest were not political; Porsile's music was already becoming dated and was being replaced by more fashionable styles.

As one might expect, Porsile's interest in Spartacus was no deeper than that of the historical antiquarians of his own age: a name and not much more. He could hardly be blamed. To the mid-eighteenth century, handbook historical knowledge of the great slave wars, including the Spartacus rebellion, was largely limited to chronological interests.¹⁵ It is true that sufficient source materials had been collated by mid-century for Spartacus to become part of consistent narratives of Republic history. Typical is the eleventh volume of 'An Universal History from the Earliest Account of Time to the Present Compiled from Original Authors,' which was issued in eleven large volumes between 1744 and 1758. In the eleventh volume, published in 1751, the Spartacus war, as well as the earlier slave wars in Sicily, received a place in the narrative.¹⁶ But these historical interests remained brief and descriptive to the point of aridity. They informed the reader of the existence of such events, but not much more.

The fundamental developments were to come some decades later and in France, not Italy, England, or Germany. They were presaged by the production of Voltaire's tragedy Brutus on 11 December 1730.¹⁷ Taking as its dramatic focal point a figure drawn from Roman history, the first Brutus who established the Republic, Voltaire's play was of avowedly Republican and anti-monarchical sentiments.¹⁸ Two points deserve emphasis. The first is the modest reception that the play received in Paris of the time, and what has kindly been called the 'uneventful history' of its restaging before the revolutionary decade of the 1790s.¹⁹ The second is the fact that the age preceding the Revolution spawned a host of theatrical Cato's and Catiline's who debated the problem of Republicanism and Liberty, and that within this context it must be always borne in mind that Spartacus was small fry indeed. Voltaire's suggestion was to take root, however, and, as he rightly guessed, not amongst historians. The 1760s — only a decade before the American Revolution and three before the French — were the temporal watershed in which Spartacus was selected to be an important historical figure.²⁰ Rousseau set the tone in some of his writings of the early 1760s in which he proclaimed the right of every human being to freedom: the natural right of every human to guide his or her own life. In other writings of the time, one can sense the undertow of romance and revolution that hailed forth the rebel Roman slave Spartacus as an axial figure for the new age.²¹ The subject of slaves and their treatment was coming into focus amongst historians specifically because of the problem posed by the rising numbers of slaves in the French overseas colonies. The consciousness of such problems provoked Jean L vesque de Burigny, in the early 1770s, to publish lengthy essays on the condition of Roman slaves. The basic argument of these treatises was that the Romans

avoided the recurrence of the violent outbursts of rebellion that characterized the late Republic by means of a modulated system of manumission and by providing legal regulation for the humane treatment of slaves.²² But it was his fellow-historian and the eminent President of the Academy, Charles de Brosses, who was engaged in research for his history of the Roman Republic, who first produced a detailed study of the rebellion of Spartacus, an essay which he presented to the Academy of Inscriptions in May of 1768.²³ The account was innovative because it was based on a careful collation of the fragments of the Histories of Sallust and their fleshing out into a continuous narrative ‘like a novel’ by de Brosses.²⁴ The result of this stitching together of a new story line was presented to the public as a new whole in de Brosses’ history of the Roman Republic published in 1777.²⁵ But it was Voltaire, about 1770, who made one of the first specific references to Spartacus in the context of the justification of armed resistance to unjust oppression. In his discussion of ‘slavery’ in the entry on the subject for the Encyclopédie, Voltaire stated emphatically that of all wars ‘that led by Spartacus was the most just, and perhaps the only just war’ in the world’s history.²⁶ The fact most deserving notice, however, is that historians were, by and large, not paying very much attention to Spartacus as such — and that when men like de Brosses did focus on him it was some time after the mythic figure had already arisen – for it was somewhat earlier, in the decade of the 1760s, that Spartacus had already, in a rather literal fashion, hit the world stage. He had already become a popular figure, and not because of the historians.

The precise occasion for the birth of the modern icon was the staging of a popular play by Bernard Saurin entitled Spartacus: A Tragedy in Five Acts at the Théâtre Français in Paris on 20 February 1760, right at the beginning of the

decade.²⁷ It is possible that Saurin's background provides some clues to his interests.²⁸ His father, Jacques Saurin, a cleric of protestant sentiments and the fiery temperament of a dissident, was often a man in trouble.²⁹ He had a long history of exiles of various kinds, finally fleeing to Lausanne, Switzerland in 1690, as a safe haven from persecution. In the mid 1750s, Bernard Saurin, his son, wished to return to France, from which his father had been exiled, by taking advantage of the repeal of the Edict of Nantes. But the younger Saurin's radical views had so enraged the Calvinists of Lausanne that they accused his father of having gone into exile in reality because of a theft that he had committed (in fact, some forty years earlier).³⁰

The rebellious son followed the rebellious father. Bernard joined a secret society known as 'The Cave.' Helvetius was a member and, indeed, acted as Saurin's life-long patron. Saurin, having taken up his father's secular occupation of surveyor, was a writer by avocation and turned, in part, to writing historical plays, the first of which was an Aménophis in 1750. From the mid 1750s, however, it was Voltaire and another member of 'The Cave,' Catroux, who were pressing him. As early as 1730, Catroux had written: 'Every gladiator, every slave and all of Thrace in the condition that it was had aspirations above their condition.' When Saurin sent the new Paris edition of his play to Voltaire in early 1769, it elicited a letter from the sage of Ferney filled with praise: Saurin's talent for characterization was superior to that of Racine and Corneille, and his play superior to both in its contribution to the cause of freedom.³¹ But then, as with many figures of the Enlightenment on both sides of the Atlantic, including Jefferson on ours, however hostile he might have been to slavery in theory,

Voltaire was no less compromised by his real involvement in the slave economy and its profits.³²

Not only is the earlier date of the play significant, but so is the fact that this first public presentation of Spartacus in the mainstream culture of Parisian France was both popular and fictional. Even at the time, the character of Spartacus in Saurin's play was openly recognized as a fabrication, an imaginary character who responded to the demand at the time for a model of just resistance. In Saurin's own words, he wished 'to evoke the picture of a great man . . . who would combine the brilliant qualities of the heroic men of justice and humanity . . . a man who was great for the good of men and not for the evil that they suffered . . . His real aim was the abolition of slavery, whose chains he broke.'³³ Saurin's play was the first in a long line of artistic creations of the slave rebel as symbol of the age's assertion of the freedoms of the individual citizen.³⁴ As such, Saurin's version of Spartacus merged with the current spate of 'anti-tyrannical' performances that drew heavily on thematic materials presented by the Roman Republic, and almost all of which had direct links with Voltaire's Brutus.³⁵ And Voltaire, in the aftermath of the success of the first performance approved. He wrote to Saurin: 'Sir, I thank you with all my heart. I love Spartacus: that's my sort of man; he is a lover of freedom and that's that.'³⁶ He should have: the parallels between Saurin's Spartacus and Voltaire's own Brutus are manifest.³⁷

This tradition was to find its end, almost literally, in the abortive attempt by Lessing, who, a decade later, attempted to compose his own 'Spartacus', moved, it might be noted, by having had Saurin's play sent to him by a friend. By 1775, Lessing had actually produced a few pages of the play.³⁸ Other fragmentary

plays of his from the same period: two on Alcibiades, another on the Matron of Ephesus, show him experimenting with classical historical themes.³⁹ More important are his plans for a tragedy on Roman galley slaves that just preceded the attempt on a Spartacus.⁴⁰ By the time that Lessing was beginning to write the latter work, however, 'anti-tyrannical' plays were being rapidly overtaken by real events.⁴¹ It is no surprise that he dropped the project.

Voltaire, Rousseau, and Saurin were provoked to take notice of Spartacus primarily because of the drive for political freedom in Europe. In the end, the plays, the operas, and the other theatrical representations, like the dramatic hero of Saurin's play, were far less about the Spartacus who lived in Roman Italy in the 70s BCE, or even about actual Roman slavery, than they were a deliberative anti-tyrannical discourse about freedom and liberty by persons who were not slaves themselves or who had ever been slaves — or, indeed, had much real experience of persons in servitude. These men were using the image of Spartacus to think about, to debate, and to propagandize their own ideas of liberty for the citizens of national states in Europe and the Americas. The pattern was the same in the new states of the era whether in Europe or in the Americas. But whereas the French writers who showed the first serious interest in Spartacus were debating the freedom of the already free citizen, there was another dimension to Spartacus that would be useful for those who had no state or community within which to be free in the first place.

In the case of post-unification Italy, the ideals of the independence movement commandeered by Giuseppe Garibaldi are directly reflected in Raffaello Giovagnoli's huge epic novel of 1874: Spartaco.⁴² Oddly enough, there was almost no substantial interest in Spartacus either amongst Italian historians

of Roman antiquity or amongst novelists and playwrights until mid-century. The one striking exception is Manzoni who, in 1821, was contemplating writing a tragedy entitled Spartaco, and who actually engaged in a great deal of detailed research in preparation, especially on the fragments of Sallust's history.⁴³ His problem, as with many other writers of the period, was precisely how to effect Walter Scott's challenge of producing a real-historical portrait of one's own society and its inherited values. Standing at a creative crossroads, Manzoni decided instead to choose the medium of prose and the historical novel as much better suited to perfecting Scott's project for realism.⁴⁴ For posterity, the choice was fortunate. The alternative road led to I promessi sposati.

Raffaello Giovagnoli also followed the path of the historical novel and his Spartaco, subtitled An Historical Tale from the Seventh Century of Ancient Rome (Racconto storico del secolo VII dell' era romana), was similarly based on Scott's program of a realistic historical representation of the past. Giovagnoli's blockbuster novel was frequently reprinted in the following decades.⁴⁵ It also provided the basis for the first cinematic transcriptions of Spartacus and the slave war that were produced in Italy in the years just before the First World War.⁴⁶ The novel was published along with a glowing letter of recommendation from Giuseppe Garibaldi from his retreat on Caprera, addressed warmly to 'my dear Giovagnoli,' in which he emphasized that Giovagnoli's work was 'serving the sacred cause of freedom' (quando si serve la causa santa della libert ). Garibaldi writes of Spartacus coming to save the slaves 'like Christ the Redeemer.' He praises Giovagnoli because his novel served as a reminder to his fellow citizens of the new Italian state that 'they lived on the same soil where the bones of those heroes of the past now rested, a land where there are no longer

any gladiators and, least of all, any slave masters.⁴⁷ There were other connections with Garibaldi. In his address to the first world peace congress, held in 1867 in Geneva, Garibaldi had echoed Voltaire's views on war and peace, emphatically holding that the only case of a just war was one in which slaves sought freedom from their masters.⁴⁸ And it was the Spartacus slave war that he used as the symbolic example of such justified wars of liberation. The younger Giovagnoli then echoed this sentiment of his political mentor.

The popular response to Spartaco was so great that Giovagnoli was provoked to spin off a series of at least a half dozen sequels on Roman history including the first and the last in the series that were dedicated to the radical plebeian tribunes L. Appuleius Saturninus and Publius Clodius.⁴⁹ Of all of these historical novels on ancient Rome, however, Spartaco was by far the most successful. It went through numerous translations in languages including French, German, Finnish, and Chinese — but not English, where Giovagnoli's work therefore still remains relatively unknown.⁵⁰

In true patriotic and Roman fashion, but rather ironically for a man who had once been a member of the 'Extreme Left,' in 1878 Giovagnoli was made responsible for delivering the funerary elogium for Italy's first king, Victor Emmanuel II.⁵¹ For all that, his Spartacus was, oddly enough, a heavily romanticized figure whose rebellion represented a breaking free 'from' external constraints that had been placed upon him. I say oddly enough because Giovagnoli was not only an historical novelist but also an academic historian who contributed to one of the standard general histories of Italy produced in the nineteenth-century: the Storia politica d'Italia. This was an epic-scale treatment of the whole history of Italy in twelve large volumes, from the primaevial origins

of the city of Rome to the reborn modern state. Arguably the most important volume for Giovagnoli's own generation, the history of the Risorgimento, was assigned to him to write.⁵² I have said that Giovagnoli's construction of Spartacus, indeed of his whole fictional recreation of the last generations of the Roman Republic, is rather odd, since he himself was later to write, and rather critically, of the romantic elements that had crept into historical writing about the Risorgimento only a generation after its achievement.⁵³ As for Giovagnoli's views and his use of Roman prototypes to carry them, one can note that although he began as a radical, literally of the Estrema Sinistra, and his novel of the popularist tribune Lucius Appuleius Saturninus of 1879 expresses these radical views, by the end of the century the process of aging had taken its near-inevitable toll. After a long interlude in which he had devoted himself to politics and to the writing of real 'empirical' history, in 1905 Giovagnoli returned to writing novels with his Publio Clodio. By now, however, for the older Giovagnoli the figure of the radical tribune had become a distasteful and dangerous thing. The heroes of the novel are Cicero and Cato, the upholders of social order and legal norms without which the Republic, the state, could not be properly sustained.

The way in which a work like Giovagnoli's could then find further life is instructive. As already noted, his Spartaco was a considerable publishing success and went through a large number of translations. Each of these has its own story — I select only one of them, exempli gratia.⁵⁴ Born into the Jewish community of Odessa in 1880, Vladimir Jabotinsky was from his earliest childhood an outsider and a rebel. He rebelled against his schooling: he set a poor record (in fact, one of outright failure) in Greek and Latin — decades later, he claimed to have acquired

a deep appreciation of Homer, although, it should be noted, by means of a Russian translation. He refused to complete his schooling, persuading his mother to allow him to leave early to take up training as a newspaper correspondent for two Odessa dailies. This assignment took him first to Berne, and then soon after, to a more congenial assignment in Rome. It was in the metropolis of the newly formed Italian state that, by his own testimony, in the years from 1898 to 1901, between ages 18 and 21, the young Jabotinsky spent the three most joyful and rewarding years of his life.⁵⁵ It was only a decade and half after Garibaldi's death, the hero of the Risorgimento whose epic life of daring international exploits and personal battles for his national ideals very much attracted Jabotinsky. Indeed, it is difficult to say which was more influential, the model of Garibaldi, or the practical instruction that he received from Enrico Ferri in Roman Law at the University of Rome and the lessons in the open-ended humanist approaches to Marxism from Antonio Labriola.⁵⁶

When Jabotinsky returned to Odessa in 1902, he became one of the most ardent and most talented proponents of Jewish nationalism, one of the most critical planks of which was the provision of texts and instruction in the Hebrew language. To that end, in the year 1910-11, Jabotinsky undertook a new venture, a Hebrew publishing house in Odessa named Turgeman or 'Translation Press.'⁵⁷ The first works that it published were Hayyim Bialik's translation of Don Quixote, David Yellin's translation of The Arabian Nights, and a contribution by Jabotinsky himself. Jabotinsky's choice was Raffaello Giovagnoli's Spartaco.⁵⁸ It is no accident, then, that this Spartacus became one of the more widely read books in Russian Jewish circles in the decade before the October Revolution.⁵⁹ But one cannot claim any univocal valence for this Spartacus. For Giovagnoli, as for

Jabotinsky, the heroic figure seems to have evoked a response more as a romantic icon linked to the struggle for the formation of a national self-identity than anything to do with socialist or communist ideals – views which, in any event, became increasingly alien both to Giovagnoli and to Jabotinsky.

On this side of the Atlantic, the ties of Spartacus with nationalist aspirations were noticeably weaker. And, although we might take the presence of the living institution of slavery in the New World as a brute fact that would provide a direct causal connection between Spartacus and his literary interpreters, such was not the case. A good case in point is offered by Robert Montgomery Bird, another one of those new men caught up in the throes of the expansion of America in the second generation of its independence — a man whose formal politics could be classified as modestly Whiggish, but perhaps more eclectic than anything else.⁶⁰ His intellectual and ideological roots are harder to discern, although specifically with respect to Spartacus, it is significant that he had noted remarks by Voltaire.⁶¹ Bird is of particular interest to me because in 1827, at age 21, he graduated from the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania.⁶² His career as a doctor was no less unsuccessful than his life before entering the university. He had an immediate aversion to the practice of medicine, especially to its commercial aspects. Doctor Bird found it difficult to collect fees and felt impelled to give away his medicines without charge, so alien were the aims of just medical care from the demands of profit. Given these unmercenary attitudes, it is not surprising that he had to close his practice within the first year of its existence. Faced with financial pressures (and not for the first time in his life) Bird had to turn, urgently, to any source of supplementary income.⁶³ He had some talent at writing and so the idea of

producing scripts for the stage suggested itself. The time was opportune because we know that Bird, and others, had a deep frustration over the lack of an American theater (the overwhelming impetus of theatrical entrepreneurs of the time was to borrow from the British stage). In response, the youthful and dynamic actor, Edwin Forrest, was trying to find ways to encourage the production of indigenous American materials. Bird immediately submitted a play that was not successful in Forrest's first prize competition.⁶⁴

Bird gave the competition another try and this time he was successful with a play entitled Pelopidas, or the Fall of the Polemarchs that he had submitted to the competition in the autumn of 1830.⁶⁵ Set in the Greek polis of Thebes, the play is about liberty. The plot by Pelopidas and his band of conspirators who enter Thebes to slay the magistrates who had betrayed the city to the Spartans is at the play's center. Bird read the story, even if rather crudely, as an anti-tyrannical one, much on the lines of the Athenian tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton.⁶⁶ In striking out as a heroic individual, Pelopidas is portrayed as a hero who restored democracy to Thebes. The play was never staged. As an experienced stage actor, Edwin Forrest, to whom Bird had submitted the script, rightly saw many difficulties with it as a production and he encouraged Bird to try his hand at writing another drama. The result was a new play that Bird completed in April of 1831, entitled The Gladiator.⁶⁷ For it, he appears to have engaged in a reasonable amount of antiquarian research.⁶⁸ It was to be a typical theme of Bird's life that he received a once-off payment of a thousand dollars for a play that Forrest must have staged a thousand times in his own lifetime and from which he made a minor fortune.⁶⁹

A drama about Spartacus and the Spartacan slave war, it was to be Bird's greatest success. First produced at the Park Theater in New York City, 26 September of 1831, and next in Bird's own Philadelphia, The Gladiator played out the hopes and frustrations of the new middling orders of American citizenry. It is perhaps interesting to note that Bird was also the author of plays and novels that contrasted the foreign—whether Native Americans in the wilderness, Latin American aristocrats, or Incan princes—with the democratic ethos of the free American citizen. Although its plot, characterization, and historicity would strike us as banal, if not bizarre, Bird's version of Spartacus was the stage success of the American theater in the nineteenth century. It was the object of an enormous (some claim an unparalleled number) of performances in Bird's own lifetime.⁷⁰ In an era of ruthless expansion, robber barons, and the Gilded Age, audiences, no doubt, sympathized with the message of the individual heroic figure, striking out against all odds to assert his rights to individual liberty and freedom. Bird himself, indeed, saw the play itself as a triumph of American nationalism.⁷¹

It was sufficiently influential, following performances in England, to provoke responses by English playwrights on the same theme—although notably these do not seem to have evoked the same popular response as Bird's play did in America.⁷² One that deserves brief notice is Jacob Jones' Spartacus, or the Roman Gladiator.⁷³ According to Jones' preface to the first print edition, published in London in 1837, he had actually penned the play some ten years previously, but apparently with no great success. He specifically — and significantly for our purposes — credits the staging of Bird's play in England as being the catalyst that made the events of the Spartacus slave war familiar to the British public. In the same preface, Jones notes that the second edition of his play

Longinus, published in 1827, included “A Gladiator’s Hymn” that was derived from the original version of his play, and that this hymn was later revised to serve as a lyric for the ‘Polish cause.’ The Polish cause of which Jones speaks was a nationalist one that very much moved liberal and radical sentiments in Britain during the 1830s. Little is known of his background of this lawyer of the Inner Temple and student ‘formerly of Brazen-Nose College, Oxford.’ In addition to his tragedy Longinus, he also wrote an opinionated essay entitled ‘Thoughts on Prison Labour’ — which, with the devotion to the ‘Polish cause’ surely indicates his liberal if not radical reformist leanings.⁷⁴ Spartacus’ words at the point of the breakout from Batiatus training school (Act. 1): ‘On, on, for Liberty, Revenge, and Fame!’ echoed by his wife’s cries (her named Camilla), of, ‘And Liberty, and Life!’ represent the tone of the play. It did not, however, elicit the same response from English audiences that Bird’s did in America.⁷⁵

Bird’s stage play and Giovagnoli’s historical novel were huge, indeed unprecedented popular successes. In neither case were the massive popular responses provoked by any concern with slaves or slavery as such, but rather by the clarion call to liberty and to freedom made to citizens who, notably, were already free and not themselves slaves. The writers who deployed these images of Spartacus were attempting to debate the legitimate status of the modern nation state, the peculiar freedom of its citizens, and the type of liberty enshrined in its political ideals. For all of these novelists, poets, and playwrights the figure of the slave embodied in the imaginary rebel slave Spartacus was a rather crude symbol for political freedom set in contrast not with real chattel slavery, least of all in the nineteenth century United States, but against the fear of political

tyranny, especially resurgent aristocratic or élitist forces that might threaten democracy.

In one of those odd ironies of history, Bird was writing his play in 1831. As if just on time, that year also witnessed Nat Turner's slave rebellion in Virginia. Bird himself, however, not only saw no connection between Spartacus and the rebel slaves, but took the opportunity to give vent to his considerable fears that 'a Spartacus' might be found to lead the slaves of Virginia on what Bird called 'a Crusade of Massacre.' He further used the occasion to castigate Christian churches for permitting the atrocities of the Turner rebellion. Real slaves in Bird's own society who violently struck out for their freedom were seen by him as nothing other than 'murderous savages.'⁷⁶ Bird saw Spartacus more as a lone individual whose historical importance was negligible and who was of use, therefore, mainly for his own literary and symbolic purposes.⁷⁷ And when, in the late 1830s, in the years soon after the Turner Rebellion, Bird was contemplating buying a farm, he finally preferred a piece of land in Maryland over farms that were available closer to hand in Pennsylvania.⁷⁸ The reason was his fear, justified as it turned out, that the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania was ready to grant freedom and the franchise to slaves, something that Bird viewed with great disgust and which was not a likely prospect in the Maryland of his time.

Not many years after the publication of his *Spartacus*, in the year 1834, having soured on the stage as a source of income and in dire need of money, Bird penned a song for sale. He received for it a pittance. In many respects, it is another one of those ironies of his life and of life in general, because almost everyone who has not heard of Robert Montgomery Bird — which is indeed

almost everyone — knows the title of his song by heart.⁷⁹ Entitled ‘God Bless America: A National Hymn,’ it marks a direct line to Irving Berlin’s version of the second national anthem.⁸⁰ More to the point are some of the lyrics from the original:

God bless the land that gave us birth
 No prayer but this know we
 God bless the land, of all the earth
 The happy and the free
 And where’s the land like ours can brave
 The splendor of the day
 And find no son of hers a slave?
 God bless America. . .

It was just as much a part of Bird’s ideological convictions as of ours that he could believe, with all sincerity, that these words, so literally untrue of his own America, embodied a living truth about his own nation.⁸¹

Although it was an enormous, perhaps unprecedented stage success through the end of the nineteenth century, by the beginning of the twentieth Bird’s Spartacus suddenly and completely vanished from the stage. Its language and, more important, its presentation of the central character of Spartacus no longer evoked a popular response to a recognizable image, certainly not the rapturous bursts of applause and repeated standing ovations from the male audiences that greeted its first performances in Philadelphia in 1831. Nor did the message of the play have any resonances outside the English-speaking world. Although several other works by Bird, especially his novels, were reprinted

overseas, and translated into French, German, and other languages, this never happened to his Spartacus.

Bird's play and his image of Spartacus, I argue, represents the last in line of a peculiar kind of representation of the rebel slave that has a long history going back to Saurin's tragedy and Porsile's opera. In this sense, Bird's Spartacus was rapidly becoming an archaic artifact and was superseded by the large complicated historical novel of the kind written by Giovagnoli. There is a difference between the two Spartacus figures: all of the pre-Giovagnolian images are dominantly Plutarchan. This is made clear by Bird's choice to write a play on Pelopidas whose main lineaments are the dramatic and detailed personal tale of adventure that is already available in the first chapters of Plutarch's life. That Bird was able to turn around and within the year write another tragedy, this time on Spartacus, was possible because the same source, Plutarch, provided him with the necessary material. And that is surely why, from Porsile to Bird, these presentations of Spartacus allot such a prominent role to Marcus Licinius Crassus, even if, as in Porsile, the modern-day historian would hardly recognize the 'Crassus' anymore than the 'Spartacus.' Giovagnoli's less biographical version, driven by the enormous and decisive impact of Sir Walter Scott on how historical realism could best be achieved, is presented as a detailed history, if a romanticized one, precisely because of the impact that the Histories of Sallust had had on modern views of the history of the late Roman Republic.

One of the most important of transitional developments, however, involves a different sort of national icon. Susannah Strickland Moodie has become, *faute de mieux*, a national foundational figure of early Canadian literature.⁸² Hers is a rather dubious inheritance, however, and on more than one

count. First of all, her classic Six Years in the Bush seems to confirm the worst of what outsiders conceive of as 'being Canadian': a sort of primaeval angst over survival amidst black flies, impenetrable forests, endless drifts of snow, and unbearable cold.⁸³ More problematic is her status as an early Canadian woman author. Here Susannah Moodie presents, at least in later life, a less than wholly acceptable spectacle. Margaret Atwood, in commenting on Ms. Moodie and her place in Canadian literature—which is to say, as one icon speaking about another—gives voice to some of these worries: 'Susanna Moodie . . . would not have anticipated or have relished being claimed as an ancestress by the modern women's movement; she was a creature of her own society, and would have disapproved of many feminist principles.' Atwood evaluates Moodie as one of the early women writers of Canada: 'All were gentlewomen, all looked at the growing colony with a critical though not entirely harsh eye, and all demonstrate that gender is not the only thing to be taken into account when accomplishments of one sort or another are being evaluated.'⁸⁴ Which is another way of saying that such literary productions by early Canadian women authors might well be disconcertingly conservative in nature. But it might be said in Susannah Moodie's defence that her fate (to grow old and to die in Toronto) is one that might well afflict any one of us. Ms. Atwood perhaps forgets that some of us, herself included, were once young and that in that earlier age we perhaps had different and nobler aspirations that have been obscured by the cynicism and weariness of later years.

So it was with Susannah Moodie. Wholly unnoticed by most of her modern Canadian commentators is a literary production of hers written as a very young girl before she made her emigration to Upper Canada in 1832 at the age of

29.⁸⁵ It was written and published at the precocious age of nineteen in the year 1823: a novel, entitled Spartacus: A Roman Story.⁸⁶ It is a narrative, written primarily for younger readers, that gives full and frank expression to outrage over the unjust treatment of the oppressed and the awful fate of the servile. Spartacus is portrayed as a noble and heroic figure, battling against a primal and savage act of injustice perpetrated by some humans against others: the act of enslavement. Examples of this rhetoric of freedom and servitude that mark her portrait of Spartacus and the rebel slaves are Spartacus' oath in which he swears to obtain liberty for the slaves and his claim to avenge the wrong of the servitude of his countrymen. In dialogue, Spartacus consistently presents his aim as one of reasserting the freedom of the slaves whom he is to lead in rebellion. After the breakout, Spartacus reflects on his own newfound freedom and his agency, his ability to act as he wishes; and he notices that his desire for liberty increases as his power becomes stronger. In a forthright statement, Spartacus declares to the Roman commander opposing him: 'I fight to free injured people, and redress their wrongs.' Moreover, Susanna Strickland was also one of the first writers to give Spartacus' wife—named Elia in her novel—a full and central role in the novel as a prophetess who foresees events on which the narrative pivots.⁸⁷ Why did Ms. Strickland, at such an impressionable age, feel moved to write this work? She probably acquired a basic knowledge of the existence of Spartacus from the type of academic sources that we have noted above. More important, the impulse to write was in the family. Her sisters set a rather amazing record for research and publication. One of them, Agnes, was a best-selling historian.⁸⁸ But in Susanna's case, there are other connections. They come through her closest friend before her marriage to John Wedderburn Moodie in 1832. Susanna had met her

future husband in the early summer of 1830 at the London (Highgate) home of a mutual friend, one Thomas Pringle.⁸⁹ It is this Thomas Pringle, a handsome and intelligent man of high principles and even higher literary ambitions, who was a significant influence on her earliest literary career.

Our vision therefore shifts from Susanna Strickland to Thomas Pringle — a man of rural Scottish origins, of unorthodox Protestant temper, and lame from birth. Pringle's literary pretensions are seen in his role, in 1817, as one of the cofounders of what became Blackwood's Magazine. Of a more adventuresome sort, debts and lack of a future forced him to seek a better fortune overseas. It was with this aim that, accepting the assistance of Walter Scott, he moved to South Africa in February of 1820. He soon fell into disfavor with the powers there precisely because of his opposition to slavery and his fight to defend the freedom of the press against repressive colonial authorities. Disillusioned, Pringle returned to Britain in 1826, where he continued his opposition to slavery in South Africa, publishing an aggressive article on the subject in the New Monthly Magazine, a moral broadside that drew the attention of the leaders of the newly formed Anti-Slavery Society.⁹⁰ In March of 1827, he was offered and accepted the position of Secretary of the Society.⁹¹

This does indeed turn out to be the critical connection. We know that Susanna Strickland was involved in the new Anti-Slavery Society that was formed in London in 1823, the year after she published her novel on Spartacus, and that she already had literary connections with Pringle that linked both of them in a common endeavor. By the early 1830s, she was residing with the Pringles in their London home.⁹² It was at this venue and at the headquarters of the Anti-Slavery Society that Susanna met former black slaves who, as residents

of England, were seeking to assert their rights as free persons. Her literary connections with two of these deserve notice. The first is a slave woman from Antigua named Mary Prince who, in November of 1828, came to the offices of the Anti-Slavery Society in Aldermanbury in east London to assert her right to be treated as a free person, complaining bitterly of severe maltreatment at the hands of John Wood, her owner. Thomas Pringle took a special interest in this case. In order to assist in the political battle for the abolition of slavery, the Anti-Slavery Society was instrumental in publishing the accounts of slaves who could give first-hand witness to the conditions of slavery.

It was in this context that there appeared, in 1831, The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related by Herself.⁹³ It is rightly regarded as one of those nineteenth-century slave narratives that is marked by a special personal and emotive force. It was also the first autobiography of a slave woman to be published in England. The story of her life as a slave was related by Mary Prince herself and was edited by Thomas Pringle. But it is surely not without significance that Mary told her story to Susanna Strickland who acted as her amanuensis. As Mary Prince declares at the conclusion of her narrative: 'All slaves want to be free. . . I will say the truth to the English people who may read this history that my good friend, Miss S[trickland], is now writing down for me.'⁹⁴ That Mary Prince expressed her dedication to Susanna Strickland the last of the three editions that were printed in 183 is also not without significance. One must suspect that the choice of a woman to act as amanuensis was no happenstance, especially given some of the personal details of Mary Prince's account that Strickland expunged from the print version of Mary's life.

Having acquired this experience, Susanna Strickland then went on to edit another slave narrative which, this time, was published under her own name. It was the account of Negro Slavery described by a Negro, as told to Susanna by Ashton Warner, another one of the former slaves who was being harbored by Pringle and the Anti-Slavery Society.⁹⁵ In her lengthy introduction to this work, Susanna put in her own words the outrage that she had come to feel about the outrageous crime of slavery fuelled by her recent encounters with actual slaves. "It seems difficult to account," she says, "for the indifference maintained by a very numerous class of well-educated persons in regard to the system of slavery in our colonies, on any other principle than their almost total, and, I may add, criminal ignorance of the real facts of the case."⁹⁶ Put in plain words, whatever Susanna Strickland might have become after she emigrated to Canada, the composition of a novel on Spartacus by this young woman was not just a fortuitous happenstance, but part of a profound personal commitment.⁹⁷ What is perhaps most significant is the fact that, of all of the literary interpretations that I have covered for this exploration of the image of Spartacus, this slight production by a young girl in Hanoverian England, is the only one that actually has as its avowed and explicit concern a consideration of the condition of slaves themselves and which is a cry of outrage against the institution of slavery. Not unrelated, therefore, is the observation that there existed not a few Anti-Slavery societies on both sides of the Atlantic that were specifically and distinctively organized as 'women's' or 'ladies' organizations that fought for the abolition first of the slave trade and then of slavery itself.⁹⁸ It is not accidental, then, that Strickland's Spartacus ends not with Spartacus' spectacular death on the field of battle, but with the words uttered by his consort Elia. Nor it is accidental, I think,

that her account also lies at the head of the modernizing movement that shifted the account from poetry into prose.⁹⁹ Every earlier consideration of Spartacus as a symbol of the freedom of the citizen was something that had to be evoked in the high aesthetic form of verse, usually in the form of a drama. What now beckoned was the real-time medium of standard prose in which the story of the slaves themselves could be highlighted. When Manzoni was contemplating committing himself to the writing of a 'Spartaco' in the early 1820s, it was a debate between poetry and prose that moved him. When he chose the latter, he axiomatically abandoned the former project, assuming that it would have to be poetic. That remained the predominant pattern, until Susanna Strickland began the movement of the account to the language of prose, which was to become the dominant twentieth-century or modern form.

To answer my larger question about the deployment of the history of the rebel Roman slave: it seems that the modern myth of Spartacus (and this includes even its socialist version, best known to us in its twentieth-century mass media forms) was born in the mid-eighteenth century and then flourished through the nineteenth century, especially in Italy, Germany, and France. In all of these cases, the primary concerns of the authors were with modern nationalistic aspirations of which the rebel Roman slave seemed to offer a striking iconic symbol. Either this, or in his stark representation of the antinomies of slavery and freedom, Spartacus was a very useful and highly dramatic means for thinking about and debating the problems of the free citizen, and of freeing citizens from the constraints and threats of tyranny. All of this came to be suffused with heavy doses of Romanticism.¹⁰⁰ Since the 1960s, however, the world and its problems have changed decisively, and with it, this sort of utility of the Spartacus myth.

Lands and ethnicities that are seeking autonomy and freedom are not at the core or even at a connected periphery of a Eurocentric world where the classical figures of Graeco-Roman antiquity are the appropriate points of reference or appeal. In the end, for Vladimir Jabotinsky, the Maccabees were far more powerful and relevant than a Roman or a Thracian slave. And as for the freedom of the citizen, that too is now debated and contested with different types of icons. For this problem, the contrast with slavery, no longer a living institution at the heart of American societies (and one to which neither Europeans nor Americans are vitally related) no longer elicits the same response from readers and viewers. It too is becoming part of history. Even at the heart of contemporary American society, it is the past image of slavery as a whole rather than an individual like Spartacus that has become the object that is institutionalized, displayed in film, replayed in television, enshrined in museums, and heavily editorialized as the mediating symbol of our new debates over racism.¹⁰¹

* I should like to record a debt of thanks to Natalie Zemon Davis for reading an earlier draft of this paper and for her valuable comments and criticisms. I have also benefitted from discussions on Spartacus with Henry MacAdam, a subject on which he has developed an enviable expertise

¹ Some of what follows is drawn from the introduction to my collection of primary sources on the Spartacus slave war and the Sicilian Slave wars: Brent D. Shaw, Spartacus and the Slave Wars: A Brief History with Documents (New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2000); fundamental resources for this investigation have been the bibliography of 'learned works' on slavery in the early-modern period assembled by E. Müller, "Spartacus und der Sklavenkrieg in Geschichte und Dichtung" [in] Programm des k.k. Staats-Gymnasiums in Salzburg (Salzburg, 1905), 3-51; J. Muszkat-Muszkowski, Spartacus: ein Stoffengeschichte (Leipzig, 1909); H. Schulz-Falkenthal, Sklaverei in der griechisch-römischen Antike: eine Bibliographie wissenschaftlicher Literatur vom ausgehenden 15. Jahrhundert bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts (Halle-Saale: Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Sachsen-Anhalt, 1985) and his valuable study of the early-modern historiography of slavery: "Die antike Sklaverei als Gegenstand der Forschung vom Ausgang des 15. bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts. Historiographisches Bemerkungen und sachliche Erläuterungen zu einer Spezialbibliographie," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg 35.4 (1986), 64-77, that was written as a pendant to this research bibliography; and his similar study of the early historiography of the slave rebellions: "Die römischen Sklavenaufstände als Gegenstand der Forschung vom ausgehenden 15. Jahrhundert bis zum Ende des 17. Jahrhunderts," Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle, Geisteswissenschaftes Reihe, 37.3 (1988), 66-79; and, finally, the study of the myth itself by Anton J. Van Hooff, Spartacus: De Vonk van Spartakus: Het voortleven van een antieke rebel (The Hague: CIP-Gegevens Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 1993).

² Only recently acquired by Howard Fast under the Freedom of Information Act: see the description in his preface "Spartacus and the Black List," to the recent reprint of his Spartacus: H. Fast, Spartacus (Armonk NY-London: North Castle Books, 1996), vii-viii.

³ A. Koestler, The Gladiators, transl. Edith Simon (1939; second edition: New York, 1956, 1962; with a new postscript: New York, 1965); the original was written in German, the typescript of which was lost after the translation had been made into English.

⁴ It is difficult to categorize Dr. Strangelove which appeared first in 1964, as presentist or futuristic; suffice it to say that it was not past-oriented.

⁵ Howard Fast, Spartacus (New York: Planetarium Press, 1951).

⁶ The first humanist at least to mention Spartacus by name, although only in passing, was Johannes Verge (Nauclerus) (1430-1510): W. Z. Rubinsohn, Die grossen Sklavenaufstände der Antike: 500 Jahre Forschung (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1993), 10; as Nicholas Vignier did again towards the end of the same century, in 1588 (ibid., 12) in the context of the wars with Mithridates. It is generally recognized that after the last notice in antiquity, apparently Claudian's reference in his Bellum Gothicum, 143-59, of c. AD 402, there was a general amnesia: 'Duch den Verfall der antiken Welt geriet der Spartacusaufstand in Vergessenheit': V. Olivová, "Spartacustradition," Eirene 17 (1980), 89-99, p. 89; then a long hiatus before the revival of interest: 'Neue Impulse für die Entfaltung der Spartacustradition brachte die Aufklärungsströmung des 17. und 18. Jhs,' which Olivová locates more precisely in the resurgence of historical research into Roman Republic, 'die in der zweiten Hälfte des 17. Jhs der gelehrte französische Abt. Lenain de Tillemont verfaßte.' (p. 90). She seems correct on the watershed formed by the Lenain de Tillemont's narrative for the period; it was the basis on which de Brosses and de Burigny worked.

⁷ Rubinsohn, ibid., 12-13.

⁸ Rubinsohn, ibid., 13-14.

⁹ Porsile was born at Naples in 1680 to Carlo Porsile whose opera Nerone was staged in the city in 1686; for more on his career see the standard entries by L. E.

Bennett, "Porsile," The New Grove Dictionary of Opera 3 (London: 1992), 1068. The score of his 'Spartaco' has been printed by H. Mayer Brown intro., Spartaco [in] Italian Opera, 1640-1770, vol. 28 (New York-London: Garland Publishing, 1979); and the libretto in: Pasquini, Giovan(ni) Claudio, Spartaco. Dramma per musica da rappresentarsi nell'imperial corte per comando Augustissimo nel Carnevale dell'anno M DCC XXVI [libretto] [in] H. Mayer Brown ed. Italian Opera Librettos: 1640-1770, vol. 9 = Italian Opera, 1640-1770, vol. 59 (New York-London: Garland, 1978).

¹⁰ Porsile's first opera, Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria (Naples, 1707), followed the mainstream of themes, whereas his second, Spartaco (Vienna, 1726), was part of the innovative historicizing trends: see M. F. Robinson, Naples and Neapolitan Opera (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 43 f. Porsile had experimented with some quasi-historical themes before his Spartaco: a mythical Arianna et Teseo in 1714 was followed by Temistocle in 1718.

¹¹ This is the argument proffered by van Hooff, Spartacus, p. 14: 'Deze 'prehistorie' van Spartacus' faam wordt afgesloten met de opera Spartaco uit 1726,' with further arguments on pp. 37-40; I am not persuaded, however.

¹² And this despite the fact that the famous soprano Faustina Bordoni-Hasse, who sang the lead role in Spartaco, was found in London only two months later, in May of 1726, where she sang in Johann Christoph Pepusch's Beggar's Opera. The lower classes, in this case those of contemporary England, were becoming acceptable thematic material -- consider the connections between John Gay's (1685-1732) innovative The Beggar's Opera (29 January 1728), which was the greatest theatrical success of the century, and the new trends in novelistic realism of the age.

¹³ Robinson, Naples and Neapolitan Opera, 25-26: In 1711 Charles was called to Vienna to become Austrian emperor, at which point Catalonia and Naples passed to his wife Elizabeth who stayed behind in Barcelona. It was in this period that Porsile went to Barcelona; in 1713, she returned to Vienna when Spain was ceded to Philip V.

¹⁴ G. C. Pasquini, Spartaco, libretto in: H. Mayer Brown ed., Italian Opera Librettos: 1610-1770, vol. 9 = Italian Opera, 1690-1770, vol. 59 (New York-London: Garland, 1978) [no pagination].

¹⁵ J. Deissler, Antike Sklaverei und Deutsche Aufklärung im Spiegel von Johann Friedrich Reitemeiers 'Geschichte und Zustand der Sklaverey und Leibeigenschaft in Griechenland' (1789) (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2000), 26 f. on Johann Christoph Gatterer and his numerous 'world chronologies' and summaries of 'universal history' published in Göttingen between 1765 and 1792.

¹⁶ Deissler, op. cit., 28-34;

¹⁷ Voltaire, Brutus, tragédie, critical edition by J. Renwick [in] Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, vol. 5 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1998), text: 184-308. Voltaire had produced a readable version as early as 16 October 1729.

¹⁸ The meaning of the term 'Republican,' however, must be understood in the context of the times, as Renwick rightly cautions: op. cit., p. 44 f..

¹⁹ 'Uneventful' is the precise description offered by Renwick (op. cit., p. 88; for the contemporary response to the play, see ibid., 78 f.), who also details the events surrounding the restaging of the play during the Revolution, beginning with the performance of 17 November 1790. He rightly offers cautions on the fundamentally changed meaning of the 'message' of the play as it was now interpreted by the popular audience in grosser terms as a brute confrontation of liberty and tyranny (ibid., 89 f.)

²⁰ Mouza Raskolnikoff, Histoire romaine et critique historique dans l'Europe des Lumières: la naissance de l'hypercritique dans l'historiographie de la Rome antique (Strasbourg: AECR, 1992), pp. 335-41; Schulz-Falkenthal, op. cit., pp. 61-61: before the work of Jean Lévesque de Burigny and Charles de Brosses in the mid-1760s, there is virtually nothing that could reasonably be said to betoken a specific historical interest in Spartacus as such.

²¹ Rubinsohn, op. cit., 28-30.

²² Jean Lévesque de Burigny, "Premier Mémoire sur les esclaves Romains; Dans lequel on examine quel était leur état avant qu'ils obtinssent l'affranchissement," Mémoires de Littérature, tirés des registres de l'Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, vol. 35 (1770), 328-59 [actually delivered to the

Academy on 13 November 1766]; and his “Second Mémoire sur les esclaves romaines; Dans lequel on traite de l’affranchissement et d l’état des Affranchis,” *ibid.*, vol. 37 (1774), 313-39 [read to the Academy on 30 April 1767].

²³ Charles de Brosses, “La seconde guerre servile, ou la révolte de Spartacus en Campanie. Fragments de Salluste, tirés de III^e et IV^e livres de son Histoire générale,” *Mémoires de Littérature, tirés des registres de l’Académie Royale des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, vol. 37 (1774), 23-86 [read to the Academy on 6 May 1768].

²⁴ For the importance of this project see M. Raskolnikoff, “Le président de Brosses et les Histoires de Salluste,” [in] Raskolnikoff, *op. cit.*, 325-51; at length on de Brosses himself and his background, see p. 328n412.

²⁵ Charles de Brosses, *Histoire de la République romaine dans le cours du VII^e siècle; par Salluste: en partie traduite du latin sur l’original; en partie rétablie & composée sur les fragments qui sont restés de ses Livre perdus, remis en ordre dans leur place véritable ou le plus vraisemblable*, 3 vols., Dijon, L. N. Frantin, 1777. The first volume begins with Sallust’s history of the Jugurthine War; what follows is then based on the fragments that survive from the five books of Sallust’s *Historiae*. The reconstructed parts of the Spartacus slave war set in context are found in volume two: [Book 3 of the ‘History of the Republic’]: chapters 58-72 (pp. 135-63) on the Spartacus war; then [Book 4 of the ‘History of the Republic’]: chapters 2-14 (pp. 301-27); 50-60 (pp. 391-420) and 66-68 (pp. 427-30) on the Spartacus war. Volume three then finishes with an account of the Catilinarian Conspiracy and the Sallustian “Letters to Caesar” and a consideration of Sallust’s own life.

²⁶ Voltaire, ‘Esclaves,’ [in] *Questions sur l’Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1771) = *Dictionnaire philosophique, 2: Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire* (Paris: Garnier frères, 1878), 599-606, at p. 600: ‘Il faut avouer que, de toutes les guerres, celle de Spartacus est la plus juste, et peut-être la seule juste.’ Note that this entry is not to be found in the most recent editions of the *Dictionnaire*, since editors have preferred to return to the original edition, rather than the later editions that included alphabetical entries taken from Voltaire’s contributions to the *Encyclopédie*. Voltaire was a thoroughgoing pacifist who was not willing to

admit the justice of many wars: H. Meyer, Voltaire on War and Peace [in] T. Besterman ed., Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 144 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1976), 61 f.

²⁷ Bernard Joseph Saurin, Spartacus, tragédie. En cinq actes, et en vers. Représentée, pour le première fois, par les Comédiens ordinaires du Roi, le mercredi 20 février 1760 (reprints were published in 1769, 1778, 1788, 1792, 1801, 1803, 1805, 1813, 1818, and 1825). The text of the play can be consulted in the standard collections, e.g., Répertoire Générale du Théâtre français, vol. 32, (Paris: H. Nicole, 1818), 71-134.

²⁸ Martin Mühle, "Spartacus," [in] Bernard-Joseph Saurin: Sein Leben und seine Werke (Dresden: Druck von Gebr. Fahdt, 1913), 44-82

²⁹ Mühle, *op. cit.*, 1-2

³⁰ For the affaire Saurin and Voltaire's unhappy role in trying to resolve it, see J. Orrioux, Voltaire, ou la royauté de l'esprit (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), 509-11, for a brief standard account.

³¹ Voltaire to Bernard Joseph Saurin, 5 April 1769: D 15572: Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, t. 118: Correspondance, vol. 34 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1974), 389-90 = no. 1169 [in] Correspondance, t. 9: juillet 1767 - septembre 1769 (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), 856-57. It was surely in this light that Voltaire himself later came to use the name of Spartacus as a symbolic name in connection with discussions of servitude: see his letter of 17 January 1776 to the Marquis de Condorcet: D 19883 [in] Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, t. 126: Correspondance, t. 42 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1975), 359-60 = no. 14465 [in] Correspondance, t. 12: janvier 1775 – juin 1777 (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 401-06: 'Vous me parles des Esclaves de la franche Comté. Je vous assure que ces Esclaves ne ferait pas le guerre de Spartacus pour sauver un philosophe. Cependant, il faut les secourir puisqu'ils sont hommes.'

³² The extent of Voltaire's actual (and knowing) involvement in profits from slave companies is still debated, but there is no doubt that he had large and profitable investments in the Compagnie des Indes: see E. Abanime, "Voltaire antiesclavagiste," [in] H. Mason ed., Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century, vol. 182 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1979), 237-51, at pp. 248-50,

for a balanced discussion; cf. Hugh Thomas, The Slave Trade (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997), 464-65.

³³ Rubinsohn, op. cit., 31; Mühle, op. cit., 65: 'Je voulais tracer le portrait d'un grand homme, tel que j'en conçois l'idée; d'un homme qui joignit aux qualités brillantes des Héros la justice et l'humanité; d'un homme, en un mot, qui fût grand pour le bien des hommes et non pour leur malheur . . . J'ai donc voulu peindre un Héros humain et vertueux . . ."

³⁴ Rubinsohn, op. cit., 30.

³⁵ Mühle, op. cit., 74 f.

³⁶ Voltaire to Bernard Joseph Saurin, 5 May 1760: D 8892: Les Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire, t. 105: Correspondance, t. 21 (Oxford: The Voltaire Foundation, 1971), 282-83 = no. 5982 [in] Correspondance, t. 5: janvier 1758 – septembre 1760 (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), 894-96: 'Je vous remercie de tout mon cœur monsieur. J'aime beaucoup [sic] Spartacus: voylà mon homme. Il aime la liberté, celui là. Je ne trouve point du tout Crassus petit. Il me semble qu'on n'est point avili quand on dit toujours ce qu'on doit dire."

³⁷ Voltaire, Brutus, staged 11 December 1730; see Mühle, op. cit., 74-78 for some of the parallels.

³⁸ The three pages of the draft that he did finally produce are printed in his collected works: G. E. Lessing, Werke, Bd. 2: Trauerspiele, Nathan, Dramatische Fragmente (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1970), 574-77; for context, see Mühle, op. cit., 78-82.

³⁹ Lessing, Werke, ibid.: 'Alcibiades' (p. 501-04); 'Alcibiades in Persien' (p. 509-11); 'Die Matrone von Ephesus' (p. 553-72).

⁴⁰ Lessing, Werke, ibid., '[Der Galeerensklave]', p. 573.

⁴¹ Spartacus continued to be an interesting figure for German dramatists, but that is another story that bridges the Romantic figure with that of the socialist revolutionary. Consider, for example, Friedrich Carl Schubert, Spartacus: Dramatisches Gedicht in 4 Akten (Leipzig: Oswald Mutze, 1878); Carl Winderlich, Spartacus-Putschke: Stück und Gegenstück mit einem Nachspiel (Leipzig: Poeten-Verlag, 1921); and Woldemar von Uxkull, Spartacus: ein Roman aus der römischen Gladiatorenzeit (Dresden: Lehmannsche

Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920) – the last two were very much politically motivated by ‘events of the time’ as is made clear by the preface and ‘Nachspiel’ by Winderlich. And, as von Uxkull states in his preface: ‘In Kampf und Not unserer Zeit ist heute ‘Spartakus’ und ‘Spartakisten’ in aller Mund. Nur wenige aber werden von jenem römischen Gladiator Ausführliches wissen, nach dem sich die Gruppe der Unentwegten seit der Revolution nennt . . . Ob die Spartakistenbewegung sich mit Recht des helden Namen bedient, das zu entscheiden überlasse ich dem Leser dieses Romans.’

⁴² Raffaello Giovagnoli, Spartaco: Racconto storico del secolo VII dell’era romana, illustrata dal Cav. Niccola Sanesi (first serialized in 1873; then published as a book: Milan: P. Carrera, 1874). It reached a fourth edition by 1882, which featured a dramatic pictorial advertisement for La capanna dello zio Tom (‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’) sold by the same publisher. Giovagnoli’s Spartaco went through at least six reprintings in Italy before the turn of the nineteenth century, and was followed by several more in the twentieth.

⁴³ The research fragments and plan can be found in: “Spartaco: Tragedia: appunti” [in] A. Chiari & F. Ghisalberti eds., Tutte le opere di Alessandro Manzoni, 1: Poesie e tragedie, 2nd ed. (Verona: Arnaldo Mondadori editore, 1969), 785-96; his detailed notes are in Latin, not Italian; he pursued research to the extent of trying to find typical Roman names in Latin epigraphical texts.

⁴⁴ This much seems clear from his letter of 3 November 1821 to his good friend Claude Faurel in Paris ; see: no. 153 [in] C. Arieti ed., Tutte le lettere, vol. 1 (Milan: Adelphi Edizioni, 1976), 142-51, which is a long debate on historical realism, critical of what Scott had not achieved in his Ivanhoe. In it Manzoni contemplates his alternatives: ‘Je corrige actuellement Adelchi et le discours pour les livrer à la presse, je rédigerai après un autre discours, que je médite depuis long-temps, sur l’influence morale de la tragédie, et après je me mettrai à mon roman, ou à une tragédie de Spartacus, selon que je me trouverai plus disposé à l’un de ces deux travaux.’ (*ibid.*, p. 249).

⁴⁵ For what follows, I note the importance of F. Lopez-Celly, Il romanzo storico in Italia dai prescottiani alle odierne vite romanizzate (Bologna: L. Capelli, 1939); and the introduction to the 1955 (Florence) reprint of Giovagnoli’s novel by Luigi

Russo, itself reprinted as: “Lo ‘Spartaco’ di R. Giovagnoli,” Belfagor 11 (1956), 74-79; and the scintillating analysis of Gennaro Savarese, “Raffaello Giovagnoli,” Belfagor 22 (1967), 556-71. Nothing of significance is added to these treatments in the recent entry by R. di Castro, “Giovagnoli, Raffaello,” [in] Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani 55 (Rome, Treccani, 2000), 429-32.

⁴⁶ The first film transcription was the “Spartaco,” directed by Oreste Gherardini — it was scripted from Giovagnoli’s novel (Società Italiana Pineschi, Rome; August 1909). At a running time of 425 minutes, it was one of the first advance advertised film ‘blockbusters.’ Perhaps it is no accident that it was derived from such a huge written text. As such, the film normally had to be shown over two days. See A. Bernardini, Il cinema muto italiano: I film dei primi anni. 1905-1909 (Turin: Edizioni RAI, 1996), 404-05. The next versions that followed were the “Spartaco,” directed by Ernesto Maria Pasquali (Rome, 1911), and the “Spartaco: Il Gladiatore della Tracia,” directed by Giovanni Enrico Vidali (Turin, Pasquali films, 1913); and the “Spartaco” directed by Cine (1914), but they tended to follow the line already established by the great epic that had taken its basic script from Giovagnoli’s novel. Van Hooff, Spartaco, 135: ‘1912: Pasquali, Spartaco (eerste verfilming)’ and M. Wyke, “Spartacus: Testing the Strength of the Body Politic,” ch. 3 [in] Projecting the Past: Ancient Rome, Cinema and History (New York-London: Routledge, 1997), 34-72, at p. 37, and 41 f., both seem to think that Pasquali’s was the first film transcription. In fact, it was not; and it was by far less interesting and significant of the three that preceded the First World War. See G. P. Brunetta, “Cinema muto italiano,” [in] G. P. Brunetta ed., Storia del cinema mondiale, 3: L’Europa: le cinematografie nazionali, vol. 1 (Turin: Einaudi, 2000), 31-60 at p. 41.

⁴⁷ Garibaldi in his letter of 25 June 1874 to Giovagnoli that was printed as a preface to the novel: ‘Spartaco, poi, come Cristo Redentore degli schiavi . . . possano i vostri concittadini ritemprarsi alla memoria di tanti eroi — che tutti dormono sulla terra compasta della stessa nostra creta — terra che non avrà più gladiatori — ma nemmeno padroni.’ Giovagnoli was able to return the compliment of Garibaldi’s praise by composing a tribute to the patriot

commissioned by a parliamentary committee of the new Italian state on the centenary of Garibaldi's birth in 1907.

⁴⁸ G. Garibaldi, Edizione nazionale degli scritti di Giuseppe Garibaldi: Scritti e discorsi politici e militari, vol. 5 (Bologna, 1925), no. 894: 'Discorso al Palais Electoral di Gineva durante il Congresso della Pace il 9 settembre': "Lo schiavo solo ha il diritto di far la guerra al tiranno, è il solo caso in cui la guerra è permessa." For context, see A. P. Campanella, Garibaldi and the First Peace Congress in Vienna in 1867 (Amsterdam, 1960).

⁴⁹ A series of historical novels inspired by the success of his 'Spartacus' and, like it, most of which bore the subtitle 'racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana,' began with Opimia: Scene storiche del secolo VI dell'era romana (Rome, 1874); Plautilla: Racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana (serialized in 1875; Rome, 1878); Saturnino: Racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana (Milan, 1879); Faustina: Scene storiche del secolo X dell'era romana (Milan, 1881); and La guerra sociale. Aquilonia: Racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana (Milan, 1882); continued with Messalina: Racconto storico del secolo VIII dell'era romana (Rome, 1885) and finished with Publio Clodio: Racconto storico del secolo VII dell'era romana (Rome-Turin, 1905).

⁵⁰ Translations appeared in French (Paris, 1902, 1919); Yiddish (St. Petersburg, 1905); Russian (Moscow, 1880, second edition, 1938; and a new translation in 1954, reprinted in 1968 and 1985; Leningrad, 1951); a new Ukrainian translation by A. H. Illichevskiy, was published in Kiev, in 1974, with an unusually high press run of a 100,000 copies; Hungarian (Budapest, 1952); Romanian (Bucarest, 1967); Serbo-Croat (Zagreb, 1950); Finnish (Portland, Oregon, 1928), and Chinese (Shanghai, 1978). Doubtless, there are others.

⁵¹ R. Giovagnoli, Commemorazione funebre di Vittorio Emanuele II (Venice: Antonelli, 1878)

⁵² R. Giovagnoli, Risorgimento Italiano dal 1815 al 1848 (Milan: Casa editrice F. Vallardi, 1897): it was the ninth volume in the series; a blockbuster of 900 pages, it was precisely the same length as his Spartaco.

⁵³ R. Giovagnoli, Il romanticismo nella storia del Risorgimento Italiano (Rome: Roux & Viarengo, 1904).

⁵⁴ There must, for example, be an interesting tale behind the appearance of the translation into Finnish in, of all places, Portland (Oregon) in 1928: Spartakus: romaani, published by the Amerikan Suomalaisten Sosialististen Kustamusliikkeiden Liitan Kustantama.

⁵⁵ S. Katz, Lone Wolf: A Biography of Vladimir (Ze'ev) Jabotinsky, 2 vols. (New York: Barricade Books, 1996), vol. 1: 17-18, 26-29; Joseph B. Schechtman, The Life and Times of Vladimir Jabotinsky, Rebel and Statesman: the Early Years, 2 vols. (Silver Spring, MD: Eshel Books, 1986), vol. 1: 45-57.

⁵⁶ Schechtman, "The Imprint of Rome: City and Teachers," ch. 2.2 (in op. cit.), 49-63.

⁵⁷ Katz, op. cit., 114-15.

⁵⁸ Espartakus: sipur histori mi-yeme meridat ha-'avadim be-malkhut Roma (targum mekutsar me-'Itakit 'al-yede Ze'ev Zhabotinski), Odessa, Hotsa'at Turgeman, 1913. At only 181 pages, it was obviously only a rapid translation of a selected part of the original; another Hebrew translation (this one reprinted?) appeared in Kiev in 1927.

⁵⁹ The history of the translation of Giovagnoli's novel into Russian is more checkered: see Z. Potapova's introduction to A. Yasina's translation Spartak (Moscow: State Publishing House for Literature, 1954), 1-13, at p. 12: it was first serialized in the Russian magazine Delo in 1880. Subject to heavy deletions by Tsarist censors, however, it was first published in full only after the October Revolution; between 1918 and 1952 it appeared in no less than thirty-four editions in all the eleven official languages of the Soviet Union, amounting to almost a million copies in print.

⁶⁰ Clement E. Foust, The Life and Dramatic Works of Robert Montgomery Bird (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1919), summarized, if in somewhat bowdlerized form, much of what was known about Bird's life. For our purposes, it is significant that Foust, who was writing in the first decade of the twentieth century, admitted that he was attempting to resurrect a by-then thoroughly forgotten American writer.

⁶¹ University of Pennsylvania: Rare Books Collections: Bird Coll. 108, file 181 ('Notes & fragments') where he notes the story that 'when Voltaire left his retreat

at Perny to receive in Paris the rewards of a lifetime of literary triumph – rewards unparalleled in his lifetime except to Lope de Vega – he expressed his overwhelming sense of renown comparing himself: “I am like the Roman Gladiator,” he said, “amazed at my own glory.” “I am like Spartacus.”

⁶² Bird matriculated into the Medical School of the University of Pennsylvania and the College of Pharmacy for the fall term of 1824; he graduated in April of 1827 and set up practice in an office at 13th Street and Pine.

⁶³ The struggle was lifelong; despite his literary successes, when Bird died in 1854, he was twenty thousand dollars in debt to one business partner, John. M. Clayton. And there were probably other debts.

⁶⁴ The winning entry by Bird’s fellow Philadelphian John Augustus Store was for a play bearing the title Metamora, or the Last of the Wamponoags.

⁶⁵ R. M. Bird, Pelopidas, or the Fall of the Polemarchs (Philadelphia, autumn of 1830); the text can be found in Foust, op. cit., 173-296; Bird was experimenting with other similar themes connected with freedom, including thoughts on a play to be entitled ‘The Helot: A Tragedy’ (Bird Coll. 108, file 182 ‘Miscellaneous’) for which he had begun noting ancient sources such as Thucydides and Pollux.

⁶⁶ As a schoolboy, Bird was already engaged in making collections of such ‘historical figures’ as in his ‘Anecdotes of Roman Emperors’ (see Foust, op. cit., 20)

⁶⁷ R. M. Bird, The Gladiator: A Tragedy in Five Acts (Philadelphia, April, 1831). The text can be found in Foust, op. cit., 299-440; and Allan G. Halline ed., American Plays (New York: American Book Co., 1935), 153-98

⁶⁸ Bird was aware of the principal primary sources (Bird MS. COLL. 108: file 181: ‘Notes and Fragments’); for the primary sources he used a standard eighteenth-century collection: Benno Kaspar Hauris, Scriptores Historiae Romanae Latini veteres qui extant omnes, notis variis illustrati, 3 vols. (Heidelberg: J. J. Haener, 1743-48); and for the modern historical narrative: Adam Ferguson’s The History of the Progress and Termination of the Roman Republic, 3 vols. (London: W. Strahan, 1783; London: Jones & Co., 1829). For Ferguson’s anti-Slavery sentiments, especially apparent in his Institutes of Moral Philosophy of 1769, see Thomas, The Slave Trade, 470. Bird became aware of the importance of the

fragments of Sallust from an article in Blackwood's Magazine on 'The War of Spartacus' [that I have been as yet unable to trace]: noted by Bird in his 'Notes and Fragments' (Bird Coll. MSS 108, file 181) and in his 'Miscellaneous' items (Bird Coll. MSS 108, file 182), where there is found another important source: an article published in the American Weekly Messenger entitled "War of Spartacus: An Historical Episode" is found.

⁶⁹ Foust, op. cit., 38-39 has some of the details.

⁷⁰ Curtis Dahl, Robert Montgomery Bird (New York: Twayne, 1963), 56-61, gives a standard estimate of "The Gladiator" as 'the resounding success of his [i.e., Bird's] life and one of the most popular plays ever written or produced in America . . . it held the stage for over seventy years. By 1854 it had had over one thousand performances; it was said to be the first play in the English language to be performed so often within the lifetime of the author . . . It was one of the greatest hits America has ever seen.' (p. 56). None of Bird's plays were published in his own lifetime.

⁷¹ As made clear in Bird's 'Secret Notes' (Bird Coll. 108, file 182): in the aftermath of the Philadelphia performance, dated 26 October: it was the fact that the stage personnel, the actors, the managers, and the playwright himself were all Americans that struck Bird as the real significance of his success.

⁷² For one of these, see William Ball (1801-78), Freemen and Slaves: An Historical Tragedy in Five Acts (London: Saunders and Otley, 1838).

⁷³ Jacob Jones, Spartacus, or the Roman Gladiator: A Tragedy in Five Acts, 2nd edition (London: James Ridgway & Sons, 1837). As Jones himself states in a preface to the play, his tragedy had actually been composed some ten years previously, in 1827, and was only now being published for the first time, 'in consequence of 'The War of Spartacus' having been just familiarized to the British public, through the representation, &c., of Dr. Bird's American Tragedy "The Gladiator." Those who possess a copy of the Second Edition of my Tragedy of "Longinus," which was printed in 1827, will find on its last leaf "A Gladiator's Hymn, from a MSS. Tragedy, in five Acts, entitled 'Spartacus, or the Roman Gladiator.'" 'That Hymn,' Jones goes on to state, 'was subsequently converted into a Lyric for the Polish cause, and, consequently, does not appear in the

present pages,' [preface dated 'Inner Temple, London, Dec. 20, 1836]. Roman themes had attracted Jones earlier: Longinus: A Tragedy in Five Acts (London, 1827) was followed, later, by Regulus: the Noblest Roman of them All: A Tragedy in Five Acts (London, 1841); perhaps, most interestingly one entitled The Stepmother: A Tragedy, in five acts (Impia Noverca) (London, 1829)

⁷⁴ Jacob Jones is otherwise rather anonymous; he has no entry in the DNB.

⁷⁵ It is of a individual libertarian strand that does find echoes in later twentieth century takes on Spartacus from the British Isles, most notably the Scottish novelist James Leslie Mitchell (then better known by his pen name of Lewis Grassic Gibbon): J. L. Mitchell, Spartacus, ed. I. Campbell (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1990), on which see, I. Campbell, "James Leslie Mitchell's Spartacus: A Novel of Rebellion," The Scottish Literary Journal 5. 1 (May, 1978), 53-60. Mitchell is, in some ways, Scotland's analogue to Susanna Moodie in Canada (see below), having been resurrected as a classic national author. Mitchell's 'Spartacus' stands apart in tone and source from the mainstream of socialist interpretations in this period, for which see, for example, Francis A. Ridley's, Spartacus. A Study in Revolutionary History, London: Independent Labour Party, 1944 (reprinted as: Spartacus, the Leader of the Roman Slaves [Kenardington, Ashford, Kent: F. Maitland, 1963]).

⁷⁶ The original of this 'Secret Records' is to be found in Bird Coll. 108, file 182 ('Miscellaneous') deserves to be quoted at length here: 'But consider the freedom of an American author. If the Gladiator were produced in a slave State, the managers, players, & perhaps myself into the bargain, would be rewarded with the Penitentiary! Happy States! At this present moment there are 6 or 800 armed negroes marching through Southampton County, Va. murdering, ravishing & burning those whom the Grace of God has made their owners — 70 killed, principally women & children. If they had but a Spartacus among them — to organize the half million of Virginia, the hundreds of thousands of the other States and to lead them on in the Crusade of Massacre, what a blessed example might they not give to the world of the excellence of slavery! What a field of interest to the playwrights of posterity! Someday we shall have it; and future generations will perhaps remember the horrors of Hayti [sic] as a farce compared

with the tragedies of our own unhappy land! The vis et amor sceleratus habendi will be repaid, violence with violence, & avarice with blood: I had sooner live among bedbugs than negroes —

N.B. The men were at a Camp Meeting. Had they staid at home minding their own business, instead of God's, this thing would not have happened."

For additional context, see R. Harris, "A Young Dramatist's Diary: The Secret Records of R. M. Bird," Library Chronicle (University of Pennsylvania), vol. 25 (Winter, 1959), 8-24, at pp. 10 and 17; it is of some interest that Bird foresaw the literary efforts of William Styron.

⁷⁷ Bird Coll. 108, file 181 ('Notes and fragments') where Bird describes Spartacus as 'a man whom fortune, in the most capricious mood, and not merit, had raised to temporary distinction.'

⁷⁸ Dahl, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷⁹ Robert M. Bird, God Bless America. National Hymn, Written and Composed with Accompaniment for the Piano Forte by Robert M. Bird, Esq. (Philadelphia: Fiot, Meignen & Co., 1834).

⁸⁰ Bird himself was to fall on hard times, experiencing personal tragedies and ever-deeper financial difficulties. He died in Philadelphia in the year 1854, in his late forties, of what were described as 'effusions of the brain' and of the effects of that quintessentially nineteenth-century affliction, melancholy.

⁸¹ Many other lines of the other verses reflect the same ideology of liberty: especially the second and the third where the contrast with slavery is marked: "For liberty our grandsires trod / the wide and stormy sea; / Our fathers bought it with their blood, / their children are all free; / And free, amid earth's servile hordes" (2.1-5); "The desert howl'd – the pilgrims came, / They fled oppression's chain: / The desert blossom'd, and the flame / Of freedom rose again. / And here, where hearts of fire are born, / That flame shall ne'er decay, / While babes laugh kings and slaves to scorn" (3.1-7). The fifth verse ends with the certainty that 'kingly states, convulses, shall die / From the earth be swept away" (5.5-6), which serves to contrast the ideal of Republican freedom with tyrannical slavery.

⁸² For some of the basic factual materials, see the entries by H. M. Chichester, "Susanna Strickland," DNB 13, 777, and (much superior) by C. P. A. Ballstadt,

“Strickland, Susanna (Moodie),” Dictionary of Canadian Biography, vol. 11: 1881 to 1890 (Toronto: The University of Toronto Press, 1982), 857-61 – neither of which mentions her Spartacus.

⁸³ Susannah Strickland Moodie, Six Years in the Bush; or, Extracts from the Journal of a Settler in Upper Canada, 1832-1838 (London, 1838); of which there were many subsequent editions and reprints, amongst these the following modern ‘edited’ editions: Margaret Atwood, intro., Roughing it in the Bush or Life in Canada (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987) [M. Atwood, “Introduction,” pp. vii-xiv]; Carl Ballstadt ed., Roughing it in the Bush or Life in Canada (Ottawa: Carleton University Press, 1988); and Elizabeth Thompson ed., Roughing it in the Bush or Life in Canada (Ottawa: The Tecumseh Press, 1997).

⁸⁴ Atwood, ‘Introduction’ (1987), p. xiv and xiii.

⁸⁵ This part of her literary production is only now beginning to receive the sort of notice that it deserves, see M. Peterman, Susanna Moodie: A Life (Toronto: ECW Press, 1999), 30-33.

⁸⁶ Susannah Strickland Moodie, Spartacus: A Roman Story (London: A. K. Newman, 1823); notably, unlike most of her later Canadian literary output, produced as an adult, this work has not been reprinted or re-edited.

⁸⁷ For these remarks and views, see pp. 3, 6, 26-27, 29, 45, and 99 of the novel.

⁸⁸ On Agnes Strickland, see E. Lee, “Agnes Strickland,” DNB 19, 48-50; ‘Historian’ is the first word in the entry.

⁸⁹ Undoubtedly more would be known of this connection if only Pringle’s collected letters and papers had survived; their disappearance was a matter of considerable frustration to his first biographer, Leitch Ritchie: Thomas Pringle, The Poetical Works of Thomas Pringle (London: Edward Moxon, 1837). The 1839 edition was prefaced by Leitch Ritchie’s “Memoirs of Thomas Pringle,” pp. ix-cxlix, at pp. x-xii with footnote; this collected poetical work was dedicated to Sir Walter Scott. Ritchie mentions the Mary Prince and Ashton Warner cases, but makes no mention of Susanna Strickland’s role in them: p. ciii-cvi.

⁹⁰ In 1787 William Wilberforce, and others, had formed a Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, whose aims were met by the 1807 Act of Parliament. In 1823, a smaller inner group, mainly Quakers, formed the more

radical Anti-Slavery Society, wishing to press for the wider goal of the emancipation of slaves in the British Colonies. For Pringle's essay on South Africa see: [T. Pringle] 'Y', "Letters from South Africa, No. 1: Slavery," The New Monthly Magazine 17.2 (1826), 481-88; published in October of 1826, the letter itself is dated 5 January 1826 and was dispatched from the Cape of Good Hope. Its contents are striking in their denunciation of the cruelties and inhumanities of the system of slavery in the colony at this time, and one can readily see how it would have caught the attention of the leading lights of the Anti-Slavery Society in London. The Society had Pringle's letter reprinted in the 31 January 1827 issue of the Anti-Slavery Monthly Reporter.

⁹¹ It was as Secretary that Pringle signed the last circular dispatched by the Anti-Slavery Society, on 27 June 1834, announcing to its members that Parliament was about to pass the bill that would abolish the institution of slavery. On the next day, he fell mortally ill and died prematurely, just shy of his forty-sixth birthday, in December of the same year.

⁹² This much seems to be clear from Thomas Pringle's editorial preface (p. 1) to the account, where he states: 'The narrative was taken down from Mary's own lips by a lady who happened to be at the time residing in my family as a visitor.' The 'lady' was Susanna Strickland. Confirmed by the court records in the defamation suit against Pringle [Wood v. Pringle, Court of King's Bench, Guildhall, 27 February 1833] as reported in The Times (London) of Friday, 1 March 1833: [the witness (Mary Prince) stated that] 'The history of her life was written down by Miss Strickland at her (witness's) request; and she told that lady the truth.' But, as emerges from account of the cross-examination, there were things that Prince had not told her amanuensis ('She did not mention that fact to Miss Strickland') or which Strickland herself deliberately edited out of Prince's account ('She told all this to Miss Strickland when the lady took down her narrative. These statements were not in the narrative published by the defendant'). No doubt, these 'less reputable' parts of Prince's background were deliberately removed so as to present a 'less problematic' character for the purposes of the anti-slavery propaganda.

⁹³ The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slaves, related by Herself (with a supplement by the editor), (London: F. Westley and A. H. Davis; Edinburgh: Waugh & Innes, 1831). The publication went through three editions in the course of 1831. The account has been the subject of several recent editions: Sara Salih ed., The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000); Moira Ferguson ed., The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave, Related By Herself (London: Pandora, 1987); William L. Andrews, intro., Six Women's Slave Narratives (New York-Oxford: 1988) [the Schomberg series]; and in Sukhdev Sandhu & David Dabydeen eds., Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation, vol. 1: Black Writers (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1999), 345-64.

⁹⁴ The History of Mary Prince . . . , p. 38

⁹⁵ S. Strickland, Negro Slavery described by a Negro: being the narrative of Ashton Warner, a native of St. Vincent's, with an Appendix, containing the testimony of four Christian ministers, recently returned from the colonies, on the system of slavery as it now exists (London: Samuel Maunders, Newgate Street, 1831). The long introduction to the book (pp. 5-16), dated 19 February 1833, was composed by Strickland herself. For the involvement of the Birmingham Female Society for the Relief of British Negro Slaves and Ashton Warner, see Salih, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

⁹⁶ Strickland, Negro Slavery . . . , "Introduction," p. 5; for the significance of the recent encounters, see pp. 10-11.

⁹⁷ This is not to blame Atwood for not seeing this earlier radical Strickland: commentators only see the author they wish to. Similarly, the Russian translator of Giovagnoli's Spartaco wholly ignores the later more conservative Giovagnoli — in this case, I think, not on purpose, but simply out of ignorance of what the older Giovagnoli had become.

⁹⁸ For example, the Women's Societies at Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, London and Bristol in England; and in Female societies in Ipswich and Boston, at least, on this side of the Atlantic; for additional detail, see C. Midgley, Women Against Slavery. The British Campaigns, 1780-1870 (London: Routledge, 1992), Appendix, "Ladies' Anti-Slavery Associations," 206-07, offers a list for England. For the general importance of these societies to the development of women's

rights, see Kathryn Kish Sklar, Women's Rights Emerges Within the Antislavery Movement, 1830-1870 (New York: Bedford / St. Martin's, 2000), which, although centered on the Grimké sisters, argues for the importance of women's involvement in antislavery activities as central to the emergence of the women's rights movement itself, but not, alas, very much about the role of the women's antislavery societies or associations themselves.

⁹⁹ The first prose monograph devoted to the history of Spartacus that I have been able to uncover is that authored by Angelo Maria Rienzi, La guerre de Spartacus en trois campagnes, published in Paris by the author himself in 1832, a decade after Strickland's novel.

¹⁰⁰ Isaiah Berlin, "In Search of a Definition," ch. 1 [in] The Roots of Romanticism, ed. H. Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 1-20, the main lines of whose arguments I accept, despite the criticisms, for some of which, see Peter Gay's comments in: "Wrong but Romantic," in TLS 5019 (11 June 1999), 3-4.

¹⁰¹ Ira Berlin, "Overcome by Slavery," NYTimes (Friday, 13 July, 2001), A21.