

**AGAINST SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION IN
STANLEY KUBRICK'S *SPARTACUS*
: A MARXIST APPROACH**



RESEARCH PAPER

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Spartacus is an historical Epic Movie. It is based on the 1951 historical novel of the same name by Howard Fast. The movie is directed by Stanley Kubrick and produced by Kirk Douglas. Douglass is not only producer but also the actor as Spartacus. It is distributed by Universal. Moreover, *Spartacus* begins shooting on 27 January 1959 and release on 6 October 1960. It takes place in Italy but it is filmed in different place out of Italy. For example, the beginnings of the movie with salt mine in California's Death Valley National Park and the battle Scenes in Spain. According to Cineaste who states in internet that it spends an expensive production about \$12 million that take 167 days to film. It premieres in New York City on 6th October 1960 with run time 184 minutes and re-release in 1967 with run time 161 minutes and again re-release in 1991 with run time 198 minutes. Spartacus is the name of major character in *Spartacus* movie and he is a slave that revolt against slavery and oppression in the year 71 B.C.

The film begins with slaves working in the Roman Province of Libya where a Roman soldier whips and tells to Thracian slave named Spartacus to go back to work. Before that, he helps a man that has fallen down. Because of Callous treatment, he attacks and bites one of Roman soldier's ankle. For this, he is tied up and sentenced to death by starvation. Meanwhile, Lentulus

Batiatus (The owner of gladiatorial games) arrives to looking for recruits Gladiator. He inspects the teeth of several slaves before finally select on Spartacus. Spartacus is selected because he is recognized with his unbroken spirit along his good health and physical condition. Batiatus brings Spartacus and other slaves to Capua whereby his Gladiatorial training camp is located.

Once upon a time, Crassus with some friends visits Batiatus. He wants two pairs of private gladiators fighting to the death. Spartacus, Crixus, Galino and Draba are selected to entertain them. The first fighting are Crixus and Galino, in which Crixus is win. Next, Spartacus versus Draba but Spartacus loses. However, Draba refuses to kill him instead he throws his trident to the audience and leaping to attack the Romans. Unfortunately, he is killed before succeed to kill one of the Roman. As he leaves, he buys a pretty slave woman named Varinia whom Batiatus has paired to Spartacus and they love each other.

Spartacus sees Varinia is brought by Soldier. Marcellus said to Spartacus that Varinia have been sold to Crassus then Spartacus shouts that "Varinia is sold". Meanwhile, Marcellus whips Spartacus mouth and shout that "Slaves don't speak in the kitchen!". In broken heart at his loss of Varinia and Callous treatment, Spartacus and the other slave rebel and escape from Batiatus house. They seize Capua and rob Romans property than go to Vulvius Mountain. Spartacus' plan is going to by sea and he cooperates with Cilician pirates with pays them with slaves' plunder.

Along their way, Spartacus and the slaves looking for the people who want to join with them. Beside that, Spartacus meets Varinia and they live together till Varinia pregnant.

When slaves arrive in the coast, they don't find one of Cicilian ship because they have been bought by Crassus. He knows Spartacus' plan from disgusted Ceasar who leak Ghraccus' secret that he helps Spartacus in order to Crassus loses opportunity in public election.

The climatic battle begins with Spartacus leading thousands slaves against Garrison of Rome that lead by Crassus. During the fighting, the slaves enjoy some success, but later, the slave forces are to be weak because of the arrival of the armies of Pompey and Lucullus. The battle result is the defeat of the rebellious slaves. Roman Soldiers catch some survivors, including Spartacus and Antonius.

After the battle, Crassus promises to spare Rebel slave if they can show where Spartacus is. Spartacus and Antonius stand up, at the same time, but before Spartacus admit who is he, Antonius shouts "I'm Spartacus!". Meanwhile, one by one, each surviving slaves stands and claims to be Spartacus with shouting out "I'm Spartacus!". For that, Crassus asks to the soldier to crucify survivor along Appian Way. In addition, he wants Antonius who his ex-servant and Spartacus who he is still remember face and name in Capua as Spartacus to be crucified for the last and they must fight in gladiator arena. Crassus takes Varinia to his house in order that she will be his mine. In other hand, Varinia brakes Crassus' heart. For that, Crassus is very impatient

waiting for next day when Antonius and Spartacus is crucified for the last. He insists them to fighting as Gladiator and declares that the winner will be crucified. So, between Spartacus and Antonius try to kill each other, in order to spare his companion a slow and agonizing death on the cross. Spartacus wins the battle and crucified for the last time.

Before Gracchus commits suicide, he asks Batiatus to steal Varinia from Crassus, and then he gives freedom for her. Batiatus and Varinia leave for Gaul via Appian way and find Spartacus hanging on the last cross in not quite dead. Varinia shows their newborn son; vowing she and their son will be grow up as a freeman; and promises to tell who is his father his dream of free from slavery and oppression. With one last breath, Spartacus' head bent of and Varinia gets back to the Chart and rides on.

Spartacus' responses are many pro and contras. Some of the audiences have different comment about this movie, but most of them praise this movie. For instance Sonatine states in internet, the appeal point of *Spartacus* movie is that the story very dramatics, so that the movie makes she sheds a tear. She argues that " it is not often I shed a tears at the movies but after the final battle scene, the victories Crassus wants to know who Spartacus is amongst the walking wounded. One by one they stand up and declare "I'm Spartacus!" while Douglas looked on, the tears rolling down my face".

According to Tom Rito who argues in internet, the interesting point is in the cast and director; he is attracted with the actor and Kubricks' brilliant idea in making *Spartacus* movie. The character that he plays can touch him

and add the movies soul. He states “it has great acting and more soul as a film. I would not change a thing. Kubrick is at his best making us feel everything on a human level while giving us a visual masterpiece”.

Spartacus is a successful box office. *Spartacus* budget is \$12 million and is the most expensive picture have ever made. It can give abundance gross income to box office as follows. The theatrical performance total in United States is \$ 30 million, International gross is \$30 million, worldwide gross is \$ 60 million, and cumulative Box Office is \$1,659,554, placing third on the list of the top money making films of 1960.

Spartacus is nominated for six Academy Awards and wins four Oscars and again wins in Golden Globe 1960. At 1960, *Spartacus* wins Oscar in the Best Art Direction-set Decoration category by Russel A. Gausman, Julia Heron, Eric W. Orbom, and Alexander Golitzen. For the best Cinematography category, *Spartacus* movie is won by Russell L. Metty. The best costume design by Irene vales and Bill Thomas and also winning the best supporting Actor category by Peter Ustinov. Moreover, *Spartacus* wins Golden Globe for Best Picture-Drama.

Spartacus is interesting to be analyzed because it has so several appeal points that come from the character, props, casting, cinematography, plot, and theme. The characters are terrific because they are able to make the audience feel for them and make the audiences feel like involve there. The character as if jumped off the screen that makes the audience cheer at their victories and cry at their defeats.

The property can raise appropriate audiences' imagery in 71 B.C although it doesn't make in Rome, the audiences can feel an ancient atmosphere of Rome when they are watching. The building and the props create in detail. In addition, make a movie at past era is more difficult than present era because filmmaker must analyze on historical in its society and create the props in order to the theme of the movie can be delivered.

In addition, the actor in *Spartacus* is an action movie and the actor should have good stamina because it presents a lot of extreme scene such like war scene, falling, running, dragging and the place of action is in the hot place. Moreover, the actor is suitable with the character that they play. Beside that, *Spartacus* presents more than 500 figurative characters.

The cinematography is awesome and it can be proved *Spartacus* wins an Oscar in cinematography at 1960. The image has used panchromatic, so the image is very sharp. In take the image is well expose, it means the image is not too dark or not too bright. Moreover, between sound and image is synchronic. It shows wide background and forward. The uses of make up, set dressing, costume can contribute a profound character.

The plot is very dramatic rare slow but in every second is worthed and exciting. There is a lot of conflict as a favor of the movie that can raise the curiosity and waiting for what happen next. The end of plot makes the audience satisfied realize a breath even move to tears.

The most interesting in *Spartacus* movie is the theme. The director's idea on *Spartacus* is that freedom is not given but has to struggle for. The

interesting point, Spartacus is to be slave before his thirteenth years old. Yet, he is a freeman before the Roman takes him in Thrace to be worker in stone mining. He wants to get his former freedom with rebellion against the Roman. The director also wants to share his idea that freedom is expensive; it is reflected in many scenes which the slaves should sacrifice their body, soul and property in order to reach their freedom.

Stimulated by all of fact clarified above, this research aims at describing the slaves to rebels against Roman emperor to get the freedom from slavery and oppression. Moreover, the researcher is interested in employs Marxist approach. The writer chooses the title “**AGAINST SLAVERY AND OPPRESSION IN STANLEY KUBRICK’S *SPARTACUS*: MARXIST APPROACH**”.

B. Literature Review

The analysis of Stanley Kubrick’s *Spartacus* movie has been studied. The researcher finds two articles in internet that studied on it. The first researcher is William J. Felchner entitled *Spartacus movie classic 1960* in 2008, he focuses on how spectacular of *Spartacus* movie. He concludes that Spartacus is based on novel by Howard Fast that involve more than 76,000 people and it cost is \$12 million and it is successful box office that gross \$11,1 million at the box office and placing the third on the list of the top money making.

The second researcher is Cineaste entitled *who kill Spartacus?* In 1990, he focuses on the reason why the director name Stanley Kubrick makes

the *Spartacus* movie. He concludes that the director wants to intrigue the *Spartacus* character who he just a slave but almost destroy the Roma and make them ashamed.

Different from two previous researches, this research focuses on against to slavery and oppression employs Marxist approach. The researcher also analyzes the structural elements of movie and related it with the Marxist theory.

C. Problem Statement

Based on the background, the researcher proposes problem how *Spartacus* and slaves rebel against slavery and oppression as reflected in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus*. In addition, the explanation on slavery and oppression will be described as follows:

Slavery is forced labor condition where a person is compelled to work to the master or the slave owner. They lost their freedom if they are sold to the master and the unlawfulness of slavery make slave to resist the oppression of their masters. Slave can not leave an owner, they must have a passport to leaving the owner and they will be returned to the owner if they escape. Slavery is a violation of sacred rights, the infliction of a great wrong which are universally adopted through the civilized world (Channing: 59).

Oppression is treated as though its scope includes any and all human experience of limitation or suffering. Oppression means the cruel rule of bourgeoisie to marginal group that economically and culturally marginalized groups endure suffering. The oppression of the working classes, economic

exploitation is the fundamental oppression in society. The condition is the owner oppresses working person, the working persons who must obey the master. Moreover, oppression is lack of respect for members of the oppressed group (Frye, 1997: 34-35).

D. Objective of the Study

The researcher proposes some objectives of the study as follow:

1. To analyze the movie based on its structural elements.
2. To analyze the movie based on Marxist approach.

E. Limitation of the Study

The researcher limits the study on the struggle against slavery and oppression in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* movie by using Marxist Approach.

F. Benefit of the Study

The benefits expected from this research as follows

1. Theoretical Benefit

To give some information which can be used by the other researcher who are interested in analyzing this literary work.

2. Practical Benefit

To give deeper understanding in literary field as the reference to the other researcher and to enrich the literary study on Marxist issues in Stanley Kubrick's *Spartacus* film.

G. Research Method

1. Type of Study

The researcher uses qualitative or library research which data are based on non human sources.

2. Object of the Study

The object of the research is against slavery and oppression in Stanley Kubrick's in *Spartacus* film.

3. Type of Data and the Data Source

In this research, the researcher uses two data sources that are primary and secondary data sources as follows:

a. Primary Data Sources

The data is taken from Spartacus movie by Stanley Kubrick and it is taken from attitude, dialogue and all statement in the text of the movie which relevant with the research.

b. Secondary Data Sources

The data is taken from the literature on theory of Marxism, review, public responses, and director's biography that relevant with the research.

4. Technique of the Data Collection

The data are collected from film and articles related the topic. To make the data more complete the writer is doing some steps. The steps as follows:

- a. Watching the film and reading the articles that connected to the research repeatedly.
- b. Finding the important data.
- c. Arranging the data into several parts and classifying it.
- d. Developing the data that are provided.

5. Technique of the Data Analysis

The data are analyzed by using descriptive qualitative analysis. This is an interpretation of the content analysis to get characteristics of the data for Marxist analysis of Karl Marx's theory at the Spartacus film.

H. Paper Organization

The paper consists of six chapters. The first chapter is introduction, which explains the background of the study, literary review, problem statement, objective of the study, limitation of the study, benefit of the study, research method and paper organization. The second chapter is underlying theory that consists of notion Marxist approach, major principles of Marxist, structural elements of the movie and technical elements of the movie. The third chapter is American social background in the middle of twentieth century. The fourth chapter is structural analysis of the movie which is divided into structural elements and technical elements of the movie. Structural elements involve character and characterization, setting, point of view, plot, and theme. Furthermore, technical elements consists of two namely cinematography and mise en scene. Cinematography involves perspective of

shot, framing of shot and duration of image; in addition, mise en scene consists of setting, set dressing, costume and props, dressing and make up. The fifth chapter is Marxist analysis that consists of dialectical materialism, historical materialism, alienation, class struggle, revolution and ideology. Furthermore, the last chapter is conclusion and suggestion.