Abstract

The Roman Empire (roughly 27 B.C. to 476 A.D.) has historically received a bad reputation due to the Romans' favored forms of entertainment. The popular combination of amusement and affliction, specifically within such venues as the Colosseum and the Circus Maximus, has labeled the Romans as a barbaric and tasteless people. Many historians condemn the Romans for their unrestrained passion for pleasure and excess as well as their savage shows. Before their fall, the imperial Romans led an advanced and successful society. Key elements of their culture were highly conducive to and representative of their acute attraction to violence. Contemporary America shares many cultural characteristics with ancient Rome, which are reflected in modern media. The following analysis will help identify why the Romans craved violence in entertainment and explore how similar factors still influence audiences today.

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