

Analyze the following passage in terms of the Nietzsche's account of aesthetics i...

[Philosophy](#)



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Section/# Analysis 2. Analyse the following passage in terms of the Nietzsche's account of aesthetics in The Birth of Tragedy: Nietzsche's "The Birth of Tragedy" takes a somewhat different approach to the exemplification of the then "modern" art that was beginning to come to prominence in the world in which he lived. What is peculiar and interesting about Nietzsche's analysis of such is the fact that he outright rejected it of having any merit and saw it as indicative of the decline of Western civilization. By opening his discussion by comparing the current representation of art with the way in which former advanced civilizations had embraced a degree of decadence and pessimism, Nietzsche is able to dismiss such representations without necessarily attacking the overall artistic merit that they might represent. Although from Nietzsche's perspective, the account that he provided no doubt provided the writer a much needed salve to understand, categorize, and critique the representations of art that were integrating themselves within his time, the fact of the matter is that the approach he provided was what many might deem a bit stodgy. As has been learned, all art cannot and should not ascribe to the same measurements of form, simplicity, beauty etc. Rather, as has been noted, it is the expression of meaning, emotion, and a litany of other feelings and derivative actions that have come to make up the definition of art as it exists today. In this way, merely attacking the form due to the fact that it does not coincide with what has previously been done is closed minded in the extreme. Secondly, with respect to his claim that this particular artwork was a sign of "decline, decadence, waywardness, of wearied, enfeebled instincts" would aptly apply to the growth and/or

development of any art form as it seeks to expand upon the rigid boundaries and constraints that the prior art forms have set for it. Likewise, to claim that such representations are evidence of the decline of art or the decline or civilization is of course a broad overstatement that history has proven to be both inaccurate and misleading. Such an approach is not new to the art critic; moreover, it is an approach that has been echoed by one of the most sadistic and solitarily evil regimes the world has ever seen. Due to the fact that Adolf Hitler embraced a great deal of Nietzsche's writings and belief systems, it comes as little surprise that the Third Reich based at least some of their interpretation of modern art forms in the way that this philosopher viewed them. Due in no small part to Nietzsche's anti-Semitism, combined with his appreciation for what he deemed as "higher" forms of art, the Third Reich expanded upon Nietzsche's view and deemed entire genres of art as "degenerate". As a function of this, art was repressed, artist ridiculed, imprisoned in concentration camps and some even killed. As a function of such a radical approach to the interpretation of what constituted "good" and "bad" art, the public was greeted with a narrow-minded and overly simplistic view of the purpose of art as well as what defined art and what did not. Indeed, the Nazi regime funded an exhibition that paraded a cavalcade of so called "degenerate" art around the nation; exhibiting what they deemed as uniquely wretched and sinister interpretations of art as a means to further a higher level of anti-Semitism and disgust within the populace. Naturally, what Nietzsche claimed with reference to the unique direction that art was taking during his time and how the Nazi's twisted this interpretation to mean a uniquely anti Jewish approach are two distinctly different

reactions; however, the correlation between the two should not be confused and or disregarded as one naturally lead to the extreme interpretation of the other. Such is not stated to equate Nietzsche with a type of war criminal bent on the destruction of the Jewish race; rather, it is said with the hope that the reader will take with him/her a more complete and nuanced understanding of what such a narrow minded approach to what art specifically entails. Finally, accepting such an approach does not allow the field to develop beyond the constraints that currently typify and or define it. Whereas art is the progression of ideas, technique and theme, the artist will struggle to represent himself/herself in a new way to the viewer as long as the field remains static without a degree of advancement or development. For this reason, Nietzsche's approach is limited in that it does not allow for development beyond the former exemplifications of what he claims to be "high" art. It is interesting to note the fact that although Nietzsche himself sees the world as highly anarchical and the human ego as definitive of the truest impulses of human nature, he espouses a somewhat different approach when it comes to art. This of course could be born out of a personal preference; however it is the belief of this author that Nietzsche is instead expressing his persona tastes and using his profound powers of description and intellect to project a personal predilection rather than a categorically true statement regarding the current fate that art experienced in his (then) modern world. As a means of understanding these issues, the reader and/or researcher can attempt to ascribe a level of higher understanding to what typifies art, both within Nietzsche's own time and within the current era. Rather than engaging art with a sense of

predetermined ideals that necessarily box in the ways in which meaning and expression can be drawn, the viewer should seek to maintain a relatively open mind; albeit mindful of technique and artistic ability. Regardless of the personal tastes that one might appreciate, the fact of the matter is that art will continue to grow, will continue to expand, and will continue to leverage different means and mechanisms to express its goals to the viewer. As such, an open-minded approach is the only one in which the rational art critic should approach such issues.