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Writing the World AH120

March 4, 2011

Are Our Bodies Perfect?

When Adolf Hitler was ruling over Germany in the 1930s, he was obsessed with Greek art. He wanted all of Germany to look at how “perfect” the Ancient Greek bodies were, and to strive to achieve the perfection they had (Comer). He also wanted every Fascist art piece, whether it was a painting, sculpture, or drawing, to present a straightforward idea to its viewers. He wanted them to look at art and see what “perfect” looked like, and to be that way (Comer). When looking through *Art of the Third Reich*, by Peter Adam, you can tell Hitler wanted every art piece to look flawless, and he would purge the artists who did not follow his rules (Comer). In fact, by comparing both Greek and Fascist art with one another from viewing *The Naked Olympics and Art of the Third Reich*, one can see how similar they really are, through their strength, hard work, and representation of their country.

In *The Naked Olympics*, by Tony Perrottet, there are many pictures of what Greek men looked like while competing in the Ancient Olympics (167). The picture I chose was of two “sparring boxers” with another man looking on waiting his turn. It was painted on an “Athenian amphora” in 336 B. C (167). Amphoras are storage jars that have two handles and an oval body. They are primarily used to store wine or special oil (Webster). In this picture, the muscles on the men who are fighting are incredibly defined. Their leg muscles are very prominent, along with their backs and chests showing many muscles too. All three men in the picture have what appears to be rope intertwined and crossed around their hands and wrists, going up to their elbows. They also have short hair that looks wispy. The

two men on the right fighting have their arms outstretched towards one another, as to hit the opponent. The look on the face of the man on the left seems very content with little emotion. He also seems to be chewing on the end of the rope on his left hand. The man on the far right of the picture looks scared, of the man who he is fighting, and his mouth is in a frown. He is also stepping backwards as to back away from the fight. The man in the middle of the picture is stepping forward towards the man he is fighting, as to knock him down. All of the men are also all completely naked.

From the *Art of the Third Reich*, written by Peter Adam, I chose a German Fascist Art sculpture (196). In the picture, all of the men are naked, and their muscles are very prominent. The artist exposes each mans' strong back muscles and arm muscles. The two men on each end also look as if they have solid leg muscles. The gluteus maximus on the man in the center looks quite firm too. You can see a look of pain and exhaustion on each man's face with their lips clenched together and their eyebrows burrowed down. Each man looks as if they have hair, but it is really short. One man, who is at the bottom on the left, appears to be trying to push the boulder up a hill. He has his right leg planted out in front of him and his arms behind him, to help hoist the boulder up. The man on the far right has his left leg extended out with his arms outstretched to the right of his body as to pull the boulder up. The other two men are balancing the boulder in the middle, and helping move it up a hill.

The picture from *The Naked Olympics* represents to me personal strength. From the muscles on each man, you can tell being muscular, fit, and active is important to the Greek culture. In addition, this picture shows that all of the athletes worked towards a common goal. That common goal was training hard for many years, for the possibility of getting a chance to compete in the Ancient Olympics (Comer). A big part of Ancient Greece was competing in the Olympics. Every male wanted the opportunity to represent their country in

a positive light (Comer). It was an honor to be in the Olympics and people would travel many miles to have the opportunity to watch the Olympic Games (Perrottet). This picture represents how hard people were willing to work just to make their country proud of them. The more wins an athlete had throughout his Olympic career, the more elaborate the sculpture representing him would be. Only men could compete in the Ancient Olympics because the Greeks believed women were emotional and not logical (Comer). That is why when looking at any piece from this time, only the men appeared in the art pieces.

Josef Thorak is the sculpture of the Fascist art piece. He calls it, "Monument to Work" (Adam 196). Thorak was hired by Hitler in 1935 when his pieces were shown in a Berlin art exhibition (Adam 190). To me, this sculpture represents three things. The first is strong men. Hitler wanted all Germans to look as the Greek art portrayed their people. Therefore, he wanted all artwork to show very muscular and fit men. He refused to display any art that did not give off the idea of fit, athletic bodies. Secondly, I believe this sculpture shows men working towards a purpose. This sculpture shows perfect German men that came together, to accomplish a single goal as one. Additionally, this sculpture shows they came together for the good of their country. The men, in unison, built a monument that would help make their country a better place.

Greek and Fascist art are similar, but still very comparable. During Adolf Hitler's reign, Fascists were obsessed with individualism on a social level, but wanted to get rid of it on the personal level (Comer). Therefore, Hitler wanted to purge "degenerate art" which showed no impression for the viewers to follow. Most artists of degenerate art were Jews, which Adolf Hitler wanted to kill off because they did not look perfect. Hitler got his perfect idea of society from looking at Ancient Greek art, which presented the idea that people needed to have impeccable bodies. For those who did not, they were to die off (Comer).

Both the Greek painting and the German sculpture represent the same things. From looking at both, you can see how the bodies of the men are perfectly defined. There are no deformities on any man. They are the ideal person to represent perfection that Hitler wanted his people to follow. Also, both the sculpture and the painting portray their countries beliefs from that time. The Greeks wanted the strong men to compete in the Olympics, so the public could have entertainment, and the men could be winners. The Germans wanted everyone to look flawless so they could have the ideal society. In both art pieces, you can see how each countries ideas are represented, and how they worked to get that achieved.

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