

Nietzsche and the Sculptural Sublime: On Becoming the One You Are

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The metaphor of sculpture goes hand in glove with philosophy from its earliest beginnings. And Nietzsche too uses the metaphor, describing the human being by speaking of “the noblest clay, the costliest marble” (BT §1). By speaking of Nietzsche and the sculptural sublime, I address the question of the relationship between sculpture and human becoming as well as our tendency (which I explore elsewhere in a historical and phenomenological discussion of the bronzes of antiquity but also in connection with some of the erotic shock and other sculptures of the contemporary artist Jeff Koons)¹ to “project” as the hermeneutic phenomenologists Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty and others would say — and as Nietzsche also said — and so “find” ourselves in our statues. This is a different encounter with ourselves than in our poetry and our literature, but it is also a different encounter than with our paintings, even those that function as “windows,” in linear and non-linear perspective as Gadamer once reflected,² and as many art historians have also argued or as “mirrors,” however oblique and deflected, as other philosophers, most subversively, Derrida and Foucault also contend, and again, and although similarly an adumbration in space, otherwise than in and through architecture as Heidegger and other theorists of space and place have also argued.³ For we are in tension with the statue as we are with other living beings and if this tension patently includes architectural and painterly resonances of our relations with one another and with ourselves, the statue is also another in a singularly centered sense, arguably because it makes its own context, its own surround the “figure determines its own fulcrum” as Rudolf Arnheim contends.⁴

Claimed by the statue as by and with another self, I reflect upon Nietzsche’s arguments that hold, as Pindar also held in the gnomic “Castor Song” he appended to his second Pythian ode, that all such agonistic tensions are for the sake of becoming what one is. I conclude with an reflection on Nietzsche’s *Zarathustra*, in particular the section in the second part, “On Those Who are Sublime.”

Tragedy and Apollinian Art of Sculpture

» O you fools, you presumptuous, pitying fools, what have you done? Was this a work for your hands? How you have bungled and botched my most beautiful stone! What a thing for you to take upon yourselves! «

— *Beyond Good and Evil*, §62

From the beginning of his *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, a book most of his colleagues and readers failed to understand to his enduring frustration — and a book that, so I argue, remains poorly understood to this day — Nietzsche refers to sculpture and the dream, speaking of Apollo, who is also associated with the dream divination and the Pythian oracle.



Fig. 1. Apollo from the Temple of Zeus, Olympia, 5th century, BCE
Archaeological Museum, Olympia Greece. Courtesy of Vanni/Art Resource.

Nietzsche thereby frames his book on tragedy architectonically as he relates “the Apollonian art of sculpture” to the specifically “non-plastic, Dionysian art of music.” (BT §1) Opposed to intoxication, opposed to the ecstasy of music and the erotic, is the dream work: the plastic art of forming and transfiguring solid, dynamic form. These musical and sculptural oppositions are yoked in the tragic work of art which is “both Dionysian and Apollonian” (ibid.). Hence we note Nietzsche’s reference to the Palazzo Pitti⁵ as epitomizing the grand style, an illustration inspired by his own long association with Burckhardt and opposing *both* Aristotle’s and Kant’s aesthetics, in a letter written to the musician Carl Fuchs in 1884-1885.

It is important to note, although this is, as is usual given the overemphasis on Wagner, rarely noted (save through and in terms of Wagner and his own relation to Beethoven) that Nietzsche institutes this grand stylistic and architectural contrast in an specifically musical context, with

explicit or illustrative reference to Beethoven's 9th Symphony — which Nietzsche regarded from the beginning to the end of his own life as a representative exercise in the consummate “art of dissonance,” an art which belongs to consonance, expressed in terms of the golden harmony of the grand style, here: architectural grandeur, described “as the most intense form of the art of melody.”⁶ As Goethe influentially expresses this enduring claim, architecture is fixed, or “frozen music,”⁷ as Schopenhauer likewise recalls Goethe's formulation to speak of musical rhythm and symmetry.

In his early notes, Nietzsche already conjoins light and sound by speaking of the sculptor god, Apollo in connection with music: “a divinity of light and sun god, and at the same time, the inventor and lord of tone.”⁸ And this acoustic and no less luminous dynamic⁹ also makes an appearance in his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy* where Nietzsche invokes the mythic account of Memnon's statues in Thebes,¹⁰ the colossi known in antiquity as the “vocal” statues famed for sounding when struck by the rays of the rising sun.¹¹ This melding of the figurative and the literal is critical inasmuch as *The Birth of Tragedy* concerns the fusion or “marrying” of the domains of two divinities, Apollo and Dionysus.



Fig. 2. The Vocal Memnon at Thebes; the colossal statues of Amunoph III. (1846-1849)

David Robert's image of Thebes, Dec. 4th, 1838, hand colored lithograph: Louis Haghe. New York Public Library.

Nietzsche also invokes sculpture in his texts as metaphor for self-fashioning (MA §258 as well as (KSA 9, 7 [101], 338) and ultimately KSA 11, 35 25 [101]). As I have explored this elsewhere with reference to the issue of life-sized Greek bronzes,¹² the idealization of the statue with reference to human formation is one that already appears in Homer (here specifically in gold) as well as Plotinus (cf. *Enneads* 1. 6 [1] and Z II *On the Blessed Isles*) but also the Stoics

— and the same metaphor can also be found in Plato who has frequent recourse to Daedalus, Socrates's supposed mythic ancestor.

Socrates himself was regarded as having been a sculptor in two senses, both by origin or trade and in terms of his words as Euthyphro, for the first characterizes the elusiveness of Socrates's arguments as being as well-crafted — and as hard to tie down — as the statues of the mythical Daedalus.¹³ In Plato's *Republic*, Socrates compares Glaucon and Adeimantus to two city-hired, statue “burnishers,” civil servants responsible for polishing the city's monuments [Rep. II: 361d]. We encounter the metaphor again when speaking of the political dollhouse that is Plato's description of the *Republic*, where — echoing Euthyphro in what is usually taken to be a different modality — Glaucon names Socrates a “sculptor,” crafting “statues of our governors faultless in beauty” [Rep.VII: 540c]. Most significant of all, perhaps, is the foundry workers' simile that is the basis for Plato's ‘noble lie,’ requisite we are told for the sake of any possible practical institution of the ‘republic’ to be founded on its basis. The ‘noble lie’ is the story Plato proposes be used to institute his philosopher's polity in the (invented) myth of autochthonous origins on the model of an underground sculptor's workshop where human beings are forged of gold or of silver or of bronze [Rep.III: 412b-415d], corresponding, respectively, to the three classes of guardians, auxiliaries, and workers. The citizen's complicity can be won, so Plato famously argues, by telling them that the memories they have of their childhood are so many induced dreams, whereby and to interpret the “truth” behind these dreams will persuade them that those born of silver and gold need not and indeed cannot handle silver and gold (which leaves the way clear for capitalism for the masses as opposed to the elite — a still radical idea) and so on. The importance of the metaphor of Daedalus is central to philosophy as the art, that is the craft of reasoning — as is the coeval origination of the tendency to treat the idea of a living or moving statue as a metaphor for aesthetic fluidity.¹⁴

Beyond its importance for Plato's argument, the same metaphor also offers us a glimpse into ancient technologies for casting life-size statues.¹⁵ These technologies and the relative ubiquity of antique statues suggest that the metaphor of polishing one's own statue is even more relevant to Greek ethical and political life. Thus Aristotle invokes sculpture when he speaks of the form potentially inherent in the block of marble, and as metaphor for self-fashioning, like the Stoics, Plotinus, too uses the same figurative reference to the human being, urging us to perfect or polish our own statue.¹⁶

If Nietzsche's first book begins with a plastic or sculptural reference, it also closes with one:

“Walking under lofty Ionic colonnades, looking upwards to a horizon cut off by pure and noble lines, finding the reflections of his transfigured shape in the shining marble at his sides, and all around him, people solemnly striding or moving delicately, with harmoniously sounding lutes and a language of rhythmic gesture.” (BT §25)



Fig 3. Ionic Columns, Munich, Germany.
Photo: Babette Babich, with original Iphone.

Later, towards the end of *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes of the kind of architecture “needed” for those who know [*Erkennenden*], suggesting that what is ultimately

lacking in our great cities: quiet and broad, widely expansive places for reflection, places with long, lofty colonnades for bad or for overly sunny weather, where no shouting or clattering of carriages would penetrate, and where a more refined propriety would prohibit even priests from praying aloud: buildings and sites which as a whole articulate the sublimity of self-reflection and retreat. (GS §280)

Here it is important to note that the reference to architectural building style is also a reference to grand spaces, to the heights of stone and to structure. And indeed, and given Nietzsche's language in his first book, we are still speaking of stone, the same coolness that is for Nietzsche so important in the Greek context as counterpart to passion: thus he in the last line of his first book cited above, he writes of finding one's “transfigured shape” “reflected” in “the shining marble at his sides,” such lute playing, solemnly striding figures would refer to one's fellow citizens as indeed refer to life-sized statues set amidst and echoing “lofty Ionic colonnades.”¹⁷



Fig. 4. Images drawn from the catalog edited by Vinzenz Brinkman's and Raimund Wünsche's *Bunte Götter*. Exhibit initially at Munich's Glyptothek. Source: GEOLino.de. Knallbunte Götter.

Although I elsewhere emphasize the importance of thinking of such life-sized sculptures in colored (and lacquered) *bronze*,¹⁸ it is essential to note that Nietzsche's own references (here and elsewhere) make it plain that he imagined them of vibrantly polychromatic marble or else of painted terracotta and so on.¹⁹

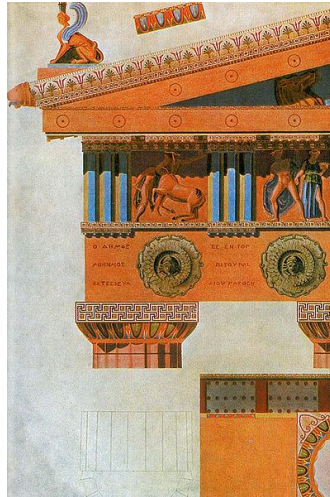


Fig. 5. Gottfried Semper, Parthenon Reconstruction

Semper Archiv, Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur, Semper Archiv, ETH Zürich. Source: Wikimedia And it is indeed the color of ancient sculpture, no matter whether in wood or marble or terra cotta or bronze, etc., that tends to elude us. No matter how often scholars tell us of the rich and even garish intensity of ancient works of sculptural art, we today continue to be reluctant to associate color, especially rich and *vibrant* color, with ancient Greek sculpture.²⁰ This recidivist classicism, a classicism of enduringly Winckelmannian white, is the point Nietzsche was already highlighting in 1870 as he reminded his audience in Basel of the then-new vision of antiquity,

Was it not until recently seen to be an unconditional artistic axiom that all ideal plastic art had to be colorless, that ancient sculpture did not permit the application of color? Very slowly, and only under the strongest resistance of these same hyper-Hellenes, did the polychrome vision of ancient statues advance according to which these would no longer be naked but considered as clothed with a colorful overlay.²¹

Since Nietzsche's time, however, and even in the wake of a great deal of careful archeologically sophisticated or scientific art history confirming just this "polychrome vision" of antiquity, the same point continues to surprise us.

Thus several years ago, there was a striking exhibition that began in the Munich's famous Glyptothek, entitled *Bunte Götter* [Polychrome Deities],²² which also became a travelling exhibit: which was in every instantiation a surprise to the public (academics included) even if (and we shall see that this is relevant for Nietzsche) the same public (academics included) always managed to go right back to the original, monochromatic, view of antiquity.²³

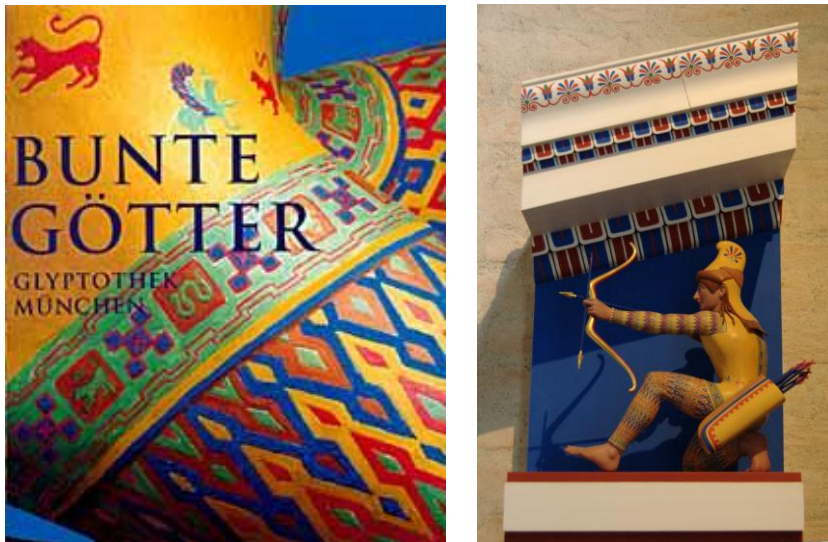


Fig. 6A. *Bunte Götter* and 6B. Aphaia Pediment Polychrome Model, x-xi, Munich's Glyptothek.
Sources: A. *Bunte Götter*, Book Cover. B. Photo: Babette Babich, Munich, May 2011.
See footnote 19 for bibliographical information.

Hence and inspite of dramatic evidence to the contrary, our own contemporary vision of Greece has not budged from the point Nietzsche sought to correct in his early lecture in Basel.²⁴ Thus just as Nietzsche's own original audience, we today, we scholars included, continue to resist the discovery that ancient Greek statues were *not* white but brightly and even garishly colored; indeed that they often weren't even naked but clothed in tight-fitting, intricately patterned, because woven garb.

Nietzsche himself later goes on to contrast the man of marble, invoking a Homeric metaphor to do so, with the man of gold: naming “golden” humanity together with the October sun as “Goethean.” (KSA 13, 24 [10], p. 634) The language of shining and colored statues emphasizes this gloriously resplendent, transfigured imagery: ancient experiences he tells us were differently illuminated for the Greeks “because a god shone through them.” (GS §152) Nietzsche in this context alludes to the statue within: the *inner* ideal of what Nietzsche here and elsewhere calls “ancient humanity,” articulated by way of “the colored splendor of that old master.” (ibid.)

The alliance between statue and column is crucial for the Greeks. But even here there are surprises and to follow Nietzsche’s argument it will do to keep Nietzsche’s own archaeologically informed²⁵ background in mind when we read *The Birth of Tragedy* and his work as a whole. The Dionysus Nietzsche talks about as the other to the crucified²⁶ is also otherwise that is to say: differently, *crucified*. In part this is related to the mythic tradition of Zagreus and Dionysus, twice born, with a good deal of violence (and in this here not unlike the figure of Osiris), in the circumstances of his transformation as Dionysus, via Semele, via Zeus. Hence ancient ceremonial rites often impaled the figure of Dionysus on a pole, a column, or a cross. It is this sculptural figure that we might keep in mind as we note Nietzsche’s well known opposition: “Dionysus contra the crucified” (EH, *Why I am a Destiny* §9). Nietzsche thereby highlights a distinction of kinds (or types) of crucifixion, it is he suggest “*not* a difference with regard to martyrdom” but only a difference in “meaning” (KSA 13, 14 [89], 265). The same difference also resonates in the erotically charged “virtue of the column.” (Z II, *On Those who are Sublime*)

By referring here to the cultic rites associated with the figure of Dionysus set up on a pillar or a column, we are confronted with what remains to modern sensibilities an inherently alien aspect of a well-known kind of Greek sculpture that is patently related to the column, namely the herm. Herms were heads or busts or even entire upper body halves set on columns and these are still familiar to us to this day as decorative architectural and garden elements, highly popular in romantic and post-romantic ages. Usually said to be of the god Hermes — although Dionysus is also represented as are other figures such as Isis or Artemis,²⁷ — Herms are so named with reference to the god of transition, to mark out boundaries.²⁸ For Hermes is the god, as one can recall from the opening lines of the *Coephoroi* [The Libation Bearers], who “communicates” between bounded spheres, moving between the underworld and the world of mortal beings above, between the realm above of the Olympian deities and humans below.²⁹



Fig. 7A. Marble herm, from Siphnos, dated late 6th century BC.
Athens, National Archaeological Museum 3728.

Hermes also played an important role in fertility and other mystery rituals that are often invoked with reference to Alcibiades' supposed sacrilege of the figures of Sais. This last image is a striking one that leaves little to the imagination — arguably, so I contend, because we today really *cannot* imagine it.



Fig. 7B. Dionysus depicted on a pole, with maenads performing sacrificial rites.
Stamnos, Dinos Painter, 2419. Naples, Museo Archeologico Nazionale.

What we can imagine and what we do tend to represent is the *image* of the goddess, Isis, as *truth*, as *nature* (obviously, Heidegger's *aletheia* comes to mind). This itself is an iconically hermetic figure, veiled and celebrated as the object of Schiller's poem *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais*, on the search for truth, *I am all that has been, and is, and shall be, and my robe no mortal*

has yet uncovered.”³⁰ Where the answer to the question, *What is it, that is hidden behind this veil*, returns with *The truth...*” and adds a deflecting warning on attaining this ambition as on the lack of reticence in those who seek or pursue truth, thus Schiller contends that no mortal has succeeded in lifting this veil, a theme Nietzsche himself takes up in his first book with its reflections on science.³¹



Fig 8. Illustration for Schiller’s “Veiled Images of Sais,” *Project Gutenberg’s Poems of The Third Period*, by *Frederich Schiller*. No original publication date given (ca 1900), no translator, no publication details available.

Source: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6796/6796-h/6796-h.htm>

Nietzsche reprises Schiller’s image in his poem in the *The Birth of Tragedy* with respect to the pursuit of knowledge, and with respect to the nature of the occupation of both literary scholarship, especially classical philology, but not less as his references to the epistemological limitations of the natural sciences as well, as these are articulated in Kant and Schopenhauer, and it also recurs in his doctrine of eternal recurrence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and *The Gay Science*, perhaps especially in his beautiful reflections on the “humaneness,” as he speaks of it as divine, of the best future.



Fig 9. Louis-Ernest Barrias, *Nature Unveiling Herself Before Science*, 1899.
Source: Musee d'Orsay, Paris.

What is true is that any time we speak of boundaries — and we do not need Derrida for this as Plato had already emphasized (here by way of a joke) this same trope of naming/un-naming in the *Republic* (479c) and Nietzsche himself makes the same assertion in his discussion of Anaximander in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* — we are always already in the doubled realm of transgression and hence of theft and that means cunning or deception. We recall that Hermes, like Apollo, is brother to Dionysus and like Dionysus, Hermes is the trickster god, like the Norse Loki.³² Hermes, winged feet or not, crossing as he does, the boundaries of the worlds of those above and below, the quick and the dead, the human the divine, is not accidentally associated with hermeneutics, the art of interpretation. One needs all the help one can get when dealing with the gods and perhaps never more so than when dealing with their messenger.³³

By contrast with the balance of the Apolloline dream, Dionysian art “is based on play with intoxication, with the state of ecstasy.” The two impulses are the “drive of springtime and narcotic drink” (ibid.) or other “stimulants” (DW §1, KSA 1, 558) and “in both states the *principium individuationis* is disrupted, subjectivity utterly disappears before the erupting force

of the general element in human life [*Generell-Menschlichen*], indeed of the universal element in nature [*Allgemein-Natürlichen*].” (Ibid.) This is the ecstatic and reconciling harmony of which Hölderlin speaks.³⁴ As Nietzsche writes here, this is the Dionysian as redeemer, dissolver of boundaries: “*Der Gott, ‘o λύσιος, hat alles von sich erlöst, alles verwandelt.*” [The god, ‘o λύσιος, has redeemed/released everything from himself, transformed everything.] (Ibid.)³⁵



Fig. 10. Nicholas Poussin, *Bacchanale devant une Statue de Pan*, 1631.
Source: London National Gallery.

In all, Nietzsche takes his references to Greek statues as seriously as the Greeks would seem to have done, invoking the despoilers of the images, i.e., the statues, of Sais³⁶ and challenging the Stoic aspiration to be like, that is to say: to be as cold as, a statue. The language of “coolness” for Nietzsche exemplified the particular powers of science which, although he argued might have the power to advance human joyfulness, tend to be better at promoting its alternate “power of depriving man of his joys and making him colder, more like a statue, more stoic.” (GS §12)³⁷ The cold image of the cold statue was emblematic for Nietzsche, who elsewhere invoked the scholarly emblem of a cold angel as he speaks throughout his second untimely mediation of a “cold demon of knowledge.”³⁸

This cool constellation echoes in the poetic and parodic passage in the fourth book of Zarathustra where Nietzsche calls upon the still, smooth, coolness of this same stoic ideal (cf. Z IV, *The Song of Melancholy*, §3). In this same measure, Nietzsche’s language of “petrification” corresponds to a power- or coping-strategy. (KSA 9 652 15 [55]) In the wake of such references,

the statue is also the classic object of the will or desire as such. Thus we have noted Nietzsche's allusion to the despoilers of the images of Sais as inevitably erotic.

Nietzsche further recalls this image with regard to the Stoic aspiration to be like, and that is to say in Nietzsche's refraction of this aspiration, the desire to be as cold as the statue to pose the challenging question contra the literality of such a literal — in antique terms — desire "What is it, embracing a statue in Winter? What is it when the statue embraces the statue?" (KSA 9, 15 [55], 652) Nietzsche thus challenges the Stoic with the implausibility and the discomfort of literally embracing the ideal of a statue, which the Greeks did indeed do.³⁹ The tension in this comparative example is between the fixed and cold and perfect ideal of such a statue and the fluid erotic idea that, as Nietzsche argues in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is more at home in the wilderness: motile, cat-like, alive, rather than frozen in stone or bronze or wood.

There is a patent conflict here as Nietzsche also ascribes the same coolness to sculpture as opposed to music unless (and only unless) music and sculpture are unified in the tragic work of art. The point reflects Nietzsche's conception of decadence. For Nietzsche, we can argue, as for Plato (and here Monique Dixaut's careful distinction between images and the moving grace of a statue in Plato can be useful),⁴⁰ the statue played the role of an exemplar in both positive and negative senses.

In the light of this tension, Nietzsche invokes the sculptural model with his metaphor of philosophizing with a hammer. Nietzsche also names his doctrine of the eternal return of the same with the same sculptor's tool for "liberation," speaking of it and of its functioning as a "hammer" (KSA 11 26 [298] 229; 12 5 [70], 210; 12 7 [45] 309, etc.) and the sculptor's talent is inseparable from Nietzsche's project of sounding out idols (KSA 13, 22 [6] 586).

But rough work is dangerous work and Nietzsche warns those who follow his project of upsetting idols, or "inverting" values, to take good care that the overturned idols and inverted values, do not topple back upon the one who upsets them, like the importunate scholars he challenges. Thus and not unlike Nietzsche here, Heidegger could conclude his *Introduction to Metaphysics* with the gnomic quote from Hölderlin: "'For the mindful God abhors untimely growth.' (Aus dem Motivkreis der Titanen)"⁴¹

Beyond the role of sculptural metaphor in Nietzsche's work, I think have made at least some case for understanding the contrasting sense of time looking at ancient sculpture in Nietzsche's art historical sense, which he also borrowed from Hölderlin and understood in terms of life.

But what growth is, and which mindful god is intended, will have to depend on the further question as Nietzsche has emphasized it as the question of finding and that is also to say in the sculptural mode, of fashioning the answer to the question of who we are.

We are back to the sensual and perhaps but, again, the ecstatic possibility is expressed in sculptural terms and via an explicitly sculptural parallel: “the human being is no longer artist, he has become a work of art.” (Ibid.) What *works* on the human being is now nature itself. Here, Dionysus, qua world artist, is the one who appropriates Apollo’s guise as sculptor-god: now kneading and chiseling, forging and working the human being as a “nobler clay; a more precious marble.” (DW §1, KSA 1, 555; cf. BT §1) For Nietzsche, this “human being whom the artist Dionysos has formed stands in the same relation to nature as a statue does to the Apollonian artist.” (Ibid.)

A more modern scientific interest in the natural world preoccupied the scholarship of Nietzsche’s day in terms of the theoretical emphasis on the methods as well as the results of natural scientific investigation. Thus a sculptural image represents both science and nature, as Pierre Hadot has recently urged us to bear in mind with respect to Nietzsche’s original image, recalling Schiller’s descriptions of the relationship between nature and the men of science.⁴² And we are talking of men here in every explicit and that is also for Nietzsche in every overtly sexualized sense. As Nietzsche emphasizes, citing Lessing as “the most honest of theoretical men” (BT §15), there would be no science of any kind, especially not natural science (as the setting of the image he offers makes plain) if it had to do only with “that one, naked goddess and nothing else besides.” (Ibid.) Connecting Lessing’s reflection together with Schiller’s poem, Nietzsche writes “truth is unveiled, the ecstatic eyes of the artist remain fixed on whatever remains covered over, even after unveiling” but the scientist, a paradigmatic fetishist, “enjoys and satisfies himself with the discarded veil” (ibid.).

If the above image is crucial for Nietzsche’s critique of modern science, here we are concerned with the inherently sculptural dimensionality of tragedy. Recalling Lessing’s own reflections on sculpture and poetry, Nietzsche’s most explicit references to sculpture can be diffused into a focus on the poetic or literary, or musically tragic as contrasted but also as bound together with the plastic sculptor’s craft. Thus the sculptural is opposed to the literary if only for its gestalt quality, as the “language of rhythmic gesture” (BT §25) as Nietzsche emphasizes this gestural “language” in the dance. Thus in a note from the summer of 1885, Nietzsche writes that

“the human being is a shape- and rhythm-building creature.” (KSA 11, 38 [10], 608) In his early writings for his courses, Nietzsche gives some care to discussing the statue’s theatrical role as *deus ex machina* and in the measure to which Nietzsche enjoyed emphasizing mechanical theatrical effect, he brings in the statue as a rhetorically consummate flourish. Hence Nietzsche does not merely refer to the sculpted image of Apollo but rather and as counterpoised to the passionate movement of the chorus, he also describes the *Trauerspiel* itself as the “living image,” (“Greek Music Drama,” KSA 1, p. 515), the gestalt of a musically staged tableau, or “living *statue* of the god” (ibid., emphasis added). For Nietzsche the sculptural tension includes an obvious analogy, as he points out that “factually the ancient actor was not unlike Mozart’s ‘Stone Guest’.” (Ibid.) Thus Nietzsche details what contemporary cultural and archaeological research likewise confirms, to wit: the ancient tragic actor, with his huge, phonically projective mask and thickly padded and oversized costume, could barely move at all. The dance of ancient tragedy was a matter of rhythmic rather than athletic movement.

With the architectonic tableau of the ancient Greek tragedy play, accordingly, everything is ordered or set up for the sake of balance and limit. In this musically sculpted ordering, everything flows: statues are moved, scenes are changed, the chorus sways to and fro with the rhythm of the tragedian’s poem, etc. Illusion is thus neither represented as nor regarded as illusion in order to trick or to fool but is rather deployed “as symbol, as a sign [*Zeichen*] of the truth.” (DW §3, 1 566) In the same way, the statue of the god will also be drawn in a parade for political effect. At issue is the *use* of illusion for a given end or purpose. The difference between Alcibiades dressing as a statue, as the city-goddess Athena for political effect, and the more conventionally “artistic”⁴³ use of sculpture had to do with the mildness of the latter deployment, and in the case of art, as in the case of play, this “harmlessness” (KSA 9, 11 [51], p. 459) was crucial, as Nietzsche explicitly emphasizes this benign quality. The absence of (real) danger generally characterizes art but also playfulness for human beings (and animals).

The sculptural also serves to model Nietzsche’s Greek rhetorical ideal as expressed in the section entitled “Dancing in Chains” in *The Wanderer and his Shadow* (HH II, WS §140; cf. BGE §226; cf. KGW II/3, 102): “to allow a multiplicity of constraints to be imposed upon oneself and then to devise an additional new constraint, impose it upon oneself and conquer it with charm and grace so that both the constraint and its conquest are noticed and admired.” (Ibid.) Thus and in addition to or expanding upon the iconic image of sculpting oneself as a work

of art and so allowing the statue within to shine forth as such,⁴⁴ the sculptural is also an inherently rhetorical trope. Sculpture can be (this image especially preoccupies Nietzsche as it similarly preoccupies others like Schiller) the ideal and real object of erotic desire and consummation. And sculpture can be exemplary, an object of admiration in addition to desire, but and ultimately, the statue can come to life, not only as Pygmalion's Galatea but also to make a perfectly Nietzschean point about linguistic style: "If a miracle had given life to the Parthenon pediment's marble images of the battle between Athena and Poseidon, they would indeed have spoken the language of Sophocles." ("Greek Music Drama," KSA 1, 515)

We can use the sculptural ideal of "dancing in chains" as the dynamic of the dance gestalt or we can also invoke the architectonic metaphor of *disegno*, to employ the dynamic Italian terminology for expressing the contrast between painting and poetry, so influential for Nicolas Poussin, the dance with lapidary restraint and as articulated in the color (*colorire*) of tones, to illuminate the formal arrangement of the tragic music drama.⁴⁵ Nietzsche goes beyond the sheerly rhetorical, stylistic level to articulate a phenomenological analysis of sculpture and therewith of space, particularly as this space, the time-space of a world, is engendered or created in tragedy. Thus Nietzsche argues that the tragedian himself is a sculptor "in the broader sense" in his lecture on "The Dionysian Worldview" (DW 1, KSA 1, 553). Here he writes that in one sense or another, the artist "*plays [this is Dionysian] with the dream [this is Apollonian]*" (ibid.).

The image of mantic play is no mere metaphor for the Nietzsche who reprises this same image as the dynamic evolution of tragedy in his first book, described as the child born from the union of Apollo's dreaming vision and ecstatic, Dionysian play. The image of sculpture recurs in the very real aspect of the statue. Thus Nietzsche emphasizes

As a block of marble, the statue is something very real, but the reality of the statue *as a dream figure*, is the living person of the god. As long as the statue hovers as a fantasy image before the artist's eyes, he still plays with reality, when he transposes this image into marble, he is playing with the dream. (ibid.)

The same image and ideal of playing with the dream recurs in *The Birth of Tragic Thought* where Nietzsche speaks of the "musical ecstasy of transfiguration solidified by Skopas and Praxiteles into sculpture" (KSA 1, 581). The transfiguring musical intoxication here, however, is a kind of musical transposition, a literal trans-formation, inasmuch as the transition to the ideal of being in oneself a work of art is at stake.

In the ecstatic transformation of Dionysian art, “playing with intoxication” (ibid.), playing with the ecstatic, the human being is transfigured, in the image of or like a god: “Just as the animals talk and the earth gives forth milk and honey, something super-natural now sounds out from within the human being.” (DW §1, KSA 1, 555) For such quasi-divine beings, Nietzsche can ask, “What are images and statues to him now? The human being is no longer an artist, he is become a work of art.” (Ibid.)

One becomes in oneself a work of art by creating oneself. And Nietzsche uses the image of sculpture to articulate such a self-birthing or self-cultivation. We have already noted that the conception Nietzsche draws upon conceives humanity as a marble of a higher order, that is: a figurative kind, hewn into a new and extraordinary creation. In this Nietzsche draws upon a Platonic image of better and best materials and better and more perfect forms as this same imagery recurs in Plotinus. Sculpture is thus the quintessential analogy of philosophy. In just this fashion, we recall Plato’s Alcibiades comparing the sculptor’s son Socrates to the ingenious *agalmata* sold to advertise the plastic talents of the artist in the *Symposium* (*Symp.* 215b).⁴⁶ And with this reference to Alcibiades who also relates Socrates seductive allure in this way, and who was in the 18th and 19th century often the subject of the illustrations depicting the role of Socrates leading Alcibiades away from sensuality, we recall Nietzsche’s captivating and problematic description of Socrates as a great eroticist. (TI, *The Problem of Socrates*, §8)

From Ideals to Icons and Iconoclasms: Philology

And this do I say also for those who overthrow statues:
nothing is more foolish than casting salt into the sea and
statues into the mud.

— *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* II: » Of Great Events «

If we tend to limit Nietzsche’s philosophic value to his reflections on the moral, we also suppose that his philology was limited to reflections on tragedy, at best (and even then we often suppose him wrong: his first book simply a result of his encounter with Wagner rather than the articulation of his own research).⁴⁷ The first assumption is a great problem for us as it limits our grasp both of his essential, if indeed essentially critical Kantianism and his correspondingly knowledge-theoretical interests, interests concerned as much with epistemology as with the possibility of science, mathematics, logic, but the second assumption is arguably a more grievous one. *Part* of this is because we when we think of philology we limit it, as we tend to do, to the

text leaving out both music and the monumental. But the same Nietzsche whose paradigmatic breaking discovery in his own field had to do with the sound of ancient Greek, and thus of texts that would have to be sung rather than spoken, to which the imperative command, “to hear with one’s eyes” would be relevant in the first place, also was a student of the monumental, the fragment, the object. In the interim, this now archaeology, art history, but in Nietzsche’s day, it was the province of philology entire, and the special concern of his teacher (the one we usually fail to mention because he was also Wilamowitz’ own teacher) Otto Jahn.⁴⁸



Fig 11. Aegina marbles, München Glyptothek.
Photo: Babette Babich, Munich, May, 2011.

The illustration of the sculptural fragment as ruin is the paradigmatic object of classical archaeology and it is also the physical objective locus of the damaging consequences of that very same antiquarian, scholarly interest. Indeed, archaeological science is often and as science regularly is, the instrument of the physical destruction of its own object of study. Indeed the wonderful statues that may be seen at eye level in the Glyptothek are statues that had fallen from the otherwise very well preserved Aphaia temple in Aegina (and which were removed in 1811 by Charles Robert Cockerell, eventually to wind up in Munich).⁴⁹

It is this theme Nietzsche foregrounds in his *On the Future of Our Educational Institutions*, underscoring the contempt scholars routinely conceive with respect to the object of their interest become all-too-familiar to them and the destructive risks posed by scholarly research methodology. Today we can think of Schliemann who dug through Troy in his search for a more suitable archaeological “find.” But Schliemann’s is the only name we know of many, many other

names — and many of us do not even know that Schliemann missed, that is to say: overshot and destroyed and discarded the Troy he found. For Nietzsche the problem was not a problem of one or two over-eager amateurs: the entire scholarly undertaking reflected the lack of measure, Hölderlinian restraint or seemliness [*Maß*].

One need only regard the younger generation of philologists: how seldom one notices with them that ashamed feeling that we with respect to such a world as the Hellenic is, WE have no right to existence at all; how coolly and audaciously on the other hand, that young brood builds its miserable nests in the midst of the most magnificent temples. (BA §3, KSA 1, 693)

For Nietzsche, here in an ironic and mocking modality, it might be better done to warn such unrestrained, grubbing or rooting (he is speaking of classical archaeology after all) scholars against their own invasions, if not for the sake of the antiquities themselves, then perhaps for their own sakes.

Thus Nietzsche suggests that one might take these “youthful” scholars (gifted, as he says, or ungifted as it may be), to put them in mind of Aristotle’s riddling classification of a murderer killed by his victim, that is by his iconic statue.⁵⁰ But as Nietzsche reflects ruefully “Oh, this voice cries out in vain: for one must already be something of the Greek type, in order even merely to understand a Greek curse and formula of banishment!” (Ibid.) Instead, and this is for Nietzsche, the paradigmatic *a-historicism* of both philology and modern epistemology or science: today’s young classicists and archaeological and historical scholars “arrange things comfortably according to their own habits among these ruins” (Ibid.) Like modern scholarly tourists (and classical archaeologists handily fit this bill): “they bring along all of their modern conveniences and fancies and, to be sure, they even conceal them behind ancient columns and grave monuments: whereby there is great jubilation when one finds again in an ancient environment what one had first oneself earlier inserted with cunning practice.” (Ibid.)

Today’s philologists, Nietzsche argues, archaeologically engaged with their insistent efforts to reconstruct so many shattered statues from the dust of antiquity, are better compared to a company of “dwarves” (one of Nietzsche’s favored metaphors) swarming across a fallen colossus. (BA §3, 1, 693) “It falls back” he writes, “and in the fall smashes the human beings under it.” (Ibid.) The mythic icon of a statue’s revenge, not unlike the trope represented by Mozart’s Stone Guest, is however far from the “danger” that concerns Nietzsche as a young and idealistically rigorous philologist who warns against the physical or real-world problems of archaeological preservation with his dry reflection: “but who will take responsibility for assuring

that the statue itself does not break into pieces as a result of these attempts!” (Ibid.) The reciprocal danger of such an unintentional “iconoclasm” on the side of the statue is what concerns Nietzsche: “The philologists perish from the Greeks — one could perhaps survive that — *but* antiquity itself reduced to shards at the hands of the philologists!” (Ibid)



Fig 12. Edward Dodwell, *Temple Aphaia, Aegina, Greece*. Watercolor, 1819.

If this danger is important to emphasize it is because Nietzsche regarded sculpture as the art that fixes or imprints the image of being on becoming, as Heidegger emphasizes in his attention to this aspect of Nietzsche’s thinking in his lecture courses.⁵¹ In this sense, Nietzsche invokes “*immovability* as an ideal,” precisely in an age where (as Nietzsche analyzed the age of Greek decadence), the Hellene “had become too sensitive, and sufferings and reversals too great (the age of Thucydides). To become a statue: whereas with the tragedians the statues (of gods or heroes) were to be made human.” (KSA 9, 7 [101], 338) In an intriguing resonance with Heinrich von Kleist’s fairytale of the dangers of self-awareness, of self-consciousness, Nietzsche writes that the genius enjoys an advantage as underappreciated or unrecognized even, perhaps most of all, in his own person. For just when the genius comes to know himself his genius is destroyed and what is left is merely a statue: “stone and stonification.” (KSA 9, 9 [16], 413)

Complicating and including these limitations, the most important role of sculpture in Nietzsche’s thought is the one we have touched on earlier. This is sculpture as it used as metaphor for self-fashioning as Nietzsche takes this over from Plato and the exemplary ideal of a statue more beautiful than life as from the Stoics and Plotinus. In this spirit, the young Nietzsche

and his friends once erected and dedicated a statue to their own “best future” as they completed their studies, calling it ‘Nirwana’ and exemplifying in practice the imperative claim from Pindar, *become the one you are*, an encomium that had seemingly given voice to their own best ideal of themselves and of their friends, the same promise that had captivated Hölderlin before them.⁵²

As we noted to begin with, the very Greek allusion to crafting or molding oneself into one’s own statue-ideal appears in “Upon the Blessed Isles” in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and in the same locus Nietzsche also echoes Michelangelo’s similarly classicist vision of finding one’s own image slumbering in stone and lamenting its hateful confinement, and finally breaking free of false constraints.

But and at the same time, Nietzsche is critical of antique conceptions of sculpting the soul conceived as Platonic ideal, and he challenges Stoicism, and scientific realism in the process, inasmuch as both share the ideal of living in concord with “nature” and thereby failing to recognize both the otherness of nature and the irreducible interdependence of pleasure and pain. The Stoic tactic of minimizing pain works by minimizing pleasure, thus the Stoic becomes “colder, statue-like” (GS §12). Even this cool ambition betrays a simplifying misconception as we recall that Nietzsche always sought to emphasize the wild colors of ancient sculpture.

On the Limits of Sculpture and the Sublime: Art History and Ancient Greek Religion

In the incompleteness, in the allusiveness or overlaidness of these figures there lies a dreadful holiness which is supposed to defend against any association of them with anything human or humanlike.

— *Human, All-too-Human*

The statue is exemplary in its standing in itself, that is to say its self-possession and its peace. Thus the statue explicitly stamps becoming with the image of being.⁵³ To this balanced composure, the composure of the cosmos as such, Nietzsche adds a complicated tension with chaos and change.

Epictetus takes for granted the pride and nobility of the statue as exemplifying itself to encourage and to praise, by contrast, “the wonders of the human being and its divine maker.”⁵⁴ And Plotinus comes closest to the negating metaphor of patently creative nihilism as Nietzsche invokes it when he uses the language of the “statue of humanity” to invoke the project of self-transfiguration:

cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiseling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue.⁵⁵

In this expressly negative rather than positive fashion, eliminating everything that does not belong to the ideal, Nietzsche reminds us that “every Greek statue can teach us that the beautiful is only negation ...” (KSA 7, 143) Thus Nietzsche’s Zarathustra reminds us, “the creators are hard” (*Z III: Old and New Values*, §29), a “hard word” intended — as this context makes clear — to and for oneself.

In antiquity this corrective elimination also worked in the tension of competition. Hence Nietzsche writes that specifically “Greek” virtue “became an affair of the *ἀγών*: each was jealous of each other.” (KSA 9, 7 [101], 338) At the same time, the ideal of stillness and impassivity was about the idealization of beauty.⁵⁶

Nietzsche never separates the Apollonian and the Dionysian despite the common conviction that he abandons the Apollonian, in my judgment, as mistaken a belief as the view that he abandons the project of his first book on tragedy. This is also the meaning of *edification* or exemplarity and in a notebook fragment from 1884 entitled *On the Means of Beautification*, Nietzsche reminds us that “the Greek philosophers did not pursue *happiness*’ in any other way than by *finding themselves beautiful*, thus making a statue of themselves, *the look of which would do one good*.” (KSA 11, 25 [101], 36)

This sculptural ideal once attained, however, like ancient Greek music drama or the tragic artwork, can be lost. Echoing Burckhardt’s judgment on the stylistic decline of sculpture, Nietzsche points to the “ruin” of sculpture in Bernini, a judgment subsequently repeated by Erwin Panofsky (CW, 2nd *Afterword*).⁵⁷ As physician of culture, and an analogy with Wagner is apt, Nietzsche advocates the restoration of the lost cultural ideal. In this spirit, Rainer Maria Rilke writes on *The Archaic Torso of Apollo*, one his most beautiful poems on the power of beauty: » *denn da ist keine Stelle, die dich nicht sieht. Du muss Dein Leben ändern* « — ‘there is no place there, that does not see you. You must change your life.’⁵⁸

Actual or realized at one time in antiquity: we understand Nietzsche’s challenge to us to go and get ourselves a culture in our own times, and in that way to become ourselves our ownmost work of art. In this way it is plain that although Nietzsche’s ideal of becoming what one is can seem akin to the very Alexandrian origins of Plotinus, Nietzsche also differs from this inasmuch as he also insists on the very Greek understanding of the sculptor’s art, a distinction which

perhaps may help to explain the paradoxical quality of Pindar's recommendation to come to be not other than but just what one is.

To qualify this exemplary ideal for the ears of his contemporary nineteenth century audience, ears not unlike our own, Nietzsche cites Plutarch's remonstrance against what might well be our own envy of the artisan's skill that "no noble-born youth would himself, upon seeing Zeus in Pisa, have the desire to become himself a Phidias or else, on seeing Hera in Argos, wish to become a Polyclitus." (KSA 1, 766)

Nietzsche thus explains, precisely for the sake of the modern reader and the very modern valuation of the creative power of the artist, that "for the Greeks, artistic creativity was as much to be subsumed under the undignified category of work as any banausic handcraft." (KSA 1, 766)

The focus is not on the artist. Given our own celebration of the culture of the genius, the artist, the playwright, the director, the composer, etc., Nietzsche's own point is anything but transparent. For the paramount value was to *become* in oneself a work of art, to form oneself as a "higher clay," to work on, to perfect oneself, so that, for the Greek, one could thereby deserve, as Plato speaks of it and as Pliny speaks of it, to have commemorative or portrait statues made of *the statue one had already consummated in and of oneself*.

In other words and rather than aspiring to be an artist on the model of a creator-god, artfully creating oneself in the image of a higher power, or becoming this self and now that self (Nietzsche in his first book and elsewhere talks about trying on such masks, and the image is one with the sculptural or masked dimension of ancient Greek tragedy), we are enjoined to become ourselves a work of art, to craft ourselves and that is to say: to craft our lives as art. As Nietzsche says, "we however want to become the poets of our lives" (GS §299).

How can we come to be part of this we? Is Nietzsche speaking for us or for some ideal reader of an as yet unattained future possibility? The question is intensified as Nietzsche, the physician of culture and not merely of the cultic ideal of self-invention or self-creation goes further and in the suggestive aphorism in *Human, All too Human* entitled: "The Statue of Humanity," remarks upon the transformative alchemy of the creative artist in the forge of culture.

— The genius of culture does as Cellini did when he cast his statue of Perseus: the liquified mass seemed insufficient, yet he was determined to produce enough: so he threw into it keys and plates and whatever else came to hand. And just so does that

genius throw in errors, vices, hopes, delusions and other things of baser as well as nobler metal, for the statue of humanity must emerge and be completed; what does it matter if here and there inferior material is employed. (HH I §258)



Fig 13. Benvenuto Cellini, *Perseus with Medusa's head*. Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence. Bronze. 18 ft high. 1545-1554.

We cannot, as isolated individuals become “what we are” unless on the basis of the whole of the cultural world of which we are a part. We have not only to craft our own lives, to invent our own second nature, but also our culture, our civilization as art.

Thus Nietzsche takes care to emphasize, in part contra Hegel, in part against a then and today still widespread ahistorical presentism, that the cultic relation of the Greek to the statue is otherwise than we assume, speaking as we do from an in-eliminably Judeo-Christian point of view. At the same time, Nietzsche also emphasizes the depiction of historically specific contingencies, reflecting the values and exigencies of ancient conflict in the sculptural expressions of antiquity: “The magnificent bodies of ancient statues look beautiful because fitting, because useful (ever the thought of war).” (KSA 7 [41], 9, 326)⁵⁹ Nietzsche later repeats this point from his earlier notebooks when he writes: “The magnificent physical suppleness, the

audacious realism and immoralism, which characterizes the Hellene, corresponds to *need* not nature.” (TI, *What I owe the Ancients*, §3)

Contra Hegel, specifically so with reference to philosophical aesthetics but not less with regard to the study of history and religion, Nietzsche takes this notion of needfulness, suitability, or necessity to counter the prevailing idea of progressive evolution in conceptions of divinity *from antiquity to the present day*.⁶⁰ The reference to Hegel (as to Wagner) is patent where Nietzsche writes against the error of taking “the simple” as first (or indeed as the last) in the order of time or in cultural development: “One still believes, for example, in a gradual evolution of *representations of gods* from clumsy stones and blocks of wood up to complete humanization: and yet the fact of the matter is that, *so long as* the divinity was introduced into trees, pieces of wood, stones, animals, and felt to reside there, one shrank from a humanization of their form as from an act of godlessness.” (HH II §222) Thus Nietzsche opposes the conventionality that projects our own modern conception of idolatry onto the ancients as opposed to raising the question of a relationship to images and representations that, so he argues, cannot but be alien to our specular instincts: “The religious imagination for a long time *refuses* absolutely to believe in the identity of the god and an image: the image is supposed to be the visible evidence that the numen of the divinity is, in some mysterious, not fully comprehensible way, active in this place and bound to it. The oldest image of the god is supposed to *harbour and at the same time conceal* the god — to intimate his presence but not expose it to view. No Greek ever truly beheld his Apollo as a wooden obelisk, his Eros as a lump of stone; they were symbols whose purpose was precisely to excite fear *of beholding*...” (HH II, §222).⁶¹ For Nietzsche, at issue was a very different relation to contemplation, to the regard, the gaze. He drew this phenomenological and hermeneutic conclusion with reference to the sculptures themselves: “The same applies to those wooden idols furnished with paltry carvings of individual limbs, sometimes an excess of them: such as a Spartan Apollo with four hands and four ears. In the incompleteness, in the allusiveness or overladdenness of these figures there lies a dreadful holiness which is supposed to *defend against* any association of them with anything human or humanlike.” (Ibid.)⁶²

We can think of the images of Shiva as cognate to the Spartan god, but the figures Nietzsche had in mind were not merely to be non-anthropocentric but explicitly apotropaic, like the Greek images of eyes in bowls and on the prows of ships and in many cases like the ithyphallic herms

we have mentioned above, which is part of the reason they would sometimes be covered, sometimes festively, sometimes protectively.⁶³ In place of primitive skill or a lack of competence developed from a quasi-embryonic potential, as he speaks of it against traditional conceptions of art-history, Nietzsche suggests that another and different relationship with the divine is at work in antiquity.



Fig. 14. Dancing Shiva, near CERN, Geneva.
Gift of the Department of Nuclear Energy, India, 18 June 2004. Photo: Arpad Horvath.

Thus Nietzsche's approach to the plastic art of sculpture in this respect is of a piece with his understanding of ancient Greek architecture which he saw as the essentially integral architectonic design of temple and cult-statue. Thus the Greek relates to the numinous with a certain religious distance and that is also to say, with an unstable tension bound together with what is for us an extraordinary coordination between the human and the god, which only gradually advanced to a parallel with the divine. Almost on the example of the Medusa's head, as he invokes this very apotropaic image in his first book, Nietzsche explains that "one thing was specifically avoided," at least at the start, namely any "direct statement." (HH II, §222) And, in the same locus, he argues that the design of the temple was directed to the same indirection and reticence: "As the cella contains the holy of holies, the actual numen of the divinity, and conceals it in mysterious semi-darkness, *but does not wholly conceal it*; as the peripteral temple in turn contains the cella and as though with a canopy and a veil shelters it from prying eyes, *but does not wholly shelter it*: thus the image is the divinity and at the same time it is also the divinity's place of concealment." (Ibid.)

What we have lost in our day is not only the depth of religiosity but also the tension that brought this ancient sensibility into being. As a consequence, Nietzsche argues that the meaning or significant form of these ancient statues as well as the very structure of the temples themselves is lost to us. One might argue that nothing of what is left speaks to us, and not indeed because the these gods have abandoned us. Rather and more prosaically and on the terms of art history, the cultural language of such temples has become alien to us, as the philosopher and art-historian Dieter Jähnig writes of the temple of Apollo at Bassae, which he describes as “the most ‘lonely of all Greek temples.’”⁶⁴ Here Jähnig echoes Nietzsche’s own emphasis in *Human, All too Human*, writing that the temple “is neither a protective nor indeed a gathering space. It is no more than ‘the house of the godhead’.”⁶⁵ But as viewers, specifically as viewers, we are so very distant from this architectural “play of built-work with image-work”⁶⁶ that we do not notice our alienation. This conception of intellectual or theoretical oblivion and perceptual insensibility echoes Nietzsche’s recollection of an artistic language that can no longer be heard. For Nietzsche as he continues here,

very like the lost music of ancient Greek words, we seem to have outgrown the symbolism of lines and figures, just as we have weaned ourselves from the sound-effects of rhetoric, and no longer imbibe this kind of cultural mother’s milk from the first moment of our lives. Everything in a Greek or Christian building originally signified something and indeed something of a higher order of things: this feeling of inexhaustible significance lay about the building as a magical veil. Beauty entered this system only incidentally, without essentially encroaching upon the fundamental sense of the uncanny-exalted, of consecration by magic and the proximity of the divine; at most beauty softened the dread — but this dread was everywhere the presupposition. (HH 1, §218)

Nietzsche thus seeks to pose the question of sculpture in antiquity *as a question* much in the way he sought to raise the question of “The Divine Service of the Greeks” (in a seminar from 1875/76)⁶⁷ in order to advance the question of Greek religious practice *as a question*.

In his first book, he articulates this same question of religious practice in terms of a poetizing creativity, expressed as a “musical rush of transfiguration” (KSA 1, 553; vgl. KSA 1, 581), and he does not fail to emphasize the cultic function of the tragic music festival as well as its extraordinarily sculptural and almost static structure in space and in time. “Dramatic music is accordingly sculpture in a higher sense: sun-like, the artist’s eye rests upon the whole.” (KSA 7, 5 [69], 109) Hence Nietzsche had earlier explained the “greatness” of the Greek sense of »μουσική«:

“An ancient drama of this kind is a *grand* musical work: yet one enjoyed music never in an absolute sense but always interconnected with cult, architectonic, sculpture, and poetry.” (KSA 7, 3 [1], 57).⁶⁸

Of the Sublime or Zarathustra and The Science of Aesthetics

ich zöge vor, eher noch ein Satyr zu sein als ein Heiliger
— *Ecce Homo*

It is with regard to the scholarly challenge of raising the question of the Greeks themselves on their own terms, that is to say, with and using the greatest philological rigor, that Nietzsche uses the analogy of a toppled statue in ruins as a metaphor for his own discipline of philology (*On the Future of Our Educational Institutions* §3, cf. HH §261), just as, if and to be sure in another scholarly mood, Nietzsche also compares the task of the philologist to that of a restorer of damaged paintings (SE § 6; KSA 1, 395ff). If sculpture is as we have seen one of the first references Nietzsche uses to express the Western tendency to fabricate an image of Greece according to our own cultural tastes and habits, Nietzsche also takes up this illustration in order to counter the tendency towards a certain “overhellenisation” in order to preserve us from “inventing” an ahistorical work of art “that never had a home anywhere in the world” (KSA 1, 518).

Thus Nietzsche uses the sculptural figure as a gleaming icon, paralleling depths replete with “swimming riddles and laughters” (Z II, *Of Those who are Sublime*) emblematic of the questions of aesthetics and taste, in order in his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* to argue for an extraordinary confluence of sublimity *and* beauty, all Alexander but also all the stallion power of Bucephalus: “And only when he turns away from himself, will he jump over his own shadow — and verily into his own sun!” (Ibid.)

The reference to sculpture is even plainer when Nietzsche goes on to say, almost like Lord Byron, “A little more, a little less: precisely this counts for much here, this matters most here” (ibid.) invoking the resting proportions of Greek sculpture, an ekphrasis, as I shall argue that it can be read, of the “Sleeping Satyr” or *Barberini Faun*, as one can still see it in Munich’s Glyptothek, a museum which was constructed in 1830 by Ludwig of Bavaria for the specific purpose of housing this statue.⁶⁹ In the concluding reading to follow, I will suggest that one might think of this patently, overtly erotic statue⁷⁰ in an explicitly provocative mode.⁷¹

In my reading and even more in personal correspondence and conversation,⁷² I have discovered that the great majority of Nietzscheans are vastly more ginger about such things — pointing as they do to the Apollo Lykeios or else to the Apollo Kitharoidos and there are a range of similar statues to choose from.⁷³ In other words, most scholars who discuss this passage seem to imagine Zarathustra’s references to sculpture, when they think of it in a literal fashion, prefer to suppose a perfectly “classical” statue.



Fig. 15. Apollo Lykeios, Roman copy (after Praxiteles). Louvre, Paris.

Note that it is not my purpose to unsettle more staid readers (and in Nietzsche’s case, these are often the best readings, offering an important counterbalance to the prevailing and always growing tendency to read Nietzsche ecstatically, riotously, that is: Nietzsche as and how you like him). Nor, as will become evident, do I disagree with the standard readings as much as I seek to expand them.

The issue for me is a hermeneutic one and the section we have been quoting from the second part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* addressed to “those who are sublime” evokes a certain action, namely the consummate action of life, as here Nietzsche’s Zarathustra is speaking of lust, of love, and we are almost on our way to the aesthetic insight that always moved Nietzsche as David Allison has emphasized the transfiguring alchemy of longing and desire, of disappointment, misappoinment, transcendence.⁷⁴ The same insight, in a different key and with reference to the broader cultural domain of art and museums, illuminated not a little by Arthur

Danto's discussion of the museum as I would speak of the role of the gallery in the context of the contemporary art world, also animates Alexander Nehamas' recent *Only a Promise of Happiness*.⁷⁵

"Of Those Who Are Sublime" follows the extraordinary cadences of Zarathustra's marvelous songs and this makes all the difference. Thus we read "The Night Song," alive to every erotic sensibility:

Night has come: now my craving breaks out of me like a well; to speak I crave.
Night has come; now all fountains speak more loudly. And my soul too is a fountain.
Night has come; now all the songs of lovers awaken. And my soul too is the song of a lover.

Howard Caygill — if Allison and Nehamas, had not already for their own part managed in different ways to get this point to stick — reminds us that this song, in particular, is all about erotic imagery.⁷⁶ The same point echoes, now apart from Zarathustra and more diffusely than either Nehamas or Allison, in Tracy Strong's reflection that what the world needs is love.⁷⁷

And "The Dancing Song" makes this point explicit, just where Zarathustra teases the girls he comes upon as they are dancing in a pasture who — very realistic touch indeed in this case — who *stop* their dancing at at his approach and *just because* they can anticipate what he is thinking:

In truth, I am a forest and a night of dark trees: but the one who is not afraid of my darkness will also find rose slopes under my cypresses. And one will also find the little god whom girls like best: beside the well he lies, still, with his eyes shut. ... Do not be angry with me, you beautiful dancers, if I chastise the little god a bit. He may cry and weep — but he is laughable even when he weeps. And with tears in his eyes he shall ask you for a dance...

Ut pictura poiesis, indeed.

For my part, it seems hardly possible to paint a clearer picture of "the little god" than Nietzsche has done.

And the "Tomb Song" begins with such a recollection of love (Anne Carson reminds us of what it means to speak of apples — on a bough, out of reach, fallen, attained — in an ancient mode in her *Eros, the Bittersweet*):⁷⁸

O you visions and apparitions of my youth! O all you glances of love, you divine moments, how quickly you died. ... For once I possessed you, and you still possess me: say, to who fell, as to me, such rose apples from the bough? I am still the heir of your love and its soil, flowering in remembrance of you with motley wild virtues, O you most loved ones. (*Z, The Tomb Song*)

Writing here on self-overcoming, Nietzsche also writes on the will to power, on the will to command and the will to obey. But he is speaking about self-overcoming and the paradox of the will to life and not “the ‘will to existence’” for “that will does not exist. For what does not exist cannot will; but what is in existence, how could that still want existence? Only where there is life is there also will, not will to life but — thus I teach you — will to power.” (Ibid.) What is the will to life as Nietzsche here contrasts it with the will to power?



Fig 16. Apollo Kitharoidos, Roman copy Pergamon, Berlin. Photo: Magnus Manske

Keeping this question together with this array of songs in mind, we turn to the reflective address “To Those Who Are Sublime,” reading the line with which it begins: “Still is the bottom of my seas: who would ever guess that it harbors sportive monsters.” It is in this context that Nietzsche reminds us of the poised balance of what he calls “one who was sublime ... who was solemn, an ascetic of the spirit; oh how my soul laughed at his ugliness. With a swelled chest and like one who holds in his breath, he stood there, silent.” You can see such solemn ascetics, ascetics who, as Nietzsche says here repel his “taste,” on any beach: “with a swelled chest and like one who holds in his breath.” And those of us who are not muscularly gifted breathe a sigh of relief for our own part. But and as always there is another point to be taken: For these are also the images of the archaic *kouroi*, as we learn indeed, this the conventionality of traditional art history, that such archaic figures are more “primitive” and hence should or ought repel our

collective taste and we can assume that Nietzsche has these in mind as he also in his notes writes of their “frosty” smiles [*archaisches Lächeln*].⁷⁹



Fig 17. Hercules of Lansdowne, after Skopas
J. Paul Getty Museum, Getty Villa Malibu.

More prosaically still, one does not have to be a Nietzsche scholar to assume that the figure Nietzsche describes easily matches a standard or classically classic statue, be it the very 19th century Apollo Lykeios already mentioned, or even, speaking of the “spoil of his hunting,” the Doryphoros or any other classical classic statue: “He still stands there like a tiger who wants to leap...” The problem for Zarathustra is that his taste “does not favor all those who withdraw.”

Nietzsche speaks of the sublime ascetic of the spirit, pointing to the tension between ugliness and beauty, a sublime tension which is indeed a matter of taste, as Nietzsche emphasizes here: “all life is a dispute over taste and tasting.”⁸⁰ I have here been reading Nietzsche’s text as referring to more than one statue and thus to more than one sculptural possibility inasmuch as the particular context is that of life and action, both of which are for Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, so I argue, as coincidentally erotic as he took Greek statues to be. Although beginning by laughing “at his ugliness,” the ugliness of the sublime, we now read that “If he grew weary of his sublimity, this sublime one, only then would his beauty commence; and only then will I taste him

and find him tasteful.” The key again is the sublime tension between ugliness and beauty and to this extent Nietzsche’s Zarathustran reflections on sublimity are also reflections on his own discipline of classical philology and the “science” as he calls it of aesthetics: “you that are sublime” he writes “shall yet become beautiful one day and hold up a mirror to your own beauty.”



Fig. 18. Barberini Faun or Sleeping Satyr, ca. 220 BCE; marble.
Munich, Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, May 2011, Photo: Babette Babich.

If we continue now, with respect to Nietzsche’s resting figure, the outline, I think it may be argued that the figure would seem to be that of the Barberini Faun, a figure Nietzsche would have known: “His face is still dark; the shadow of the hand plays upon him. His sense of sight is still in shadows. His deed itself still lies upon him as a shadow: the hand still darkens the doer. As yet he has not overcome his deed.”

My reading here is attuned to a particular posture and a specific positionality, as this can be seen on site — consider the dome in Figure 19 or as a whole in Figure 21: “The arm placed over the head: thus should the hero overcome even his rest.” (Ibid.) The posture is that of repose. In other words, the figure Nietzsche describes here is drowsy or sleeping (and as David Allison ingeniously, brilliantly, reminds us: sleep is one of the more common modalities in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*).⁸¹ Thus we read: “Though I love the bull’s neck on him, I also want to see the eye of the angel.” For this sleeping satyr, and as yet, “his knowledge has not learned to smile and be without jealousy; as yet his torrential passion has not become still in beauty.”

Overcoming, particularly self-overcoming, will not be about asceticism or Christian or Stoic self-denial:

Verily it is not in satiety that his desire shall grow silent and be submerged but in beauty. Gracefulness is part of the graciousness of the great-souled.

His arm placed over his head: thus should the hero rest; thus should he overcome even his rest. But just for the hero the beautiful is the most difficult thing. No violent will can attain the beautiful by exertion.



Fig. 19. Closer View: Barberini Faun (and dome), Munich, Glyptothek, May 2011, Photo: Babette Babich.

And where Nietzsche's description of the statue changes once again — if I am right in emphasizing this interpretive option and where the classically sensibilized readings can now be seen to be in accord with or at least to be compatible with my own — as the Lycian Apollo, or else the Doryphoros, if one prefers, one now can imagine Zarathustra's next invocation of the difficult balance of grace or stillness: "To stand with relaxed muscles and unharnessed will: that is most difficult for all of you who are sublime!" (Ibid.)

But and like the statue, which is always another world for *Bildsaule*, thus anti-Hegelian, anti-Platonic, Nietzsche's Zarathustra continues his aesthetic discourse:

When power becomes gracious and descends into the visible — such descent I call beauty.

You shall strive after the virtue of the column: it grows more and more beautiful and gentle, but internally harder and more enduring, as it ascends. (Ibid.)



Fig 20. George Röhmer's bronze composite reconstruction of the bronze original, Polycleitos, 440 BC. Munich (destroyed in 1944).

Acknowledgments

This essay develops a longer project that began with a different but related talk given at the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, and I dedicate it to the memory of my friend and colleague there, the late Irish philosopher and classicist, John Cleary. This current essay was given as a lecture for the Nietzsche Circle in New York at the Onassis Cultural Center on Fifth Avenue in NY in February of 2009. I am grateful to Rainer Hanshe for his kind invitation as well for subsequent discussion and to Nicholas Pappas for his valuable engagement with this theme. I thank Yunus Tuncel for including it in the current issue of *The Agonist* and I thank Zvi Lothane who read a version of this text as did my very good friend Holger Schmid. I am also particularly grateful to many of the students there who asked an array of intriguing questions and who sent follow-up email queries. I appreciated the chance to dialogue with the Austrian-Canadian philosopher, Horst Hutter and his wife, the artist Francine Prevost. I note some of the others with whom I have spoken about these themes below (note 65) and I am grateful to them, especially to Tracy Strong, whose writings and comments have been very helpful. I draw upon elements here that appear in German in Babich, „Skulptur/Plastik,“ in: Christian Niemeyer, ed., *Nietzsche-Lexikon* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2009), pp. 325-328 and at greater length in Babich, „Zu Nietzsches Statuen: Skulptur und das Erhabene“ in: Beatrix Vogel and Nikolaus Gerdes, eds., *Grenzen der Rationalität: Teilband_2: Vorträge 2006 – 2009* (München: Allitera Verlag, 2011), pp. 391-421. I also thank as well as the Toronto art historian, Guy Metraux for the inspiration of his own work on medical sculpture in antiquity and for his initial encouragement with this project. I am also grateful to

Herbert Hoffmann and the sculptor David Konstam and as ever to my friends and philosophical and personally very aesthetic and beautiful colleagues, David Allison and Alexander Nehamas.



Fig. 21. Barberini Faun, Munich, Glyptothek, May 2011. Photo: Babette Babich.

¹ See Babich, "[Greek Bronze: Holding a Mirror to Life](#)," *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society*, Volume 7 (2007): 1-30 and further developed in German as "[Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze im Spiegel des Lebens: Betrachtungen über Heideggers ästhetische Phänomenologie und Nietzsches agonale Politik](#)," trans. Harald Seubert (with the author), in: Günter Figal, ed., *Internationales Jahrbuch für Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), pp. 127-189. A related English version, including a supplementary discussion of Heidegger's account of the Sistine Madonna added at the specific request of the journal editors, appears as "[Reflections on Greek Bronze and the Statue of Humanity: Heidegger's Aesthetic Phenomenology, Nietzsche's Agonistic Politics](#)," *Existentialia*, XVII 5/6 (2008): 243-471. On related themes in connection with Jeff Koons, see Babich, „[Die Ästhetik des »Dazwischen«: Raum und Schönheit](#)“ in: Vinzenz Brinkmann, Matthias Ulrich, and Joachim Pissarro, eds., *Jeff Koons. The Sculptor* (Frankfurt: Schirn Kunsthalle Frankfurt, June 2012), pp. 50-69.

² Hans-Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful and other essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986 [1977]), pp. 8ff.

- ³ Here I recommend Gary Shapiro's *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003). Given the surprising absence of a discussion of Nietzsche as such (despite his presence in the title) in the various contributions to Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth, eds., *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"* (Los Angeles: Getty, 1999), one should see on Nietzsche and architecture, Hartmut Böhme, "'Auch die Gottlosen brauchen Räume, in denen sie ihre Gedanken denken können,' Nietzsches Phantasien über Architektur im postreligiösen Zeitalter," *Der Architekt*, 3 (2001): 16-23 as well as Markus Breitschmid, *Der bauende Geist. Friedrich Nietzsche und die Architektur* (Lucerne: Quart Verlag, 2001) and Jörg H. Gleiter, *Der philosophische Flaneur: Nietzsche und die Architektur* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2008).
- ⁴ Rudolf. Arnheim, *Art and Visual Perception: A Psychology of the Creative Eye* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), p. 11.
- ⁵ Nietzsche, KSA 13, 14 [61], 246.
- ⁶ From Nietzsche in Nice to Carl Fuchs in Danzig, ca. mid-April, 1886, *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari with Helga Anania-Heß, Vol. 7 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), p. 177.
- ⁷ The convention of speaking of architecture as frozen music stems from Schopenhauer who invokes in his discussion of musical form in the second volume of his *World as Will and Representation*. He cites Goethe as the original source of the term as *Witzwort*, which had enjoyed as he writes them for some three decades a good deal of play, quoting Goethe's conversations with Eckermann „Ich habe unter meinen Papieren ein Blatt gefunden," sagte Goethe, „wo ich die Baukunst eine erstarrte Musik nenne. Und wirklich, es hat etwas; die Stimmung, die von der Baukunst ausgeht, kommt dem Effekt der Musik nahe." See *Eckermanns Gesprächen*, Bd. II, p. 88, dated 23 March, 1829. Cited, without the date, in Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, Vol II, (Zürich: Haffmans-Ausgabe, 1988), „Zur Metaphysik der Musik," (i.e., Chapter 39), p. 528. The term frozen, "gefrorene Musik," was in the air, including Jacobi and Schlegel, although Goethe himself earlier attributes it to a 'noble philosopher,' See for a brief discussion contextualized in the always musical context of Italian architecture, O. v. Lippmann, "Zu »Baukunst — Erstarrte Musik«," *Goethe-Jahrbuch*, 27, Ludwig Geiger, ed., *Goethe-Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Literarische Anstalt: Rütten und Loehning, 1906), p. 249-250. For a recent review of Nietzsche's observations on this theme, see Tilmann Buddensieg „'Leere Form' und ‚grosser Stil' — Nietzsche und die italiensische Baukunst, *Georges-Bloch-Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Instituts der Universität Zürich*, Vol. 6 (1999): 253-268 as well as his *Nietzsches Italien. Städte, Gärten, Paläste* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2002). In English, see, albeit vastly more useful on Vitruvius than on Nietzsche, Mark Rozahegi, „Vitruvius, Nietzsche, and the Architecture of the Body," in Alberto Pérez-Gómez, ed., *Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, (Montreal: McGill Queens' Press, 1999), pp. 179-200. I myself address the relationship between architecture and music in Nietzsche's style in my footnotes on concinnity. Anyone who wishes can look these up themselves. There are additional studies of Nietzsche's influence on architecture, de Chirico, van de Velde and so on.
- ⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, edited by Hans Joachim Mette (Munich: Beck, 1994), Vol. 2, p. 398. April May 1864. Cf. Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, ed., Sir Richard Jebb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1887) line 185 to line 187. [*paian de lampei stonoessa te gêrus homaulos hôn huper, ô chrusea thugater Dios, euôpa pempson alkan.*] See further as well Babich, "Nietzsche's Imperative as a Friend's Encomium: On Becoming the One You Are, Ethics, and Blessing," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 33 (2003): 29-58 and Babich, "Hören und Lesen, Musik und Wissenschaft. Nietzsches »gaya scienza«," trans. Harald Seubert and Heidi Byrnes (with the author), in Beatrix Vogel, ed., *Der Mensch Sein Eigenes Experiment* (München: Allitera, 2008), pp. 487-526.
- ⁹ See for my discussion of Nietzsche's use of synaesthetic metaphor, Babich, "Between Hölderlin and Heidegger: Nietzsche's Transfiguration of Philosophy," *Nietzsche-Studien*, 29 (2000): 267-301. "[Nietzsche's Synaesthetic Epistemology: The Restitution of the Holistic Human](#)" and Martin Seel takes this up in the context of aesthetics in his book *The Aesthetics of Appearing*, John Farrell, trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), pp. 29ff.

- ¹⁰ From David Robert's *Egypt & Nubia* in Roberts's *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, with drawings made on the spot. With historical descriptions by William Brockedon*. (London: London: F.G. Moon, 1842-1843-1842; 1846-1849-1849). In six volumes.
- ¹¹ One of these statues was said to have given out a low sound at sunrise after being shattered in an earthquake. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche writes, "The lance of knowledge turns itself against the wise man. Wisdom is a crime against nature." Myth calls out such frightening statements to us: but the Greek poet, like a ray of sunlight, touches the sublime and fearful Memnon's mythic columns, so that they suddenly begin to resound — in Sophoclean melodies. (BT §9) In his earlier unpublished "*Nachtrag an der Stelle 'παῖν δὲ λάμπει'*," the reference to these statues also appears "Auch die Sage von dem Tönen der Memnonssäule mag wohl im Grunde nichts anders bedeuten. Das Umgekehrte, daß die Wirkung des Tones durch eine Lichtwirkung bezeichnet wird, ist vollständig durchgeführt in unsrer jetzigen musikalischen Terminologie. Sei es daß unsre Sprache <zu> arm ist, um Schattirungen der Toneffekte auszudrücken, sei es überhaupt, daß wir, um die Wirkung von Schällen auf uns einem anderen vor die Seele zu führen, die faßlicheren und beschreibbareren Wirkungen des Lichtes als Medium gebrauchen müssen wir reden von glänzenden, düstern, verschwommenen Harmonien, während wir in der Malerei von dem Tone des Gemäldes, von seiner Harmonie sprechen." Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften*, Vol. 2, p. 398. Here, Nietzsche echoes his earlier philological studies of the intermingling of the metaphors for light and sound, an intermingling of metaphor and metonymy — a dynamic play which also works physiologically. I discuss the dynamics of this metaphorical/metonymical conjunction together with some contemporary reflections on synesthesia elsewhere. See for example and for further references, Babich, »*Eines Gottes Glück, voller Macht und Liebe*« (Weimar: Bauhaus Universitätsverlag, 2009), especially chapter five.
- ¹² Babich, "Greek Bronze" and Babich, "Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze im Spiegel des Lebens."
- ¹³ For a comprehensive art-historical discussion of Daedalus, see Sarah P. Morris, *Daedalus and the Origins of Greek Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).
- ¹⁴ See, again, for discussion of the concept of ancient demythologizing, the opening pages of Babich, "Greek Bronze" and, with additional detail, Babich, "Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze im Spiegel des Lebens."
- ¹⁵ Once again, in Babich "Greek Bronze" and "Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze im Spiegel des Lebens."
- ¹⁶ See for a discussion of Nietzsche and Plotinus in this context, Peter Groff, "Al-Kindī and Nietzsche on the Stoic Art of Banishing Sorrow," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, Issue 28 (Autumn 2004): 139-173.
- ¹⁷ In addition to the author's "Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze und die ästhetische Phänomenologie," see too the conclusion of Babich, "Nietzsches Ursprung der Tragödie als Musik: Lyrik — Rhetorik — Skulptur." Trans. Harald Seubert with the author in: Volker Gerhardt and Renate Reschke, eds., *Friedrich Nietzsche — Zwischen Musik, Philosophie und Ressentiment* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2006), pp. 221-238.
- ¹⁸ To emphasize bronze for my own part is *not* to say that Nietzsche knew nothing of bronze statues much less gold statues in addition to those of stone: as we have already noted such statues are commonly invoked in Plato (and of course, in Homer). See Babich, "Reflections on Greek Bronze and the Statue of Humanity."
- ¹⁹ The chromatic key to sculpture for Nietzsche was color — and if this were a lecture on music, we could insist on the same polychromatic metaphoricity.
- ²⁰ See reference in notes 22 and 23 below.
- ²¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, „Das griechische Musikdrama“, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, Vol. 1 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), p. 518.
- ²² See the exhibition catalog edited by Vinzenz Brinkman and Raimund Wünsche, eds., *Bunte Götterdie Farbigkeit antiker Skulptur; eine Ausstellung der Staatlichen Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek München in Zusammenarbeit mit der Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek Kopenhagen und den Vatikanischen Museen, Rom; Glyptothek München, Königsplatz, 16. Dezember 2003 bis 29. Februar 2004* (Munich: Staatliche Antikensammlungen und Glyptothek, 2004).
- ²³ See for a discussion of just this persistent tendency, [Brunilde Ridgway's review of Brinkman and Wünsche, eds., Bunte Götter in the Bryn Mawr Classical Review, 2004.08.07.](#)

- ²⁴ See Nietzsche, “Das griechische Musikdrama” as well as KSA 7 1 [17], 15.
- ²⁵ For this reason although the great majority of scholars persist in assuming that Jahn had no influence on Nietzsche’s scholarly formation, I emphasize the importance of Otto Jahn emphases on archeology and the monumental for Nietzsche as a classical scholar, see Babich, “[Nietzsche’s Philology and Nietzsche’s Science: On The ‘Problem of Science’ and ‘fröhliche Wissenschaft.’](#)” In: Pascale Hummel, ed., *Metaphilology: Histories and Languages of Philology* (Philologicum: Paris, 2009), pp. 155-201 and Babich, “Nietzsche’s Judgment of Style and Hume’s Quixotic Taste: On the Joyful Science of Aesthetics — or Playing the Satyr,” in *The Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, 43.2 (2012): 240-259.
- ²⁶ See Paul Valadier, “Dionysus versus the Crucified” in David Allison, ed., *The New Nietzsche* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 247-261.
- ²⁷ See the array of engravings in Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard, 2006), pp. 201ff, particularly the statue of Artemis at Ephesus, p. 202.
- ²⁸ See Walter Burkert, “Herms, Libations, and Branches” in his *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982) p. 39ff. and see too Karl Kerényi, *Dionysos: Archetypal Image of Indestructible Life*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
- ²⁹ See Babich, “Becoming and Purification: Empedocles, Zarathustra’s *Übermensch*, and Lucian’s Tyrant” In: Vanessa Lemm, ed., *Nietzsche and the Becoming of Life* (New York: Fordham University Press, forthcoming: 2013).
- ³⁰ „»Was ist’s, Das hinter diesem Schleier sich verbirgt?« / — »Die Wahrheit,« ist die Antwort —»Wie?« ruft Jener, / »Nach Wahrheit streb’ ich ja allein, und diese / Gerade ist es, die man mir verhüllt?« // »Das mache mit der Gottheit aus,« versetzt / Der Hierophant. »Kein Sterblicher, sagt sie, / Rückt diesen Schleier, bis ich selbst ihn hebe.“ Schiller, *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais*, 1795 See further, Plutarch, “Isis and Osiris,” Frank Cole Babbitt, trans. (Cambridge, Loeb Classical Library, 1936), Vol. 5. For discussion, in addition to Hadot, see Jan Assmann, *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais. Schillers Ballade und ihre griechischen und ägyptischen Hintergründe* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1999).
- ³¹ Schiller himself, following Plutarch, attributed the lines to the legend found on an „old statue of Isis, “Ich bin, was da ist” [*I am, what there is*] and inscribed on a pyramid at Sais the uncanny inscription, “Ich bin alles, was ist, was gewesen ist und was sein wird. Kein sterblicher Mensch hat meinen Schleier aufgehoben.” [*I am everything that is, that was, and will be. No mortal human has ever raised my veil*]. Schiller, *Dem Erhabene*, 1793. See further, Plutarch, “Isis and Osiris,” Frank Cole Babbitt, trans. (Cambridge, Loeb Classical Library, 1936), Vol. 5. For discussion, in addition to Hadot, see Jan Assmann, *Das verschleierte Bild zu Sais. Schillers Ballade und ihre griechischen und ägyptischen Hintergründe* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1999).
- ³² Hermes is also psychopompus as Nietzsche invokes this term in his *Philologica*. Hermes also figures importantly in Lucian’s tales of the dead, including the dialogue, *Kataplous*, known as the source of Nietzsche’s term for the over-human, the human as he appears on the earth, before his downgoing, before his transition to the underworld, or to death. See Babich, « [Le Zarathoustra de Nietzsche et le style parodique. A propos de l’hyperanthropos de Lucien et du surhomme de Nietzsche.](#) » *Diogène. Revue internationale des sciences humaines*, 232 (October 2010 [2011]): 70-93 and, as noted above, in English as “Becoming and Purification.”
- ³³ Alluding to Hermes, god of deception and trickery, Nietzsche also invokes Apollo in *Die dionysische Weltanschauung* asking “in what sense could Apollo be made into a god of art” and answering his own question: “to the extent that he is the god of dream-representations” (DW §1, KSA 1, 554) The dream, Nietzsche tells us in *The Birth of Tragedy*, is a double to the waking world (BT §4) and in *The Dionysian World View*, he tells us that “the image of Apollo must also include that delicate line which the dream image must not overstep if its effect is not to become pathological, in which case the semblance does not simply deceive but also cheats...” (DW §1, KSA 1, 554).
- ³⁴ See for a further discussion of this reconciling harmony, the concluding pages to the preface to Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, pp. x-xii.

- ³⁵ This is a cult name for Dionysos, recalling the association with Eros, limb-loosener, as the god who gives release.
- ³⁶ See again for a discussion, Hadot, *The Veil of Isis*.
- ³⁷ The question of balance here is an eternal problem (and Nietzsche reflects that one often does not have the energy for a Beethoven, say, and thus requires therapeutical the southern tones of a Mozart or indeed, as is more well known, Bizet or Rossini).
- ³⁸ See Nietzsche, KSA 7, 493, 19 [234].
- ³⁹ See for a discussion of ancient literature on *agalmatophilia* (the consummation of erotic love with statues), Ján Elsner, *Roman Eyes* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 2007), Karin Moser von Filseck: *Kairos und Eros. Zwei Wege zu einem Neuerständnis griechischer Bildwerke* (Bonn: Habelt, 1990) in addition to Eva C. Keuls' pathbreaking study, *The Reign of the Phallus: Sexual Politics in Ancient Athens* (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).
- ⁴⁰ Monique Dixaut, "Platon, Nietzsche et les images" in: Jean-Claude Gens and Pierre Rodrigo, eds., *Puissances de l'image* (Dijon: Editions Universitaires de Dijon, 2007), pp. 11-24.
- ⁴¹ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* trans. Ralph Manheim (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 206.
- ⁴² See, again, Hadot, *The Veil of Isis*. In addition to Schiller, this was also a concern for Hölderlin. See Babich, "The Ethos of Nature and Art: Hölderlin's Ecological Politics" in *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, pp. 185ff.
- ⁴³ But what does this mean? There is no theoretical basis for the supposition that the Greeks regarded sculpture or art in general as we do and Nietzsche always sought to underscore this very alien quality separating us from antiquity.
- ⁴⁴ See for references to this ancient tradition, the references included in the opening footnotes in Babich, "Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze und die ästhetische Phänomenologie," pp. 127-128.
- ⁴⁵ There are many discussions of this term but for a recent, and superlative analysis, see Jonathan Unglaub, *Poussin and the Poetics of Painting: Pictorial Narrative and the Legacy of Tasso* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- ⁴⁶ Alcibiades claims that Socrates "is very like the busts of Silenus, which are set up in the statuaries' shops, holding pipes and flutes in their mouths; and they are made to open in the middle, and have images of gods inside them.." *Sym.* 215a-b. And Alcibiades repeats, like these marvelous trick figures "his outer mask" represents "the sculpted head of Silenus" but, like such ingenious figures, when Alcibiades "opened him up," he saw in Socrates "divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded." (Ibid.) Cf. Hans Jörg Bloesch, *Agalma. Kleinod, Weihgeschenk, Götterbild. Ein Beitrag zur frühgriechischen Kultur- und Religionsgeschichte* (Bern: Bentelli, 1963).
- ⁴⁷ I take this up in the concluding chapters (on Nietzsche and music) in Babich, *The Hallelujah Effect: Philosophical Reflections on Music, Performance Practice and Technology*. (Surrey: Ashgate, January 2013). An early version is available on line, see the conclusion of Babich, "[The Birth of kd lang's Hallelujah out of the 'Spirit of Music': Performing Desire and 'Recording Consciousness' on Facebook and YouTube.](#)" Perfect Sound Forever. online music magazine—Oct/Nov 2011.
- ⁴⁸ See here Babich, "Nietzsche's Judgment of Style and Hume's Quixotic Taste."
- ⁴⁹ It is worth noting that the paintings by Dodwell functioned as folio catalogues for the works he acquired during his travels in Greece and Italy to sell to collectors, including the Glyptothek and other museums.
- ⁵⁰ Here Nietzsche turns upon his fellow philologists to challenge them with his own variation upon Aristotle's riddle: "Have you heard that it is an untragic death according to Aristotle to be killed by a statue? And precisely this death threatens you." (Ibid.) We recall that Aristotle invokes "the statue of Mityas at Argos, which fell upon his murderer while he was a spectator at a festival, and killed him." (*Poetics*, 6.1) Nietzsche refers to this example as non-tragic, intimating as Aristotle does that more is at work in such events, but also and exactly for Nietzsche as a paradox and hence as contrary to the "truly historical *connexus* of cause and

effect” (UM II) as well as to illustrate the paradigmatic value of glamorized historicizing in his “On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.”

- ⁵¹ Note Heidegger’s debated discussion of the phrase that appears in Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*: „Dem Werden den Charakter des Seins aufzuprägen — das ist der höchste Wille zur Macht“. In: Heidegger, *Nietzsche I*, p. 466.
- ⁵² Nietzsche, Letter to Rohde 3 November 1867. See further Babich, *Words in Blood, Like Flowers*, pp. 81-82.
- ⁵³ Note again Heidegger’s discussion, cited above, of this disputed sentence from Nietzsche’s *Wille zur Macht*.
- ⁵⁴ *Golden Sayings of Epictetus*, Vol 2, No. 2 (Cambridge: Harvard Loeb Classics, 1910-1914), p. LXI.
- ⁵⁵ Plotinus, “On Beauty,” *The Enneads*, Stephen Mackenna, trans. (Hassocks: Penguin, 1991), 1. 6 [1], p. 54.
- ⁵⁶ In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche suggests that at least one function of prayer, in addition to its rhythmic and so magical efficacy, was also to occupy the mind and the body for the great majority of people: “what are they to do at sacred sites and in all significant situations of life, where calm and some sort of dignity are called for”, prayer composes one, making one more like a statue, which Nietzsche argues also makes one more humane: “What religion wants from the masses is no more than that they should keep still with their eyes, hands, legs, and other organs; that way they become more beautiful for a while and — look more like human beings.” (GS §128)
- ⁵⁷ Panofsky, *Grabplastik. Vier Vorlesungen über ihren Bedeutungswandel von Alt-Ägypten bis Bernini* (Köln: Dumont Schauberg, 1964), p. 106.
- ⁵⁸ Gadamer foregrounds this same poem in his discussion of exemplarity of the work of center as the very that that such a thing stood among human beings like ourselves. Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful*, Nicholas Walker trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 34.
- ⁵⁹ The same goes for our own conception of superheroes today, from the Terminator to the Batman, even if we achieve the look by mechanical means. And if we mix in fantasy, like that of Superman, the DC comic figure, it is not enough that he has his strength from the yellow sun, he needs to “look” the part aesthetically speaking (although and given the theoretical conceit of Superman’s superpowers, a scrawny physique would have worked just as well). The evolution of the graphic character in the Superman comics from a roughly drawn figure to a heavily muscled and small-waisted exemplar of physical culture or development, makes Nietzsche’s *aesthetic* point. I discuss this further in Babich, “Politics and Heidegger: Aristotle, Superman, and Žižek.” *Telos*, Vol. 161 (Fall 2012):
- ⁶⁰ See A. A. Donohue, *Xoana and the Origins of Greek Sculpture* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). The assumptions that are built into the conventionality of “stylistic progress” are addressed in her more recent book, *Greek Sculpture and the Problem of Description* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See too Nietzsche’s inaugural lecture at Basel which concerns, indeed, the same themes.
- ⁶¹ See further Nietzsche’s *Zwei öffentliche Vorträge über die griechische Tragödie; Die Dionysische Weltanschauung* 1 and also 2.
- ⁶² Cf. Joachimo de Sandrart, *Iconologia Deorum Oder Abbildung der Götter*, see especially the chapter: „Von dem Apollo, der auch Phoebus oder Sol oder Sonne genennet wird,“ p. 25.
- ⁶³ See for further references Guy Hedreen, “Involved Spectatorship in Archaic Greek Art,” *Art History* 30 / 2 (2007): 217–246 and Rainer Mack, “Facing Down Medusa (An Aetiology of the Gaze),” *Art History*, 25 / 5 (2002): 570-604. Cf. Jean-Paul Vernant, “Death in the Eyes: Gorgo, Figure of the Other,” in: Froma Zeitlin, ed., *Mortals and Immortals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), pp. 111-138, etc
- ⁶⁴ Dieter Jähnig, „‘Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes’ und die moderne Kunst“, in: Walter Biemel and Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, eds., *Kunst und Technik . Gedächtnisschrift zum 100. Geburtstag von Martin Heidegger*, (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1989), pp. 219-254, here p. 231. See further, Jähnig, *Kunstgeschichte, Weltgeschichte* (Cologne: Dumont-Schauberg).
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.

- 66 Ibid.
- 67 Nietzsche, „Der Gottesdienst der Griechen. Alterthümer des religiösen Cultus der Griechen, dreistündig Winter 1975-1976“ in *Nietzsches Werke* Bd. IXX 3/3, Otto Crusius & Wilhelm Nestle, eds. (Leipzig: Kröner, 1913). 1-124. See further, Andrea Orsucci, *Orient-Okzident. Nietzsches Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996).
- 68 See on this and including a range of further references, Babich, “Nietzsches Ursprung der Tragödie als Musik: Lyrik — Rhetorik — Skulptur.”
- 69 The Glyptothek was designed by the architect Leo von Klenze. See Frances Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture 1500-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), pp. 202-205. Vaihingers *Nietzsche als Philosoph* (Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1902), mentions the Glyptothek on p. 58.
- 70 It is not for nothing that this the figure is featured, wearing J. Crew style boxer shorts, on an variant of the historical novel, *Gods Behaving Badly*, derivatively titled and authored by a sensibility reared on *World of Warcraft* and presumably a lack of either historical material or a certain (any) sense of history.
- 71 Note that I do not pretend to be the first to note the erotic dimensionality of Nietzsche’s *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Hardly.
- 72 I am grateful to Holger Schmid for discussing the character of the statue in question with me, as I am also grateful to Gary Shapiro and I am also grateful for correspondence with other scholars, especially Richard Perkins.
- 73 The Apollo Kitharoidos was reassembled (and “completed” or finished) for 19th century sensibilities or tastes by Emil Wolff. The original sculptor was Praxiteles, ca 330 BC.
- 74 David B. Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001). See for a discussion, Babich, “Reading David Allison,” *New Nietzsche Studies*. Vol. 6 3/4 & 7 1/2 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006): 241-254.
- 75 See Arthur Danto’s *After the End of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press) as well as Alexander Nehamas, *Only a Promise of Happiness: The Place of Beauty in a World of Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007). I speak of the gallery, among other things elsewhere but specifically in Babich, “On Malls, Museums, and the Art World: Postmodernism and the Vicissitudes of Consumer Culture,” *Art Criticism*, IX/1 (Fall 1993): 1-16.
- 76 See for these and other references, Babich, “[Nietzsche and Eros Between the Devil and God’s Deep Blue Sea: The Erotic Valence of Art and the Artist as Actor — Jew — Woman.](#)” *Continental Philosophy Review*. 33 (2000): 159-188. Also here: http://www.nietzschecircle.com/Nietzsche_and_Eros.pdf.
- 77 See above reference for citation and discussion.
- 78 Anne Carson, *Eros, the Bittersweet* (Urbana: Dalkey Archive, 1998).
- 79 See again Donohue, *Xoana*, for a discussion. Donohue does not indeed refer to Nietzsche herself but I discuss the connection with her work in Babich, „Die Naturkunde der Griechischen Bronze und die ästhetische Phänomenologie.“ Discussions of the so-called ‘archaic smile’ are well-represented in the literature.
- 80 Note again, Nietzsche’s inaugural lecture at Basel on the Homeric question as the question of scholarly taste, here for Nietzsche to be articulated as a question, is central to the notion of style. See further Babich, “Nietzsche’s Philology and Nietzsche’s Science.”
- 81 See David Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche*.