

6-2013

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Seeing Flight: Ancient Greek Theories of Vision
and Their Application to Winged Sculptures

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
Honors in the Department of Classics

UNION COLLEGE

June, 2013

ABSTRACT

JOHN, JESSICA Seeing Flight: Ancient Greek Theories of Vision and Their Application to Winged Sculptures. Department of Classics, June 2013.

ADVISOR: Stacie Raucci

Ancient Greek philosophers attempted to understand and describe the way by which humans see. Each of the greatest philosophers of the time, including Plato, Leucippus, and Aristotle, had an innovative theory of vision. The number of theories demonstrates the importance the Greeks placed on comprehending how the image of the world was imprinted on the mind. With an understanding of how the body physically sees, the theories can be expanded to determine how the Greeks interpreted their surroundings, specifically sculptures. This thesis will examine the leading theories of the visual process and subsequently apply them to how the Greeks saw various pieces of art including the Nike of Paionios, the Gorgon on the temple of Apollo at Didyma, and the Naxian sphinx at Delphi. The theories of vision will provide insight into how the depiction of winged creatures affected the Greeks' visual experience

Introduction

Sight can be considered the most fundamental sense. Information we gather through vision helps us understand the environment in such a way that is unparalleled by any other sensation. We determine time by the light we see. Vision is important for the study of other sciences (Lindberg 1). Correcting vision that is failing is incredibly important in medicine. How we perceive other people dictates how we behave. Vision allows us to interact appropriately with the people around us since we communicate through body language just as much as with words. Not only is vision the primarily used sense when interpreting one's relationship with other people, but it also guides our interactions with the inanimate, such as art or the natural world. The eyes are constantly providing information to the brain in order to interpret the outside world and this continuous stream of input allows us to know who we are in the context of our environment. Moreover, we learn through written word and the majority of the human race requires their eyes in order to do so. The eyes may be the window to the soul but more importantly, they are the window through which we see and understand.

The way humans perceive the world through their eyes often carries the most weight. We rely on the sense of sight far more than on our ability to hear or smell. Vision is the most trusted sense. Something may be heard, but it is not until we visualize the source of the sound that we accept and believe what it is. Vision is so important that we find it difficult to function without our sight. When we are denied our sight, the world becomes an entirely different, frightening place that is difficult to process, such as when the electricity goes out at night. The first inclination is to find flashlights and candles, so that our ability to see is restored. We value vision so highly that we take every

opportunity to document what we see, through photographs, rather than recordings of what we hear. Information is disseminated to the masses via television and we are entertained chiefly through visual media as opposed to auditory. The ancient Greeks are credited with the idea of ocularcentrism, or privileging visual information above all else and this sentiment continues today (Stewart 13). Sight dominates because it is more than a sensation; it is a means of knowing.

Chapter 1: Ancient Theories of Vision

The desire to explain what we do not understand is a fundamental aspect of human nature. The pursuit of knowledge has always been the ultimate aim. We cannot simply accept the world we live in. We must try and learn the answers to how and why. The growth of the mind provides a satisfaction that cannot be matched by anything else. The journey towards understanding is often difficult and seemingly futile, particularly when the apparent answers come up short. However, when we finally know something, truly understand it, we have reached a goal and can speak with certainty. The first step towards acquiring knowledge involves discovering something unknown. Typically, what we see causes us to wonder and attempt to learn more. Everything we observe has a potential explanation and the inherent craving of man is to uncover the answer.

As a result of the importance humans place on sight, our understanding of vision itself and exactly how we perceive has been the topic of scholarly debate since ancient times. The Greeks are credited with initiating the Western optical tradition and there is mention of vision and light in some of the oldest writings of ancient philosophers. Vision is difficult to explain since there can be a vast amount of input at any one time, but there have been numerous theories explaining vision that developed over the years and culminated only recently with the scientific explanation of sight. Lacking the technology of today, ancient philosophers attempted to explain vision in unique and varied ways, through visual fire, the Platonic theory, and the Atomist theory. There were theories that focused on both intromission and emission of visual streams that allowed one to see. These theories are examples of the physical nature of Greek optics, however there are also the medical and mathematical approaches to vision (Lindberg 1). We will focus on

the physical and philosophical tradition of vision as it most directly relates to an individual's understanding of vision. Moreover, when an individual understands how he sees, there is a definite transformation in what that person sees and more importantly, how the object in view affects him. While we register an incredible amount of visual stimuli each day, it is those objects that have the explicit intent to influence the viewer, such as art, that obtain the greatest power through an understanding of the visual process. With an understanding of how we see, what we perceive can be altered.

The first well-documented description of visual perception was that of the Atomists. This theory is credited to a few Greek philosophers including Epicurus, Democritus, and Leucippus. (Lindberg 2). While there was not a single wholly accepted theory, the basis of the Atomist idea was that sensations were caused by actual contact with the sensory organ (Darrigol 3). More specifically, a physical entity was conveyed from the object to the eye (Lindberg 2). The entity is described as a film, streaming particles, or *eidola*, meaning a phantom image or apparition. Epicurus detailed the physical nature of the stream in his *Letter to Herodotus* such that:

particles are continually streaming off from the surface of bodies, though no diminution of the bodies is observed, because other particles take their place. And those given off for a long time retain the position and arrangement which their atoms had when they formed part of the solid bodies, although occasionally they are thrown into confusion... We must also consider that it is by the entrance of something coming from external objects that we see their shapes and think of them. For external things would not stamp on us their own nature of colour and form through the medium of the air which is between them and us, or by means of rays of light or currents of any sort going from us to them, so well as by the entrance into our eyes or minds, to whichever their size is suitable, of films coming from the things themselves (14).

The exact nature of the body was a topic of dispute in ancient times, however it was agreed that the eye was the recipient of the traveling body. These particles enter the eye

and make an impression on the psyche (Darrigol 4). According to Aetius "...perception and thought arise when images enter from outside" (Lindberg 2). Films from objects hit the eye and sight was the result. The eye itself was a passive participant in the visual process, simply receiving the particles. This theory is one of the simplest explanations of vision since it relies on only two players: the eye which acted as the mediator between the object being viewed and the mind, which processed the sensation the particles caused on the eye and formed an image.

There were some qualms voiced by other philosophers about the Atomist theory. Namely, if there was in fact a film or stream of particles emitted by the object, how can the eye process something massive like a mountain? The film was described as being an outline of the same shape and color as the object being viewed (Darrigol 4). Therefore the fact that things far larger than the eye are perceived just as easily as a small stone should debunk the Atomist theory. However, these philosophers explained that only a small portion of the film, from even an enormous object, was needed for the mind to figure out what exactly was being viewed (Darrigol 4). The sensation of the unique particles from any sized object on the eye is sufficient for visualization. Furthermore, there were some criticisms of the theory as it did not explicitly demonstrate the necessity of light for vision. Later in history, Lucretius illustrated in his writings that it was atoms from the sun or another source of light that opened up the spaces between air molecules so that particles could travel from object to eye (Darrigol 4). Without a space in which to move, the film cannot reach the eye and that is why man can only see in the light. The Atomists were able to provide an explanation for every aspect of vision through the use of particles.

The Atomists' theory simplified vision in such a way that it could be described by what was already understood. The Atomists equated the sense of sight, and all other modes of perception, to that of touch (Darrigol 4). When the body comes into contact with anything, the person feels the object and understands the touch. However the person can usually also see what the body feels and the tactile sensation is explained. On the other hand, vision seems to simply occur. Nothing appears to be physically occurring; however the mind is able to process such an immense amount of information through the eyes. Therefore, the most logical explanation of vision at the time was that some "thing" must be in contact with the eye. Breaking down vision to be an extension of touch was the widely accepted theory because physical contact made sense. The eyes acted like skin. Based on what the Atomists already knew of the natural world and the body, they extrapolated the understanding of one sense to another.

Another established Greek theory of vision described the visual fire (Darrigol 2). This theory suggested that there was a light emitted by the eye that came into contact with the object being viewed (Lindberg 4). When the fire hit the object, it reflected back to the eye and the image was seen. Empedocles supported the theory of a visual fire and alluded to the flames in his poem:

as when a man, thinking to go out through the wintry night, makes ready a light, a flame of blazing fire, putting round it a lantern to keep away all manner of winds; it divides the blasts of the rushing winds, but the light, the finer substance, passes through and shines on the threshold with unyielding beams; so at that time primeval fire, enclosed in membranes, gave birth to the round pupil in its delicate garments which are pierced through with wondrous channels. These keep out the water which surrounds the pupil, but let through the fire, the finer part (235).

This theory starkly contrasted with the Atomists' idea since the eye had a very active role in the visual process. However, there were some who believed in a slight variation of the

two theories such that the film hit the eye and formed the image but the fire went out to the object in order to confirm its identity (Lindberg 4). The existence of the visual fire was supported by Alcmaeon's theory that the color bursts seen when pressure is applied to closed eyes is caused by the fire from within (Darrigol 3). Visual fire and sunlight were described by the same word (*ἀχτίς*), demonstrating the people's belief that the gods created the body with elements of the earth (Darrigol 3). The use of the word to describe both types of light shows that the visual fire theory provided most Greeks with a basic understanding of vision.

This theory of vision was accessible by all Greeks, as opposed to solely academia. The visual fire was referenced in several works of Greek poetry, particularly in Homer's *Iliad* (Darrigol 2). The bard describes fierce anger in the context of a visual fire when he speaks of Agememnon, who was "—furious, his dark heart filled to the brim,/ blazing with anger now, his eye like searing fire" (Homer *Iliad* Book 1 Line 121) He also mentions Achilles, such that "the more he gazed, the deeper his anger went,/ his eyes flashing under his eyelids, fierce as fire" (Homer *Iliad* Book 19 Line 19). The visual fire theory was quite violent when considering Homer's words and yet it was the traditional understanding of vision. The inclusion of visual fire in the story at all demonstrates the expansiveness of the theory in that it crossed the lines of philosophy into general culture. The oral nature of the epic meant that it was a story for all people and therefore fire was the people's explanation of vision. Though the lay people accepted fire as the visual medium, it was the philosophers of the time who hypothesized and developed newer models of vision. The visual fire theory gave way to more complicated explanations of

the visual process but according to Homer, a fire from the eyes was the only requirement for sight.

The Platonic theory of vision was deeply rooted in the visual fire design, but introduced an entirely new idea in the visual process. Plato suggested that the fire from the eyes mixed with the fire that is daylight to form a material intermediary (Lindberg 5).

Plato clearly described how the mediating entity formed in the *Timaeus*:

so much of fire as would not burn, but gave a gentle light, they formed into a substance akin to the light of every-day life; and the pure fire which is within us and related thereto they made to flow through the eyes in a stream smooth and dense, compressing the whole eye, and especially the centre part, so that it kept out everything of a coarser nature, and allowed to pass only this pure element. When the light of day surrounds the stream of vision, then like falls upon life, and they coalesce, and one body is formed by the natural affinity in the line of vision, wherever the light that falls from within meets with an external object. And the whole stream of vision, being similarly affected in virtue of similarity diffuses the motions of what it touches or what touches it over the whole body, until they reach the soul, causing that perception which we call sight (108).

This “whole stream of vision” then interacted with the object being seen and the contact between them was perceived as sight. Since the gods used the same fire of daylight to create eyes, the combination was possible because like bodies are miscible. When the sun has set, vision is absent because, according to Plato, the very nature of darkness cannot combine with the visual fire and subsequently the mediating stream is not created. Light was not the principle explanation for vision but it was a necessary component that allowed the image of the object to be perceived by the eyes and mind.

This theory also supported the idea of an emission from the object in view. However Plato’s understanding of the purpose of the object’s stream contrasted with that of the Atomists. The size of the particles from the object dictated exactly what was perceived. Particles equal in size to those of the material intermediary could not be seen

and therefore the object was transparent (Plato *Timaeus* 66). Large particles caused the visual ray to contract and this was then perceived as the color black. The whole visual stream dilated when it came into contact with smaller particles from the object and this was seen as white. The particle's size determined the brightness of the object while the speed of the particles assisted in color perception. Depending upon the speed of the object's emissions, the lights combine with tears and colors are perceived. In fact, Plato even illustrates the concept of "dazzling" through his theory. When the visual ray flashes, the fire of daylight enters the eyes but is suppressed by tears (Plato *Timaeus* 66). The mixture of tears and the external fire causes the visualization of many colors at once. By introducing the material intermediary, Plato is able to describe most visual phenomena.

In Plato's *Timaeus*, he details the purpose of sight and its role in the human experience. The eyes were the very first organ created by the gods, illustrating the importance of vision and further demonstrating the ocularcentric sentiment of the Greeks. The eyes were given so that man could perceive the world, created by the gods. By seeing the creation, man would be able to pursue an understanding of the ways of the gods. Vision was the mediator between the mortal and immortal worlds. Specifically, perception of the environment would instill a desire in man to learn how the gods thought. Once they understood the gods, man would be able to apply immortal methods and intelligence to human life. An understanding of how the gods worked would allow man to comprehend the natural world. As a result of sight, man is able to perceive the cycles of the sun and stars and consequently develop a concept of time. One must see in order to know. Without the ability to see, there could be no true grasp of how the world worked. Sight is necessary for the pursuit of knowledge in any realm.

Aristotle had his own explanation for how vision worked and rejected most of the earlier theories. He found that the greatest fault in the Atomists' theory was that they attempted to reduce everything to a sensation of touch (Lindberg 6). Furthermore, he did not support the idea of any sort of stream flowing from a viewed object because "light is neither fire nor any kind whatsoever of body nor an efflux from any kind of body (if it were, it would again itself be a kind of body)" (Aristotle *De Anima* 36). Additionally, he combated the idea of visual fire since "in general it is unreasonable to suppose that seeing occurs by something issuing from the eye; that the ray of vision reaches as far as the stars, or goes to a certain point and there coalesces with the object, as some think" (Aristotle *De Sensu* 225). While Aristotle did not accept most aspects of older theories, he did firmly believe in the necessity of a physical intermediary (Darrigol 6). Vision was impossible without some homogenous medium between the eye and object of sight:

seeing is due to an affection or change of what has the perceptive faculty, and it cannot be affected by the seen color itself; it remains that it must be affected by what comes between. Hence it is indispensable that there be something in between—if there were nothing, so far from seeing with greater distinctness, we should see nothing at all (Aristotle *De Anima* 37).

This medium is typically of a transparent nature, usually air or water (Darrigol 6). The transparent entity allows for the passage of some quality from the object to the eye, such as color. The medium itself is not colored, but is defined by Aristotle as "that which is visible." Vision results when the color of the object "sets in movement not the sense organ but what is transparent, e.g. the air, and that, extending continuously from the object to the organ, sets the latter in movement (Aristotle *De Anima* 37). Rather than an actual stream of particles or emission from the object coming into contact with the eye, Aristotle claimed that it was the very nature of the medium that allowed for sight. Since

the intermediary and the eye are continuous, the movement of the medium can act directly on the sense organ of the soul, resulting in vision (Lindberg 7). Aristotle's theory reverted back to older theories of a passive eye by relating sight to a direct impression of the outside world on the senses.

Another distinct visual theory is detailed in Plato's *Theaetetus* which relayed Socrates own thoughts on the visual process. This theory could be described as a melding of the previously mentioned theories. Socrates explained to Theaetetus during a dialogue that:

when the eye and the appropriate object meet together and give birth to whiteness and the sensation connatural with it, which could not have been given by either of them going elsewhere, then, while the sight is flowing from the eye, whiteness proceeds from the object which combines in producing the colour; and so the eye is fulfilled with sight, and really sees, and becomes, not sight, but a seeing eye; and the object which combined to form the colour is fulfilled with whiteness, and becomes not whiteness but a white thing, whether wood or stone or whatever the object may be which happens to be coloured white (Plato *Theaetetus* 86).

This philosopher believed that color flowed from the object in view, similar to the film of the Atomists' theory. Every color "arises out of the eye meeting the appropriate motion, and that what we call colour is in each case neither the active nor the passive element, but something which passes between them" (Plato *Theaetetus* 84). Sight itself was an emission of the eye, but was not quite a fire. Rather, there was a stream from the eye with the same general essence of the emission from the object. When the color from the object and the flow of the eye met in air, vision was fulfilled. The two streams are like one another and therefore the contact between them creates a new and useful visual stream. The viewer sees what is actually there and the object becomes a physical entity instead of simply a color. Socrates' theory was an uncomplicated description of the visual process.

In addition to explaining his theory of vision during this dialogue, Socrates also combated the idea that seeing was knowing. He argued that a man could know what he did not see. He explained:

that seeing is knowing, and therefore not-seeing is not-knowing... Then the inference is, that a man may have attained the knowledge, of something, which he may remember and yet not know, because he does not see; and this has been affirmed by us to be a monstrous supposition... Thus, then, the assertion that knowledge and perception are one, involves a manifest impossibility (Plato *Theaetetus* 94).

Socrates argued that after looking at something, man could close his eyes but still remember what he saw. This remembrance was equated to knowledge. Therefore, without sight, since the eyes were closed, man could still know. However, Socrates' argument is based on a major assumption that weakens the point. If man has not seen something initially, then when he does close his eyes, he cannot remember it and therefore does not know what it is. The only way one can "remember" anything according to Socrates' description is to have seen it first. Consequently, in accordance with Socrates' case, seeing actually is knowing. It is predominately as a result of sight that we are able to remember the environment. Then, since we remember, we can reflect on what has been seen and attempt to comprehend it. Vision is the most important sense to the human race because it is the most useful avenue between the mind and the world. Vision is the sense perception directly linked to reason, the scientific perception (Goldhill and Osbourne 139). Socrates was correct in that one can remember something without looking at it in that very moment, but in order to find meaning in anything, it has to be seen.

Through vision we are able to understand the world. Humans regard sight as the ultimate and most trustworthy sense. Without visual perception, we are unable to

appreciate the environment to the full extent. Colors, shapes, and the essential nature of things are perceived by sight. The Atomists believed that all things were made of particles and a stream from an object could come into contact with the eye that we might see. There was also the idea of a fire that emanated from the eyes, meeting with the object or its stream, creating the sensation. These various theories, though different in detail, all center on the same sentiment: visual perception results in a change in the self. While some theories equate this change to a physical transformation due to the movement of particles or media, it is the impression made on the psyche by what is seen that is to be noted. We think because we can see. We can pursue knowledge because we can see. We know because we can see.

Chapter 2: Vision and Art

While sight allows man to interpret the natural world created by the gods, it is also instrumental in the understanding of creations of man, specifically art. The work of an artist can affect the mind and overall impression of the viewer by both what is portrayed and how it is shown. The techniques and styles of the artist succeed in portraying the meaning of an image because they relate to the properties of the visual system (Latto 68). Certain images are aesthetically pleasing not because they accurately reflect the natural world but because they exploit the visual process as it is understood today. Artists have been exploring and characterizing the nature of vision long before philosophers or scientists were investigating sight (Latto 70). Ancient Greek sculptors could utilize their techniques in order to elicit the appropriate response from the viewer based on how the brain interpreted what was seen. Of course sculptors of the time were not aware of the role of the brain in the visual process; however the art itself shaped how the brain saw.

The scientific understanding of sight helps to explain how certain images have a particular effect on the viewer. For example, lateral inhibition is a process in the brain that helps with definition. This process exaggerates the changes in brightness that differentiate one object from another (Latto 72). Artists use a technique called irradiation in order to mimic this brain mechanism and cause the viewer to see depth (Latto 73). With sculptures, this involves carving the marble so that there are both raised and tunneled surfaces that cast shadows and are perceived as depth. In addition, the visual cortex, the portion of the brain directly linked to the eyes, has cells that respond optimally to lines in a specific orientation (Latto 76). Therefore images with many lines cause

maximal stimulation and feed the visual process. The lines created by the carvings in a draped peplos or outstretched wings are visually engaging and present precisely what the brain can see. Furthermore, studies have shown that there is a unique class of neurons that are specialized for the visual analysis of the human form (Latto 86). Subsequently, sculptures of man can have a profound impact on the brain. Certain facial expressions and body postures can have an intense emotional link and when we view a sculpture, the artistic representation can cause a strong visual response. An image perceived that stirs emotions has the ability to directly excite the pathways of vision. The emotions attached to an image as a result of the visual process allow art to define our humanity. What is seen changes how the viewer feels.

The artist, masterpiece, and viewer work together so that the meaning of the piece is conveyed. How the artist's techniques function in conjunction with the mind allow the viewer to be an active participant in the visual experience and develop an emotional attachment to the work. The pleasure associated with viewing a piece of art does not come from standing back and accepting the image as is, but rather allowing the mind to transform what is there into a finished image (Gombrich 199). The artist can produce anything with the intent to communicate a specific idea, but the viewer has full range of interpretation. Both artist and viewer utilize art for the sake of imitation, as articulated by Philostratus. The artist uses his hands and mind to produce some imitation while the beholder uses his mind to draw on the meaning of the creation (Gombrich 181). Similar to a book, the viewer must read the image. What any one person focuses on will be different depending upon their condition. Different aspects of the work will stand out as a result of the emotional, social, and spiritual state of the viewer. The reading of the image

relies on the viewer's ability to recognize something in the piece that he has seen before (Gombrich 186). The viewer must be able to project his memory onto the art in order for there to be some form of a relationship between the work and beholder. The artist may present a work but if the viewer cannot relate, the meaning is lost. The artist's skill in suggesting a meaning must be matched by the viewer's capacity to understand it (Gombrich 195). Unlike some ancient visual theories where the eyes are passive in the visual experience, here I argue that in order to understand what is seen, the mind must play a role.

The visual process is a joint experience between the eyes and mind of the viewer and the art form. In order to interpret what is seen, the viewer must be able to project what he already knows onto the object. The projection serves the purpose of closing the gap left behind by the artist (Gombrich 206). This can only work if the viewer has no reservations about how to "finish" the work. Classical reliefs and some sculptures relieve the viewer of any hesitation since the works portray movement and space, directing the mind towards what is happening (Gombrich 228). Since most sculptures are not exact replicas of the real-life subject, the viewer participates in "making" the art by completing what is missing (Gombrich 211). The artist, with the knowledge of the nature of vision, is able to leave out certain details since the mind will allow the viewer to see what is not there. Given that there are absent portions, the artist leaves the piece fully open to interpretation. As the viewer "reads" the image, he tests out various possibilities before settling on what fits and appropriately fills the void (Gombrich 226). The viewer's initial projection reflects what he expects to find in the work, but this interpretation must be flexible as information from the sculpture is transferred (Gombrich 225). The viewer's

projection must adapt to accurately associate what is perceived with what is viewed. The ambiguity of a piece allows for several fitting interpretations for different people, relating to the viewer's own contribution to the process. However, a single viewer cannot actually see more than one interpretation at a time (Gombrich 236). He can accept that there are more ways to perceive the work, but in any given moment, the mind recognizes a single view of the work. What the artist does or does not include in his work permits the viewer to engage with the piece mentally and subsequently experience an impact on his psyche.

In conjunction with the viewer's role in completing a work are the Greek ideas of *phantasia* and *mimesis*. Both Plato and Aristotle discussed these ideas in their works, describing *mimesis* as the imitation or representation of the natural world in forms of art (Donohue 1). *Phantasia* is slightly more intricate, relating to the imagination. It combines perception and opinion. *Phantasia* encompasses the idea that the mind will compensate for sensory input that is imprecise (Labarrière 1). Imitation was the goal of the Greek artist in an effort to portray the ideal, however sculptural techniques were limiting. Therefore, by engaging the viewer's imagination, an artist could illustrate their idea despite their restrictions. When viewing a work, the viewer takes in what the artist has represented but the piece must evoke some intellectual response from the viewer so that there is meaning in the piece.

Art itself changes as the culture of the time changes, which modifies what is seen and experienced by the viewer. The atmosphere, the current state of society, influences what is portrayed in art. Following the victory of the Persian War, the High Classical style was introduced (Meyer 257). This transition was not so much an evolution of technique, though there were developments, as it was an evolution of taste. As a result of

the victory and the general mood of the Greek people, sculpture transformed to reflect this sentiment. It was during this time that the cult images for the Parthenon and the Temple of Olympian Zeus were created, demonstrating the wealth and grandeur experienced by the Greeks since cities were now protected from a Persian threat (Meyer 258). Sculptures reflect the feelings of the viewers that are produced by the present condition of the people while simultaneously producing an emotional response in the viewer.

Sculptures can also portray images that allow the viewer to escape their present circumstances. Rather than mirroring the state of society, art can be a refuge away from trying times. For example, during the Peloponnesian War, several sculptures included windblown drapery and ornate carvings. These were symbols of a better time and viewers could place themselves away from the disaster and misery of the long war (Meyer 259). The reliefs on the temple of Athena Nike reflect the escapist tone of art during the war. There does not appear to be any meaning or cohesive narrative, rather the work is simply focused on ornamental beauty (Pollitt 115). The more aimless designs of these sculptures provide an avenue by which to forget agony, if only for a short while (Pollitt 118). The art was more frivolous in order to lighten the spirits of the Greek people. Depending on the human condition, art is able to bring forth the emotions the viewer needs to experience at that time.

Art, particularly sculpture, has a way of altering a viewer's perception of both the outside world and the self. The subject of the work can transform how the viewer sees himself and where in society the viewer places himself. An interesting interpretation put forth by Stansbury-O'Donnell asserts that there are two paths of vision, the *gaze* and the

Gaze, which are responsible for the effects that art can have on the mind (172). The *gaze* comes from the self and is what one sees when observing the outside world. The *Gaze* encompasses the collective sight of the viewer by others. It is what others see when they look at you, the viewer. The two poles of vision can also be referred to as the glance from the self and gaze from the other (Stewart 13). While the theories detailed previously focus on the physiological aspect of vision, it is the social aspect, or *visuality*, that is responsible for the psychological effects felt by the viewer when observing art (Stewart 13). An artist may excite the brain with his technique but the subject matter has the profound impact on the person. The works must be placed in a social context in order for the purpose of the piece to be understood. This is not to say that an ancient sculpture will fail in message delivery when viewed in the modern age. However one must accept that while the artist may have intended for a particular meaning, each piece will affect each viewer uniquely, depending upon their state. The fundamental similarity between the Platonic, Atomist, and Aristotelian theories is that there is a physical entity that enters or touches the eye and body. This entity causes the physical change in the body that results in sight but is also responsible for the mental consequences the viewer experiences. The *Gaze* of the object causes the viewer to become an object himself and this exchange results in a transformation of the self.

The subject is always aware of the *Gaze* and how others perceive him (Stansbury-O'Donnell 173). As a result of this, the subject, or viewed, makes a constant effort to appear a certain way, depending upon who or what holds the *Gaze*. The view from sculptures of powerful gods or rulers is included in the overall *Gaze* and subsequently elicits a certain type of behavior from the viewer (Stansbury-O'Donnell 173). Their

presence at places of worship brings forth specific actions from viewers that are not caused by any other *Gaze*. With the knowledge that Zeus, Athena, or any other god is staring down at you, one is compelled to demonstrate a certain respect and appropriate conduct. The sculptures confront worshippers directly with the power of the gods (Osborne 229). Though the god is not physically there to evaluate one's behavior, the eyes of the sculpture are enough to force the viewer to recognize his place in that relationship. The *Gaze* of the piece delivers judgment as a representation of the god. Therefore the viewer must present himself in such a way as commanded by the specific *Gaze*. The *gaze/Gaze* idea is best illustrated when pieces portray *aidos*, humility, or shame (Stansbury-O'Donnell 174). In early 5th century works, artists directed the *Gaze* of the subject matter away from the *gaze* of the viewer to convey a sense of modesty (Stansbury-O'Donnell 174). With these pieces, the work appears to behave as the viewer does when coming before a cult statue. The viewer is free to look at the subject matter uninhibited. When the *Gaze* exhibits shame, the *gaze* is confident. The gaze of the subject elicits some sort of behavioral response from the viewer which varies with each piece. The subject of the work dictates the actions and self perception of the viewer. It is through the *Gaze* that a viewer also sees, not his surroundings but rather his self, and his conduct in any social interaction is determined by each individual visual exchange.

The viewer can utilize the *gaze* and *Gaze* to construct an idea of his self-identity. This is dependent on the nature of the piece, the viewing conditions, and the subject (Stansbury-O'Donnell 177). There are several possibilities as far as identifying one's place with respect to the sculpture, just as there are many interpretations to a single piece. How the viewer sees himself will change as a result of different artistic subjects and life

experiences. A viewer sees himself in varying lights depending upon the circumstances under which he is being viewed. Furthermore, the emotional reaction garnered by the work will alter self perception. A piece can portray both *ethos*, or character, and *pathos*, meaning a man's reaction to his own life experiences (Pollitt 43). The expression of *ethos* and *pathos* helps the viewer to place himself in the realm of the work. The artist may create a noble presence through the sculpture as a way of conveying exultation (Pollitt 45). This separates the viewer from the subject matter and places them on two different social levels. The general atmosphere created by the piece will affect how the viewer sees himself. For example, the inscription on the statue of an Olympic victor is written in first and third person, putting a distance between the viewer and the subject (Stansbury-O'Donnell 178). It creates a distinction between the viewers and the victor in the image. The viewer recognizes his mortal nature in front of this *Gaze* and responds accordingly, similar to the circumstances involving religious sculptures. Depending upon the subject, the viewer will see the work but also see himself in relation to the work and this defines his identity in that moment.

There are several avenues of Greek sculpture and each delivers the *Gaze* in a distinctive way such that the viewer interacts with each subject differently and experiences varied emotional connections with the works. The architectural setting for a piece of sculpture was utilized by the artist to push the viewer into a relationship with the figure (Osborne 230). The viewer would have a different response to the sculpture depending upon how the subject was presented. For example, pediments are confrontational pieces in that the viewer is not fully satisfied unless he stands directly in the middle of the front of the temple to see the entire scene (Osborne 231). The demand

the piece places on the position of the viewer immediately puts the viewer under the power of the subject matter. The viewer has no choice once the initial decision to engage with the temple sculpture is made; he must focus his gaze on the pedimental scene as a whole. In order to read the image in its entirety and fill any gaps the artist may have left behind the viewer must come into direct view of the point of the pediment, the area of important action in the scene. In essence, the viewer becomes the object of the pedimental sculpture's gaze. The *Gaze* of the monument engages the viewer, challenging him (Osborne 232). The center sculpture prepares the viewer to reflect on the deeds of the gods but also on the self. This specific structure commands an interaction between image and viewer that results in personal reflection as the eyes of the subject bore into the soul of the viewer.

The relationship between viewer and art is slightly different with metopes since they are constrained by the triglyphs (Osborne 230). Each scene is both an individual piece and portion of a sequence so that the continuous story is broken up. The viewer, standing on the ground, is aware of all other metopes while focusing on a single square (Osborne 230). Therefore the viewer plays an active role in telling the story of the piece. As the eyes move across from one square to the next, the viewer completes the image, joining the events of previous metopes with the image of the current square in order to tell the story. While this form of sculpture creates a task for the viewer other than simple spectator, the disjointed nature of the scene prevents the establishment of a stable relationship between the viewer and the work (Osborne 238). Unlike a pediment where the eyes of the viewer are drawn to the point and forced to linger there, metopes insist upon a wandering gaze. Since the viewer constantly has to readjust the direction of his

gaze to accommodate the nature of the metope, there is never a solid *gaze/Gaze* interaction between subject and viewer. This form of sculpture makes it more difficult for the work to have a substantial psychological impact on the viewer because of the wandering eyes. It is as a result of focused viewing that a piece can incite personal reflection. With a metope, the viewer is more concerned with connecting the story. However, the active participation of the viewer in completing the piece does engage the viewer in an interesting way that places him within the story. The events occur because the viewer is present to carry on the myth from one metope to the next. Through this art form, the artist and viewer must work together to convey the meaning of the piece.

Continuous friezes are the least constraining form of sculpture for the viewer. There may be a beginning and end to the piece but the viewer is free to read the piece in any direction (Osborne 230). With a metope, there is a specific story to be shared through the work, piece by piece whereas a frieze can be read however the viewer chooses. Though there may be many figures, a frieze is similar to a free-standing sculpture. A direction is not given as far as the viewer's gaze but the eyes naturally engage with the faces depicted. There is a story portrayed but there is no climax, like in a pedimental sculpture (Osborne 243). The viewer has the least direct interaction with this sculptural form because of the lack of direction. While the eyes are free to view the piece in any way, moving from one end to the other as with a metope, the mind is not required to complete a story. As mentioned previously, there will be gaps in the work such that the viewer is expected to project his own thoughts on the piece to draw out a meaning, but the viewer does not actively participate in the story the artist is portraying. The viewer engages with the piece however he pleases which is distinctly different than interactions

with metopes or pediments. These other architectural forms of sculpture connect with the viewer through both subject matter and display approach while a continuous frieze is very open to interpretation. How the viewer interacts with the pieces, completes the image, and falls under the *Gaze* of the subjects are left to the mind of the viewer to decide when viewing a frieze. The viewer can more readily see what he wishes to and subsequently feel however he desires because this type of piece does not confine the viewer to any binding standards.

Art can have a significant and transformative impact on viewers. How we view anything is impacted by what we bring to the situation and how others see us at that time. Due to the artist's technique, the physical setting of the work, the social context of the viewing period, and the condition of the viewer, a piece will change how the viewer looks at the world and sees himself in the human environment. The artist presents the piece with his own intended meaning, but may leave portions incomplete so that the viewer might form a bond with the work in order to see it fully. The active participation of the viewer in the visual process as it relates to sculpture, either by completing the piece or telling the story, allows the viewer to immerse themselves in the sphere of the work. This causes the viewer to reflect on the self, as a result of the relationship forged between viewer and work. The basis of this relationship is the *gaze/Gaze* interaction which dictates the social sentiment of any situation. As a result of the *Gaze* the viewer will behave in a particular way, commanded by the presence of the beholder. The *Gaze* has a power over its subject because of the social nature of mankind. While the sculpture is the subject of the *gaze*, the viewer himself is an object and must appear a specific way before the *Gaze*. Being aware of the *Gaze* causes the viewer to look within himself, because as

humans, our self perception is dictated by how the other perceives us. Subsequently, sculptures, holding the *Gaze*, will have a major impact on the self, changing the way the viewer sees himself or anything else, especially when the subject matter of the work is as intense as a god or terrifying mythical creature. We can see, but others can see us as well, which defines the human experience.

Chapter 3: The Gorgon

Due to the powerfully transformative nature of art, different subjects will affect the viewer in a unique way. The way an image is presented does have a serious influence on the viewer, as was made evident by the different forms of architectural sculpture. However, the subject of the work also has a profound impact on the viewer because it is this part of the work that he will connect with. The subject of the work will be one portion of the *gaze/Gaze* relationship, touching the viewer. Furthermore, based on the ancient theories of vision, one can imagine how the art form could be received by the viewer, adding to the overall impact a sculpture can have on him. The subject of the piece, the form the work takes, and the way by which it is physically seen all contribute to the overall visual experience. By analyzing every element of the work one can gain an understanding of the meaning of the piece for both ancient viewers and those in modern times.

An artist has entirely free range as to what he will portray in his work when deciding to create a piece. The universe and the world within his mind can all be represented by the sculpture. What the artist chooses will depend on what the purpose of the piece is. The work may commemorate a ruler or hero. It may be the cult statue in a temple or part of the temple itself. The artist would have been commissioned in ancient times to create a work so the subject may even be the request of the patron. In ancient Greece, sculptural representations of terrifying and supernatural mythological creatures were the focus of most artists. By utilizing the subject matter of well-known stories as the theme of their works, artists were able to easily convey a particular message to viewers by depending on their knowledge of the myth. The association of the subject of the work

and its particular myth permitted artists to perfectly relate the message they wished to communicate to the viewer with the sculpture they created. Sculptures were avenues by which to experience that which was other worldly or difficult to understand. When there was already a myth associated with some creature, the artist could bridge the art forms to portray something that was typically only imagined. Taking inspiration from the stories of the gods and heroes, artists are able to easily connect with the viewer, since there is already an established relationship between the viewer and the subject. Rather than portraying something entirely new, artists utilize sculpture to provide a representation and reference for the imagination of the viewer.

An interesting subset of mythological beings that was broadly represented in Greek sculpture was those with wings. These creatures, particularly the Gorgon, sphinx, and goddess Nike, had robust and colorful histories with the added element of the mystical ability to fly. The fascination with flight has long been an interest of mankind, as is demonstrated by the myth of Daedalus' escape from Crete. He fashioned wax wings in order to flee from the island with his son, Icarus. Daedalus was said to be a magician and the fact that only a man with supernatural gifts could fly speaks to the ancient Greek belief that flight and subsequently wings were out of reach of human ability. Only with the development of modern technology have humans been able to understand the science of the flight of birds and other animals. Therefore, it is no surprise that in ancient times, without the explanations provided by science, flight was an unfeasible and mysterious idea reserved for mythological creatures and deities. It should be noted that human beings were never given wings in any form of ancient Greek sculpture. Wings have been used as the attribute distinguishing certain deities. The wings would immediately separate the

subject of the work from the viewer, placing him below the work. The inclusion of wings by sculptors gave pieces a mystical air and placed them in a realm above humanity.

The Gorgon is an appealing subject for sculptors because she not only is often represented with wings, but the myth associated with her has a very strong vision component. The Gorgon of interest is Medusa, one of the pertinent characters in the heroic tale of Perseus. She was beautiful, but cursed by a goddess:

Medusa once had charms; to gain her love/ A rival crowd of envious
lovers strove./ They, who have seen her, own, they ne'er did trace/ More
moving features in a sweeter face./ Yet above all, her length of hair, they
own,/ In golden ringlets wav'd, and graceful shone./ Her Neptune saw, and
with such beauties fir'd,/ Resolv'd to compass, what his soul desir'd./ In
chaste Minerva's fane, he, lustful, stay'd,/ And seiz'd, and rifled the young,
blushing maid./ The bashful Goddess turn'd her eyes away,/ Nor durst
such bold impurity survey;/ But on the ravish'd virgin vengeance
takes,/ Her shining hair is chang'd to hissing snakes (Ovid *Metamorphoses*
Book 4 Line 795).

The myth of Perseus and the Gorgons is told both by Ovid and Apollodorus, in which the hero must present the head of the Gorgon to King Polydektes. This mission was given to Perseus by the King in the hopes that his efforts would be fruitless. Despite his knowledge of the power of the Gorgons and his probable fate, Perseus embarks on a quest for the head. The Gorgons are described by Apollodorus as three sisters with scaly heads, boar's tusks, wings, and glaring eyes with snakes wrapped around their waists (Wilk 21). These creatures were so hideous that anyone who looked at them directly would be turned immediately to stone. Her power lied in her gaze, which could petrify anyone or anything. The only way to defeat her would require not looking at her. Perseus was advised to use a mirror in order to avoid her glare since the reflection had less power

(Wilk 22). Utilizing the gifts presented to him by the Nymphs and Hermes, Perseus succeeded in decapitating Medusa, the only mortal sister:

The heroe with his just request complies,/ Shows, how a vale beneath cold Atlas lies,/ Where, with aspiring mountains fenc'd around,/ He the two daughters of old Phorcus found./ Fate had one common eye to both assign'd,/ Each saw by turns, and each by turns was blind./ But while one strove to lend her sister sight,/ He stretch'd his hand, and stole their mutual light,/And left both eyeless, both involv'd in night./ Thro' devious wilds, and trackless woods he past,/And at the Gorgon-seats arriv'd at last:/But as he journey'd, pensive he survey'd,/ What wasteful havock dire Medusa made./ Here, stood still breathing statues, men before;/ There, rampant lions seem'd in stone to roar./ Nor did he, yet affrighted, quit the field,/ But in the mirror of his polish'd shield/ Reflected saw Medusa slumbers take,/ And not one serpent by good chance awake./ Then backward an unerring blow he sped,/ And from her body lop'd at once her head./ The gore prolifick prov'd; with sudden force/ Sprung Pegasus, and wing'd his airy course (Ovid *Metamorphoses* Book 4 Line 773).

In the process of slicing off her head, Medusa's two children, Pegasus, the winged horse, and Chrysaor, sprang forth. They are sometimes depicted with her in sculptures. On his journey back from Hades different tellings detail Perseus' encounters with various antagonists whom he defeated by presenting the head of Medusa. The power of her gaze was so strong that even when her head was removed from her body it could still have its damning effect on the object of her stare. There was no real way to escape a fate of stone if her gaze was not avoided. Furthermore, with her wings, the Gorgon could capture anything that attempted to flee. This creature had a power unmatched by any other living thing, the power to kill while dead or alive.

The Gorgon was a terrifying creature and despite its ultimate defeat, the image can have an incredibly strong effect on the viewer. The image of the Gorgon was often used apotropaically on temple structures. While the typical intention of an apotropaic image is to ward off evil influences, the sight of such a creature could also turn away a

viewer and potential worshipper. Take for example the west pediment of the temple of Artemis at Corfu (1). Here a Gorgon is featured in the center, flanked by her two children Chrysaor and Pegasus, as well as other beasts. What remains of this pediment today shows Medusa in knielauf position, where she is kneeling but has the appearance of running as well, with a wing on her preserved sandal. There are also the faint remains of wings that emerged from her back, similar to a bird. While the myths associated with the Gorgons do not specify precisely where her wings were located, this artist's interpretation is a feasible one particularly because Perseus uses winged sandals on his expedition back from killing Medusa. Aside from the horrifying face of this Gorgon with eyes that engulf you in her stare, the detail of the wings must be noted. The wing is a harsh hook shape coming up and pointed away from Medusa's knee. There is not much detail but the artist made an effort to define the grooves to represent different feathers. The wings on her back are not well preserved at all, but of what remains the detail is incredibly simple yet efficient. In reconstructions, the feathers are all equally sized and shaped like tendrils with rounded bottoms. These are not realistic at all but accomplish the purpose of conveying to the reader that the creature has wings. In the running position, the Gorgon is ready to swoop down and attack any person who attempts to enter the temple unclean. The wings amplify the intimidation factor of the Gorgon because it has the ability to come for you wherever you are.

The temple of Apollo at Didyma included an architrave with a Gorgon relief at the corner (2). This particular sculpture is visually engaging because the body is centered right along the edge of the marble block such that the wings of the Gorgon spread out on two different surfaces. Therefore, to look at the Gorgon face-on would require the

spectator to view the entirety of the creature. However, if the viewer were walking on either side of the temple of Apollo, the wings would be the first sight until the person rounded the corner. This suggests that the wings alone were enough to act in an apotropaic manner. The wings indicated that some vicious creature lied in wait around the bend and could effectively ward off any evil. The wings of this Gorgon are shown in layers, such that the creature appears to have more than one pair of wings. The artist achieved this look by varying the level of relief such that the bottom pair of wings is carved in low relief and the top pair of wings in high relief with another layer on top of that in low relief. These different levels of relief allow the top wings to cast a shadow and provide the illusion of thickness to the wings. Furthermore, these wings do not have the hook shape of older pieces but are rather much softer and rounder. If there was only one pair of wings depicted, the lack of sharpness would have given off a sense of delicacy. But the thickness offsets the smooth edges to provide an equivalent threat as the Gorgon at Corfu. The feathers are carved like the fluting of a column. The many lines are particularly visually stimulating, drawing the eye across the image. Whilst older sculptors simply carved lines into the wing surface to indicate feathers, this sculptor chipped away at the marble around each feather to add dimension. This rougher, detailed texture once again adds to the thick appearance of the wings which subsequently intensifies the intimidating nature of the relief.

In conjunction with the visual theories, the sight of these Gorgon sculptures is both unavoidable and threatening. The Gorgon is presented at the climax of the pediment, demanding the attention of any viewer on the west side of the temple. This placement makes it impossible for a viewer to avoid her gaze, which is precisely what a viewer

would try to do based on their knowledge of the myth. The wings on the architrave act as a sort of bait to lure a viewer around the corner only to be ambushed by the monster. Furthermore, in order to actually see the Gorgon sculpture, taking any ancient theory, some piece or impression of her met with the body. Whether they were particles, a film, or the combination of the visual and subject's stream, the Gorgon came into contact with the viewer. One can speculate that her ability to turn man to stone had its foundation in the visual process. As a result of the nature of vision, the Gorgon need not be near her conquest in order to invoke the horrid fate upon him; she only requires seeing him. Since there is a connection made between the viewer and the object of his gaze, the Gorgon may utilize this to carry out her curse. The particles that are streaming off of the Gorgon touch the viewer and subsequently cause the viewer to turn to stone. When thinking of the visual fire theory, it is as if the fire from the self is no match to the Gorgon's gaze. In an effort to meet the object with his own gaze, the viewer is overcome by her hideous nature. As a result of the contact between man and beast through vision, her power is manifested. The way we see gives power to the Gorgon. This power is not restricted to the monster itself though, since the sculpture has the same effect of summoning terror in a viewer. The sensation of sight not only allows the viewer to experience the sculptures visually, but also experience the subject of the work completely. Avoiding her gaze is the aim of any viewer, but these sculptures force the viewer's eyes to meet hers. Her petrifying power had direct access to the viewer due to her placement and the nature of vision.

The viewer becomes part of these sculptures because the artist intends for his work to be presented to people who have knowledge of the myth. As the subject of her

gaze, the viewer is given the opportunity to read the entire image in order to complete the story. The scene on the pediment at Corfu is not exactly a known sequence. The artist does not portray Perseus or even three Gorgon sisters. However, a single creature is enough for the viewer to know exactly what the context of the piece is. The viewer's role is to associate the image with the story to complete the visual experience. The viewer does not even need to see the entire image in order to begin completing the story, as is evident by the corner placement of the Gorgon at the temple of Apollo. The wing alone triggers the viewer's mind to begin understanding what he is seeing. The artist creates these images knowing the viewer will come with his own familiarity and understand what is portrayed. There is an element of active participation by the viewer required when viewing a sculpture of a Gorgon. While a viewer would not uphold the line of vision for very long for fear of what could happen, the time spent establishing the visual is enough to solidify the relationship between the two. The viewer and the Gorgon see each other and as a result of the myth, the viewer is able to recognize his place. The viewer and Gorgon are both subjects of the other's gaze which then becomes the driving force behind the self reflection.

Even in her marble form, the Gorgon is able to instill a fear in the viewer. One would believe that since she is inanimate, the image of her would have no effect on a viewer but the actual relationship between sculpture and man is equivalent to that between creature and man. While the person would only be subject to the Gorgon's gaze if he actively sought her, like Perseus, simply because it is just the image and not actually Medusa does not change anything about the position the monster holds. If anything, the sculpture of the Gorgon has greater power since it has access to any and all who visit the

temple. The viewer is helpless before these sculptures as a result of her ability to turn him to stone but also the fact that her wings give her even more presence. The Gorgon may sit on these architectural elements, but the wings convey to the viewer that an escape is nearly impossible. The viewer is clearly at the disadvantage when presented with a Gorgon sculpture. In the moment, the viewer recognizes his sheer weakness and human nature. With respect to the Gorgon at Corfu, the ability of the sculpture to make the viewer see himself in such a light coincides with the humble nature associated with coming to worship a god. Any sense of pride is quickly washed away and replaced with fear at the sight of the Gorgon. The Gorgon is a creature from another world but on the sculpture, the viewer and monster are present together, forcing the viewer to see himself in relation to it. With the myth, the listeners are removed, visualizing the story as a third party. The sculptures on the temples put the viewer at the center of the story. The viewer becomes the object of the Gorgon's gaze and sees himself in relation to the supernatural. As if such daunting structures did not suffice to make a man feel small, these specific sculptures hold the ability to compel a viewer to become acutely aware of his mortality.

The Gorgon is a prime example of how substantial the visual experience is to man. Sight has the power to transform you, physically and mentally. Man is encompassed in the *Gaze* of anyone or anything, which subsequently alters how the person will behave in a given situation. One is forced to look inwardly in the face of another. This can be recognized as the power of the glance from the other. The *Gaze* held by the Gorgon is the most daunting because she holds a power unmatched by anything else. Like any other, an identity is created within the *Gaze* of the Gorgon as one transforms the view of the self with respect to the beholder. However, there is the potential for a physical transformation

that could occur because the Gorgon holds the power to petrify. With the knowledge of the myth, a viewer has no choice but to place themselves in the tale of the creature when presented with a sculpture. As a result of the visual process, the Gorgon sculpture has as much control of the fear in a viewer as the creature itself. Couple this with the fact that the Gorgon has wings that make it nearly impossible to escape her and one has a poignant subject for sculptures. Gorgon sculptures force a viewer to come to terms with their weakness, mortality, and overall human nature.

Chapter 4: The Sphinx

Temple and sanctuary sculptures had incredibly varied purposes that took a visitor on a psychological and emotional journey. There are some specifics as far as what structures should be present to honor the god appropriately but the art can truly be anything. Despite the open-ended nature of the potential art, sculptors typically focus on similar themes at each sanctuary. There are only so many forms the works can take but even this does not really constrain the artist as far as subject matter. The sculptor can fit any idea into a sculpture form but most choose to convey a similar message from temple to temple. There is often some sort of terrible animal or creature that commands the attention of the viewer when entering a sacred place. This creature will be a representation of a mythological being capable of something rather gruesome. The purpose of placing such a sculpture in a prominent place at the sanctuary is simple; the area is sacred and evil must be repelled. Various creatures are used in this way, such as the Gorgon. But by utilizing different creatures as the subject of the work, the artist is able to demonstrate a certain idea but affect the viewer in a distinctive way. The key is to rely on the visual process and the viewer's unique experiences in order for the similar works to maintain their impact.

The Greek sphinx is often portrayed in sculpture as a winged creature perched at some high point waiting and watching. Like the Gorgon, the sphinx has a deeply frightening and well-known history grounded in mythology. The origin of the sphinx is debated due to contrasting ancient sources. In Hesiod's *Theogony*, the sphinx is the daughter of Orthus and Chimaera, the monster with three different animal heads (33). She is also suggested to be the daughter of Typhon and Chimaera or Typhon and Echidna in

other works (Regier 100). The sphinx is described as having the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle, and the head of a woman (Regier 96). Some stories also suggest that she has a serpent-like tail (Regier 98). The combination of these different creatures forms a terrifying monster whose sole purpose was to terrorize a city. Not only was this hideous monster capable of ripping any human to shreds but she also had unmatched intelligence. Her animalistic form and human mind made for an undefeatable creature. The sphinx came to Thebes to wreak havoc:

for Hera sent the Sphinx, whose mother was Echidna and her father Typhon... And having learned a riddle from the Muses, she sat on Mount Phicium, and propounded it to the Thebans. And the riddle was this:— What is that which has one voice and yet becomes four-footed and two-footed and three-footed? Now the Thebans were in possession of an oracle which declared that they should be rid of the Sphinx whenever they had read her riddle; so they often met and discussed the answer, and when they could not find it the Sphinx used to snatch away one of them and gobble him up. When many had perished, and last of all Creon's son Haemon, Creon made proclamation that to him who should real the riddle he would give both the kingdom and the wife Laius (Apollodorus 348).

The creature would devour those who could not deliver the answer to her riddle. The riddle baffled the people of Thebes and there was no real way of defeating the sphinx without ample bloodshed. The people were so desperate to rid themselves of the sphinx that the reward for her demise was marriage to the queen and the kingdom. In the tale of Oedipus, we learn that he was able to defeat the sphinx by producing the answer:

declaring that the riddle of the Sphinx referred to man; for as a babe he is four-footed, going on four limbs, as an adult he is two-footed, and as an old man he gets besides a third support in a staff. So the Sphinx threw herself from the citadel (Apollodorus 348).

In accordance with the oracle, the monster throws herself from the cliff she resided on because her wit was outsmarted. However, despite her ultimate demise, Greeks recall her

intimidating form and incomparable wisdom. Man could not stand against the sphinx as it was capable of getting the better of anyone.

Sphinxes were quite popular among Greek sculptors during the early part of the Archaic period due to their Egyptian influence. Since Egyptians taught Greeks the art of marble sculpture and provided the tools needed to produce such art forms, early Greek pieces are inevitably inspired by ancient Egyptian art. For example, the huge sphinx at Delphi from Naxos stood on a ten-meter Ionic column just inside the sanctuary of Apollo (3). This colossal sphinx acted as a sort of guard for the sanctuary. The sphinx was a sign of wisdom as well as danger because of its relation to the myth. The size of the sphinx from Delphi alone presents a menacing warning to all who wish to enter the sanctuary. Her placement on the column is reminiscent of her perch in the myth, atop the cliff she eventually flings herself from. The angle gave her prime access to anyone who was approaching the sanctuary. She could see the person from quite far away making it incredibly difficult to avoid her once caught in her gaze. For a first time visitor, the sight of this sphinx could be daunting once coming to the realization that she was watching long before the viewer even knew she was there. Adding to the threat imposed by the size of the sphinx is her very nature, with a female face paired with a lion body and bird-like wings. She could launch herself from the column, swooping down to devour her prey. Only a truly evil god-sent creation could be such a terrifying combination.

The wings of this sphinx are sharp and threatening, curving upward like a hook straight behind the piece. The detail on the wings is more elaborate but still minimalistic relative to later winged pieces. Different sized feathers are portrayed by different lengths and widths of grooves on the surface of the wings. These grooves help to make the wings

look much more natural, though not realistic. The smooth edges detract from the reality but still manage to convey to the viewer what is being seen. The combination of human and animal features transmits a frightening tone to the viewer. The sphinx could fly off to any place and terrorize the people of the land with her riddles. The fact that wings are shown on a monster of this sort provides insight into the ancient Greek perception of flight. Similar to the reason wings are placed on the goddess, the sphinx's wings are indicative of its supernatural abilities. Ordinary human beings could not possibly sprout wings and take off to a new place, only creatures of another realm had such skills.

As time progressed, the wings of the sphinx became extraordinarily natural by way of intricate feather detail. In addition, the shape of the wing itself evolves over time from the severe hook of the limestone sphinx from Spata to a softer more delicate curve of the sphinx from Spata dated to 550 (4 & 5). A few years later there is evidence for further evolution with the sphinx from Attica (6). This sphinx has wings with scalloped edges where each feather ends. Unlike older representations where the curvature of the wings is smoothed by the sculptor and the feather detail is cut on the single viewed surface of the wing, the wings of the sphinx from Attica have feathers cut around to the back. Furthermore, the sculptor of this sphinx has effectively depicted layered feathers with a distinction between a short top layer and longer feathers underneath. While the sphinx from Delphi has a head facing forward, later sphinxes have their heads turned to the side. So in order to see the eyes of the creature, one would have to view the wings spread out as well. Her most terrifying traits must be viewed by the person in a single gaze, giving the sphinx an undeniable power over the viewer. The sphinx's coy smile is coupled with the wings to emphasize the terrifying nature of its purpose to punish people.

The placement of sphinx sculptures provides the monster with a clear advantage in the *gaze/Gaze* relationship. Perched high above the sphinx is able to observe anyone even remotely near the sanctuary. The monster sees the viewer before the viewer ever does because it is usually crouching meters above ground level. This placement puts the sphinx on a different level, both physically, and as a visual representation of the supernatural nature of the monster. The perch allows the sphinx to make the viewer the subject of the *Gaze* while he is unaware that this is even occurring. The foundation of the relationship is laid while one participant cannot see the other. Then, when the viewer finally is close enough to the sculpture that he can engage in the visual experience he is faced with the realization that he has been watched during the entire journey. While a Greek would be aware that the gods can see all, sculptures such as these turn that idea into a reality. The sphinx could see everything within its visual field from its location as the gods see the entire world from their residence. The human viewer sees very little at any one time. The *gaze* is limited while the *Gaze* is powerful due to the extent of vision of the two participants.

The sphinx is a fascinating apotropaic sculpture subject because it is rarely if ever represented without its wings. While the Gorgon head is enough to instill fear in man, as depicted on the shield of Achilles, the sphinx is always portrayed with wings. It is this feature that helps a viewer identify the subject and subsequently relate the myth to the image. As a result of its Egyptian influence, the Greek viewers likely had an understanding of the sphinx shaped by both their own myths and the creature's even deeper history. A people from long ago also feared this monster and knowledge of this fact gives the sphinx an even greater aura of terror. This frightening power is grounded

by the fact that even after hundreds of years, man cannot escape this monster. The sculpture itself may not even appear all that menacing, especially if the face is smiling or the piece is at such a distance that its most terrifying aspects are difficult to make out. While the limestone or marbles sculptures would not be able to attack a viewer, just the sight of the creature calls upon thoughts of the myth. These thoughts then alter the emotional experience of viewing the piece. It is within the mind that the sculpture has the greatest impact as the viewer relates what is seen with what he already knows.

The sphinx puts the viewer face to face with the wisdom of the gods, which in some cases can be even more terrifying than the sight of a vicious monster. The sphinx is a representation of intelligence and this was bestowed upon the monster by its creators. While the gods are the creators of man as well, when faced with something so great, like the sphinx, man is able to reflect on the incredible supremacy of the gods. The power of the gods was unmatched and their abilities were most clearly on display when reflecting on their creations. We utilize our ability to see to understand the world created by the gods but when faced with a mythological sculpture, the visual experience is entirely different. These creatures are not seen regularly, they are imagined based on stories shared. Therefore when presented with a sculpture like a sphinx, the viewer is confronted with an aspect of the power and greatness of the gods that cannot be experienced elsewhere. Only the immortals would be able to create such a monster. The human mind can only imagine the sphinx as a punishment sent from the gods. The monster is so terrifying that its purpose could only be related back to the immortals. Something so powerful could only be created by something bigger. When a viewer sees a sphinx, he is reminded of the gods and their power, due to the strength of the creature. The sphinx

stands as a symbol of the gods and the sculptures of these monsters allow every man to come before and recognize their awe-inspiring capabilities.

In a similar fashion to a Gorgon sculpture, the sphinx forces the viewer to see himself. Rather than acting as a mirror for the viewer, as is the case with some human centered pieces that allow the viewer to observe the best possible version of himself, the sphinx causes the viewer to see himself in a rather unflattering light. As a creature sent by the gods the viewer is brought to their knees out of fear before the sphinx. When seeing the sphinx, the viewer would imagine himself before the actual monster and the deadly outcome of that interaction. In addition, the viewer would recognize the power of the creators and reflect on how much more terrible it would be to stand before the gods. This is exactly how the viewer should feel when coming to the sanctuary, where sphinx sculptures are often erected. The sphinx functions to humble the viewer prior to entering the sanctuary, so that the heart is prepared for sacrifice and worship. The sphinx represents the wonder and grandeur of the gods. In a way, the inability of most men to answer the sphinx's riddle demonstrates man's lack of understanding of the way of the gods. The viewer sees his own shortcomings and helplessness when he views the sphinx. When coming to the temple, the viewer, as the worshipper, must have their mind in a specific place. The sphinx works to ensure that no one who enters the temple area is haughty but rather recognizes his human nature and presents himself to the gods appropriately.

The sphinx was a popular sculpture subject in ancient Greece because the creature had such a captivating and detailed back story. Incorporating the monster into art allowed the sculptor to target the pre-existing impressions of the viewer in order to spark a

specific emotional reaction. The sphinx is capable of igniting a pure fear in the viewer due to its ability to outsmart man, its animal form, and placement high above the viewer. The monstrous sculpture waits for the viewer on its perch and sees every action of the person as he makes his way up to the sanctuary. The *Gaze* held by the sphinx sculpture is unavoidable because the viewer is not aware of its existence until well into the relationship between art and man. The sphinx acts as a guard and hand of the gods in order to ward off evil and prepare the viewer for worship. As one of the first images the viewer comes into contact with at a sanctuary, the sphinx functions as the god itself would in order to force the viewer to come to terms with his inherent weakness. Any regular viewer would not be able to defeat the creature because its wisdom is unmatched and its physical form makes it impossible to escape. When standing before the sphinx, the viewer sees not only a terrifying being but also the profound power of the gods. As a visual representation of one of the gods' most horrible creations, the viewer of these sculptures thinks of the myth and himself with respect to that myth to draw the conclusion that as a human, he is small, weak, and easily overcome.

Chapter 5: Nike, Goddess of Victory

We will now turn our attention away from the creations of the gods associated with wings to the immortals themselves. There are a handful of gods, both major and more minor linked to this form including Eros, Kairos, Hermes, and Nike. Including the instruments of flight on the sculptural representations of these deities instantly attracts the viewer and alerts them of the position of the subject. There can be no mistake in recognizing a god when there are crafted wings. This simple addition completely transforms the figure from a human to a god. The wings function to elevate the subject to the immortal realm. The artist succeeds in portraying this aura because the viewer has a preconceived notion about wings. This feature is majestic and otherworldly, reserved for the birds. Man can only observe flight but never participate in it. The impossibility of flight gives it a power and the subsequent creation of winged sculptures gives them a presence. Humans are most mesmerized by what they cannot understand and to the ancient Greeks, flight was an unattainable and mystical feat. The wings are a representation of everything man is not. These sculptures demand attention and the focus of the viewer. The wings on these sculptures made them impossible to ignore, which is precisely the sentiment garnered by the gods.

One particular winged goddess, Nike, the personification of victory, was a beautiful and frequent subject of Greek sculptures. Nike statues were often erected to commemorate a battle successfully won. In addition, Athena was often associated with the epithet, Nike, most notably on the Athenian Acropolis within the temple of Athena Nike. Nike was the daughter of Styx and Pallas as detailed by Hesiod:

Now Styx, the daughter of Ocean, mixed with Pallas; she gave birth/ To lovely-ankled Victory and Glory, then brought forth/ Power and Strength

her children, both of them illustrious:/ They have no separate dwelling nor a place apart from Zeus,/ Nor any motivation save where Zeus directs their road,/ But always they sit near to him, the heavy-thundered god./ For so the daughter Ocean, everlasting Styx, had planned/ Upon that day on which the Olympian lightener gave command/ That all the immortal gods should come to Olympos's lofty height;/ For whosoever, so he said, among the gods should fight/ Against the Titans by his side would have no loss of fame/ Or any rights among the gods which he was wont to claim;/ And anyone who under Kronos was without esteem,/ Prizes and privilege, as is right, he would bestow on him./ And so it was that Styx, the everlasting one, first came/ To Olympos with her children—her dear father hatched the scheme./ Zeus gave her honor and he gave prodigious gifts to her,/ And made her the great oath by which the Olympian gods all swear,/ Decreeing that her children should dwell with him for all days;/ And everything he promised he fulfilled in all these ways,/ For he himself is master and is powerful indeed (*Theogony* 35).

The winged goddess resided with Zeus following her participation in the battle against the Titans with her siblings. There is very little development of the goddess in mythology other than this small description. Since Nike does not have a rich mythological background like the Gorgon and sphinx, the viewer has very limited prior information to shape his visual engagement with a piece. The artist's interpretation of the goddess is just one of the millions that any one person can take because there is no clear description of her in the literature. Subsequently what the artist presented and what the viewer expected were less likely to match, leading to an interesting visual experience. Unlike the gorgons or sphinxes, Nike statues did not serve apotropaic purposes. Rather, this goddess relayed a much more positive message. A spectator was likely not threatened by the image of the winged goddess but instead encouraged, for her presence meant victory had been achieved once and could be attained again. These figures fall into the realm of works that can function to reflect the era but also provide hope for the future in desperate times.

The first winged portrayal of victory was Achermos' Nike from Delos (7). This votive offering to Apollo has wings on both her heels as well as her back. Since this piece

was created during the Archaic period, her wings were likely similar in shape to the bronze goddess from Olympia. Little remains of her wings so it is difficult to assess the feather detail of the particular piece. However, the artist likely was influenced by the sphinxes that were produced prior to the 550 B.C. date given to Archermos' Nike so the wings would not have much detail. The artist would have instead attempted to show feathers with simple cuts in the marble rather than trying to mimic a realistic image. Similar to the version by Archermos is the Nike acroterion from the temple of Apollo at Delphi. She also has wings on her heels and back. The wing on the heel that remains has a layered feather effect but the feathers themselves are not carved with much detail. Once again, the early artist did not intend to capture reality but successfully depicted wings and feathers using the techniques available to him.

There were several Nike sculptures erected on the Athenian Acropolis, associated with both the temple of Athena Nike and the Parthenon. The Athena Parthenos held a Nike in the palm of her hand indicating that Athens itself possessed victory. There are numerous copies of the original, but the Varvakeion statuette in particular is worth noting (8). Not only is there a Nike alighting on Athena's outstretched hand, but there is also a sphinx and winged horses on Athena's helmet. The Nike could be just landing on Athena's hand but at any moment she could take off. The wings act as a reminder that victory is fleeting and though one may win a single battle, there are always more to be fought. The 2nd century copy of the Parthenos includes both realistic and more natural versions of wings. The horses have curved wings coming from the area of their forelimbs and pointing upward. The Nike, on the other hand, has wings similar to a bird that fall naturally down as if the Nike is at rest. It appears as though there are only three feathers

on either wing of the Pegasus as indicated by the grooves on the viewed surface. The wings of the Nike in Athena's hand are also not very detailed but rather rely on the shape to identify the female as Nike. Much detail is not necessary on these wings since the entire Athena is covered in iconography. Further, the piece was painted in ancient times, so decorative elements of the wings could have been predominantly colors instead of carvings. The viewer cannot image the sculpture as anyone other than Athena and Nike because they are so often represented together; Victory herself and the one who can grant victory to others.

The balustrade around the Athena Nike temple is covered with Nike reliefs (9). The Sandal Binder as well as the other Nikes have wings similar in shape to those of the Parthenos Nike. They are very natural, showing a clear evolution from the sharp hook-like wings of the sphinxes of the past. Despite the fact that the Athenians were at a low point in the Peloponnesian War during the time these reliefs were carved, the artist has managed to completely remove that from the spectator's mind. This piece is all about being victorious as each Nike lines up to present gifts to Athena. Regardless of the current state of affairs, the Athenians are reminded that victory was attainable. The work functions to remind the Greeks of a better time and look towards a brighter future. Instead of reflecting on the state of the self, these reliefs call for a reflection on society as a whole. While the war is raging, these goddesses are almost carefree. A viewer would find these reliefs on the way up the Acropolis and be confronted with the state of the nation. The position of the temple on the hill forces a worshipper to face these images and no matter where he finds himself emotional, these images allow him to see himself as a part of the majority. This piece epitomizes the varied purposes of wings in ancient Greek

sculpture. The wings could inflict fear or hope in the viewer, depending upon the subject. The power of the wings to evoke such a wide range of emotions explains why they were included in such a wide spectrum of pieces.

The wings of the Nike of Paionios at Olympia were a truly magnificent showpiece of Classical Greek sculpture (10). Though little today remains of her wings, reconstructions allow for modern viewers to see what immense detail went into carving the wings and sculpture itself. The position of her wings shows that she is still floating and just about to land on the ten-meter column upon which she was erected. The wings are spread out wide and appear as if they could produce a gust considering her flowing drapery and their massive size. These wings, in the reconstructions, are intricately carved to show the texture of the wings. The main shaft of each feather is carved and short grooves are cut into the marble to portray the soft plumage. The feathers appear layered upon one another as if the artist added each one individually on top of the next as opposed to subtractively chipping away at the marble. Both long and short feathers are shown to add dimension. The wings are very realistic in shape, almost as if taken from a bird and placed on Nike's back. These wings also have a textured edge comprised of the ends of the outermost layer of feathers. Though marble, this aspect adds to the softness of these wings. They are powerful yet delicate. The curve of the wing insights a flexibility unmatched by previously mentioned winged creatures. The brilliance of this piece and its wings in particular properly showcase the great victory that was won which incited its creation.

The Nike of Samothrace is yet another fantastic example of the transition of wings from the earlier gorgons and sphinxes (11). This Hellenistic sculpture stood

overlooking the sanctuary of the Great Gods at Samothrace (Boardman 78). Contrasted with the diaphanous drapery around her torso and legs, the wings are incredibly thick. While her body appears wet, her wings are mighty. Both the shape of her wings as well as the elaborate feather detailing are realistic. The sculpture appears to have an innumerable amount of feathers shaping her dense wings. There are so many feathers that trying to make out a single one is nearly impossible. Unlike the Paionios Nike, whose wings are more clean-cut, the wings of the Nike of Samothrace are coarse and have an intensity about them. Though the piece was made to be seen from only one angle, the thickness of the wings makes the spectator wish to see the piece from behind to view the wings in their full glory. Similar to the Nike of Paionios, this Nike is barely perched on her plinth and she is also leaning forward which exaggerates the feeling of motion embodied by the piece.

Another Nike from Samothrace has such simple wings it is hard to believe it was created later. The Nike acroterion from Hieron is a 2nd century piece with one remaining wing (12). This wing appears static. While the Nike of Paionios and Samothrace Nike, as previously mentioned, appear as if in mid-flight, this Nike is at rest. The feathers are shown as they were on older pieces with equidistant grooves cut into the surface to differentiate individual feathers. The drapery of this Nike is much more the focus of the piece than the wings, unlike the other Nike from Samothrace. In fact, the wings appear out of place against the body of the goddess and when viewed straight on, the wings fall into the shadow of her elaborate clothing. The wings are the focus of the Samothrace and Paionios sculptures and are accented by the drapery. Here, Nike stands nonchalantly with her hip thrown to the side appearing rather ordinary. The piece is still commanding due to

the presence of the wings but the overall feeling exuded by this piece towards the viewer is not grandeur. This piece is more relatable despite its position high above the viewer. Her body garners the viewer's attention and like many other pieces, her human form represents an ideal. However, once the wings are in view the piece is elevated. But this only occurs when the wings are visualized and with this Nike, her form as a woman rather than flying goddess is emphasized.

Similar to the Gorgon sculptures, Nike is many times placed in a position that makes her unavoidable. While placement functions to require the establishment of a relationship between the monster and the viewer as they stare at one another, it forces the viewer to take in the entire goddess from foot to wing tip. Apart from being grand sculptures that would naturally demand attention, Nike stands precisely so that one is drawn to her. Her alighting position, as depicted in Paionios' sculpture and the statue at Samothrace, guides the viewer to view her in all her glory. The eye is drawn up in order to engage with each part of her body, most notably her wings. The expansive wings, moving drapery, and general size of these two pieces in particular give the goddess a presence unmatched by other sculptures we have focused on. The particles streaming off of these figures have even greater power to touch the viewer and transform their psyche because of the movement depicted. In order to see these pieces, the fire, particles or intermediary comes into contact with the eye, but moreover, the sculpture connects with the entire body of the viewer. These Nikes come at the viewer in a rush. It is not the goddess or sculpture itself, but rather the impression of her that comes towards the viewer. However, as a consequence of the movement shown, the viewer's experience is equivalent to the impact of some physical entity. Since the sculpture is high above, the

image appears to be able to launch itself towards the viewer. While Nike is coming to rest on her post, the slightest movement of her wings could bring her face to face with the viewer. She is capable of anything because she has these powerful wings. This prospect makes the visual experience with these sculptures very intense.

In order to appropriately relate to the sculpture, the viewer is expected to complete these images by relating to history, rather than mythology. With the other winged sculptures, there was a detailed mythological description of what the creature looked like and how it behaved. However with Nike sculptures, the viewer does not have much previous experience with the goddess other than additional artwork. Therefore, the relationship between the viewer and the piece is based almost exclusively on what the viewer is experiencing and how the piece can affect that. The interaction with a Nike sculpture is almost pure because the viewer does not come expecting anything. The viewer knows who she is but she can represent anything the viewer needs her to in the moment. If the times are peaceful, Nike is a reminder of wars past. On the other hand, if the nation is experiencing turmoil, the sight of Nike can instill a hope in the viewer. Her *Gaze* envelops the viewer in a story of his present and recent past. Rather than causing the viewer to reflect on the self with respect to the story of the subject, Nike forces the viewer to see himself in relation to his own world. The purpose when standing before a Nike sculpture is not to compel the viewer to recognize his own inadequacies, though this is inevitable considering the majestic nature of the winged goddess. Instead the viewer is driven to contemplate the state of society and his place with respect to it. When presented with a Nike image, it is not a time to think about everything one has done wrong and the

punishment that awaits but a time to reflect on what man is capable of, with the help of the gods.

Nike, as the personification of victory, represents success and strength. Regardless of the detail, the wings give power to Nike which in turn reminds the spectator that victory is power. This applies to both people living in the cities in which Nike statues are erected as well as visitors. Since Nike statues were usually commissioned as a monument for a battle won, those in the city had a reminder that they were powerful at some point and rose victorious against their enemies. Foreigners who came and saw a statue as grand as the Nike of Samothrace had evidence that the city was great and mighty with the capabilities to take down those that rose against it. The wings of Nike statues were able to speak to the dignity of the city. Moreover, these sculptures served as a reminder to the Greeks that all things, good and bad, came from the gods. While man may have won the war, it is as a result of the immortals, ultimately. Man may put in the effort but the outcome is under the gods' discretion. A goddess is erected as a symbol of the victory, not a man. Man may accomplish much, but only in accordance with the immortals' decisions. Nike serves as a reminder to any and all viewers that one can accomplish much but, as a man, he is a very small part in the grander scheme established by the gods and they are to be recognized above all else.

Conclusion

Ancient theories of vision provide a gateway to understanding what is seen and expanding the visual experience. The Greeks were fascinated by sight, just as we are today and attempted to explain it in a variety of ways. Earlier theorists equated sight with touch. Then the theories evolved to include light and air in the environment as major players in the visual process. There could be emissions from the eye and object in view or the creation of a material intermediary that functioned to allow sight. The overarching connection between the many theories was that there was some sort of physical contact between what was seen and the viewer. This physical contact could then be transferred into an emotional connection.

It is generally accepted that vision takes precedence as the most important sense and the Greeks would agree as quite the ocularcentric society. Vision allows man to absorb the world in a way unmatched by any other sense. Sight is the means by which man can sense the world created by the gods most fully. When man sees creation, a spark is ignited to understand the world and subsequently understand the ways of the gods. With this understanding, man is able to apply immortal intelligence to human life and creations of man, specifically art.

What makes art so interesting, particularly in relation to how we see, is the fact that artists are able to exploit aspects of the visual system in order to convey their message. By utilizing certain techniques, the eyes and mind of the viewer are affected in such a way that the viewer can understand what is presented before him. But it is not only what the artist portrays. The viewer plays an active role in receiving the message of the piece. The artist may have a specific intention of why he created the piece and where it

was displayed but the viewer has full range of interpretation. As a viewer, specifically of works of art, the person is responsible for bringing his own experiences into the relationship. The connection is formed between work and viewer as a result of what the viewer projects onto the piece. The artist presents an image but the visual experience depends upon how the viewer relates to what is seen. How the viewer sees and accordingly feels in response to the image can have a transformative effect on the viewer.

In conjunction with the interaction between viewer and work is the idea of a *gaze/Gaze* relationship. The *gaze* is one's view of the world, what a person sees. The *Gaze* is the world's view of the person, what society as a whole visualizes. A person is always aware of the *Gaze* and will subsequently behave a certain way in order to portray themselves differently, depending upon who holds the *Gaze*. But in this effort to appear a certain way to others, the person also views himself in a different light, in relation to the *Gaze* holder. The visual experience is based on forming this relationship between what is the object and the self. Sculptures can be included in the overall *Gaze*. As the viewer observes the piece he becomes the subject of the sculpture's *Gaze* and will vary his behavior in accordance with how he views himself in relation to the piece.

By analyzing various forms of winged sculpture I found that the viewer's connection to a work is established through several components. The subject itself, such as a sphinx, Gorgon, or Nike is important to provide the background through which the viewer first relates to the piece. By bringing their knowledge of mythology and culture, Greek viewers are able to interact with these pieces in an interesting way. The projection of the viewer onto the piece as a result of their understanding transforms the *gaze/Gaze* relationship, specifically tailoring it to the particular visual experience. How the piece is

physically portrayed, both in sculpture form and placement also have a direct impact on how the viewer will see and connect with the work. When engaging with sculptures, the viewer is affected by what he sees, how he sees it, and how he relates to what is presented before him.

Everything observed has an impact, whether intentional, such as with art, or not, and that impact is a unique experience for every viewer. How a man sees in the physical sense has a profound effect on how he sees in the psychological sense. What is viewed can change how a person feels and thinks about his world and himself. By trying to understand vision, one can begin to understand how what is seen can affect the viewer. As a result of the physical contact between the piece and the eye, through particles, intermediary, or rays of light, there is a physical transformation that subsequently leads to psychological reflection.

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